

India-US civil N-deal will remain **A CROWNING GLORY** of his Prime Ministership

NEW DELHI, Dec 26 (PTI)

INDIA'S epochal civil nuclear agreement with the United States in 2008 will remain a crowning glory for Manmohan Singh's Prime Ministership in the foreign policy domain as it not only ended the country's nuclear apartheid but created favourable geopolitical configuration.

Singh, the then Prime Minister, was so convinced about the futuristic outcomes of the historic deal he showed steely determination to push it strongly though the survival of his Government was at stake during a no-confidence vote in Parliament.

The civil nuclear deal changed India's overall engagement with the US as it paved the way for



building the bonds of a strategic partnership, especially in areas of high-technology and defence.

In July 2005, India and the US announced that they would cooperate in civil nuclear energy following Singh's talks with then American President George W Bush.

In an address at a joint session of the US Congress on July 19, Singh elaborated on the need for India-US collaboration in the civil nuclear energy sector and explained New Delhi's impeccable record in nuclear non-pro-

In this April 12, 2010 file image, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh with U.S. President Barack Obama during their meeting in advance of the Nuclear Security Summit, at Blair House in Washington. (PTI)

liferation.

"We have adhered scrupulously to every rule and canon in this area. We have done so even though we have witnessed unchecked nuclear proliferation in our own neighbourhood which has directly affected our security interests," he had said.

"This is because India, as a responsible nuclear power, is fully conscious of the immense responsibilities that come with the possession of advanced technologies, both civilian and strategic," Singh said.

The agreement was signed by then External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and his US counterpart Condoleezza Rice, on October 10.

Following the deal, India's overall strategic cooperation with the US witnessed a major upswing.

RBI sets up eight member panel on ethical use of AI

MUMBAI, Dec 26 (PTI)

THE Reserve Bank on Thursday announced the setting up of an eight-member committee to develop a framework for responsible and ethical enablement of artificial intelligence (FREE-AI) in the financial sector. Headed by IIT Bombay professor Pushpak Bhattacharyya (Department of Computer Science and Engineering), the panel will assess the current level of adoption of AI in financial services, globally as well as in India.

It will also review regulatory and supervisory approaches on AI with focus on the financial sector globally. The panel will also identify potential risks associated with AI, if any, and recommend an evaluation, mitigation and monitoring framework



and consequent compliance requirements for financial institutions, including banks, NBFCs, FinTechs, PSOs, etc.

The committee will recommend a framework including governance aspects for responsible, ethical adoption of AI models / applications in the Indian financial sector, the RBI said. The other members of the pan-

el are: Debjani Ghosh (Independent Director, Reserve Bank Innovation Hub); Balaraman Ravindran (Professor and Head, Wadhvani School of Data Science and AI, IIT Madras); Abhishek Singh (Additional Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology); Rahul Matthan (Partner, Trilegal); Anjani Rathor (Group Head and Chief Digital Experience Officer, HDFC Bank); Sree Hari Nagaralu (Head of Security AI Research, Microsoft India); and Suwendu Pati (CGM, FinTech Department, RBI).

The Committee will submit its report within six months from the date of its first meeting, the RBI said. The central bank had made the announcement regarding the panel in its December monetary policy meeting.

Situation along LAC is stable but sensitive: MoD

Consensus achieved to restore ground situation based on equal, mutual security: Govt on LAC

NEW DELHI, Dec 26 (PTI)

THE overall situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is "stable" but "sensitive" and broad consensus was reached to restore ground situation based on principles of "equal and mutual security", the Defence Ministry said on Thursday, weeks after Indian and Chinese militaries disengaged from last two friction points in eastern Ladakh.

In an year-end review, the Ministry referred to the understanding reached between the two sides on October 21 on disengagement and said patrolling activity has commenced in traditional areas in Depsang and Demchok. "Overall situation along the LAC is stable but sensitive," it said. Broad consensus has been achieved to restore the ground situation based on principles of equal and mutual secu-

rity following prolonged negotiations at diplomatic and military levels, the ministry said in the understanding. "Consensus achieved includes disengagement and relocation of troops from the friction areas of Depsang and Demchok followed by joint verification," it said.

"Currently, blocking positions have been removed by both sides and joint verification has been completed. Patrolling activity has commenced to traditional patrolling areas in Depsang and Demchok," the ministry said in a brief on Indian Army's activities in 2024. It said the Army maintained a high state of operational preparedness to ensure stability and dominance along all the frontiers including LAC and Line of Control (LoC).

Last week, NSA Ajit Doval travelled to Beijing and held talks with Chinese Foreign Minister

China: Agreement to end stand-off being implemented effectively

BEIJING, Dec 26 (PTI)

CHINA'S Defence Ministry on Thursday said that the Chinese and Indian militaries are "comprehensively and effectively" implementing the agreement to end the standoff at eastern Ladakh and "steady progress" has been made.

Chinese Defence Spokesperson Senior Colonel Zhang Xiaogang made the remarks during a media briefing here while answering a question on the December 18 Special Representatives talks.

"At present, the Chinese and Indian militaries are comprehensively and effectively imple-

menting the border-related solutions reached between the two sides, and steady progress has been made," he said.

He said that in recent times, based on the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, China and India have maintained close communication on the border situation through diplomatic and military channels and achieved great progress.

Following October 21 agreement between India and China, Special Representatives for border question NSA Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met here and held a comprehensive dialogue .

Wang Yi under the framework of Special Representatives (SR) dialogue on the boundary dispute.

The decision to revive the SR dialogue mechanism was taken at a meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Kazan on October 23, two days after India and China firmed up the disengagement pact, effectively ending the over four-year border standoff along the LAC in eastern Ladakh.

On the situation along the LoC with Pakistan, the Ministry said relentless counter terror operations were carried out while constantly reviewing emerging and future threats to national security. Infrastructure development in border areas being one of the key imperatives of operational preparedness was given impetus in consonance with the 'Viksit Bharat Vision' of Government.

President confers Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar on 17 children

NEW DELHI, Dec 26 (PTI)

PRESIDENT Droupadi Murmu on Thursday presented the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar to 17 children, recognizing their exceptional courage and outstanding achievements across diverse fields, including art, culture, sports and innovation.

The President underlined the importance of nurturing and celebrating young talents.

"Providing opportunities and recognizing children's talents has always been a part of our tradition. This tradition should be further strengthened to ensure that every child realises their full potential," she said.

The award celebrates extraordinary accomplishments in seven categories: art and culture, bravery, innovation, science and technology, social service, sports and environment.

The honourees -- seven boys and ten girls selected from 14 States and Union Territories -- were presented with a medal, certificate and citation booklet.

Among them was Keya Hatkar, a 14-year-old author and dis-



President Droupadi Murmu confers a 'Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar' to 3-year-old Chess prodigy Anish Sarkar, at the Rashtrapati Bhawan Cultural Centre, in New Delhi on Thursday. (PTI)

ability advocate, recognised for her excellence in art and culture.

Despite living with spinal mus-

cular atrophy, she founded initiatives like "IM POSSIBLE" and "SMA-ART," promoting inclu-

sivity and disability awareness.

President Murmu highlighted
(Contd on page 5)



Ex-PM Manmohan Singh passes away

NEW DELHI, Dec 26 (PTI)

FORMER Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, architect of India's economic reforms, died here on Thursday night. He was 92.

Singh's death was announced by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi, where he was admitted in the Emergency ward around 8.30 PM in a critical condition.

An AIIMS bulletin said "he was treated for age related medical conditions and had sudden loss of consciousness at home" on December 26.

"Resuscitative measures were started immediately at home. He was brought to medical emergency at AIIMS Delhi at 8.06

pm. Despite all efforts, he could not be revived and was declared dead at 9.51 pm," said the bulletin.

Singh, who was Prime Minister for two terms in the Congress-led UPA Government from 2004 to 2014, had been in

1932-2024

poor health for the last few months.

He is survived by wife Gurcharan Singh and three daughters.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and her mother Sonia Gandhi reached the hospital as soon as the news of his

hospitalisation became known.

Singh, who was Finance Minister under the then Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, was the architect and the brain-child of economic reforms in 1991 that pulled India from the brink of bankruptcy and ushered in an era of economic liberalisation that is widely believed to have changed the course of India's economic trajectory.

Singh died as the Congress party concluded its Congress Working Committee meeting at Belagavi in Karnataka, where all top party leaders were present.

It is believed that party chief Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi are on their way to Delhi from Belagavi.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday expressed grief over the death of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Taking to X, Prime Minister Modi wrote: "India mourns the loss of one of its most distinguished leaders, Dr. Manmohan Singh Ji. Rising from humble origins, he rose to become a respected economist.

He served in various Government positions as well, including as Finance Minister, leaving a strong imprint on our economic policy over the years. His interventions in Parliament were also insightful. As our Prime Minister, he made extensive efforts to improve people's lives."

China approves world's largest dam over Brahmaputra river close to Indian border

■ By K J M Varma
BEIJING, Dec 26 (PTI)

CHINA has approved the construction of the world's largest dam, stated to be the planet's biggest infra project costing USD 137 billion, on the Brahmaputra River in Tibet close to the Indian border, raising concerns in riparian states - India and Bangladesh.

The Chinese Government has approved the construction of a hydropower project in the low-



er reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo River, the Tibetan name for the Brahmaputra, according to an official statement quoted by

state-run 'Xinhua' news agency on Wednesday.

The dam is to be built at a huge gorge in the Himalayan reaches

where the Brahmaputra river makes a huge U-turn to flow into Arunachal Pradesh and then to Bangladesh.

The total investment in the dam could exceed one trillion yuan (USD 137 billion), which would dwarf any other single infrastructure project on the planet including China's own Three Gorges Dam, regarded as the largest in the world, the Hong Kong-based *South China* (Contd on page 5)

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