

India, Vietnam to further expand partnership

■ PM Modi holds talks with visiting Vietnam PM Pham Minh Chinh

NEW DELHI, Aug 1 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday held wide-ranging talks with his Vietnamese counterpart Pham Minh Chinh to further expand the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries.

Chinh arrived in Delhi on Tuesday night on a three-day visit that is aimed at further expanding the comprehensive strategic ties between the two countries. "PM @narendramodi extended a warm welcome to PM Pham Minh Chinh of Vietnam at Hyderabad House," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on 'X'.

"Substantive discussions to further energise the India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership on the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his Vietnamese counterpart Pham Minh Chinh during a meeting, in New Delhi. (PTI)

agenda," he said. The strategic ties between India and Vietnam have been on an upswing in

the last few years.

VIETNAM PM CALLS ON PRESIDENT MURMU: VIET-

NAMESE Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh on Thursday called on President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here and discussed various issues concerning the two nations, an official release said.

Chinh arrived in Delhi on Tuesday on a three-day visit aimed at further expanding the comprehensive strategic ties between the two countries.

Welcoming Chinh, the President said India-Vietnam relations are built on the firm foundation of close cultural and historical links and are marked by mutual trust and understanding, and cooperation in international fora, the release by the Rashtrapati Bhavan said. Murmu said Vietnam is a crucial pillar of India's Act East Policy and an important partner for New Delhi's Indo-Pacific vision.

Lt Gen Lakhera new DG of Assam Rifles

NEW DELHI, Aug 1 (PTI)

LIEUTENANT General Vikas Lakhera on Thursday assumed charge as the new Director General of the Assam Rifles, which is known as the "Sentinels" of the north-eastern region.

He succeeds Lt General PC Nair who retired after four decades of service.

Lt Gen Lakhera has varied professional experience in serving in the north-eastern region. He was commissioned into the 4 SIKH LI of the Indian Army on June 9, 1990.

The General Officer is a post graduate from Defence Service Staff College, Wellington.

He is an alumnus of the Higher Defence Management Course from College of Defence Management, Secunderabad and completed the prestigious National Defence Course from the Royal College of Defence Studies, London. He has tenanted various command and staff appointments during his illustrious career.

Lt General Lakhera was serving as the Additional Director General military operations handling information warfare



Lt General Vikas Lakhera assumes charge as Director General of Assam Rifles. (PTI)

prior to taking over as Director General of Assam Rifles.

His academic qualifications included MSc from Madras University, MA from King's College, London and Masters in Management Studies from Osmania University.

The officer has extensive experience of planning and executing counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist operations in Jammu and Kashmir and North-eastern region.

He is a recipient of Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Sena Medal, Chief of Army Staff Commendation Card and two Army Commander Commendation Cards.

Bangladesh bans Jamaat-e-Islami, its student wing under anti-terrorism law

DHAKA, Aug 1 (PTI)

BANGLADESH on Thursday banned the Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir under anti-terrorism law following nationwide unrest over the quota system for Government jobs, accusing the party of instigating protests that left at least 150 people dead.

A notification issued by the Public Security Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs on Thursday confirmed the ban on the Islamist party, a key ally of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party. The ban on Jamaat,

Chhatra Shibir and other associated groups came through an executive order under Section 18(1) of the Anti-Terrorism Act.

"They (Jamaat-Shibir and BNP) just used the students as their shield," Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on Thursday when Italian Ambassador Antonio Alessandro called on her at her official residence Ganabhaban here. A Home Ministry spokesman said that the Government on August 1 banned all political activities of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami and its various wings. The Bangladesh Government on

Tuesday decided to ban the Jamaat-e-Islami following the deadly nationwide students' protests over quotas in Government jobs, accusing it of exploiting the movement that left at least 150 people dead. The development comes after a meeting of the ruling Awami League-led 14-party alliance passed a resolution earlier this week that Jamaat must be banned from politics.

The decision to ban Jamaat comes over 50 years after its initial prohibition in 1972 for "misusing religion for political purposes". The Jamaat opposed Bangladesh's 1971 Independence from Pakistan

and sided with the Pakistani troops during the Liberation War. The party, founded in 1941 in undivided India, was first banned in 1972, the year Bangladesh framed its Constitution, which disbanded the functioning of any association or union or political party based on religion.

But the subsequent military Government led by General Ziaur Rahman revoked the ban by issuing a martial law proclamation, which allowed Jamaat to refloat and years later became a crucial partner of the then prime minister Khaleda Zia's 2001-2006 four-party alliance Government.

Nature's fury continues

Rains wreak havoc in HP, U'khand, Bihar

■ 29 killed in three States due to cloudburst, rains and lightning

NEW DELHI, Aug 1 (PTI)

FIVE people were killed and about 50 missing following several incidents of cloudburst in Himachal Pradesh where rains washed away many houses, bridges and roads, officials said on Thursday. Twelve people, including three of a family, were killed and six injured in heavy overnight rains that triggered flooding and house collapse as several rivers swelled in Uttarakhand, officials said.

In Bihar, Twelve people were killed by lightning strikes across four districts in the last 24 hours.



A scene after cloud burst at Shamej in Rampur, in Shimla district on Thursday. (PTI)

The state emergency operation centre said the cloudbursts took place in Nirmand, Sainj and Malana areas in Kullu, Padhar in Mandi and Rampur in Shimla districts.

The local Meteorological office has issued a "red alert" of heavy to extremely heavy rains along with thunderstorms and lightning at isolated places in three districts of Kangra, Kullu and Mandi on Thursday.

Water gushed into many homes in Dehradun besides leaving the roads heavily waterlogged at various places in the city.

(Contd on page 5)

800 mn People lifted out of poverty due to India's digital revolution: UNGA chief

NEW DELHI, Aug 1 (IANS)

DENNIS Francis, President of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), has highlighted the contribution of mobile phones and digital banking services in India in lifting 800 million people out of poverty.

Addressing the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations on 'Accelerating progress towards Zero Hunger for the current and future generations', Francis gave India's example while explaining the change that technology and innovation can bring in the lives of people from developing countries.



"India has been able to lift 800 million people out of poverty over the last five or six years simply by the use of a smartphone. Rural farmers in India, who never had a relationship with a banking system, are now able to transact all their businesses on their smartphone," Francis, a seasoned diplomat

from Trinidad and Tobago, told the gathering. "They pay their bills and they receive payments for orders... 800 million people lifted out of poverty because there is a high level of internet penetration in India and almost everyone has a cellphone," he added. The UNGA President then went on to speak on closing the gap between the developed and developing countries of the world with respect to technology and innovation.

"The playing field is not levelled. This is, in fact, an important descriptor of the distinction between the Global North and Global South. Rather than the gap being closed, we are witnessing it being widened," he mentioned.

Hamas Military Chief Mohammed Deif killed in July 13 strike, confirms Israel

JERUSALEM, Aug 1 (AP)

THE Israeli military said on Thursday that it has confirmed that the head of Hamas' military wing, Mohammed Deif, was killed in an airstrike in Gaza in July.

Israel targeted Deif in a July 13 strike that hit a compound on the outskirts of the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, but the military said for weeks it was working to determine if he died in the blast. Hamas has denied he was killed.

More than 90 other people, including displaced civilians in nearby tents, were killed in the strike, Gaza health officials said at the time.

In a statement Thursday, the



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Israeli military said that "following an intelligence assessment, it can be confirmed that Mohammed Deif was eliminated in the strike."

There was no immediate

comment from Hamas.

The Israeli confirmation came a day after an apparent Israeli airstrike in Tehran killed Hamas' top political leader, Ismail Haniyeh. Israel has not confirmed or denied being behind the attack, but Iran has vowed retaliation.

Along with Deif and Haniyeh, Israel has vowed to eliminate Hamas' top leader in Gaza, Yehya Sinwar, but he has so far remained elusive.

Israel says Sinwar and Deif were the masterminds of the October 7 attack in which Hamas-led militants rampaged in southern Israeli communities, killing around 1,200 people and taking some 250 others hostage.



Swapnil shoots India's third bronze at Paris

Clinches country's first-ever Olympics bronze in 50m rifle 3 positions event

Mah Govt announces Rs 1 cr prize for Kusale

Swapnil Kusale proudly flashes bronze medal at Paris. (PTI)

CHATEAUROUX (France), Aug 1 (PTI)

ON AN empty stomach and with his heart racing, Indian shooter Swapnil Kusale kept

his composure to stage a remarkable comeback and help the country claim its first ever Olympic bronze in the 50m rifle 3 positions event here on Thursday.

Kusale shot an aggregate of 451.4 in the eight-shooter final to finish third after being placed sixth at one stage. It took the country's overall tally to three, all bronze in shooting, at the Paris Games.

His medal comes following the stunning performance of Manu Bhaker, who clinched the women's 10m air pistol and mixed team 10m air pistol bronze alongside Sarabjot

Singh. "I did not eat anything, was feeling the butterflies (in my stomach). Just had black tea and came here. The night before every match, I just pray to god," Kusale said after his unprecedented achievement.

"Today the heartbeat was on the higher side. I just tried to control my breathing and did not try anything different. (Contd on page 5)

Every Indian filled with happiness: PM Modi at shooter Kusale's win

NEW DELHI, Aug 1 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday lauded shooter Swapnil Kusale's bronze-winning performance at the Olympics as "exceptional", noting he is the first Indian athlete to win a medal in the category.

Kusale clinched the first ever Olympic bronze in 50m rifle 3 positions event, taking the country's overall tally to three at the ongoing

Paris Games here on Thursday.

Modi said on X, "Exceptional performance by Swapnil Kusale! Congrats to him for winning the Bronze medal in the Men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions at the Paris Olympics 2024. His performance is special because he's shown great resilience and skills. He is also the first Indian athlete to win a medal in this category. Every Indian is filled with happiness."