

# Trump's envoy Witkoff meets Putin in Moscow

MOSCOW, Aug 6 (AP)

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin held talks with US President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff in Moscow on Wednesday, the Kremlin said, days before the White House's deadline for Russia to reach a peace deal with Ukraine or potentially face severe economic penalties that could also hit countries buying its oil.

The Kremlin did not immediately provide more details of the meeting. Earlier, Witkoff took an early morning stroll through Zaryadye Park, a stone's throw from the Kremlin, with Kirill Dmitriev, the Russian president's envoy for investment and economic cooperation, footage aired by TASS showed.

Dmitriev played a key role in three rounds of direct talks



between delegations from Russia and Ukraine in Istanbul in recent months, as well as discussions between Russian and US officials. The negotiations made no progress on ending the three-year war following Russia's invasion of its neighbour.

Trump's deadline for Putin ends on Friday. Washington has threatened "severe tariffs" and other economic penalties if the killing doesn't stop. Trump has expressed increasing frustration with Putin over Russia's escalating strikes on civilian areas of

Ukraine, intended to erode morale and public appetite for the war. The intensified attacks have occurred even as Trump has urged the Russian leader in recent months to relent.

Russian forces hit a recreational center in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region, killing two people and injuring 12, including two children, regional Gov. Ivan Fedorov said Wednesday. Russian forces launched at least four strikes on the area and initially attacked with powerful glide bombs.

"There is zero military sense in this strike. Only cruelty to intimidate," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

Russia also struck the Ukrainian power grid and heating gas facilities, Zelenskyy said, as Ukraine makes preparations for winter.

**'MERCENARIES FROM PAK, CHINA FIGHTING FOR RUSSIA': UKRAINIAN**

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said that "mercenaries" from China and Pakistan, along with a few other nations, are fighting alongside Russian forces in the ongoing conflict. Zelenskyy's statement came after he met with Ukrainian soldiers fighting in the Vovchansk direction. He stated that soldiers in this sector have mentioned the participation of "mercenaries" from China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and African countries in the war and vowed to respond to them.

Zelenskyy stated, "Today, I was with those defending our country in the Vovchansk direction - the warriors of the 17th Separate Motorized Infantry Battalion of the 57th Brigade named after Kish Otaman Kost Hordiienko."

# Amid US tariff standoff, PM may visit China for first time in 7 years

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**New Delhi:** India and China are in touch about a likely visit by PM Narendra Modi to the country for the Shanghai Cooperation Summit (SCO) from Aug 31-Sept 1. There was no official confirmation by either side about Modi's visit but govt sources said preparations were on for Indian participation in the summit that will be hosted by President Xi Jinping in Tianjin and will also be attended by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The PM is also expected to visit Tokyo for the annual India-Japan summit, along with China. It's learnt that once India officially confirms participation by Modi, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi

## As deadline nears, Putin talks to Trump envoy

Steve Witkoff, envoy for US President Trump, met Russian President Putin for the fifth time this year on Wednesday, holding talks that Trump had described as pivotal in determining whether the US goes ahead with new sanctions against Russia. Russian news agencies said the meeting lasted about three hours. **P 24**

will travel to India to discuss the agenda for Modi's bilateral with Xi on the margins of the summit. Wang is also expected for the Special Representative talks with NSA Ajit Doval on the boundary issue.

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# Trump doubles tariff on India to 50%; 'unfair', says govt

Goes Into Effect Aug 27, Talks To Be Held Aug 25

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: US President Donald Trump slapped an additional 25% penalty on most imports from India for buying Russian oil, bringing overall

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duty on Indian exports to the US to 50%. India hit back, describing the action as "unfortunate" and said it would take all necessary action to protect national interest.

The govt said that while India was being targeted, the US had chosen to conveniently ignore similar action by other countries to secure their energy interests. For the govt, it's also disturbing that China, which has been importing more energy from Russia, is being

HIGHEST RATES FOR 'BICS' NATIONS		Product	Proposed tariff (%)	Exports to US (\$bn)
50%	39%	Smartphones	0	10.6
Brazil, India	Switzerland	Pharma	0	9.8
30%	20%	Oil products (with no Russia link)	6.9	4.1
China, South Africa	Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Vietnam	Shrimps	50.0	2.0
19%	15%	Machinery, mechanical appliances	51.3	6.7
Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Thailand	Japan, South Korea, Turkiye	Diamonds, gold and products	52.1	10.0
10%		Carpets	52.9	1.2
United Kingdom		Organic chemicals	54.0	2.7
		Woven apparel	60.3	2.7
		Knitted apparel	63.9	2.7

favoured over India. "We have already made clear our position on these issues, including the fact that our imports are based on market factors and done with the overall objective of ensuring the energy security of 1.4 billion people of India. It is therefore extremely unfortunate that the US should choose to impose additional tariffs on India for actions that several other countries are also taking in their own national interest. We reiterate that the-

se actions are unfair, unjustified and unreasonable," the foreign ministry said.

The executive order signed by Trump Wednesday, citing threats to US national security because of India's purchase of oil from Russia, goes into effect on Aug 27 — providing a three-week window to negotiate an agreement. A delegation of US negotiators is scheduled to begin talks on Aug 25.

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Govt unlikely to budge on dairy, farm, GM food

India is likely to hold firm on its stand with the US, drawing a red line in sensitive areas such as dairy and agricultural products, including genetically modified food, while keeping the interests of Indian consumers paramount when it comes to oil purchases, reports Sidhartha. While negotiators are looking to engage in further talks, a breakthrough looks tough given that both sides have dug in their heels.

While the US is demanding zero duty access for all its products into India, there is no reciprocity, with Trump levying additional tariffs — 10-20% — on all other countries with which he has clinched deals. For the govt, lowering tariffs on farm products is politically sensitive given that it will expose small Indian farmers to competition from large growers in the US. P 16

# Rescuers battle rain & rubble in race against time at Dharali

'Over 50-Ft-High Debris'; 2 Bodies Found At Site

Gaurav Talwar & Kalyan Das

**Dehradun:** Twenty-four hours after the flash flood that tore through Dharali village near Gangotri, rescue teams were still struggling to reach the epicentre of the devastation. Landslides, fractured roads and a washed-away bridge had reduced the approach to

► **EDIT: Eco Logic**

Dharali — once a remote but reachable hamlet — into a logistical nightmare for rescue workers fighting both weather and topography.

By Wednesday afternoon, it was clear that reaching those trapped or missing wasn't just about dispatching people and resources. The challenge also lay in getting there.

Rescue teams already present in Dharali — including



A portion of the Gangotri highway collapsed near Bhatwari, one of several obstacles preventing relief teams from reaching Dharali

## Over 6k trees to be cut around tragedy site

The Dharali devastation has rekindled long-standing concern over felling of thousands of deodar trees in Bhatwari block, the area hit by the deluge. Over 6,000 trees are to be cut along a 10-km stretch — Jangla to Dharali, Harsil and Jhala — many standing precisely where the disaster unfolded. **P14**

the Army, ITBP and SDRF — pulled out the body of 32-year-old Mahavir Singh Panwar from the rubble on Wednesday. A second body was reco-

vered later while at least 15 people remain missing, mostly from the Dharali area.

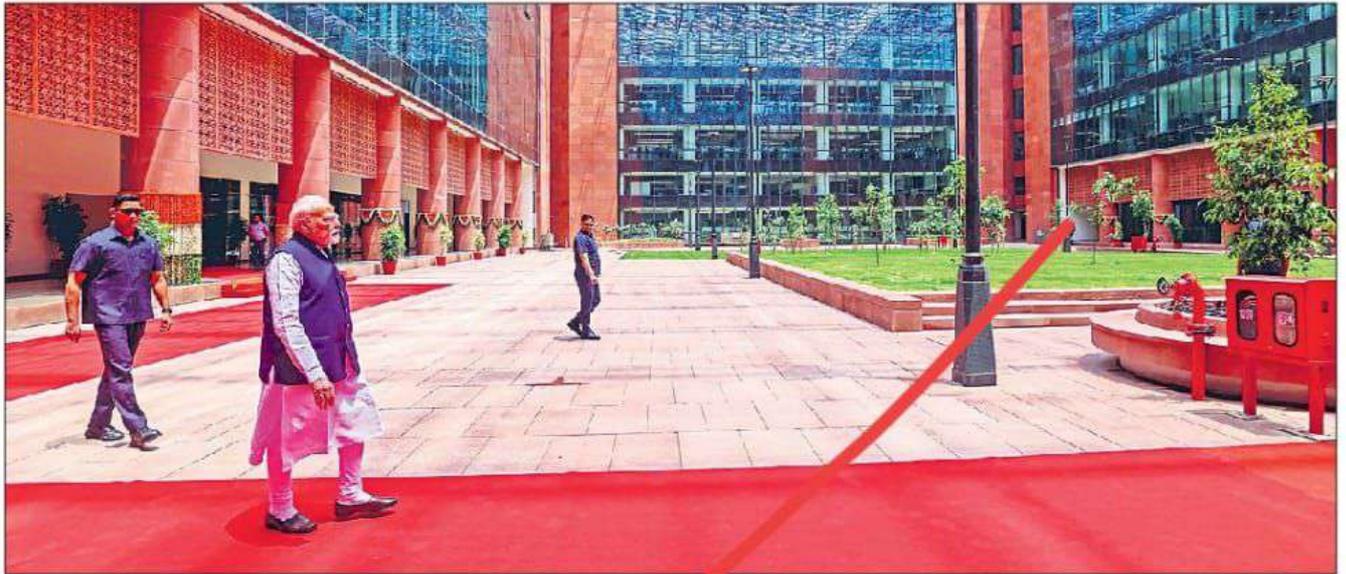
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## Tempting fate? Bazar was built on river bed

Kheer Gad, the Himalayan stream and source of the flash flood that flattened much of Dharali village, did not veer from its path. It followed the course it always had. The devastated bazaar and buildings that had stood as the village's spine had been constructed, quite plainly, on the river's ancient bed — on ground laid by Kheer Gad itself. **P15**

## Local festival saved scores of lives

Hardoodh, a little-known local festival, may have saved many lives at Dharali. As a mass of slush and rocks tore through one side of the village on Tuesday afternoon, many residents were away since morning to the other side of the stream to attend the festival that draws the community each Sawan to offer prayers to Naag Devta. **P14**



# PM inaugurates Kartavya Bhavan

NEW DELHI, Aug 6 (PTI)

**PRIME** Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday inaugurated Kartavya Bhavan, the first of the 10 upcoming Common

Central Secretariat buildings which will house offices of all ministries.

The ambitious project is aimed at bringing ministries and departments under one

roof for efficiency.

Kartavya Bhavan-03, the first to be inaugurated, will house the Home Affairs, External Affairs, Rural Development,

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