

# Inflation in Europe dips to 2-year low

**Frankfurt:** Inflation that has plagued Europeans declined sharply in September to the lowest level in two years, strengthening hopes that consumers will get relief from costlier groceries, vacations and haircuts — and that the European Central Bank (ECB) won't have to further restrict economy by raising interest rates from already-record highs.

The annual rate was 4.3% this month, a drop from 5.2% in August, and the lowest since October 2021, the European Union's statistics agency Eurostat, said Friday. But recently higher oil prices are cas-

ting a shadow over prospects for quickly beating inflation down to the central bank's target of 2%. Core inflation, which excludes volatile fuel and food prices, fell more than analysts expected — to 4.5% from 5.3%. ECB watches this figure to assess how inflation is coming down.

The fall in core inflation “reinforces our view that ECB has finished raising interest rates,” said Jack Allen-Reynolds, deputy chief eurozone economist at Capital Economics. He said overall inflation rate would tumble to 3.5% by year-end. AP

# Army moves over Rs 6,500 cr deal to MoD to procure 400 howitzers from Indian firms

■ **By Ajit Dubey**

NEW DELHI, Sept 29 (ANI)

**IN A** mega push to promote indigenously designed and developed weapon systems, the Indian Army has moved a proposal to the Defence Ministry to buy 400 howitzers from Indian firms.

Indian Army's Regiment of Artillery is looking to use the expertise of Indian Industry to produce 155 mm/52 calibre Towed Gun System, which will be lighter, versatile and cater for future technological advancements. "A proposal for buying 400 155mm 52 calibre towed gun systems (TGS) along with towing vehicles from Indian firms under the Buy Indian-IDDMM category has

been moved to the Defence Ministry. The Government is expected to soon take a decision on the TGS at a high-level meeting," senior military officials told ANI.

The Indian Army has already issued a tender for buying 307 Advanced Towed Artillery Gun Systems (ATAGS) along with one for finding a mounted gun system for its requirements along borders with China and Pakistan. The Indian Designed, Developed and Manufactured howitzer would mean that it would be totally Indian in all ways.

The Army wants the guns to be lighter in weight and easier to deploy in high-altitude areas like the older Bofors guns.

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# IAF to place orders for 156 more Prachand Light Combat Helicopters with HAL

■ To be deployed along China, Pak border

■ By Ajit K Dubey  
NEW DELHI, Sept 29 (ANI)



IN WHAT could be termed as one of the biggest pushes for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Make in India' in the defence sector, the Indian Air Force is going to place orders for 156 more Prachand Light Combat Helicopters, with HAL, which would be deployed at both the China and Pakistan front by the IAF and the Indian Army.

The two services have already inducted 15 of these

choppers in their fleet in the last 15 months after holding trials in the most extreme weather conditions and terrain in the world. "The Indian Air Force as the lead service has moved a proposal to the Government for buying 156 more Prachand choppers as a joint acquisition case which is likely to get approved soon," senior defence officials told ANI.

Recently, Indian Air Force chief Air Chief Marshal V R

Chaudhari had announced from foreign soil about the force's intent to buy around 100 more Light Combat Aircraft Mark 1A to push indigenisation.

The combined total of the two projects in terms of worth is over Rs 1.5 lakh crore.

Of the 156 choppers, 66 would be inducted by the Indian Air Force while the rest 90 would be acquired by the Indian Army.

Meeting the Indian Air Force requirement of being a completely Indian Designed, developed and manufactured weapon system, the Prachand has been extensively test-flown by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL). The attack helicopter has been built as per the

requirements of the Indian armed forces to operate both in desert terrains and high-altitude sectors.

Prachand is the world's only attack helicopter that can land and take off at an altitude of 5,000 metres (16,400 ft), which makes it ideal to operate in the high-altitude areas of the Siachen glacier and Eastern Ladakh. It is also capable of firing a range of air-to-ground and air-to-air missiles and can destroy air defence operations of the enemy.

It is also going to be equipped with newer Dhruvastra air-to-ground missiles which can destroy hardened shelters of the enemy in high altitude as well as other terrain.

# Jaishankar, Blinken discuss ties amid Nijjar killing row



Secretary of State Antony Blinken walks with Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar on Thursday at the State Department in Washington. (AP/PTI)

■ By Lalit K Jha

WASHINGTON, Sept 29 (PTI)

**INDIA** and the US have emphasised the continued importance of bilateral cooperation in areas like defence, space and clean energy as External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met Secretary of State Antony Blinken and exchanged notes on global developments, amid a simmering diplomatic row between India and Canada over the killing of a Khalistani separatist.

Jaishankar is currently on a five-day official trip to Washington DC.

Jaishankar on Friday said that the Canadian allegations with regard to the death of a Khalistani separatist was discussed during his meeting with the Secretary of State Tony Blinken and noted that the two delegations came out 'better informed' after the meeting.

"Yes, I did," Jaishankar said in response to a question during his appearance at the prestigious Hudson Institute think tank when asked if the issue of Canadian allegations came up during his meeting with Blinken at the Foggy Bottom headquarters of the State Department. Thursday's meeting at the State Department was the highest-level interaction between the two countries after the recent G20 Summit in New Delhi when President Joe Biden and PM Modi met.

"Great to meet my friend US Secretary of State @SecBlinken at the State Department today. A wide-ranging discussion, following up on PM @narendramodi's June visit. Also exchanged notes on global

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A vibrant pink advertisement for Satish Saree Stores. At the top, it features the text 'पैराण महोत्सव' (Pheera Mahotsav) in yellow and white, accompanied by a stylized peacock logo. Below this, a white banner with pink text reads 'LAST DAY TODAY'. The bottom part of the ad shows the 'Satish Saree STORES' logo in white and pink script. At the very bottom, there is a small line of text: 'Modi No. 5, Gurgaon, Haryana, 122002'.

# World badly in need of re-globalisation: Jaishankar

WASHINGTON, Sept 29 (PTI)

"THE world is badly in need of some form of re-globalisation," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Friday, underlining that India is "non-Western and not anti-Western".

Jaishankar was speaking at an event organised by the prestigious think tank Hudson Institute in Washington DC on the topic of 'India's Role in a New Pacific Order'.

"If you put it together, I would suggest to you that the world is badly in need of some form of re-globalisation," he said.

The minister said globalisation itself is undeniable because it has struck very deep roots. "It has tremendous benefits. Nobody doubts. But this

Jaishankar said he believes that a United Nations without the most populous country and the fifth largest economy not in the Security Council is obviously lacks credibility and to a large degree effectiveness.

particular model of globalisation has evolved over the last 25 years. Obviously, it has a lot of risks inherent, and today how to address those risks and create a safer world is part of the challenge," he said.

On the Indo-Pacific, Jaishankar said it is a concept that has gained ground. The separation in a way of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Region is something actually which was an outcome really of the Second World War. The

one looked at a global strategy and global understanding before that of the Indian Ocean Pacific Ocean but dealt with it in a much more integrated way, with the emphasis on India, he said. In terms of the Pacific order, Jaishankar said, a lot of the global concerns are most acute. "One is of course the larger issue of how you maintain stability in the middle of a very major change taking place because often sharp changes imbalances of power

and interest can influence and create risks," he said.

Responding to a question, Jaishankar underlined that India is not against the West.

"India is non-western and not anti-western," he said.

The minister reiterated that a country like India and a continent like Africa not being at the UN Security Council does not reflect the ground realities of the 21st century.

Jaishankar said he believes that a United Nations without the most populous country and the fifth largest economy not in the Security Council economy, as well as a continent of 50-plus countries not being there obviously lacks credibility and to a large degree effectiveness.

On Russia, the minister said the West's relationship with Moscow as a result of the Ukrainian war has virtually broken down. Today Russia, which has been a European power, is looking towards Asia and building its relationship with Asian countries.

"Russia has always seen itself as European. So you're actually seeing a reinvention of Russia as a consequence of what is happening (in Ukraine)," he said, pointing to the growing Russia-China relationship.

Jaishankar predicted that Russia would focus on the non-western world, away from Europe, away from the United States, and look much more at Asia, possibly in other regions as well.

# Women's Reservation Bill gets President's assent

NEW DELHI, Sept 29 (PTI)

PRESIDENT Droupadi Murmu has given her assent to the Women's Reservation Bill which seeks to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.

According to a Law Ministry notification issued on Friday, the President gave her assent on Thursday.

Now, it will be officially known as the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act.

According to its provision, "It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notifica-

tion in the Official Gazette, appoint."

During a special session of Parliament earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had described the law as "Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam".

The Constitution amendment bill was passed by the Lok Sabha with near unanimity and the Rajya Sabha with unanimity.

The law will take some time before being implemented as the next census and the subsequent delimitation exercise - redrawing of Lok Sabha and Assembly constituencies - will ascertain the particular seats being earmarked for women.

The quota for women in the Lok Sabha and Assemblies will continue for 15 years and Parliament can later extend the benefit period.

While there is quota within quota for Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) women, the Opposition had demanded that the benefit be extended to Other Backward Classes.

There have been several efforts to pass the bill in Parliament since 1996. The last such attempt was made in 2010, when the Rajya Sabha had passed a bill for women's reservation, but the same could not be passed in the Lok Sabha.

# Philippines' Marcos vows to defend waters against Chinese aggression

MANILA, Sept 29 (AP)

THE Philippine President said on Friday that his country does not want a confrontation but will staunchly defend its waters after its coast guard removed a floating barrier placed by China at a disputed shoal in the South China Sea.

It was the first time President Ferdinand Marcos Jr has spoken publicly against China's installation of the 300-metre (980-foot) -long barrier at the entrance to Scarborough Shoal which was dismantled at his order.

"We're not looking for trou-

ble but what we'll do is to continue defending the maritime territory of the Philippines and the rights of our fishermen, who have been fishing in those areas for hundreds of years," Marcos said in response to a question at a news briefing in southern Surigao del Norte province.

The latest flare-up between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea, one of the world's busiest trade routes, comes after Marcos decided earlier this year to allow an expansion of the US military presence in the Philippines under a 2014 defence pact.