

# IED blasts at Christian prayer meet in Kerala kill 2, injure 58

## Former Member Of Group Claims Responsibility

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Kochi:** Three back-to-back explosions at a 2,000-strong prayer congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, a Christian denomination, at Kalamasse-

► **Shah speaks to CM, tells NIA, NSG to rush, P 12**  
► **Survivors recall fire, smoke, scurry to flee, P 12**

ry in Kerala's Kochi on Sunday killed two women and wounded 58 other members. The blasts were initially suspected to be a terror attack but were later declared to be the alleged handiwork of a disgruntled former member

The improvised explosive devices (IEDs) allegedly planted at the Zamra International Convention and Ex-



CCTV footage of the aftermath shows children and elderly people among the crowd scampering out of the hall as the furniture burns

hibition Centre by the suspect, identified as Dominic Martin of Thammanam in Kochi, went off in the middle of prayers at 9.35am, police said. The centre was the venue of a three-day Jehovah's Witnesses event since Friday.

Survivors said they heard three explosions within seconds, with the first one being powerful, followed by two

smaller ones. "I found a woman in flames lying face down on the floor. I grabbed a hose from the fire-safety system and sprayed water over her to douse the flames, but she was dead seconds later," said Marcel, a participant from Varapuzha. The woman hadn't been identified till late Sunday.

► **Continued on P 12**

# India will emerge as a \$30-trillion economy by 2047, says Niti CEO

Surojit Gupta | TNN

**New Delhi:** India is estimated to be a \$30 trillion developed economy by 2047, preliminary results from the Centre's vision document which is being prepared have shown, Niti Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam said on Sunday. The Vision India@2047 document is likely to be released by PM Modi in the next three months. The estimates will go through some fine-tuning before the draft vision document is ready by December.

India is currently estimated to be the fifth largest economy with a GDP of \$3.7 trillion. Several estimates show that India's GDP is expected to overtake Japan and Germany by 2030. Ratings agency S&P estimates that India's

## CURRENTLY NO. 5

GDP in \$ tn	2022	2023
United States	25.5	27.9
China	17.9	17.7
Japan	4.2	4.4
Germany	4.1	4.2
India	3.4	3.7

nominal GDP will rise from \$3.4 trillion in 2022 to \$7.3 trillion by 2030.

"This rapid pace of economic expansion would result in the size of the Indian GDP exceeding Japanese GDP by 2030, making India the second largest economy in the Asia-Pacific region. By 2022, the size of Indian GDP had already become larger than the GDP of the UK and also France. By 2030, India's

GDP is also forecast to surpass Germany," according to the agency's statement released earlier this year.

Going by the preliminary numbers provided by the Niti Aayog, estimates show that the economy will need to post an annual average economic growth of 9.2% between 2030-2040, 8.8% between 2040-2047 and 9% between 2030 to 2047. Subrahmanyam said the vision document will outline the structural changes and reforms needed to reach the objective.

It is also expected to have details about the country's global engagement on trade, investment, technology, capital, research and development entities.

► Continued on P 19

# India aims to deploy desi 'iron dome' by 2028-2029

## 'Will Be Comparable To Russian S-400 Triumph Air Defence System'

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**New Delhi:** India plans to operationally deploy by 2028-29 its own long-range air defence system, which can detect and destroy incoming stealth fighters, aircraft, drones, cruise missiles and precision-guided munitions at ranges of up to 350km.

The "interception capabilities" of the indigenous long-range surface-to-air missile (LR-SAM) system, being developed by DRDO under the ambitious 'Project Kusha', will be "comparable" to the formidable Russian S-400 Triumph air defence system recently inducted by the IAF, sources told **TOI** on Sunday.

After the cabinet committee on security in May 2022 cleared development of the LR-SAM system as a "mission-mode" project, the defence ministry last month accorded



IAF is also hopeful of receiving the remaining two of the five S-400 Triumph squadrons over the next one year

the acceptance of necessity (AoN) for procurement of five of its squadrons for the IAF at a cost of Rs 21,700 crore.

The mobile LR-SAM, with long-range surveillance and fire control radars, will have different types of interceptor missiles designed to hit hostile targets at 150-km, 250-km and 350-km ranges. "It will be capable of reliable 'area air

defence' with single-shot kill probability of not less than 80% for single missile launch and not less than 90% for salvo launch," a source said.

Meant to provide comprehensive air defence cover to strategic and tactical vulnerable areas, the LR-SAM will be effective against high-speed targets with low-radar cross-section, as per the DRDO.

"It will be geared to take out fighter-sized targets at a 250-km range, with larger aircraft like AWACS (airborne warning and control systems) and mid-air refuellers being intercepted at 350km," he said.

Firing units of the LR-SAM will be able to "interact" with the IAF's integrated air command and control system, which is a fully-automated air defence network with data links being progressively built to integrate the wide array of military radars with each other as well as with civilian radars to plug surveillance gaps in Indian airspace.

IAF is also hopeful of receiving the remaining two of the five S-400 Triumph squadrons over the next one year after a delay due to the Russia-Ukraine war. The first three squadrons have been deployed in northwest and east India to cater for China and Pakistan.

# UN chief meets Nepal PM Prachanda, Dy PM

KATHMANDU, Oct 29 (PTI)

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UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Sunday called on Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' after arriving here on first official visit to the Himalayan nation.

Guterres also held separate meetings with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Purna Bahadur Khadka and Foreign Minister Narayan Prakash Saud.

In a post on X, Nepal's Prime Minister's office said a meeting was held between PM Prachanda and UN chief Guterres, who is here on an official visit to Nepal at the friendly invitation of the Prime Minister.

Guterres said that the tran-

sitional justice process in Nepal that the Government is trying to conclude must help bring peace to victims, families and communities.

Addressing the media after meeting Prime Minister Prachanda, the UN chief pledged the world body's support to Nepal to develop a process that meets international standards, the Supreme Court's rulings, and the needs of victims – and to put it into practice, My Republica newspaper reported.

In a joint press briefing with Prime Minister Prachanda, the UN chief urged developed countries to increase support to countries like Nepal that are hard-hit by the impacts of climate change.

# India, Kazakhstan to conduct 13-day military exercise from today

NEW DELHI, Oct 29 (PTI)

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INDIA and Kazakhstan will begin on Monday a 13-day megawargame in the Kazakh military base of Otar with a focus on boosting their counter-terror cooperation.

The Indian contingent comprising 120 personnel from the Army and the Indian Air Force left for Kazakhstan on Sunday to participate in the seventh edition of the exercise 'Kazind-2023.' "In this edition of the exercise, both sides will practice conduct of counter terrorism operations."

# At least 10 dead, 25 wounded as 2 trains collide in Andhra

## Toll Likely To Rise As Many Feared Trapped

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**Vizianagaram:** At least 10 people died and 25 were injured when a passenger train travelling from Visakhapatnam to Rayagada derailed after colliding with the Visakhapatnam-Palasa passenger train near Kothavalasa railway station in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh around 7pm on Sunday.

This was the third rail accident since June 2 when the Coromandel Express crashed into a stationary freight train in Odisha's Balasore, leading to the loss of 296 lives and 1,200 suffered injuries. On October 11, five people died and 30 were injured when the Delhi-Ka-



The accident occurred when the Visakhapatnam-Rayagada train rear-ended the Visakhapatnam-Palasa train around 7pm

makhya North East Express derailed in Bihar's Buxar.

Sunday's accident occurred when the Visakhapatnam-Palasa train was switching from the main track to a side track. Simultaneously, the Visakhapatnam-Rayagada train, travelling on the main track, rear-ended the other train, leading to the derail-

ment of the last three coaches upon impact and damaging two severely. Vizianagaram SP Deepika Patil confirmed that "at least 10 persons were killed, and over 25 were seriously injured in the accident. Four coaches of the Rayagada passenger train were involved". However, East Coast Railway's Waltair division

manager Saurabh Prasad said: "Three coaches were involved in the accident."

As the coaches were "unreserved", the details of the deceased passengers remain unknown. Officials fear that the toll may increase as some passengers may still be trapped inside the mangled coaches. Locals from nearby Kantakapalle village quickly initiated relief and rescue operations. They pulled out the trapped passengers and shifted the injured to hospitals.

However, the pitch-dark conditions hampered these efforts. Authorities deployed emergency lights to assist police, railway personnel, and other officials in the rescue effort. NDRF and SDRF teams were mobilised, and ambulances were dispatched from Anakapalli and Visakhapatnam to attend to the injured.

► Continued on P 16

# Jaishankar on 4-day visit to Portugal, Italy from Tuesday

NEW DELHI, Oct 29 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will pay a four-day visit to Portugal and Italy from Tuesday with an aim to further bolster India's bilateral ties with the two key European nations.

In the first leg of the trip, Jaishankar will visit Portugal on October 31 and November 1, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

The external affairs minister will be in Italy on November 2 and 3. "During the visit to Portugal, the external affairs minister will hold discussions with his counterpart Foreign Minister Joao Gomes Cravinho on the entire range of bilateral relations and on regional and multilateral issues

of mutual interest," the MEA said.

It said the minister is expected to meet the Portuguese leadership, members of the Portugal-India Parliamentary Friendship Group and the Indian community in Portugal.

From Portugal, Jaishankar will travel to Italy. "The external affairs minister will meet his counterpart Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani, Minister of Defence and Minister for 'Made in Italy'. He is also expected to meet the top leadership of the country," the MEA said in a statement.

It said he would be addressing the Joint Session of the Senate's External Affairs and Defence Commission, and the EU Affairs Commission and India-Italy Parliamentary Friendship Group.