

India, Maldives review withdrawal of Indian military personnel

NEW DELHI, Mar 17 (PTI)

INDIA and the Maldives on Sunday reviewed the ongoing process of replacing Indian military personnel from the island nation with Male saying the second group will leave by April 10.

The two sides held the third meeting of the bilateral high-level core group in Male, days after India withdrew the first team of military personnel that was operating an advanced light helicopter in the Indian Ocean archipelago.

The military team has been replaced by civilian technical experts. The Indian personnel are operating three aviation

platforms in the Maldives and New Delhi is now deploying civilian personnel to operate them. Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu had set March 10 as the deadline for the withdrawal of the first group of Indian military personnel from his country.

"During the meeting, both sides reviewed the ongoing deputation of Indian technical personnel to enable continued operation of Indian aviation platforms that provide humanitarian and medvac (medical evacuation) services to the people of Maldives," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

It said both sides continued

their discussions on wide-ranging issues related to bilateral cooperation.

"This inter alia included expediting the implementation of ongoing development cooperation projects through regular convening of joint monitoring mechanisms, efforts to boost bilateral trade and investment and enhancing people-to-people linkages through capacity building and travel," the MEA said.

The Maldivian foreign ministry said both sides noted the progress that has been made in replacing Indian military personnel with civilians at the aviation platforms in the Maldives.

India, Seychelles to carry out 10-day mega war game from today

NEW DELHI, Mar 17 (PTI)

THE Indian Army will carry out a 10-day mega war game with troops of Seychelles at a military facility in the island nation to boost "collaborative partnership" against the backdrop of common concerns over China's growing muscle-flexing in the Indian Ocean.

Both sides will jointly train, plan and execute a series of

the Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF) will join the exercise.

"The exercise will contribute immensely in developing mutual understanding and magnify jointness between the troops of both the armies. It will also foster collaborative partnership and help in sharing best practices between the two sides," the Army said in a readout.

It said the aim of the exercise is to enhance interoper-



well-developed tactical drills, the Indian Army said on Sunday.

The Seychelles is a strategically located archipelago of around 115 islands in the Indian Ocean region and India has been focusing on significantly ramping up defence cooperation with the country.

An Indian Army contingent comprising 45 personnel, which will participate in the exercise 'Lamitiye', departed for Seychelles on Sunday. An equal number of troops from

ability in sub-conventional operations in semi-urban environments under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter on peacekeeping operations.

"The exercise will enhance cooperation and interoperability between both sides during peacekeeping operations," the Army said.

"The exercise will also build and promote bilateral military relations in addition to exchanging skills, experiences and good practices between both armies," it said.

Ballot boxes for Maldives' elections to be placed in India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia

MALE, Mar 17 (PTI)

THE ballot boxes for Maldives' upcoming parliamentary elections will be placed in India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia, after around 11,000 Maldivians submitted re-registration requests to relocate their polling stations, the country's election commission announced on Sunday.

The six-day window for people to relocate their voting stations for the April 21 parliamentary elections expired on Saturday, media reports said, citing an Elections Commission notification.

The top electoral body said that ballot boxes for the island nation's elections will also be placed in Trivandrum (Thiruvananthapuram), the capital of Kerala, Sri Lanka's Colombo and Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur after at least 150 people re-register to vote in each of the three countries.

"As previously, enough people registered in Sri Lanka and Malaysia. And since 150 people had registered in Trivandrum, India, we have decided to set up a ballot box there," web portal adadhu.Com quoted EC's secretary-general Hassan Zakariyya as saying.

Defence Minister approves extension of resettlement facilities to invalidated cadets

NEW DELHI, Mar 17 (IANS)

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal for the extension of resettlement facilities to cadets who are invalidated on medical grounds due to causes attributable to military training.

The decision has been taken as the cadets join military academies at a young age with the intention of joining as officers in the Armed Forces, showing a commitment to serve the nation in uniform, but are unfortunate in being invalidated, the Defence Ministry said in a statement on Saturday.

For decades, cadets and their parents have been demanding such resettlement



opportunities.

Every year, young cadets at military academies undergo academic and military training with the prime objective of being commissioned as offi-

Rajnath has cleared another proposal of the Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare, allowing the extension of benefits of schemes run by the Directorate General Resettlement in order to enhance the opportunities for invalidated cadets

cers in the Armed Forces. As per extant rules, such a cadet is treated as an officer only after commissioning. Instances occur where, given the rigours of military training, some

cadets (10-20 per annum) are invalidated on medical grounds due to causes attributable to or aggravated by military training, the Ministry said.

In order to further enhance the opportunities for such cadets, the Defence Minister has cleared another proposal of the Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare, allowing the extension of benefits of schemes run by the Directorate General Resettlement.

"This will help 500 cadets who have been boarded out on medical grounds to access the schemes and ensure a brighter future for them. Future cadets in similar conditions would also get the same benefits," it added.

India's economic **BOOM** feels like 2003-07: Morgan Stanley

NEW DELHI, Mar 17 (PTI)

INDIA'S current world-beating economic growth rate on the back of an investment boom resembles that of 2003-07 when growth averaged more than 8 per cent, according to economists at Morgan Stanley.

In a report 'The Viewpoint: India - Why this feels like 2003-07', Morgan Stanley said after a decade of investment to GDP steadily declining, capex has emerged as a key growth driver in India. "We think the capex cycle has more room to run, therefore the current expansion closely resembles that of 2003-07," it said.

The current cycle is driven by investment outperforming



consumption, public capex leading initially but private capex rapidly catching up, the urban consumer leading consumption followed by catch-up in rural demand, market share in global exports rising and macro stability risks kept in check.

"We think the defining characteristic of the current expansion is the rise in the investment-to-GDP ratio. Similarly, in the 2003-07 cycle investment

to GDP rose from 27 per cent in FY2003 (fiscal year ending March 2003) to 39 per cent in FY2008, which was close to the peak. Investment to GDP then hovered around those levels until it peaked in FY2011. 2011 to 2021 then registered a decade of decline - but the ratio has now inflected again to 34 per cent of GDP and we expect it to rise further to 36 per cent of GDP in FY2027," it said.

In 2003-07, the capex boom led to an acceleration in productivity, job creation and income growth. As more labour was absorbed into employment by the strengthening economy, savings to GDP also rose from 28 per cent in FY2003 to 39 per cent in F2008.