

Indian K9 squad on duty at Paris Games

Bharti.Jain@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Five-year old Vast and three-year old Denby — the two Belgian Malinois K9 'soldiers' of the CRPF — will be part of the 10 K9 squads, comprising the dogs and their handlers, assigned to be part of the security paraphernalia at Paris Olympics beginning next week.

The 10 dogs — drawn from different central armed police force (CAPFs) including the CRPF, NSG, SSB, ITBP — will be in Paris for a month until August 11, carrying out sniffing and patrolling duties under the overall supervision of the French authorities handling security of all Olympics venues and events.

The K9 teams have been deputed for the Olympics assignment on the request of the French govt. This is the first international deployment of an Indian K9 unit drawn from the CAPFs, for purposes other than disaster relief.

Like Vast and Denby, the



CRPF dogs Vast and Denby along with their handlers in Paris

dogs for the Paris Olympics security squad have undergone stringent training and special conditioning for their foreign assignment. Their trainers too are said to have been put through basic familiarisation with French language.

"Vast and Denby were trained at the dog breeding and training school of the CRPF at Taralu near Bengaluru. They were also put through conditioning for carrying out sniffing, search

and patrolling duties as part of the Paris Olympics security squad," a senior CRPF officer told TOI.

The K9 teams got a warm welcome in Paris from Indian ambassador to France and Monaco, Jawed Ashraf, who posted a photo of their meeting with the post: "Proud to meet 10-member K9 unit from India, for a month in Paris to support Security for #ParisOlympics2024. Our K9 stars & handlers doing well after travel from India; quickly on the

job for National Day". He remarked that he had got a nice handshake as well from the CAPF canine soldiers.

Belgian Shepherd Malinois dogs are known for their agility, strength and stamina, and are valued as police dogs for their dexterity, intelli-

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gence and eagerness to please. They were instrumental in detecting the hideout of al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan before he was killed by the US Navy Seals and had also chased down IS head Abu Bakr Baghdadi in a tunnel in Idlib before he was killed.

NITI Aayog reconstituted

NEW DELHI, July 17 (PTI)

NARENDRA Modi-led NDA Government reconstituted the NITI Aayog, with four full-time members and 15 Union Ministers, including from BJP allies, as either ex-officio members or special invitees.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi remains the Chairperson and economist Suman K Bery will continue to be the Vice-Chairperson of NITI Aayog, according to an official notification. Scientist V K Saraswat, agricultural economist Ramesh Chand, paediatrician V K Paul and macro-economist Arvind Virmani will also continue to be full-time members of the Government think-tank.

The four ex-officio members will be Union Ministers Rajnath Singh (Defence), Amit Shah



(Home), Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Agriculture) and Nirmala Sitharaman (Finance).

The Prime Minister has approved the revised composition of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), the notification said. The special invi-

tees will be Nitin Gadkari (Road Transport and Highways), Jagat Prakash Nadda (Health), H D Kumaraswamy (Heavy Industries and Steel), Jitan Ram Manjhi (MSMEs), Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh (Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying).

ADB RETAINS INDIA'S GDP GROWTH FORECAST AT 7% FOR FY25

NEW DELHI, Jul 17 (PTI)

THE Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Wednesday maintained India's GDP growth forecast at 7 per cent for the current financial year, citing that a rebound in agriculture is expected given above-normal monsoon projections.

The ADB forecast comes a day after the International Monetary Fund revised upward its GDP growth projections for India to 7 per cent compared to 6.8 per cent projected in April.

Last month, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) revised upward its growth forecast to 7.2 per cent, from 7 per cent estimated earlier.

The Indian economy is on track to grow by 7 per cent in FY2024 (ending 31 March 2025) and 7.2 per cent in FY2025 (next financial year), as projected in ADO April 2024, said the July edition of the Asian



Development Outlook (ADO).

The Indian economy logged a growth rate of 8.2 per cent for the financial year ended March 2024, as against 7 per cent in the previous fiscal year.

Services continued to expand robustly in Q4 of FY24, and the forward-looking services PMI is well above its long-term average, it said, adding, industry is also expected to grow robustly, driven by manufacturing and strong demand for construction led by housing, it said.

"After muted growth in

FY2023 (previous fiscal), a rebound in agriculture is expected given the above-normal monsoon projections. This is notwithstanding the slower advance of monsoon in June. A rebound in agriculture will be important to sustain growth momentum in rural areas," it said.

Investment demand continues to be strong, led by public investments and bank credit is fueling robust housing demand and improving private investment demand, it said. However, it said, export growth will con-

tinue to be led by services, with merchandise exports showing relatively weaker growth.

The stronger-than-expected fiscal position of the central Government could provide a further boost to growth, it said.

However, the report said, this must be weighed against downside risks arising from weather events and geopolitical shocks. With regard to inflation, ADO has also retained its forecast at 4.6 per cent for the current financial year and expects it to marginally decline to 4.5 per cent next fiscal.

With regard to developing Asia's growth forecast, ADO said, it is revised up to 5 per cent in 2024 and maintained at 4.9 per cent in 2025. Growth projections remain broadly unchanged with respect to ADO April 2024, it said, adding, resilient domestic demand along with improved exports and manufacturing will support growth this year.

US chip cos slip on fears of tighter curbs on China

US chip stocks fell more than 4% on Wednesday after Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump sounded lukewarm about defending Taiwan and a report that Washington is mulling tighter curbs on export of advanced semiconductor technology to China.

The US has told allies it is considering using the most severe trade curbs available if companies continue giving Beijing access to advanced semiconductor technology.

US-listed shares of the Dutch chipmaking equipment provider ASML Holding fell about 9% following

MAY HURT EXPORTS

> US curbs on Chinese access to cutting-edge chip technology have dented US chipmakers' sales to China

> Nvidia's revenue from China stood at about 18% of its total revenue in the quarter ended April 28, compared to 66% a year ago

> A report that Washington is mulling even tighter curbs led to US chip stocks falling more than 4% on Wed



the report even as it beat second-quarter profit estimates.

Shares of AI heavyweight Nvidia fell about 4%.

Smaller rival AMD shed 6% and Qualcomm, Micron Technology, Broadcom and Arm Holdings were all down more than 5%.

Intel bucked the trend, trading up 5%, with analysts pointing to its efforts to build plants in the US. Smaller contract manufacturer GlobalFoundries also soared more than 11%.

The Biden administration has moved aggressively in recent months to curb Chinese access to cutting-edge chip technology, including sweeping restrictions issued in Oct to limit exports of AI processors designed by firms including Nvidia. U.S. COMMERCE

Jaishankar meets Mauritius top political leaders

■ "A lively conversation on contemporary global issues," EAM Jaishankar on meeting ex-Mauritius PM Berenger

PORT LOUIS, July 17 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday met Mauritius' top political leaders, including Opposition leader Arvin Boolell, and discussed with them ways to deepen India's special and enduring partnership with the island nation.

Jaishankar arrived here on Tuesday on a two-day visit, one of the first countries he was visiting in his current term as External Affairs Minister.

"It underscores the strength and depth of our bilateral ties. It is also an opportunity to underline India's unwavering commitment to its special and enduring partnership with Mauritius," Jaishankar said on Tuesday.

Jaishankar discussed with Boolell the Mauritius-India relationship and its significance for the prosperity and well-being of the Indian Ocean region.

"Welcome his support for the continuous strengthening of our ties," Jaishankar posted on X.

Boolell, who was born in an Arya Samajist Indo-Mauritian family in Port Louis, is the son of former leader of the Labour Party and former Deputy Prime Minister Satcam Boolell.



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets the Mauritian Leader of Opposition Dr Arvin Boolell, in Port Louis on Wednesday. (ANI)

He also met Xavier Luc Duval, the leader of the Parti

Mauricien Social Democrat. "Good exchange of views on

deepening India-Mauritius partnership," Jaishankar said on X.

He also met former Prime Ministers Paul Berenger and Navin Ramgoolam.

"Good to meet former Prime Minister Paul Berenger. A lively conversation on contemporary global issues. Value his support for India-Mauritius relations," Jaishankar said.

Berenger served as Prime Minister of Mauritius from 2003 to 2005.

"A pleasure to meet with former Prime Minister @Ramgoolam_Dr this morning. Discussed our longstanding bilateral partnership and the broad-based desire for its further growth. Appreciate his expression of support for India-Mauritius ties," he wrote on X.