

As Yunus takes oath, Modi presses for safety of Hindus

PM's First Remarks On Targeting Of Minorities Since Hasina's Ouster

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: PM Narendra Modi on Thursday asked the new regime in Bangladesh to ensure safety of beleaguered Hindus and other minority communities who have been under attack from violent mobs rampaging through the country since the ouster of Sheikh Hasina as PM.



► **DELHI REACHES OUT; UK FGN SECY DIALS JAISHANKAR, FLAP INSIDE**

Modi extended his best wishes to the Nobel Prize-winning economist who took over as head of an interim govt in Bangladesh. "My best wishes to Professor Muhammad Yunus on the assumption of his new responsibilities. We hope for an early return to normalcy, ensuring the safety and protection of Hindus and all other minority communities," the PM said on X, his first remarks since the chaotic resignation of Hasina on Monday.

TWO STUDENT NETAS WHO LED STIR IN COUNCIL OF 17



Muhammad Yunus meets top military officers on returning to Dhaka on Thursday

► Members of council include **M Nahid Islam & Asif Mahmud Sajib Bhuiyan**, who played a key role in the student stir. Others are Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, **ex-guv of Bangladesh Bank**, Syeda Rizwana Hasan, an **SC lawyer**, Farida Akhtar, a rights activist, **tribal leader Supradip Chakma**, Bidhan Ranjan Roy, a **psychiatry prof**, & **ex-foreign secy M Touhid Hossain**

Modi also conveyed his desire to work with the new regime in Bangladesh which under Hasina remained sensitive to India's security concerns.

► **Continued on P 26**

Yunus slams attack on minorities as 'part of conspiracy'

Dhaka: An interim govt headed by Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus (84) assumed control in Bangladesh Thursday, with a commitment to ending violence against minorities and guiding the nation towards a better future, reports **AKM Moinuddin**. Yunus, who heads a 17-member council of non-political figures, took the oath of office in Dhaka.

"I will uphold, support, and protect

► **Will be tough to cooperate with India if it helps Hasina: BNP, P 20**

► **Ready for politics: Hasina son, P 24**

the constitution," Yunus, an economist and banker, declared as he was sworn in as chief adviser, a role equivalent to the PM's. Yunus condemned the attacks on minority communities as "part of a conspiracy" and appealed to public to prevent further violence. The army chief, who announced the formation of the interim govt, did not specify its tenure.

► **Continued on P 24**

Political parties demand immediate Assembly elections in J&K during meetings with EC

SRINAGAR, Aug 8 (PTI)

WITH the Supreme Court deadline for holding Assembly polls looming large, the Election Commission (EC) held a series of meetings in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday with political parties and district heads of the civil administration and police in order to get a feedback for holding the election.

The EC team, led by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar and including election commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and S S Sandhu, met representatives of registered political parties, including the National Conference (NC), People's



Security personnel keep vigil as a team of the Election Commission of India (ECI) is scheduled to meet various political parties to take feedback in view of the preparedness for Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir at SKICC in Srinagar on Thursday. (PTI)

Democratic Party (PDP), Congress and Jammu and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Kashmir Panthers Party (JKPP),

at the International Convention Centre (SKICC) here. Immediate Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir was the dominant demand of all the political leaders who met the visiting EC team.

Assembly polls have not been held in Jammu and Kashmir since 2014. The polls were due to be held in early 2019 following the dissolution of the legislative body of the erstwhile state in 2018.

However, after the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into Union territories in August 2019, the Assembly polls could not be held due to various reasons, including a delimitation exercise that was completed in 2022.

Talking to reporters after party-wise meetings with the EC delegation, the leaders said they were unanimous in their demand for immediate Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir.

They also demanded that a level-playing field should be ensured in the polls for the restoration of democracy in the Union Territory.

The Supreme Court has directed the Centre to conclude the election process by September 30. The poll schedule is yet to be announced by the EC, with just a little over seven weeks left for the deadline.

The BJP also battled for immediate Assembly polls.

Neeraj settles for SILVER

PARIS, Aug 8 (Agencies)

DEFENDING champion India's Neeraj Chopra could not repeat his feat in Paris and had to satisfy with a silver medal in javelin throw behind Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem who created an Olympic record at the Stade de France Stadium on Thursday night.

Nadeem threw a monster throw of 92.97m in his second attempt which none of the 12 throwers could breach.

Neeraj, the 2020 Tokyo Games gold medalist, threw his spear 89.45 metres in his second attempt to settle at the second spot. With his silver, Chopra became first Indian track-and-field



athlete to win two Olympic medals.

Grenada's Anderson Peters claimed the bronze medal with a throw of 88.54 metres.

This was India's fifth medal, first silver, at Paris Games. The Indian shooters won three bronze medals earlier in the competition while the men's hockey team claimed their second successive bronze medal earlier in the day.

The 26-year-old Neeraj came to Paris having won the Federation Cup in India in May and the Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland in June.

The defending champion finished

second at the Doha Diamond League, his first outing of 2024, with a then-season best of 88.36m.

Chopra qualified for the Paris Olympics finals with a huge throw of 89.34 metres on his first attempt, on Tuesday.

This time, the quality of the field was better than Tokyo. Nine throwers crossed the automatic final round qualification mark of 84m in Paris as against six in Tokyo. Out of the nine, five made it to the final round with their first throws.

On Thursday, Neeraj's first attempt was a foul as his right foot crossed the line.

In the second attempt he recorded his season's best throw with 89.45m. The season's best effort was the Indian's only legitimate throw of the evening.

RBI holds repo rate for 9th time in a row at 6.5%

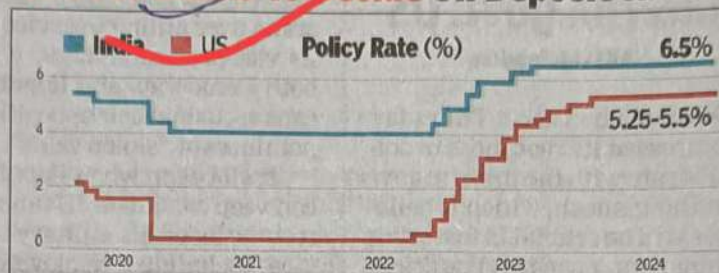
Says Need To Maintain Inflation's Declining Trajectory

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: RBI on Thursday decided to keep policy rates on hold for the ninth consecutive time, citing strong demand and the need to maintain inflation's declining trajectory. The central bank said that there is a need to remain vigilant amid the backdrop of "large and persistent" supply side shocks in food items.

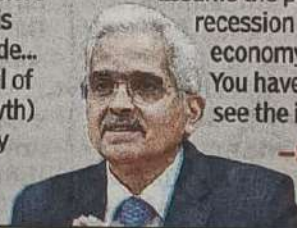
The six-member monetary policy committee voted 4:2 to keep the repo rate — the rate at which the central banks lends to banks — at 6.5% and to continue focusing on withdrawing accommodation to align inflation with the target while supporting growth. "Growth remains resilient, inflation has been trending downward and we have made progress in achieving price stability; but we have more distance to cover. The progress towards our goal of price stability has been uneven

'It's For Banks To Decide On Deposit Rates'



On Slow Deposit Growth...

“I am not suggesting that people should not go for equity markets and put more deposits in the banks. It is left to the people to decide... Banks need to be mindful of this (slower deposit growth) because it can potentially create some structural challenges...”



—Shaktikanta Das | RBI GUV

On US Recession Fears...

Based on a month's unemployment data you cannot assume the possibility of a recession in the largest economy in the world. You have to wait and see the incoming data

due to large and persistent supply side shocks, especially in food items. We need to remain vigilant to ensure that inflation moves sustainably towards the target, while supporting growth. This approach

would be net positive for sustained high growth,” Das said in a statement after the meeting of the monetary policy committee.

Although the policy maintained a status quo in terms

of action, many read the governor's statement as hawkish. Particularly his comments cautioning banks on growing credit faster than deposits. Das asked banks to beef up household deposit mobilisation by leveraging their branch network and through innovative service offerings.

Das retained the growth forecast for FY25 at 7.2% but cut down the forecast for Q1FY25 to 7.1% from 7.3% earlier due to updated information on high-frequency indicators, which show lower than anticipated corporate profitability, general government expenditure and core industries output. The governor also retained the inflation forecast for FY25 at 4.5% even as he tweaked quarterly forecasts.

According to RBI, the slowdown in deposits is partly because of a winding down of precautionary savings that households have built up during Covid when avenues were limited.

Renewed momentum generated in India-New Zealand ties: Murmu

President Murmu arrives in New Zealand

WELLINGTON, Aug 8 (PTI)

PRESIDENT Droupadi Murmu on Thursday said there is a renewed momentum in India-New Zealand bilateral relations, generated by high-level contacts and growing engagement across a range of sectors.

Murmu arrived in New Zealand on Wednesday on the second leg of her three-nation tour. She was accorded Royal Guard of Honour on her arrival in the country.

The official X handle of the President of India said Governor General Dame Cindy Kiro hosted a State Banquet in honour of President Murmu at Government House. The banquet was attended by several New Zealand dignitaries, including Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, as well as eminent representatives of the New Zealand Indian community. "President Murmu said that there is a renewed momentum in our bilateral relations, generated by high-level contacts and increased engagement across a range of sectors. Governor General Dame Kiro hailed President Murmu for her commitment and initiatives for the upliftment of all sections of society," it said, sharing a series of photographs from the banquet.

Earlier in the day, Murmu and Luxon reaffirmed their commitment to enhance bilateral ties, especially in educa-



President Droupadi Murmu being received upon her arrival at the airport, in Wellington. (PTI)

tion, trade and culture.

"A boost to India-New Zealand partnership! President Droupadi Murmu @rashtrapatibhvn held discussions with PM @chrisluxonmp of New Zealand. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing bilateral ties, especially in education, trade and culture," the Ministry of External Affairs posted on X.

Murmu also discussed bilateral ties and ways to enhance cooperation across various sectors during her talks with Governor General Kiro and Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters.

"President Droupadi Murmu held a meeting with Governor General Dame Cindy Kiro of New Zealand. Both leaders hailed the warm and friendly relationship between the two countries and discussed coop-

eration across various sectors," the President's Office said in a post on X. Later, Peters, who is also the Foreign Minister, called on President Murmu.

"Both leaders acknowledged the progress in bilateral relations and deliberated upon ways of enhancing cooperation in several areas," her office said. Murmu also addressed the New Zealand International Education Conference in Wellington.

During her address, the President spoke about the transformative power of education. "Education has always been close to my heart. I have seen and experienced first-hand the transformative power of education. Education is not just an individual endeavour, but also a vehicle for social change and nation building," she said.