

Putin vows fight in Ukraine to go on until goals achieved

Rules Out More Mobilisations, Says 617K Troops Deployed

Moscow: Russia will press on with its war in Ukraine unless Kyiv does a deal that takes Moscow's security concerns into account, President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday, adding that the goals of the "special military operation" would be met regardless. Fielding questions from the public and media at an event dominated by the conflict, Putin said Russia's core goals remained "de-Nazification", "de-militarisation" and securing Ukraine's neutrality. "There will be peace when we achieve our goals," the 71-year-old leader said. "Either we get an agreement, agree on certain parameters (on the size and strength of Ukraine's military)... or we solve this by force," he added.

Putin said he had detected signs that Western enthusiasm for providing Ukraine with military and financial aid was waning. He accused Kyiv of sacrificing its troops in order to show some success to its Western sponsors as it seeks more aid. He also dismissed the need for a second wave of mobilisation of reservists to fight in Ukraine — a move that has been deeply unpopular. He said there are some 617,000 Russian soldiers there, including about 244,000 troops who were called up to fight alongside professional military forces. REUTERS & AP



The Russian president appeared briefly lost for words when an AI-generated version of himself (right) confronted him during his end-of-year presser

Putin confronts AI 'double', jokes only one must be like me

President Putin appeared briefly lost for words when confronted with an AI-generated version of himself. The "double" took the opportunity to put a question to Putin about the dangers of AI. "Hello, I am a student at St Petersburg state university. I want to ask, is it true you have a lot of doubles?" the double asked, prompting laughter among the audience. "I see you may resemble me and speak with my voice. But I have thought about it and decided that only one person must be like me and speak with my voice, and that will be me," Putin said. "That is my first double, by the way," he added. There has been speculation that Putin has body doubles to cover for him in some public appearances because of alleged health problems. REUTERS

Amid soaring egg prices, Russian prez makes rare apology

President Vladimir Putin issued a rare apology on Thursday when a pensioner complained to him about the price of eggs. During Putin's Q&A session with the media and the public calling in from across Russia, Irina Akopova was shown seated at her kitchen table via video link. "Vladimir Vladimirovich, take pity on pensioners! We don't get millions. Sort this out - we have no one to turn to," she said. "I'm very grateful to you, I'm counting on you to help." Putin replied, "I apologise for this, but this is a failure of the government's work... I promise that the situation will be corrected." The government this week said it would exempt 1.2 billion eggs from import duty in the first half of next year to try and rein in prices that have risen more than 40% this year. REUTERS

EU summit decides to launch membership talks with Ukraine

Brussels: EU leaders unexpectedly agreed on Thursday to open membership talks with Ukraine, something Hungarian PM Viktor Orban for weeks had vowed to block. Hungary said it was a bad decision, after the chairman of the summit, European Council President Charles Michel, said: "The European Council has decided to open accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova." He went on to say the summit granted EU candidate status to Georgia and would also advance an EU bid by another hopeful — Bosnia — once it reaches "the necessary degree of compliance" with criteria.

"This is a victory for Ukraine. A victory for all of Europe. A victory that motivates, inspires, and strengthens," said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Orban said on Facebook that he had abstained and did not want to take part in what he called a bad decision. REUTERS

War against Hamas will last months: Israel def minister

US Seeks Accurate Hits Amid Reports Of 'Dumb Bombs' Use

Israel's defence minister said on Thursday that the war against Hamas "will last more than several months", signalling determination to carry on with the bombardment of Gaza even as the White House national security adviser arrived in Tel Aviv to discuss a timetable for ending the fighting.

Before meeting with NSA Jake Sullivan, defence minister Yoav Gallant repeated Israel's arguments that destroying Hamas was essential to Israel's security and was difficult because Hamas has built an extensive underground infrastructure in Gaza. "It will require a long period of time — it will last more than several months, but we will win and we will destroy them," he said. The comments suggested that Israel was not likely to be swayed by international condemnation of the war's enormous civilian toll in Gaza. Sullivan had said before his visit that one of the topics of discussion with Israeli officials would be "how they are seeing the timetable of this war."

Gaps between the US and Israel have widened over Israel's conduct of its war against Hamas and a postwar settlement for the Gaza Strip. On Tuesday, President Biden made some of his bluntest criticism yet of Netanyahu's government, which he said had no interest in allowing the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Israel was beginning to lose international support, he added, because of the "indiscriminate bombing" of Gaza. But the White House appeared to play down Biden's comments on Wednesday, with a spokesman, John F. Kirby, saying the president was only expressing concern about rising civilian casualties in the



A photo released by the Israeli army reportedly shows Palestinian fighters surrendering near the Kamal Adwan hospital in Beit Lahia in north Gaza

Denmark and Germany announce arrests of terror suspects, including 'Hamas members'

Denmark and Germany announced on Thursday arrests of several terror suspects, including alleged Hamas members suspected of plotting attacks on Jews and Jewish institutions in Europe over the Israel-Hamas war. The announcements were issued separately and it was unclear how the arrests were connected. Danish police said three people were arrested across Denmark while a fourth person was detained in the Netherlands on suspicion of plotting to carry out "an act of terror". The operative head of Denmark's Security and Intelligence Service cryptically said police had "a special focus" on Jewish institutions. In Germany, authorities said three suspected members of the Palestinian militant Hamas group who were allegedly planning attacks on Jewish institutions in Europe were arrested on Thursday. In Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu's office lauded what it said were seven Hamas suspects arrested in Europe, but attributed the arrests to Danish police. The discrepancies between the Danish, German and Israeli statements could not immediately be resolved. AP

war. Israel has so far brushed off calls for a ceasefire, including a resolution at the UN Security Council blocked by a US veto last week and another that passed overwhelmingly in the General Assembly this week.

Kirby said Sullivan had met PM Benjamin Netanyahu and planned to discuss with the Israelis the need to be more accurate in strikes. Up to 45% of the 29,000 air-to-ground munitions

that Israel has dropped on Gaza since Oct. 7 have been unguided "dumb bombs", according to a US intelligence assessment reported by CNN. Agriculture minister Avi Dichter, a member of Israel's security cabinet and Netanyahu's Likud party, rejected Biden's characterisation of Israel's strikes as indiscriminate. "There is no such thing as 'dumb bombs'. Some bombs are more accurate, some bombs are

IDF: Over 70 armed 'terrorists' captured inside Gaza hospital

Israeli soldiers captured more than 70 armed Palestinian terrorists inside a Gaza hospital, the Israel Defence Forces said on Thursday. According to the IDF, the terrorists were operating inside the Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza's Jabaliya neighbourhood. Soldiers also discovered weapons inside the medical facility. In addition, several terrorists who engaged soldiers in the area of the hospital were killed. After surrendering their weapons, the terrorists were transferred to field interrogators for further questioning. ANI

Israel begins limited flooding of tunnels with seawater: Reports

The Israeli military has begun pumping seawater into Hamas' tunnel complex in Gaza, Wall Street Journal and ABC News have reported, citing unnamed US officials. The Journal reported the process would likely take weeks. ABC News reported that the flooding appears to be limited as Israel evaluates the strategy's effectiveness. Israel's military didn't comment. Some US officials have said the process could help destroy the tunnels. REUTERS

less accurate. What we have is mostly pilots who are precise," he told Army Radio, saying that only militants were targeted. Israel's air and ground assault has killed over 18,700 Palestinians, according to the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian telecom provider Paltel said that all communication services across Gaza were cut off due to ongoing fighting. NYT, REUTERS, AP

India, US to step up fight against money laundering

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India and the US on Thursday recognised the pressing need to accelerate global implementation of anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism standards for virtual assets, in line with the financial action task force (FATF) recommendations, to effectively address the issue of regulatory arbitrage.

The two countries met in the national capital and co-chaired the India-US anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) dialogue. The Indian side was led by revenue secretary Sanjay Malhotra, while US Treasury under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, Brian Nelson, represented the US.

The co-chairs reconvened the India-US AML/CFT dialogue as it is an effective forum for India and the US to share perspectives and best practices on how to strengthen the collective efforts of both the countries to address illicit finance risk across the two countries and the international financial systems. "In forum sessions, our participants discussed each country's experience with virtual assets and virtual asset service providers, given the focus area of both sides to promote responsible innovation, while mitigating illicit finance risks," according to a joint statement issued after the meeting.

6,17,000 Russian troops fighting in Ukraine: Putin

Putin dismisses need for a 2nd wave of mobilisation of reservists to fight in Ukraine and said, "There will be peace when we will achieve our goals."

MOSCOW, Dec 14 (AP)

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin vowed on Thursday that there would be no peace in Ukraine until his goals are achieved and said those objectives remain unchanged at a year-end news conference that offers the leader an opportunity to reinforce his grip on power.

Giving rare detail on what Moscow calls its special military operation, Putin dismissed the need for a second wave of mobilisation of reservists to fight in



Russian President Vladimir Putin speaks during his annual news conference in Moscow on Thursday. (AP/PTI)

Ukraine — a move that proved deeply unpopular in the past. He said there are some 6,17,000 Russian soldiers currently there, including around 2,44,000 troops who were called up to fight alongside professional Russian military forces.

Putin did not hold his traditional press conference last year after his military

failed to take Kyiv and as the Ukrainian Army retook swaths of territory in the east and south of the country.

This year, ordinary citizens have the chance to phone in questions along with those asked by journalists, and Russians have been submitting queries for Putin for two weeks. It is the first time the Russian leader, who has heavily limited his interaction with foreign media, will potentially face multiple questions from Western journalists since the fighting in Ukraine began.

The press conference opened with questions about the conflict in Ukraine and highlighted concerns some Russians have fears of another wave of mobilisation. Putin reiterated that Moscow's goals in Ukraine - "de-Nazification, de-militarisation and a neutral status" of Ukraine - remain unchanged. "There will be peace when we will achieve our goals," Putin said, repeating a frequent Kremlin line.

WPI Inflation at 8-month high of 0.26% in Nov on costlier veggies, onion

NEW DELHI, Dec 14 (PTI)

WHOLESALE price-based inflation rose to an eight-month high of 0.26 per cent in November, driven by a sharp jump in food prices, especially onion and vegetables.

The WPI inflation was in the negative or deflationary zone for the past seven months since April and was at (-)0.52 per cent in October. The last positive WPI inflation was recorded in March at 1.41 per cent.

“Positive rate of inflation in November 2023 is primarily due to increase in prices of food articles, minerals, machinery and equipment, computer, electronics and optical products, motor vehicles, other transport equipment and other manufacturing etc,” the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in a statement.

Food inflation spiked to 8.18 per cent in November, from 2.53 per cent in October.

Inflation in onion zoomed 101.24 per cent in November, from 62.60 per cent in the previous month.

The Government last week banned exports of this kitchen staple till March next year in a bid to increase domestic avail-



ability and contain prices, which skyrocketed to Rs 80/kg in the retail market. It expects prices to cool to Rs 40/kg by January. Inflation in vegetables was 10.44 per cent, as against (-) 21.04 per cent in October.

In paddy and fruits, inflation was 10.44 per cent and 8.37 per cent respectively. Inflation in potato remained low at (-) 27.22 per cent in November.

During the month, inflation in manufactured products stood at (-)0.64 per cent, fuel and power (-)4.61 per cent and non-food articles (-)3.20 per cent. Barclays Research said the magnitude of increase in wholesale food prices was more than in retail food prices, indicating wholesalers did not pass

through the entire price rise to consumers, which may be reflected in elevated retail food prices in December, unless supply (particularly of vegetables) increases.

The RBI in its monetary policy review last week had said that there would be an uptick in the inflation data for November and December due to pressure on food prices.

“Going ahead, inflation outlook would be considerably influenced by uncertain food prices. High-frequency food price indicators point to an increase in prices of key vegetables, which may push CPI inflation higher,” Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das had said.

Impeachment probe against Biden gets US House nod

WASHINGTON, Dec 14 (AP)

THE House on Wednesday authorised the impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden, with every Republican rallying behind the politically charged process despite lingering concerns among some in the party that the investigation has yet to produce evidence of misconduct by the President.

The 221-212 party-line vote put the entire House Republican conference on record in support of an impeachment process that can lead to the ultimate penalty for a President: Punishment for what Constitution describes as “high crimes and misdemeanours,” which can lead to removal from office if convicted in Senate trial.

Biden, in a rare statement about the impeachment effort, questioned the priorities of House Republicans in pursuing an inquiry against him and his family. “Instead of doing anything to help make Americans’ lives better, they are focused on attacking me with lies,” the President said following the vote.



“Instead of doing their job on the urgent work that needs to be done, they are choosing to waste time on this baseless political stunt that even Republicans in

Congress admit is not supported by facts.” Authorising the monthslong inquiry ensures that the impeachment investigation extends well into 2024, when Biden will be running for re-election and seems likely to be squaring off against former President Donald

Trump—who was twice impeached during his time in the White House. Trump has pushed his GOP allies in Congress to move swiftly on impeaching Biden, part of his broader calls for vengeance and retribution against his political enemies. The decision to hold a vote came as Speaker Mike Johnson and his team faced growing pressure to show progress in what has become a nearly yearlong probe centered around the business dealings of Biden’s family members. While their investigation has raised ethical questions, no evidence has emerged that Biden acted corruptly or accepted bribes in his current role.

Rs 2,800 cr

MoD approves 6,400 rockets for Pinaka weapon system

■ By Ajit Dubey

NEW DELHI, Dec 14 (ANI)

IN A major boost for the Indian Army, the Defence Ministry has approved a Rs 2,800 crore proposal for buying around 6,400 rockets for Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launcher systems.

The Defence Ministry's Defence Acquisition Council's recent meeting had cleared the proposal for the acquisition of two types of these rockets, known as Area Denial Munition Type 2 and Type-3, defence sources told ANI.

The rockets would be procured by the Indian Army from indigenous sources only and two main contenders include the Economic Explosives Limited of Solar Industries and the Munitions India Limited--one of the ammunition-producing companies created by the corporatisation of the erst-



while Ordnance Factories, they said. The Indian-made Pinaka weapon system, named after the bow of Lord Shiva, has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation. The weapon system is one of the first few Indian military terms to have been exported to foreign countries, including Armenia.

Private sector companies involved in the project include Larsen & Toubro, Tata Defence and Economic Explosives Limited.

They have set up production lines for the Pinaka system that are being supplied in bulk to

the armed forces.

As part of larger artillery modernisation plans, the army has a requirement of 22 regiments of the Pinaka MBRL.

Pinaka regiments of the Indian Army include launchers with automated gun aiming and positioning systems and command posts.

The trials of the Pinaka rockets have also been conducted recently by the forces in Pokharan firing ranges.

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APPENDIX-IV		
POSSESSION NOTICE		
Whereas, The undersigned being the A Branch, Central bank Of India, 346, St Mumbai-400023, under the Securitized Assets and Enforcement of Security I exercise of powers conferred under s security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 16.10.2019 calling upon the borrowers, M/s N Kumar Projects And Infrastruct 1st Floor, B. Poonam Chambers, Bvr		