

IB chief, NHRC seev gen get 1-yr extn

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Centre on Monday announced a one-year extension for Intelligence Bureau director **Tapan Kumar Deka** until June 30, 2025. This comes close on the heels of national security adviser Ajit Doval's reappointment as the national security adviser for a period co-terminus with that of the Narendra Modi govt.



The continuity in the high-erechelons of the central secu-

rity establishment under Modi govt 3.0 is being seen as crucial to the regime's keenness to move further on key priorities

like countering terrorism in J&K that now has the Jammu region on target, holding J&K assembly polls peacefully, pushing back Maoists further in Left-wing-extremism-hit pockets, initiating talks with different communities in Manipur to end the ethnic strife, reaching a settlement with Nagas and tackling pro-Khalistan ele-

ments in Punjab.

Deka, a 1988 batch IPS officer belonging to Himachal Pradesh cadre, was appointed its director in June 2022. He has served in different security theatres, including LWE-hit areas, through his career in the premier central intelligence agency, and was instrumental in the strategy to defang Indian Mujahideen.

The Centre on Monday also gave a year's extension to secretary general of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Bharat Lal.

EAM reviews strategic ties with Nahyan

DUBAI, June 24 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has reviewed with his United Arab Emirates counterpart Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan the multi-faceted India-UAE comprehensive strategic partnership and discussed new areas with "untapped potential" to enhance collaboration, an official statement said on Monday.

Jaishankar, who was in the UAE on Sunday, also exchanged views with Al Nahyan on regional and global issues. He visited the iconic BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi and participated in the 10th International Yoga Day celebrations before meeting Al Nahyan. The two Foreign Ministers "reviewed the multi-faceted India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," MEA in New Delhi said on Monday.

They expressed "happiness at the substantive progress in diverse areas of bilateral cooperation, including commercial and economic collaboration, fintech, edu-



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi on Monday. (PTI)

cation, culture, and people-to-people connect," it said in a statement. The Ministry said the two Ministers "discussed new areas with untapped potential for fur-

ther enhancing collaboration" and also exchanged views on regional and global issues.

Taking to X after meeting his UAE counterpart, Jaishankar said,

"Very pleased to meet UAE FM @ABZayed today in Abu Dhabi." "Productive and deep conversations on our ever-growing Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Appreciated the discussion and his insights on regional and global issues," he said.

Jaishankar visited the BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 14.

Taking to X, he called the temple, which received one million visitors in less than four months, a "visible symbol of India-UAE friendship".

At the temple, the minister interacted with the monks of BAPS, the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Sansthan, the organisation that built the temple on the land donated by the UAE. Jaishankar then inaugurated and participated in the 10th International Day of Yoga celebrations organised by the Indian Embassy in UAE, held at the Louvre, Abu Dhabi museum premises.

'Ready to go' with India on FTA, says UK's Labour Party

■ By Aditi Khanna

LONDON, June 24 (PTI)

THE UK's Opposition Labour Party on Monday criticised the governing Conservatives of having "over-promised and under delivered" on relations with India and declared that it is "ready to go" on striking a free trade agreement (FTA) if it wins the July 4 general election.

Addressing the India Global Forum (IGF) in the final full week of the election campaign, the party's shadow foreign secretary David Lammy laid out his ambitions of the FTA being

"a floor, not a ceiling" of the partnership he aspires to with his "friend" external Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar.

India and the UK have completed 13 rounds of FTA negotiations to enhance the estimated GBP 38.1 billion a year trading relationship, with talks currently stalled amid the election cycles in both countries.

"Many Diwalis have come and gone without a trade deal and too many businesses have been left waiting," said Lammy, referring to the missed Diwali 2022 deadline set by former PM Boris Johnson for the FTA.

"My message to [Finance] Minister [Nirmala] Sitharaman and [Trade] Minister [Piyush] Goyal is that Labour is ready to go. Let's finally get our free trade deal done and move on," he said, adding he will be in Delhi before the end of July if elected to government on July 4.

Describing India as a "priority" for the party and an economic, technological and cultural "superpower", Lammy sought to set the tone for his future tenure in a Labour-led Cabinet – hopeful of taking charge as the country's Foreign Secretary.

Netanyahu nays US-backed proposal to end Gaza war

TEL AVIV, June 24 (AP)

THE viability of a US-backed proposal to wind down the 8-month-long war in Gaza was cast into doubt on Monday after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he would only be willing to agree to a "partial" cease-fire deal that would not end the war, comments that sparked an uproar from families of hostages held by Hamas.

In an interview broadcast on Sunday on Israeli Channel 14, a conservative, pro-Netanyahu

station, the Israeli leader said he was "prepared to make a partial deal -- this is no secret -- that will return to us some of the people," referring to the roughly 120 hostages still held in the Gaza Strip. "But we are committed to continuing the war after a pause, in order to complete the goal of eliminating Hamas. I'm not willing to give up on that."

Netanyahu's comments did not deviate dramatically from what he has said previously about his terms for a deal. But they come at a sensitive time

as Israel and Hamas appear to be moving further apart over the latest cease-fire proposal, and they could represent another setback for mediators trying to end the war. Netanyahu's comments stood in sharp contrast to the outlines of the deal by US President Biden, who framed the plan as an Israeli one and which some in Israel refer to as "Netanyahu's deal." His remarks could further strain Israel's ties to US, its top ally, which launched a major diplomatic push for ceasefire proposal.

India, Pakistan delegations reach J&K to inspect Indus Water Treaty projects

JAMMU, June 24 (PTI)

DELEGATIONS from India and Pakistan on Monday flew to Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district with neutral experts and began inspection of two power projects under the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), officials said. About 40 people reached Jammu Sunday evening and flew to Kishtwar this morning for inspection of various under-construction power projects in the Chenab valley region, the officials said.

This is the first visit by a Pakistani delegation to Jammu and Kashmir in more than five

(Contd on page 5)



A delegation of Indo-Pakistan teams arrive to inspect two hydroelectric power projects under the Indus Water Treaty (IWT).

(PTI)

Wheat stock limits back to curb hoarding

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Govt re-imposed stock limit on wheat on Monday, barely after a gap of two-and-a-half months, to check hoarding and price rise of the commodity. This will remain in force till March next year. While this is aimed at bringing down prices, officials said the prices of green vegetables, potato and onion are also likely to cool down with heatwave subsiding in many parts of the country.

The food and public dis-

tribution department had last year imposed a stock limit on June 13 which lasted till March. As per the new norms, wholesalers can keep 3,000 tonne of wheat stock and stock with retailers has been capped at 10 tonne. Big chain retailers can keep 10 tonne for each outlet and 3,000 tonne at all depots at any given point of time. They have to disclose the stock every week as well.

Union food secretary Sanjeev Chopra said, "The decision has been taken to put a

check on hoarders and black marketers who are trying to gain as sentiment around wheat prices (are) going up amid rumours of not having adequate wheat. We want prices of wheat to be stable."

He said there is no shortfall of wheat as the overall production was 40-50 lakh tonne higher than last year. Chopra said the opening stock of wheat was 82 lakh tonne on April 1, 2023 while it was 75 lakh tonne on April 1, 2024. The secretary said 266 lakh tonne of wheat has been procured in

this Rabi season against 262 lakh tonne last season.

This will be more than what govt requires for the National Food Security Act and other welfare schemes of 184 lakh tonne and closing stock requirement.

On the prices of other essential commodities, Union consumer affairs secretary Nidhi Khare said they expect prices to fall soon. "The severe heatwave reduced the arrival of green vegetables and thereby putting pressure on potatoes and onions."