

Jaishankar meets counterparts from several nations @ G20

JOHANNESBURG, Feb 20 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday called on South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and conveyed the warm greetings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Jaishankar, who is in Johannesburg on a two-day visit to South Africa to participate in the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, assured India's support for South Africa's G20 priorities.

"Honoured to call on President



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar calls upon his Singaporean counterpart Vivian Balakrishnan during 2-day visit to South Africa for G20 Foreign Minister's meeting in Johannesburg (ANI)

@CyrilRamaphosa of South Africa on the sidelines of the G20 FMM in Johannesburg. Conveyed the warm greetings of Prime Minister @narendramodi. Assured India's support for South Africa's G20 priorities," Jaishankar said in a post on X.

South Africa holds the Presidency of the G20 for this year, the first time that it is being hosted on the African continent.

On the sidelines of the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Jaishankar interacted with sev-

eral world leaders, including Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan.

He also met his counterparts from Singapore, Brazil and Ethiopia and discussed with them global developments and ways to enhance bilateral ties.

He met Singapore Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan and Brazilian counterpart Mauro Vieira on the margins of the meet.

India poised to stay world's fastest growing economy in 2025-26: RBI

MUMBAI, Feb 20 (IANS)

HIGH frequency indicators point towards a sequential pick-up in momentum of India's economic activity during the second half of 2024-25, which is likely to sustain moving forward, according to the latest RBI monthly bulletin.

In a challenging and increasingly uncertain global environment, the Indian economy is poised to sustain its position as the fastest growing major economy during 2025-26 as per the IMF and World Bank estimates of GDP growth of 6.5 per cent and 6.7 per cent, respectively, the report points out.

It further states that the Union Budget 2025-26 prudently balances fiscal consolidation and growth objectives by continued focus on Capex alongside measures to boost household incomes

and consumption.

The effective capital expenditure/GDP ratio is budgeted to improve to 4.3 per cent in 2025-26 from 4.1 per cent in 2024-25 (revised estimate). Retail inflation moderated to a five-month low of 4.3 per cent in January, mainly due to a sharp decline in vegetable prices driven by the arrival of winter crops in the market, the report states. High frequency indicators show



that the economy is on a path of recovery during H2:2024-25 from the loss of momentum witnessed in H1.

Industrial activity has recorded an improvement over the previous quarter, as reflected in the Purchasing

Managers' Index (PMI) in January. Pick-up in tractor sales growth, and fuel consumption, and sustained growth in air passenger traffic also point to a recovery in overall momentum, according to the bulletin.

It also highlights that rural demand continues to hold up, buoyed by increasing farm incomes. In rural areas, sales of Fast-Moving Consumer Good (FMCG) companies grew by 9.9 per cent in Q3:2024-25, much higher than 5.7 per cent in Q2. Urban demand also exhibited a recovery with 5 per cent growth in Q3, being nearly double of 2.6 per cent in the previous quarter.

The enterprise surveys conducted by the Reserve Bank corroborate this assessment. Listed non-government non-financial companies recorded acceleration in sales growth during Q3 as per early results.

On a sequential basis, operating profit margins have also turned out to be higher in line with improved sales growth, according to the report.

Ukraine war could be settled without you, Trump threatens Zelenskyy

NEW YORK, Feb 20 (IANS)

AS THEIR war of words escalated, US President Donald Trump threatened Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that there could be a deal with Russia to end the three-year Ukraine War without him.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy "better move fast or he is not going to have a Country left," Trump wrote on Truth Social on Wednesday.

"We are successfully negotiating an end to the War with Russia, something all admit only 'TRUMP,' and the Trump Administration, can do," he said.

The warning came after Volodymyr Zelenskyy com-

plained that Ukraine was not at the talks between US and Russian diplomats in Riyadh, and said that his country would not accept a peace deal reached without its participation.

In a personal attack on Trump, Zelenskyy told reporters in Kyiv that Trump was 'living in a web of disinformation'. Trump shot back that Zelenskyy was a 'dictator without elections'.

Earlier, Trump had accused Ukraine of starting the war, although Russia had invaded it.

Trump calling Zelenskyy a 'dictator' has to do with Ukraine not holding elections because of the war last year after his five-year term ended.

New CEC calls on President Murmu, V-P Dhankhar



NEW DELHI, Feb 20 (PTI)

CHIEF Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on Thursday called on President Droupadi Murmu and Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar.

An Election Commissioner since March 2024, Kumar took over as the 26th Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) on Thursday.

The Election Commission shared pictures of Kumar meeting President Murmu and Vice-President Dhankhar here.

Trump says it will be 'very unfair' to US if Musk built Tesla factory in India

WASHINGTON, Feb 20 (PTI)

PRESIDENT Donald Trump has said if Elon Musk's Tesla built a factory in India to avoid that country's tariffs, it would be unfair to the US.

Trump's comments came

Efficiency, was also present during the interview.

A few days back, electric car-maker Tesla opened recruitment for various roles in India, including business operations analyst and customer support specialist.



amid moves by him to increase tariffs significantly.

On February 13, hours before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's bilateral meeting with Trump at the White House, the US President announced reciprocal tariffs.

Trump in a recent interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity said during their meeting he told Prime Minister Modi that India charges the highest tariffs in the world.

Trump said it is "impossible" for Musk to sell a car in India.

"Every country in the world takes advantage of us, and they do it with tariffs... It is impossible to sell a car, practically, in, as an example, India," he said.

"..If he (Musk) built the factory in India, that's okay, but that's unfair to us. It's very unfair," Trump said in the interview.

Musk, who heads the Department of Government

The move is viewed as a sign of the company's entry into the country.

As per the job postings on the company's website, the posts are for the 'Mumbai Suburban' area.

Trump during the interview said he discussed the issue of tariffs with Modi.

"I told Prime Minister Modi... Here's what you do. We are going to... be very fair with you."

When asked if the tariffs India charged were 36%.

Trump said, "Much much higher." Musk said, "It's 100 per cent on — auto imports are 100 per cent."

'Here's what we're going to do: reciprocal. Whatever you charge, I'm charging,' President Trump said.

"He (Modi) goes, 'No, no, I don't like that.' 'No, no, whatever you charge, I'm going to charge.' I'm doing that with every country."

Asia Economic Dialogue 2025 begins in Pune

PUNE, Feb 20 (ANI)

THE 9th edition of the Asia Economic Dialogue (AED), jointly organised by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Pune International Centre, commenced in Maharashtra's Pune on Thursday.

The Dialogue will take place from February 20 to 22, 2025, at Pune International Centre.

AED is the Ministry's annual

flagship 'Track 1.5 Dialogue' on geo-economics.

"The 9th edition of the Asia Economic Dialogue, jointly organised by @MEAIndia & @PuneIntCentre, commenced today in Pune," Randhir Jaiswal, a spokesperson with the MEA said.

"Mr.@PiyushGoyal, Minister of Commerce & Industry delivered the inaugural address at the dialogue."

Rekha Gupta sworn in as Delhi CM along with six Ministers

NEW DELHI, Feb 20 (PTI)

DEBUTANT legislator Rekha Gupta was sworn in as Delhi Chief Minister along with six Ministers on Thursday in a grand show of strength full of colour and spectacle to mark the BJP's return to power in the city after more than 26 years.

The ceremony at the sprawling Ramilla Ground was attended by Prime Minister Narendra

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Modi, the top BJP brass and NDA leaders. Gupta is Delhi's fourth woman Chief Minister after her party's Sushma Swaraj, the Congress' Sheila Dikshit and AAP's Atishi.

The 50-year-old MLA from Shalimar Bagh, who took charge of her office at the Delhi
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Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Ministers Rajnath Singh and Amit Shah and LG VK Saxena with newly sworn-in Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and Ministers during the oath ceremony of the Delhi Government at Ramilla Maidan, in New Delhi on Thursday. (PTI)

Confident CM will work for Delhi's devt with full vigour: PM Modi

NEW DELHI, Feb 20 (PTI)

CONGRATULATING Rekha Gupta on taking oath as Delhi's Chief Minister, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said she has risen from the grassroots and expressed confidence that she will work for the city's development with full vigour.

Modi said in a congratulatory message, "She has risen from the grassroots, being active in campus politics, State organisation, municipal administration and now MLA as well as Chief Minister."