

No negotiation over annexed Ukrainian territory: Kremlin

Agence France-Presse
MOSCOW

The Kremlin on Thursday ruled out any negotiation over the status of five Ukrainian regions it claims to have annexed despite not fully controlling four of them. "The territories which have become subjects of the Russian Federation are an inseparable part of our country," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"This is undeniable and non-negotiable," he said in a phone briefing.

Russia in 2014 annexed Ukraine's Crimea peninsula following a brief military operation and a referendum that was criticised as illegitimate by Kyiv and Western powers.

After launching its full-scale offensive, Russia in September 2022 declared the annexation of four Ukrainian regions – Donetsk,



Vladimir Putin

Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. Russian forces control most of the Donetsk and Luhansk region but only parts of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson.

Ruled out

Ukraine has seized hundreds of square kilometres of Russia's Kursk region and President Volodymyr Zelensky has raised the possibility of an "exchange" of territory with Moscow – a notion ruled out by Russia.

India, China to end Ladakh conflict in 'effective manner'

Press Trust of India

BEIJING

The Chinese Defence Ministry on Thursday said the militaries of India and China are implementing the resolutions to end the stand-off in eastern Ladakh in a "comprehensive and effective manner."

"At present, the Chinese and Indian militaries are implementing the resolutions related to the border areas in a compressive and effective manner," Chinese Defence Ministry spokesperson Sr. Col. Wu Qian

told a media briefing here, replying to a question on the status of the normalisation of the situation in eastern Ladakh sector.

"We are ready to work with the Indian side to jointly preserve the peace and tranquility in the border areas," he further added.

India and China completed the disengagement process late last year after firming up a military pact for withdrawal of troops from Depsang and Demchok, the last two friction points in eastern Ladakh.

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U.S. President set to impose an extra 10% tariff on China

Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Thursday that he would impose an added 10% tariff, in addition to the 10% tariff announced earlier, on Chinese imports while moving ahead with levies on Canada and Mexico next week, citing "unacceptable" drug smuggling.

Mr. Trump had announced – then halted – sweeping 25% levies on Canadian and Mexican imports this month over illegal immigration and deadly fentanyl. But the month-long pause ends on March 4.

Mr. Trump also plans to implement "reciprocal tariffs" on April 2, tailored to each trading partner.

Man-in-Loop anti-ship missile flight-tested

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: DRDO and Indian Navy have successfully conducted flight trials of a first-of-its-kind naval anti-ship missile (NASM-SR) that has 'Man-in-Loop' features, which is unique as it gives the capability of in-flight retargeting.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO, Indian Navy and the industries for the successful flight tests carried out from Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur on Tuesday. The trials demonstrated the missile's capability against ship targets while launched from an naval helicopter.

"The missile uses an in-

igenous imaging infra-red seeker for terminal guidance. The mission also has demonstrated the high bandwidth two-way data-link system, which is used to transmit the seeker live images back to the pilot for in-flight retargeting," the defence ministry said.

The missile was launched in 'Bearing-only Lock-on' after launch mode with several targets in close vicinity for selecting one among them.

The trials have proven the missile's 'Man-in-Loop' feature and scored a direct hit on a small ship target in sea-skimming mode at its maximum range, according to a statement released by the ministry.

Aus unveils \$20m road map to boost trade ties with India

New Delhi: The Australian govt has introduced two significant funding initiatives as part of its new roadmap for economic engagement with India — the \$4 million Maitri Grants programme aims to strengthen business and cultural ties, and the \$16 million Australia-India Trade and Investment Accelerator Fund is designed to support Australian businesses expanding into the Indian market.

Australian PM Anthony Albanese announced the initiatives, emphasising their role in strengthening bilateral ties, as he unveiled the comprehensive roadmap for his country's economic engagement with India at Deakin University, Melbourne, on Wednesday. Deakin is the first foreign university to set up campus in India. The roadmap, developed through over 400 consultations, aims at deepening trade ties as India is projected to become the world's third-largest economy by 2030. The initiative prioritises key sectors, including clean energy and education.

Albanese said clean energy remains a key component, adding joint research and industry linkages in hydrogen technology and sustainable solutions will be essential for long-term energy security. "The roadmap is not just about trade but about building long-term partnerships that drive innovation and prosperity for both countries." TNN

India requires crucial structural reforms: IMF

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

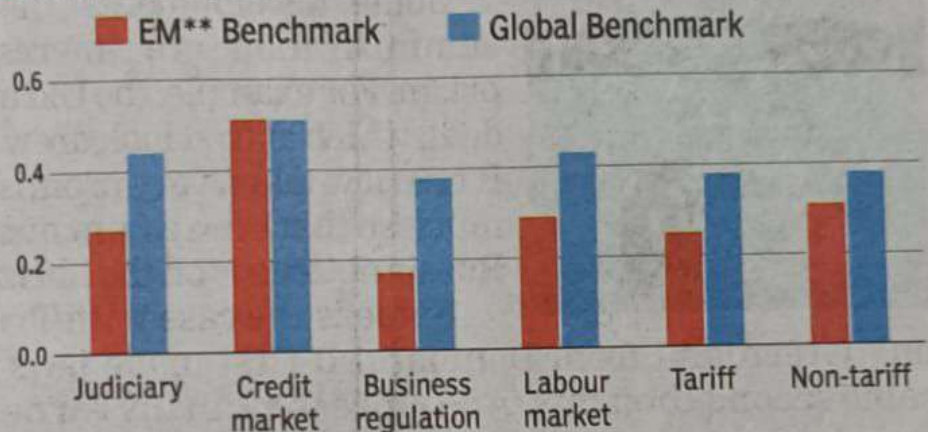
New Delhi: IMF has said that India appears to be on course for sustained growth in the medium-term on the back of multiple factors but underlined the need for crucial structural reforms, including in judiciary, tariffs, labour regulation, along with a stable regulatory regime.

The latest review based on the annual consultation has also called for GST simplification — preferably moving to a single rate of 14%, along with a cut in excise duty on fuel and broadening of the income tax base. "...India's financial sector health, strengthened corporate balance sheets and strong foundation in digital public infrastructure underscore India's potential for sustained medium-term growth and continued social welfare gains. Risks to the economic outlook are tilted to the downside," IMF said.

While calling for higher R&D push, it flagged several other reform moves that were

India's Reforms: Distance To Frontier

Distance to frontier* benchmarks — lower is better



*Distance to frontier is defined as difference in values between frontier (best performer) and India. The distance ranges between 0 and 1, where larger values indicate large distance relative to the frontier

**Emerging market

Source: IMF

required in the country: Other priorities include pursuing agricultural, land, governance, and judicial reforms; strengthening of education, skilling, public health, and social safety nets; reducing the public sector footprint in credit markets; and implementation of climate policies."

It also sought a review of the bilateral investment treaty, something that was announced by FM Nirmala Sitha-

raman in the budget, and suggested more trade deals, going beyond bilateral agreements. It underlined the need for deeper reforms, arguing that PLIs would not be sufficient to create jobs needed to absorb the growing labour force. "In addition, the fiscal costs per job created are substantial," it said, pointing to the scheme that has attracted some top global, such as Apple's suppliers to invest.

India needs to ramp up bilateral relations for trade, investment: Nirmala Sitharaman

NEW DELHI, Feb 27 (PTI)

FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said India needs to ramp up its bilateral relations for trade and investment, as the world is witnessing a churn, and bilateralism seems to be the new catalyst tool.

Speaking at BSManthan, the Finance Minister said these are very interesting yet challenging times and the Government is making all efforts to make India move up

the ladder and be an engine of global growth.

"Bilateralism is now taking the top of the agenda... It is for us to ramp up our bilateral relations with many countries, not just for trade, not just for investment, but also for strategic relations. So multilateralism, sort of, out, I'm still saying with a qualifying word 'sort of out', but bilateralism is very much your only catalytic



tool that you can use," she said.

Observing that multilateral institutions are increasingly fading away, she said, every attempt to revive them and energize

them is not having the desired result.

"So, where you have to address issues which affect more than your own country. You have no more forums left which can effectively deliver...

Multilateral institutions and their contributions probably are fading away, at least in the near future, till an attempt is made to revive them with that kind of energy... It's not going to happen in the next few years," she said.

Asserting that global trade is undergoing a complete reset, she said, "the terms and references with which all of us played trade, with some kind of an anchor in the World Trade Organization are no longer available."

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