

PM Modi to visit Sri Lanka on April 5

COLOMBO, Mar 22 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi will visit Sri Lanka on April 5, President Anura Kumara Dissanayake has

announced.



Dissanayake was delivering a statement in Parliament on Friday when he

announced the date for Modi's visit, according to news portal Adaderana.Lk.

As announced by Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath last week, Modi will arrive here to finalise agreements reached during President Dissanayake's visit to Delhi last year.

The President also told Parliament that the construction work on the Sampur Power Plant in the eastern port district of Trincomalee is scheduled to commence at the same time as the Indian PM's visit. Dissanayake said Modi is visiting Sri Lanka due to the stability of the country.

Last month, Sri Lanka and India reached an agreement for setting up of solar power plants in the island country, Health Minister Nalinda Jayathissa announced.

"Consensus has been reached between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Government of India to establish solar power plants capacity of 50 Megawatt (stage 1) and 70 Megawatt (stage 2) at Sampur in Trincomalee on the basis of construction, ownership, and operation by the Ceylon Electricity Board and National Thermal Power Corporation of India as a joint venture between two Governments," Jayathissa said.

27 Myanmar nationals deported from Manipur

IMPHAL, Mar 21 (PTI)

ALTOGETHER 27 Myanmar nationals who had entered Manipur illegally were deported by the Indian authorities, officials said on Saturday.

The foreigners, including a minor, were handed over to the authorities of the neighbouring country at Indo Myanmar Friendship Gate in Moreh in Manipur's Tengnoupal district on Friday.

They had been lodged at the Foreigners' Detention Centre at Sajiwa Jail in Imphal.

"After completing their jail terms, Indian authorities repatriated the Myanmar nationals," an official added.

India's GDP doubles in 10 yrs, to surpass Japan and Germany by 2027

NEW DELHI, Mar 22 (IANS)

INDIA'S GDP has surged from \$2.1 trillion in 2015 to an estimated \$4.3 trillion in 2025, reflecting an impressive 105 per cent increase, according to inflation-adjusted data from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The growth trajectory positions India as a global economic powerhouse, poised to surpass Japan in 2025 and Germany by 2027, according to the report findings which was shared by BJP leader Amit Malviya on his X social media platform handle on Saturday.

The GDP growth rate is the fastest among major economies, significantly outpacing advanced nations. The IMF data highlighted India's rapid economic ascent, driven by policy reforms and strong growth momentum.

"This extraordinary achievement is a testament to the decisive leadership of PM Modi and the relentless efforts of his Govt," Malviya posted. Through proac-

tive economic policies, bold structural reforms, and a sustained focus on ease of doing business, the PM Modi Govt has propelled India to the position of the world's fastest-growing major economy—an accolade no previous Government had secured since independence, he added. Today, these transformative initiatives are not only driving India's economic expansion but also positioning it ahead of traditional global powerhouses, signalling a significant shift in the global economic landscape.

Commending India's "prudent" policies, the IMF Executive Board said the country's strong economic performance can help it adopt critical reforms to achieve advanced economy status by 2047. India's "strong economic performance provides an opportunity to advance critical and challenging structural reforms to realise India's ambition of becoming an advanced economy by 2047", said the IMF report.

Govt withdraws 20 pc export duty on onion effective April 1

NEW DELHI, Mar 22 (PTI)

THE Government on Saturday announced the withdrawal of 20 per cent export duty on onions effective from April 1, aiming to protect farmers' interests amid softening prices.

The Department of Revenue issued a notification following communication from the Department of Consumer Affairs, according to an official statement. "The decision stands as another testament to the Government's commitment to ensuring remunerative prices to farmers while maintaining

affordability of onions to consumers," the Consumer Affairs Ministry said.

The export duty had been in place since September 2024. Despite export restrictions, total onion exports reached 1.17 million tonnes through March 18 of the current fiscal year.

Monthly onion export volume increased from 72,000 tonnes in September 2024 to 185,000 tonnes in January this year.

Onion prices have declined in key growing states due to increased crop arrivals. At Asia's biggest wholesale markets, Lasalgaon and Pimpalgaon in

Maharashtra, prices were ruling at Rs 1,330 per quintal and Rs 1,325 per quintal, respectively, on March 21. All-India weighted average modal prices fell 39 per cent while retail prices dropped 10 per cent over the past month, the Ministry reported.

The Agriculture Ministry estimates rabi onion output at 22.7 million tonnes this year, 18 per cent higher than the previous year's 19.2 million tonnes.

Rabi onion, accounting for 70-75 per cent of India's total production, is crucial for market stability until kharif crop arrivals begin in October-November.

Israel fires on Lebanon in response to rockets fired at Israeli targets

BEIRUT (Lebanon), Mar 22 (AP)

ISRAEL struck Lebanon on Saturday in retaliation for rockets targeting Israel, killing two, including a child, in the heaviest exchange of fire since the ceasefire with the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

Earlier, rockets were fired from Lebanon into Israel, for the second time since December, sparking concern about whether the fragile ceasefire would hold. A Hezbollah official told *The Associated Press* on Saturday that

Lebanon's Health Ministry said Saturday that the strike in the southern village of Touline killed also wounded eight others.

Hezbollah began launching rockets, drones and missiles into Israel the day after Hamas' October 7, 2023 attack out of Gaza ignited the war there.

The Israel-Hezbollah conflict boiled over into an all-out war in September as Israel carried out massive waves of airstrikes and killed most of the militant



it was not responsible for the attack, calling it "primitive," speaking on condition of anonymity as they are not authorised to speak to the media.

Israel had said that it would respond "severely" to the attack from Lebanon early on Saturday morning, when rockets were fired into northern Israel. Israel's army said the intercepted rockets targeted the Israeli town of Metula.

group's senior leaders. The fighting killed more than 4,000 people in Lebanon and displaced about 60,000 Israelis.

Under the ceasefire reached in November, Israeli forces were supposed to withdraw from all Lebanese territory by late January. The deadline was then extended to February 18 by agreement between Lebanon and Israel.