

Budget Session ends with over 100% productivity



Opposition members protest in the Lok Sabha during the Budget Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Friday. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Apr 4 (PTI)

PARLIAMENT'S nod to the Waqf (Amendment) Bill rendering it the Government's most consequential piece of legislation in its third term, and the political heat it generated inside and outside the legislature defined the second half of the Budget Session which ended on Friday.

Punches and counterpunches between the ruling BJP-led NDA and Opposition INDIA bloc, which showed signs of common purpose during as the session drew to a close, ran through the sitting that saw more than 100 per cent productivity in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

(Contd on page 3)

Waqf Bill: Jawed, Owaisi move SC

NEW DELHI, Apr 4 (PTI)

CONGRESS MP Mohammad Jawed and AIMIM President Asaduddin Owaisi on Friday challenged the validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025 in the Supreme Court, saying it violated the constitutional provisions.

Jawed's plea alleged the bill imposed "arbitrary restrictions" on Waqf properties and their management, undermining the religious autonomy of the Muslim community.

The petition, filed through advocate Anas Tanwir, said the proposed law discriminated against the Muslim communi-

ty by "imposing restrictions that are not present in the governance of other religious endowments".

The bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha with 128 members voting in favour and 95 opposing it. It was passed in the Lok Sabha early April 3 with 288 members supporting it and 232 against it.

Jawed, a Lok Sabha MP from Kishanganj in Bihar, was a member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the bill and has alleged in his plea that the bill "introduces restrictions on the creation of Waqfs based on the duration

(Contd on page 3)

China slaps ~~34 per cent~~ tariff on US goods in tit-for-tat move

■ By K J M Varma
BEIJING, Apr 4 (PTI)

CHINA on Friday slapped a 34 per cent additional tariff on imports from the US in a tit-for-tat response to President Donald Trump's move to impose a similar levy on Chinese goods.

Beijing also announced export controls on certain rare earth metals, aiming to hit American defence, computer, and smartphone industries.

The tariffs on all products imported from the US will be imposed from April 10, the Customs Tariff Commission of the State Council announced

Friday. The announcement follows the US decision to impose "reciprocal tariffs" on Chinese exports to America, a move that the commission said does not conform to international trade rules. It also seriously undermines China's legitimate rights and interests, and represents a typical act of unilateral bullying, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Beijing filed a lawsuit with the World Trade Organisation after the US slapped "reciprocal tariffs" on trading partners, the report said.

"By imposing the so-called 'reciprocal tariffs,' the US grave-

ly violated WTO rules, seriously undermined the legitimate rights and interests of WTO members, and seriously damaged the rules-based multilateral trading system and the international economic and trade order," a spokesperson from the Commerce Ministry here said.

"It is a typical unilateral practice of bullying that jeopardises the stability of the global economic and trade order, and China is firmly opposed to this," the spokesperson said, urging the US to immediately correct its wrongdoings and cancel its unilateral tariff measures.

Yoon Suk Yeol removed as S Korea's President

SEOUL, Apr 4 (AP)

SOUTH Korea's Constitutional Court unanimously removed Yoon Suk Yeol from office Friday, ending his tumultuous presidency and setting up a new election, four months after he threw the nation into turmoil with an ill-fated declaration of martial law. The verdict capped a dramatic fall for Yoon, a former star prosecutor who became President in 2022, just a year after he entered politics.

In a nationally televised hearing, the court's acting chief Moon Hyung-bae said the eight-member bench found Yoon's actions were unconstitutional and had a grave impact.

"By declaring martial law in breach of the Constitution and other laws, the defendant brought back the history of abus-



ing state emergency decrees, shocked the people and caused confusion in the society, economy, politics, diplomacy and all other areas," Moon said.

"Given the negative impact on constitutional order caused by the defendant's violation of laws and its ripple effects are grave, we find that the benefits of upholding the constitution by dismissing the defendant far outweigh the national losses from the dismissal of the president," the justice concluded.

President Murmu on state visits to Portugal, Slovakia from 7-10: MEA

NEW DELHI, Apr 4 (ANI)

PRESIDENT Droupadi Murmu will be on state visits to Portugal and Slovakia from April 7-10, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a special briefing on Friday.

President Murmu will visit Portugal from 7-8 April at the invitation of President of Portugal, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa. The visit is taking place after a gap of 27 years, as the last state visit took place in 1998 when President K R Narayanan visited Portugal.

While from 9-10 April, President Droupadi Murmu will visit the Slovakia at the invitation of the Slovakia President Peter Pellegrini. It will be the first visit by the President of India to

Slovakia in 29 years.

Speaking to media during the special briefing, Tanmay Lal Secretary (West) MEA, called the visits "two important landmark visits".

Sharing the details of the visit to Portugal, Secretary Lal said that the visit becomes historic as it comes when India and Portugal are marking 50 years of the diplomatic relations and this visit will "take forward the friendship and partnership." "It is also 27 years since the last visit by a President from India to Portugal. So it's a very symbolic and landmark visit. The President will be travelling to Portugal at the invitation of President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa of Portugal", he said.

Secretary Lal highlighted that

The visit becomes historic as it comes when India and Portugal are marking 50 years of the diplomatic relations

the last few years show the high level exchange of visits between India and Portugal and that shows the degree of high-level engagement that is ongoing between the two countries. Noting the events in which President Murmu will engage in Portugal, he highlighted that she will hold delegation-level

talks with her counterpart, President Sousa.

"The President (Sousa) will also host a banquet dinner in her honour. The President will meet Prime Minister Luis Montenegro. She will also meet the Speaker of the Parliament of Portugal, Jose Pedro Aguiar Branco. The Mayor of Lisbon will also host a special event in her honour. President will also meet members of the Indian community in Portugal and she is likely to meet some Indian researchers from various universities and academic institutions", he said.

Elaborating the details of the visit to Slovak Republic, Secretary (West), Tanmay Lal said, "The state visit of President is a historic visit. It is nearly three

decades, since the last President visit to Slovakia from India. This is only the second ever state visit from India to Slovakia. In recent years, there has been lot of political engagement at a very high level." He highlighted that the visit comes 30 years after the establishment of the Indian embassy in Bratislava, which was done in 1995.

"With Slovakia also, there is a strong political momentum; at the same time, business engagement is going... There is significant Indian investment in Slovakia in a range of sectors from automobiles to engineering to IT. Slovakian businesses are also investing in India, in very diverse fields- manufacturing steel, IT hardware, railways".

DRDO successfully flight tests surface to air missile

NEW DELHI, Apr 4 (ANI)

THE Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted four successful flight tests of the Army version of Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM) from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha on April 3 and 4, as per an official statement.

The four operational flight trials were carried out against high-speed aerial targets. The missiles intercepted the aerial targets and destroyed them, registering direct hits.

Four trials were carried out to intercept four targets at long range, short ranges and high and low altitudes, proving the operational capability, the statement said.

Four trials were carried out by the Indian Army from Eastern and Southern commands under DRDO guidance. These trials

have proven the operational capability of both Army Commands and paved the way for the liberalisation of weapon systems in two Regiments, the statement added.

The MRSAM is a surface-to-Air Missile developed jointly by the DRDO and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), Israel for use by the Indian Army. The MRSAM Army weapon system comprises multi-function radar, command post, mobile launcher system and other vehicles.

The flight tests were carried out with the weapon system in operational condition. The performance of the weapon system was validated through the flight data captured by range instruments like radars and electro-optical tracking systems deployed by ITR, Chandipur. The flight tests were carried out in the presence of senior officials from DRDO and the Indian Army.

US GOVT REVISES TARIFF ON INDIA downwards from 27 pc to 26 pc

NEW DELHI, Apr 4 (PTI)

THE United States has revised downwards the import duties to be imposed on India from 27 per cent to 26 per cent, according to a White House document.

These duties will come into force from April 9.

While announcing the reciprocal tariffs against different countries on Wednesday, US President Donald Trump held up a chart that showed the tariffs that countries such as India, China, the UK, and the European Union will now have to pay.

The chart indicated that India charged 52 per cent tariffs, including currency manipulation and trade barriers, and



President Donald Trump holds up the \$5 million gold card in flight on board Air Force One en-route to Miami. (AP/PTI)

America would now charge India a discounted reciprocal tariff of 26 per cent. Earlier, the White House documents showed a 27 per cent duty on India.

However, as per the latest updates, it has been revised

Read Editorial
BARGAINING CHIP
on page 6

downwards to 26 per cent. When asked, industry experts said one per cent would not have much of an impact.

From 2021-22 to 2023-24, the US was India's largest trading partner. The US accounts for about 18 per cent of India's total goods exports, 6.22 per cent in imports, and 10.73 per cent in bilateral trade. With America, India had a trade surplus (the difference between imports and exports) of USD 35.32 billion in goods in 2023-24.

Ensure safety of minorities, Hindus in Dosh: Modi to Yunus

■ By Sagar Kulkarni
BANGKOK, Apr 4 (PTI)

IN HIS first meeting with Bangladesh's Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged India's concerns over the safety of minorities, including Hindus, and conveyed that any rhetoric that vitiated the environment was best avoided.

During the 40-minute meeting that took place on the

PM Modi asks Bangladesh's Chief Advisor to investigate thoroughly all cases of atrocities against minorities

sidelines of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral and Technical Cooperation (BIMSTEC) summit here, Modi also underscored India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful, progressive and inclusive Bangladesh.

At the meeting, Yunus also flagged the issues of the extra-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Bangladesh Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus on the sidelines of the 6th BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok, Thailand on Friday. (PMO via PTI)

dition of deposed Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and border killings.

This was the first meeting between Modi and Yunus since Hasina's ouster in August last year. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval were also present during the meeting.

The Prime Minister told Yunus that the strict enforcement of the law and prevention of illegal border crossings, especially at night, are necessary for maintaining

border security and stability.

"Bangladesh has made a formal request regarding Sheikh Hasina. It will not be proper for me to say anything more on this matter," Foreign Secretary Vikram Misra told reporters here.

"Met Mr Muhammad Yunus, Chief Advisor of the interim Government of Bangladesh. India remains committed to a constructive and people-centric relationship with Bangladesh," Modi said in a post on X.

(Contd on page 3)

PM MODI'S 21-POINT ACTION PLAN to boost ties in BIMSTEC nations

BANGKOK, Apr 4 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Friday proposed a 21-point action plan that includes linking India's UPI with the payment systems of BIMSTEC nations and setting up a BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce to strengthen engagement among the grouping's members.

Addressing the sixth BIMSTEC Summit here, the Prime

Minister said the grouping is an important forum to further global good.

"It is imperative we strengthen it and deepen our engagement. In this context, I proposed a 21-point Action Plan covering different aspects of our cooperation," Modi posted on X. The action plan also includes BODHI or BIMSTEC for Organised Development of

(Contd on page 3)

Modi offers more help to Myanmar



Prime Minister Modi with Senior General Min Aung Hlaing of Myanmar. (PTI)

BANGKOK, Apr 4 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Friday told Myanmar's top leader that India is ready to offer more help to the country after the recent earthquake and pushed for 'credible and inclusive elections' to resolve the conflict there.

Modi met Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, the head of

(Contd on page 3)



Top BIMSTEC leaders during the session. (PTI)

Manoj Kumar, Hindi cinema's *Bharat*, no more

MUMBAI, Apr 4 (PTI)

ACTOR-FILMMAKER Manoj Kumar, who personified the angst and aspirations of an evolving 'Bharat' in films such as "Upkar", "Purab Aur Paschim" and "Roti, Kapda Aur Makaan", died in a Mumbai hospital early on Friday. He was 87.

The actor, who came to be known as 'Bharat Kumar' for his roles in a series of patriotic films, had been ailing for a while and died of age related issues at the Kokilaben Ambani Hospital around 3.30 am.



"He is out of his misery now," the filmmaker's son Kunal told PTI, adding that his father had been battling multiple health issues and was bedridden for the last few years.

Kumar, who had retreated into a quieter life behind the arclights for the last many years, was in and out of hospital. He was most recently admitted for pneumonia, his son said.

The last rites of the actor, whose films ruled the box office

in the late 1960s and 1970s, will take place on Saturday at Mumbai's Pawan Hans crematorium.

He is survived by his two sons and wife Shashi.

Tributes for the star, who also made a mark as

a romantic actor in a range of films, including "Himalaya Ki God Mein" and "Patthar Ke Sanam", poured in from all quarters. "The iconic characters of national heroes, farmers and

(Contd on page 3)

Read Time & Tide
**THE LEGEND OF
'BHARAT' KUMAR**
on page 6

