

# President lauds 1st batch of NDA women cadets reviews NDA passing out parade

PUNE, Nov 30 (PTI)

**PRESIDENT** Droupadi Murmu on Thursday reviewed the passing out parade of 145th course of the National Defence Academy (NDA) at Khadakwasla in Pune and expressed happiness over the participation of the first batch of women cadets in the marching contingent.

Terming it as a historic day, Murmu extended good wishes to the women cadets, while noting that today daughters have to struggle to select a



President Droupadi Murmu at the passing out parade of the 145th course of the National Defence Academy at Khadakwasla in Pune on Thursday. (PTI)

career of their choice.

She said, the NDA is a “cradle of leadership” and asked the cadets to move forward by

learning and adopting new technologies to face challenges of the future.

“Our forces are fully capable

and ready to face any external or internal situation that tries to damage the spirit of unity and integrity of the country,” she added. Around 15 women cadets participated in the passing out parade along with their male counterparts.

Last year, the first batch of 19 women cadets joined the NDA, Khadakwasla, a premier tri-services institution that has given the country the finest military officers, and they are currently in the second year of the military-cum-academic training, a defence official earlier said.

The second and third year cadets take part in the passing out parade, the official said.

Maharashtra Governor Ramesh Bais and Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan were present on the occasion.

# INDIA'S GDP grows 7.6% in Sept qtr

NEW DELHI, Nov 30 (PTI)

INDIA'S economy grew 7.6 per cent in the September quarter of this fiscal and remained the fastest-growing large economy, mainly due to better performance by manufacturing, mining and services sectors, the Government data

showed on Thursday.



The gross domestic product (GDP) expanded by 6.2 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2022-23. India

remained the fastest-growing major economy, as China posted a 4.9 per cent growth in July-September 2023.

According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) data, the agriculture sector GVA (Gross Value Added) growth decelerated to 1.2 per cent in the September 2023 quarter from 2.5 per cent a year ago. The expansion in financial, real estate and professional services' GVA was 6 per cent, down from 7.1 per cent in the year-ago quarter.

The GVA in the manufacturing sector showed a growth of 13.9 per cent in the second quarter of the current fiscal compared to a contraction of 3.8 per cent in the year-ago period.

As per the data, the output (GVA) in the 'mining and quarrying' accelerated to 10 per cent in the second quarter against a contraction of 0.1 per cent a year ago. Electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services' grew by 10.1 per cent from 6.1 per cent.

# Indian national agreed to assassination plot in US: Federal prosecutors

- Indian national Nikhil Gupta agreed after assurances criminal case against him in Gujarat will be dismissed

NEW YORK, Nov 30 (PTI)

AN INDIAN national, charged in connection with a plan to assassinate a Sikh separatist on American soil, agreed to the plot after being assured that a criminal case against him in Gujarat would be dismissed, federal prosecutors here have alleged.

Nikhil Gupta, 52, has been charged with murder-for-hire in connection with his participation in a foiled plot to assassinate a US citizen in New York City, according to a superseding indictment unsealed on Wednesday in the US District Court for the Southern District of New York.

While the indictment does not name the US citizen who was the target of the assassination plot, 'The Financial Times', citing unnamed sources, last week reported that US authorities thwarted a plot to assassinate banned Sikhs for Justice's Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, and issued a warning to the Indian Government over concerns it was involved in the plot. In the indictment, prosecutors outline how Gupta agreed to the plot after being assured that a criminal case against him in Gujarat would be dismissed. "Beginning in or about early May 2023, in a series of telephonic and electronic communications between CC-1 and Gupta over encrypted applications, CC-1 asked Gupta to arrange the murder of the Victim in exchange for CC-1's assistance in securing the dismissal of a criminal case against Gupta in India. Gupta agreed to orchestrate the assassination. In addition to their electronic communications, Gupta also met CC-1 in person in New Delhi in furtherance of the plot," the indictment said.

# BSF introduces biometric devices, anti-drone system for frontier

NEW DELHI, Nov 30 (ANI)

THE Border Security Force (BSF) has adopted modern technologies like anti-drone systems and biometric devices to secure the frontiers of the country. On the occasion of the 59th BSF Day Parade, BSF Director General Nitin Agarwal held a media briefing in Hazaribagh on Thursday.

BSF informed that it has deployed some hand-held static and vehicle-mounted anti-drone systems to counter the increasing threat of drones on the Indo-Pak border. Apart from this, the force has also started the registration of farmers having land ahead of fencing at the Punjab border on biometric machines at a few gates. The replacement of border flood lights with LED lights is underway.

On other borders, the ESVP (Electronic Surveillance of Vulnerable Patches) project is underway. The project is under installation in an area of responsibility (AOR) of seven frontiers on the Indo-Pakistan and Indo-Bangladesh borders, i.e., Jammu,



Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, South Bengal, North Bengal and Guwahati. Out of 635 vulnerable patches, projects have already been installed on 328 patches. In Western Border, in the last year, between November 1, 2022 and October 31, this year, a total of 90 drones have been recovered. Of the total number of drones recovered, 81 were recovered in Punjab and only nine in Rajasthan.

BSF further informed that a drone forensic lab has been established at Tigri Camp in Delhi to carry out detailed

analysis of 81 drones recovered by field units on the Western border and the outcome has been intimated to all concerned for follow-up action.

A total of six optical time-domain reflectometers (OTDR) and splicer machines have been provided to field formation to detect and monitor unauthorised activities with a high level of precision. A total of 16 Avaya Point-to-Point upgradable video conferencing endpoints have been provided to field formations, informed BSF.

# After China, more countries report outbreak of pneumonia epidemic

NEW DELHI, Nov 30 (IANS)

DENMARK and Netherlands are the latest countries to report an outbreak of pneumonia in children, days after China.

A post on Avian Flu Diary, an infectious disease news blog, revealed *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* infections have reached the epidemic level, with an increase that began in the summer but has risen significantly over the past five weeks. "The number is now so high that it is an epidemic," according to Denmark's Statens Serum Institut. "In the past five weeks, the number of new cases has increased significantly, and we are now seeing significantly more cases than usual, and that there is widespread infection throughout the coun-



try," senior researcher Hanne-Dorthe Emborg from the Statens Serum Institut was quoted as saying.

In week 47, 541 new cases of *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* infection were detected, which is more than threefold since week 42, when the number of detected cases was 168.

The real number of cases is probably much higher, as not everyone with mild symptoms

is tested. However, Emborg said the cases are "not unusual" to Denmark, which historically sees nationwide epidemics of *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* infections approximately every four years.

She said the incidence is typically highest in autumn and early winter.

"For the past four years, the number of mycoplasma infections has been extremely low, and it is therefore not unusual that we have an epidemic now. We have actually been waiting for it since we closed the country after the covid-19 pandemic," Emborg said.

The disease often presents as mild flu-like symptoms with fatigue, headache, sore throat and prolonged dry cough, especially nocturnal cough.

# Saudi Arabia extends cut in oil in bid to boost prices

The Saudi Energy Ministry said its voluntary cut of 1 mn barrels per day will stay in place through the first three months of next year.

LONDON, Nov 30 (AP)

SAUDI Arabia will extend a cut in the amount of oil it sends to the world after a series of reductions by members of the OPEC+ alliance of major producing countries failed to prop up prices.

That's been a good thing for US drivers, who have been able to fill their gas tanks for less money in recent months. But it's bad news for OPEC+ countries whose oil income bolsters their economies and who have faced setbacks in pushing prices higher despite initial fears that the Israel-Hamas war could affect oil flows.

The Saudi Energy Ministry said in a statement on its website that its voluntary cut of 1 million barrels per day will stay in place through the first three months of next year.

It was announced after rest of the OPEC oil cartel and allied nations like Russia met in an online meeting about global oil production.

The OPEC+ coalition announced that Brazil will join the bloc in January, bringing one of the world's fastest-growing oil producers into the alliance.

**'MATTER OF CONCERN'**

# India on US accusing Indian in foiled plot to kill Pannun

NEW DELHI, Nov 30 (PTI)

INDIA on Thursday described as a "matter of concern" the US charging an Indian national with conspiring to kill a Sikh separatist on American soil, and asserted that a high-level probe committee will investigate all aspects of the case.

India has constituted a probe team to investigate allegations relating to the foiled plot to kill Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a Sikh extremist and known to

be an American and Canadian citizen.

On Wednesday, US federal prosecutors charged Indian national Nikhil Gupta of working with an Indian Government employee in the foiled plot to kill Pannun.

US prosecutors informed a Manhattan court on Wednesday that authorities in the Czech Republic arrested and detained Gupta, and he is

currently awaiting extradition to the US. "As regards the case

against an individual that has been filed in a US court allegedly linking him to an Indian official, this is a matter of concern," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said. "We have said and let me reiterate that this is also contrary to government policy," he said at a media briefing.

Bagchi said the "nexus

between organised crime, trafficking, gunrunning and extremists at an international level is a serious issue for the law enforcement agencies and organisations to consider and it is precisely for that reason a high-level inquiry committee has been constituted and we will obviously be guided by its results."

The MEA spokesperson said the US side shared some "inputs" pertaining to nexus  
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# India approves defence acquisition projects

## WORTH RS 2.23 LAKH CR



97 Tejas jets  
156 Prachand choppers  
to be added

NEW DELHI, Nov 30 (PTI)

**INDIA** on Thursday accorded an initial approval to defence acquisition projects worth Rs2.23lakh crore that included procurement of 97 Tejas light combat aircraft and 156 Prachand combat helicopters, in a major move to significantly enhance the combat capabilities of the armed forces.

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, cleared the projects, at a time India is locked in a bitter military standoff with China at a number of friction points in eastern Ladakh for over three years.

The defence ministry said 98 per cent of the total procurement worth Rs2.23lakh crore will be sourced from

the domestic industries and that the move will give a substantial boost to the Indian defence industry in achieving the goal of 'Aatmanirbharta' (self-reliance) in defence industry. The DAC also approved a proposal of the Indian Air Force to upgrade its Su-30 fighter fleet by state-run aerospace major Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL).

The DAC further accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) or initial approval for procurement of two types of anti-tank munitions namely area denial munition (ADM) type-2 and type-3. The top body on procurement of military hardware also cleared acquisition and integration of automatic target tracker (ATT) and

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