

THREAT TO PEACE

Suppress activities of transnational criminal groups: Ruchira at UN

NEW YORK, Dec 8 (ANI)

INDIA has emphasised the need to address growing state complicity in suppressing the activities of transnational criminal groups, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ruchira Kamboj said on Thursday.

Speaking at a United Nations Security Council debate on 'Threats to International Peace and Security: Transnational Organised Crime, Growing Challenges and New Threats', Kamboj called for action against some states that continue to provide safe havens to offenders of crime syndicates.

Kamboj said, "We need to address growing political or state complicity in suppressing the activities of transnational criminal groups."

"Some states continue to provide support, and safe havens to offenders of crime syndicates who have not only

committed serious crimes but also continue to harm the economies of their adversary-States, through means such as counterfeiting and the dissemination of the currency of the adversary-State, supply of arms, drugs and other means

to support terror activities across the border. Actions of such states should be held accountable," she added.

Recalling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks at the 90th INTERPOL General Assembly in New Delhi last year, she noted that he underscored the urgent need for collective action from the international community to counter transnational organised crime and terrorism. Further, in her remarks, Kamboj said many nations give economic citizenship to criminal and economic offenders. She stressed that such States should fulfil their obligations under the concerned resolutions of the UNSC.



India at final week of COP28

Bring youth to centre stage to solve climate crisis

■ By Uzmi Athar
DUBAI, Dec 8 (PTI)

DESCRIBING the youth as the “agents of change”, Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav on Friday called on countries to bring young people to the centre stage of solving the climate crisis.

Yadav was speaking at the launch of the Green Rising, an initiative launched by India with UN children’s body UNICEF here at the COP28. The initiative is aimed at fuelling Youth-led Climate Actions and Solutions.

The Green Rising Global Initiative will create pathways for at least 10 million children to contribute to countries’ ambitious National Action Plans on Climate



A woman walks outside of the China Pavilion near an inflatable panda at the COP28 UN Climate Summit, on Friday, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. (AP/PTI)

Change, he said.

Noting that the young are the

most crucial key to attaining a sustainable world but they are also “the most vulnerable group affected by climate change”, the Environment Minister said the young bear the least responsibility for the climate crisis but they are suffering its worst consequences.

“But there is also no denying that youth are valuable contributors to climate action. They are agents of change as innovators, entrepreneurs, and environmentally conscious individuals with a will to drive positive change. The young today are making best use of education, science, and technology to scale up their effort to accelerate climate action,” he said.

Putin praises Modi's **TOUGH STANCE** in defending national interests



Russian President Putin at the 14th VTB Investment Forum 'Russia Calling', on Thursday.

(ANI)

MOSCOW, Dec 8 (ANI)

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin on Thursday heaped praise on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying that he cannot be intimidated or forced to take decisions that are contrary to national interests.

He also spoke favourably of Prime Minister Modi's tough posturing and stance when it comes to defending the national interests.

"I cannot imagine that Prime Minister Modi could be intimidated, intimidated or forced to take any actions, steps and decisions that are contrary to the national interests of India and the Indian people. And there is such pressure, I know.

By the way, he and I never even talk about this. I just look at what is happening from the outside, and sometimes, to be honest, I'm even surprised at his tough position on defending the national interests of the Indian state," the Russian President's Office quoted Putin as saying at the 14th VTB Investment Forum 'Russia Calling'.

Also underlining the bilateral ties between India and Russia, Putin said the relations between the two nations have been "developing progressively" in all directions.

Addressing the forum, the Russian President said the 'policy' pursued by PM Modi is the main 'guarantor' of relations between the two countries.

Aditya-L1 captures full-disk images of Sun in near ultraviolet wavelengths

BENGALURU, Dec 8 (PTI)

THE Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT) instrument on board the Aditya-L1 spacecraft has successfully captured the first full-disk images of the Sun in the 200-400 nm wavelength range.

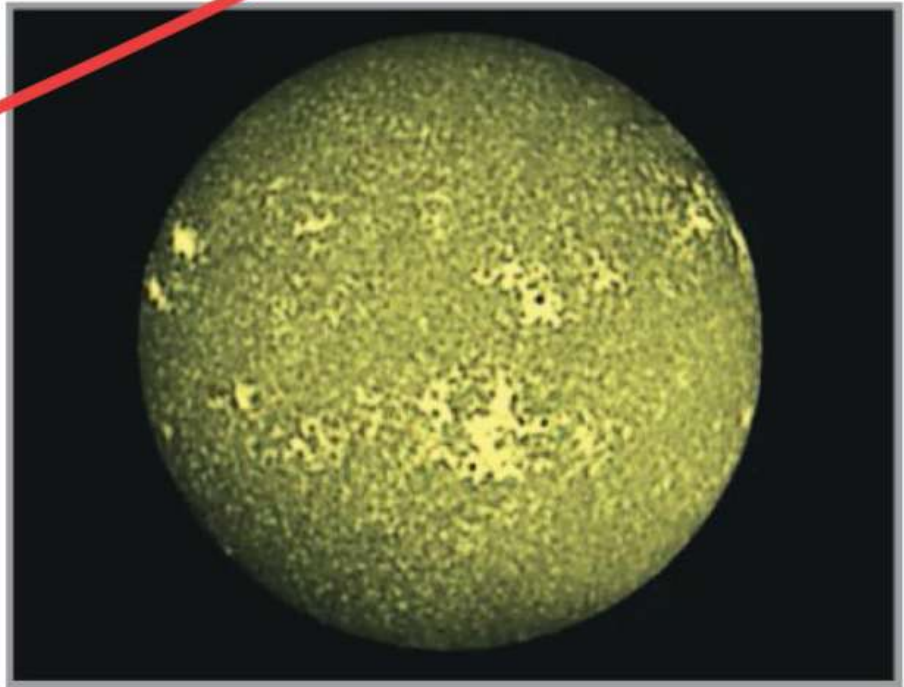
SUIT captured images of the Sun's photosphere and chromosphere in this wavelength range using various scientific filters, according to ISRO.

"On November 20, 2023, the SUIT payload was powered ON. Following a successful pre-commissioning phase, the telescope captured its first light science images on December 6, 2023," an ISRO statement said on Friday.

"These unprecedented images, taken using eleven different filters, include the first-ever full-disk representations of the Sun in wavelengths ranging from 200 to 400 nm, excluding Ca II h. The full disk images of the Sun in the Ca II h wavelength has been studied from other observatories" it said.

Among the notable features revealed are sunspots, plage, and quiet Sun regions, providing scientists with pioneering insights into the intricate details of the Sun's photosphere and chromosphere.

SUIT observations will help sci-



The first picture of the full disk of Sun as captured by Aditya L-1 mission. (Photo: ISRO)

entists study the dynamic coupling of the magnetised solar atmosphere and assist them in placing tight constraints on the effects of solar radiation on Earth's climate, ISRO added.

The development of SUIT involved a collaborative effort under the leadership of the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy

and Astrophysics, Pune. This collaboration included ISRO, the Manipal Academy of Higher Education, the Centre for Excellence in Space Science India at IISER-Kolkata, the Indian Institute of Astrophysics Bengaluru, the Udaipur Solar Observatory (USO-PRL), and Tezpur University Assam, it was stated.

ONION EXPORT

~~Banned till March next year~~

NEW DELHI, Dec 8 (PTI)

THE Government has banned exports of onion till March next year with a view to increase domestic availability and to keep prices in check. "Export policy of onions... Is amended from free to prohibited till March 31, 2024," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in a notification.

Local vendors in the national capital are selling onions at Rs 70-Rs 80 per kg.

Earlier, the Centre in October had decided to step up the sale of buffer onion stock at a subsidised rate of Rs 25 per kg in retail markets in order to provide relief to consumers. To control prices, the Government has earlier taken several steps. It had

imposed a minimum export price (MEP) of USD 800 per tonne on onion exports on October 28 till December 31 this year.

In August, India had imposed a 40 per cent export



duty on onions up to December 31.

The DGFT also said that the exports of onion, however, will be allowed on the basis of permission granted by the government to other countries based on their request.

It added that shipments of

onion, whose loading had commenced before this notification, are allowed to be exported.

Further, where shipping bill is filed and vessels have already berthed and anchored in Indian ports for loading of onion and their rotation number has been allocated before this notification, that shipment is also allowed for exports.

Exports of onion are also permitted if "consignments of onion has been handed over to the customs before this notification and is registered in their system/ where onions consignment has entered the customs station for exportation before this notification and is registered in the electronic systems of the concerned custodian of the cus-

toms station with verifiable evidence of date and time stamping of these commodities having entered the station prior to December 8".

The period of exports for such consignments shall be up to January 5 next year.

ONION FARMERS STAGE PROTEST: ONION farmers blocked the Mumbai Agra Highway at three places in Maharashtra's Nashik and stopped auctions in wholesale markets of the district on Friday after the Centre announced a ban on the export of the kitchen staple, police said.

Farmers stopped auctions at onion markets of Lasalgaon, Chandwad, Nandgaon, Dindori, Yeola, Umarane and other places in Nashik district on Friday, an official said.

LALDUHOMA sworn-in as MIZO CM

AIZAWL, Dec 8 (PTI)

ZORAM People's Movement (ZPM) leader Lalduhoma was sworn-in as the Chief Minister of Mizoram on Friday. Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati administered the oath of office and secrecy to Lalduhoma. Eleven other ZPM leaders will also take oath as Ministers.

The swearing-in ceremony was held at the Raj Bhawan where Mizo National Front leader and outgoing Chief Minister Zoramthanga was present. All MNF MLAs, including its legislature party leader Lalchhandama Ralte, attended the event. Former Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla was also present there. On Tuesday, the ZPM Legislature Party elected Lalduhoma as its leader and K Sapdanga as the deputy leader.



ZPM leader Lalduhoma takes oath as the Chief Minister of Mizoram during swearing-in ceremony in Aizawl on Friday. Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati is also seen. (PTI)

With a 40-member Assembly, Mizoram can have 12 Ministers, including CM. The ZPM, which was registered as a political party only in 2019, emerged victorious in the assembly elections bagging 27 seats, increasing its tally from 8 in the 2018 polls.

3-DAY MIZORAM ASSEMBLY SESSION FROM DEC 12: MIZORAM Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati on Friday summoned an Assembly Session for three days which will commence on December 12, a senior official said.

North-East

Connecting places, boosting cross-border ties



By Kartik Lokhande
SHILLONG

ON NOVEMBER 1, 2023, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina jointly virtually inaugurated Agartala-Akhaura railway line connecting the two countries, history was created. The railway line not only reduces the trading distance between the two countries, but also strengthens the bond of friendship. This also came as an important chapter in development of the North-Eastern region.

It is a very crucial link between the two countries. The railway link with Bangladesh has been established after decades. It will reduce the distance between Tripura and Kolkata by around 1,000 kms. The new railway line will connect Agartala (Tripura) with Akhaura in Bangladesh, from where the line will join the existing Bangladesh railway

line up to the western Petrapole-Benapole border crossing. From this border crossing, railway line is available up to Kolkata in Indian State of West Bengal. Thus, the Agartala-Akhaura rail link will also help in connecting Agartala with Kolkata through Bangladesh.

Informing the visiting media persons from Maharashtra about this crucial rail link, K Moses Chalal, Secretary of the North-Eastern Council (NEC), said that the length of the Agartala-Akhaura cross-border rail link was 12 km with only 5.45 kms on Indian side and the remaining in Bangladesh. The project has been funded by Department of North-Eastern Region (DoNER) and the NEC. The total approved cost of the project for 12 km was Rs 708.73 crore, of which NEC has already released Rs 678 crore. The committed liabilities are of Rs 30.73 crore.

"Much of the area on the Indian side was marshy land, which posed a great challenge for us. We had to deposit 1.8 lakh truckloads of earth to prepare the

ground for the rail link. Then, COVID-19 threw up a labour challenge. But, through the challenges, the project traversed its way to the historic day of November 1, 2023," said K Moses Chalal.

Agartala-Akhaura rail link project is one of the five Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR)-Central projects. The total approved cost of these projects is Rs 1,057.19 crore, of which Rs 1,019.23 crore has been released. Of

course, Agartala-Akhaura rail link is the biggest of these five projects.

The second biggest project is protection of the world-famous Majuli island from erosion due to flood in river Brahmaputra. The cost of this project is Rs 207 crore, of which entire fund has been released, and there has been 96 per cent of physical progress, which means that the project is nearing completion.

The other three NLCPR-Central projects include creation of infrastructure for establishment of one new college in Agriculture and Allied Science at Pasighat in Arunachal

Pradesh and six multi-technology testing centres and vocation training centres in North-Eastern Hill region; establishment of Science and Technology Intervention in North-Eastern Region (STINER) common facility centre at CSIR-NEIST at Jorhat; and construction of meter gauge to broad gauge railway line from Panchgram station to inside Cachar Paper Mill. The Panchgram-Cachar Paper Mill project has been completed, and STINER common facility centre at Jorhat has registered 70 per cent progress. The agriculture college at Pasighat and multi-technology centres also have been completed.

The NEC has been actively engaged in not only road construction but also other areas of development. Its regional plan has allocations for agriculture and allied sectors, power and renewable energy, industries, tourism, transport and communication, health, human resource development, science and technology, intellectual property rights, sustainable livelihood etc.

Now, it is working on a four-year pool of schemes that are fully Centrally funded. Is it part of a long-term vision for development of the North-Eastern region?

(To be continued)