

# India-UAE Business Summit held to strengthen bilateral ties

GUJARAT, Jan 11 (ANI)

AS PART of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2024, the India-UAE Business Summit was held on Wednesday to strengthen bilateral ties between the two nations.

The inaugural session of the India-UAE Business Summit included keynote addresses from Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Trade Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi and special remarks from Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, according to Ministry of Commerce and Industry press release.

Piyush Goyal, Thani bin Ahmed

Al Zeyoudi, and Bhupendra Patel ceremonially launched the UAE-India CEPA Council (UICC) website as part of the inaugural session.

The session also highlighted India's booming startup landscape and included remarks from Kunal Bahl, Chairman - Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) National Startup Council and Co-founder - Snapdeal and Titan Capital. A report on the CII India-UAE Start-Up Initiative titled "Unlocking Opportunities: India- UAE Start-Up Ecosystem Convergence" was also launched during the summit. The inaugural session was chaired by R Dinesh, President, CII and Chairman, TVS Supply Chain Solutions Limited.

# Zelenskyy rules out ceasefire with Russia

TALLINN, Jan 11 (AP)

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Thursday ruled out a ceasefire as his country fights off the Russian invasion, saying the Kremlin's forces would use the pause to rearm and regroup in order to overwhelm Kyiv's troops. "A pause on the Ukrainian battlefield will not mean a pause in the war," Zelenskyy said during a visit to Estonia. "A pause would play into (Russia's) hands. It might crush us afterward."

Limited ceasefires have occa-

sionally been proposed since Russia launched its full-scale war in February 2022 but have never taken hold.

Both sides are scrambling to replenish their weapons after 22 months of fighting and are facing the prospect of a protracted conflict. With the roughly 1,500-kilometre front line mostly static during winter, they both require artillery shells, missiles and drones that enable long-range strikes.

Zelenskyy said Moscow is receiving artillery shells and missiles from North Korea and drones from Iran. On January

4, the White House cited US intelligence officials as saying that Russia acquired ballistic missiles from North Korea and is seeking them from Iran.

Zelenskyy was in the Estonian capital of Tallinn as part of a two-day swing through Baltic countries, which have been among Ukraine's staunchest supporters.

He met with Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, who gave him a shirt with the Estonian word "Kaitsetahe" — "The will to defend" — printed on the front, which Zelenskyy wore as he addressed Parliament.

"Tyranny must be defeated. Tyranny must be a loser," Zelenskyy said. "Always. Always. Always."

Zelenskyy said he and Kallas also discussed Ukrainians who fled to Estonia when the war began, telling a news conference that any of them who are of draft age "need to help Ukraine and be in Ukraine."

His comments came as lawmakers in Kyiv returned a draft law on mobilisation to the government for amendments, saying it might contain human rights violations, among other concerns, officials said.

The draft law aims to impose restrictions on citizens who have evaded mobilisation duties, as Ukraine grapples with shortages of military personnel.

Zelenskyy said last month that Ukraine's military wants to mobilise up to 500,000 more troops, but he said he had asked the brass to spell out the details on what is "a very sensitive matter" before deciding whether to grant their wish. He also is pressing allies to provide Ukraine with more support on top of the billions of dollars in military aid from the West.

# Army officer, soldier develop hybrid anti-drone system

■ The hybrid anti-drone system includes an indigenous jammer integrated with an upgraded Russian-origin Schilka Weapon System. The system can be used effectively against swarm drone attacks

NEW DELHI, Jan 11 (ANI)



Army Air Defence officer Major Nagaraj SY and his fellow soldier Mohammed Firoze Khan show the hybrid anti-drone system that includes an indigenous jammer integrated with an upgraded Russian-origin Schilka Weapon System. The system can be used effectively against swarm drone attacks. The Schilka Weapon System can track any incoming drone from a far distance which can be taken out using kinetic and non-kinetic systems. (ANI)

Schilka Weapon System.

Army Air Defence officer Major Nagaraj SY and his fellow soldier Mohammed Firoze Khan have developed this system for the Army.

"In today's Russia-Ukraine conflict, we have seen that there is a lot of threat to mechanized operations through stealth drones. Worldwide research says that the best way to eliminate swarm drone attacks is a hybrid anti-drone system that has both kinetic and non-kinetic system," Major Nagaraj SY said. "It took us approximately 8-10 months to make it. Its deployment has started in our western sector," he added.

The hybrid anti-drone system includes an indigenous

jammer integrated with an upgraded Russian-origin Schilka Weapon System. The system can be used effectively against swarm drone attacks.

The Schilka Weapon System can track any incoming drone from a far distance, which can be taken out using both kinetic and non-kinetic system.

Meanwhile, the Indian Army will observe 2024 as "Year of Technology Absorption."

"The Indian Army shall be observing the year 2024 as the Year of Technology Absorption. This theme underscores our commitment to leverage technology as a catalyst for transformative change, as well as to utilise in-house expertise to innovate solutions to our oper-

ational and logistic requirements and give shape to these projects in collaboration with the domestic defence industry."

"The Indian Army personnel are being trained to leverage technology and exploit the cyber domain effectively through institutionalised, procedural and technological measures. Project SAMBHAV is an end-to-end, secure, network-agnostic mobile ecosystem to provide secure communication with instant connectivity on the move. Operating on state-of-the-art contemporary 5G technology, it represents a significant leap forward in India's defence capability," ADGPI, Indian Army posted on X.

# Israel is committing genocide in Gaza: South Africa to UN top court

THE HAGUE, Jan 11 (AP)

A CONTINENT away from the war in Gaza, South Africa accused Israel of committing genocide against the Palestinians there and pleaded with the United Nations' top court on Thursday to order an immediate halt to the country's military operation. Israel has vehemently denied the allegations.

South African lawyers said during the opening arguments that the latest Gaza war is part of a decades-long oppression of the Palestinians by Israel.

The two-day hearing is the public side of a landmark case, one of the most significant to be heard in an international court and which goes to the heart of one of the world's most intractable conflicts.

South Africa is seeking binding preliminary orders to compel Israel to stop its military campaign in Gaza, in which more than 23,000 people have died, according to the Health Ministry which is run by Hamas.

"Genocides are never declared in advance, but this court has the benefit of the past 13 weeks of evidence that shows incontrovertibly a pattern of conduct and related intention that justifies as a plausible claim of genocidal acts," South African lawyer

Adila Hassim told the judges and audience in the packed, ornate room of the Peace Palace in The Hague.

"Nothing will stop the suffering except an order from this court," she said.

Israel, however, says it is battling a fierce enemy in the Gaza Strip that carried out the deadliest attack on its territory, killing more than 1,200 people, since its creation in 1948. Israel says it is following international law and does its utmost to avoid harm to civilians. It blames Hamas for the high toll, saying its enemy embeds in residential areas.

South Africa turns a deaf ear to such arguments, insisting Israel committed genocide by design.

"The scale of destruction in Gaza, the targeting of family homes and civilians, the war being a war on children, all make clear that genocidal intent is both understood and has been put into practice. The articulated intent is the destruction of Palestinian life," said lawyer Tembeka Ngcukaitobi.

"What state would admit to a genocidal intent? Yet the distinctive feature of this case has not been the silence as such, but the reiteration and repetition of genocidal speech throughout every sphere of the state in Israel," he said.

# Sheikh Hasina sworn in as PM of B'desh for 5th term

DHAKA, Jan 11 (PTI)

SHEIKH Hasina was on Thursday sworn in as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh for the fifth term, days after her Awami League won an overwhelming majority in the general elections boycotted by the main Opposition BNP and its allies.

President Mohammad Shahabuddin administered the oath of office to 76-year-old Hasina at a ceremony joined by politicians, foreign diplomats, civil society figures and senior civil and military officials at Bangabhaban presidential palace here.

She will serve as the 12th Prime Minister; her fourth consecutive term and fifth overall term.

Hasina, the daughter of Bangladesh's founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, has been ruling the strategically located South Asian nation since 2009. She is among the world's longest-serving female heads



Bangladeshi President Mohammed Shahabuddin administers oath to Sheikh Hasina as the country's Prime Minister in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Thursday. (AP)

of Government.

Following the Prime Minister, the new members of Cabinet were sworn in by the President.

Hasina's party won 223 seats

in the 300-member Parliament.

Hasina formed her Government for the straight fourth term. She has inducted 25 ministers and 11 state ministers in her Cabinet.

# Iran's navy seizes oil tanker in Gulf of Oman

## Vessel, Manned By Crew of 19, Was At Centre Of Major US-Iran Row Last Year

Iran seized a tanker with Iraqi crude destined for Turkey Thursday in what appeared to be a retaliation for the seizure last year of the same vessel by Tehran's arch foe the US, Iranian media reported.

The Greek-owned, Marshall Islands-flagged tanker St Nikolas, which last year was confiscated by the US for carrying Iranian oil, was boarded by armed intruders as it sailed close to the Omani city of Sohar, according to UK maritime security firm Ambrey, and its tracking system was turned off as it headed in the direction of the Iranian port of Bandar-e-Jask.

Following the seizure of the vessel last year, Iran warned the US that "it will not go unanswered". "The Navy of Iran's Army has announced



In 2023, the St Nikolas was seized by the US when it sailed under a different name, Suez Rajan. The US said at the time that Iran was trying to send its contraband oil to China

the seizure of an American oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman with a judicial order," Iranian state media cited a statement by the army. It was unclear why Iranian media described the ship as an "American vessel".

The US on Thursday demanded that Iran immediately

release the ship and said it was looking at steps to take.

In 2023 the St Nikolas was seized by the US in a sanctions enforcement operation when it sailed under a different name, Suez Rajan. The US said at the time that Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) had been trying to send contraband Iranian oil to China, in violation of US sanctions.

The ship loaded 145,000 metric tonnes of oil in the Iraqi port of Basra and was heading to Aliaga in Turkey via the Suez Canal, its operator Empire Navigation said. The vessel is manned by a crew of 19, including 18 Filipinos and one Greek national, the operator said.

While Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis have been attacking vessels in the Red Sea to show

support for Hamas in the Gaza war, those incidents have been concentrated on the Bab al-Mandab Strait, to the southwest of the Arabian Peninsula. Thursday's incident is located closer to the Strait of Hormuz, between Oman and Iran.

The UK Maritime Trade Operations authority said earlier it had received a report that a vessel located around 50 nautical miles east of Oman's coast was boarded by four to five armed persons. The armed intruders were reported to be wearing military-style black uniforms and black masks.

The Suez Rajan was carrying more than 980,000 barrels of Iranian crude oil last year when it was seized and the oil confiscated in the US sanctions enforcement operation. REUTERS

# First Made-in-India semiconductor chip this year: Vaishnaw

## Minister Hails Micron Tech Team's Passion

TIMES NEW NETWORK

**Gandhinagar:** The Micron plant at Sanand in Gujarat will hopefully bring out the first "Made in India" semiconductor chip this year, Union minister of communication and railways Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Thursday at the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit (VGGS).

"I want to congratulate the Micron (Technology) team — their work with passion and speed gives me confidence," the minister told a session "Semiconductor and Electronics" held under VGGS 2024.

The place for global manufacturers of semiconductors is "Bharat" and Gujarat is a natural choice, he said, attributing it to two major factors.

"Gujarat is coming up with the largest green power hub anywhere in the world with a capacity of 30,000MW... The current largest such hub or cluster is about 5,000-7,000 MW.



ANI

Gujarat is coming up with the world's largest green power hub with a capacity of 30,000MW, Vaishnaw said

The work is currently on... When the semiconductor industry is going towards green energy, it is a major opportunity to have 100% green power," said Vaishnaw.

"Another major plus" is availability of skilled human resources. "The global industry will require more than a million talents in the next decade. It will come from India. It is part of the semiconductor mission's biggest goal. We have tied up with 104 universities and institutions for developing courses at various levels," Vaishnaw added.

Vaishnaw urged Gujarat government and Micron Technology to establish a Centre of Excellence in semiconductors at IIT Gandhinagar for research & development, and validating new ideas.

# EAM discusses West Asia, Ukraine with Quad counterparts

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Foreign minister S Jaishankar spoke to his two Quad counterparts, US secretary of state Antony Blinken and Australian foreign minister Penny Wong, and discussed bilateral cooperation and regional and global issues like the conflict in West Asia and the Ukraine war. The Quad countries are looking to finalise dates for the 2024 summit which India has to host.



The Quad countries are looking to finalise dates for the 2024 summit that India has to host

"A good discussion this evening with my friend US @SecBlinken. Our conversa-

tion focused on maritime security challenges, especially the Red Sea region. Appreciated his insights on ongoing situation in West Asia, including Gaza," said the minister in a post on X.

"Exchanged perspectives on developments pertaining to the Ukraine conflict. Looking forward to realising our extensive cooperation agenda for 2024," he added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had joined UAE President Mohamed Bin

Zayed Al Nahyan in their bilateral meeting earlier this week in calling for an early humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza. India has also said it attaches high importance to freedom of navigation in the Red Sea.

"The first conversation of 2024 with @SenatorWong of Australia. Exchanged views on the state of the world and discussed our cooperation for this year, including through Quad," said Jaishankar, on his conversation.



# LAC situation 'stable' but 'sensitive', says Army chief

## 'Operational Military Preparedness Remains Very High'

Rajat.Pandit@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** India's first priority is the restoration of status quo ante along the frontier in eastern Ladakh, General Manoj Pande said on Thursday, adding that the operational military preparedness along the line of actual control with China remains "very high" to tackle any contingency while the situation is "stable" but "sensitive" at present.

"Currently, our attempt is to continue with talks to go back to the status quo ante which existed in the middle of 2020. Once that happens, we can look at larger issues like de-induction of troops and the like. But that is the first aim to achieve," the Army chief said.

Speaking in the run-up to the Army Day on January 15, Gen Pande made it clear that India will not reduce the around 50,000 troops and heavy weapon systems deployed along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, where the tense military confrontation with China is into its fourth successive winter now.

India has been pressing for the sequential process of disengagement, de-escalation and de-induction of



Army chief General Manoj Pande visits an exhibition after addressing the annual presser ahead of Army Day in New Delhi on Thursday

## Firmly oppose external interference in Maldives, says China as Muizzu ends trip

China on Thursday said that it "firmly opposes external interference" in the internal affairs of the Maldives and supports the island nation in upholding its sovereignty and independence as Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu concluded his maiden visit to Beijing amid a diplomatic row with India. "The two sides agree to continue firmly supporting each other in safeguarding their respective core interests," said a joint statement issued at the end of Muizzu's talks with the top Chinese leaders. "China firmly supports the Maldives in upholding its national sovereignty, independence and national dignity, respects and supports the Maldives' exploration of a development path that suits its national conditions, and firmly opposes external interference in the internal affairs of the Maldives," it said, without referring to any country. PTI

troops. China, however, has so far not shown any inclination to disengage from the two remaining major face-offs at Depsang Plains and

the Charding Ninglung Nallah (CNN) track junction at Demchok, let alone accept any return to status quo ante, despite 20 rounds of corps

commander-level talks apart from diplomatic dialogues.

Restoration of status quo ante would mean a return to the situation that existed before Chinese soldiers made incursions at several points across the LAC in April-May 2020.

The boundary talks between Bhutan and China, which have been resumed after a gap of seven years, are also being closely monitored since they could have security implications for India. "We have a unique bilateral relationship with Bhutan, which also transcends into the military domain. We are interacting closely with our friends in Bhutan," Gen Pande said.

The military posture along the 1,643-km border with Myanmar has also been strengthened due to the influx of 416 Myanmar soldiers, apart from civilians, who had crossed over to India in view of the conflict between government force and armed ethnic groups in the country.

"The situation is of concern to us. You are aware of the activities of the Myanmar army and the ethnic armed outfits and the People's Defence Forces in the past couple of months," Pande said.

# Budget session from January 31, to conclude on February 9 or 13

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** The budget session of Parliament is likely to commence on January 31, with President Droupadi Murmu addressing a joint sitting of Parliament, which will be followed by a vote-on-account or presentation of the interim budget on February 1.

Government sources, however, said the number of days for the session is yet to be finalised and the session—likely to be the last of the current Lok Sabha—will conclude either on February 9 or February 13. “A final decision on the number of days is likely to be taken on Friday,” a government functionary said.

**There is expectation  
govt will announce  
measures for key  
constituencies,  
including women,  
youth, farmers and  
the middle-class**

The end of the budget session will also lead to the start of the countdown to the announcement of general elections by Election Commission.

The interim budget will be among the last major policy announcements ahead of EC’s intimation of general elections, which is widely expected to be in the first week of March. In 2019, the Lok Sabha polls were announced on March 10 and voting was held in seven phases between April 11 and May 19.

While finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said there will be no “spectacular announcements” in what will be her sixth budget speech, there is expectation the Modi government will announce measures for key constituencies, including women, youth, farmers and middle class. The new government will present a full-fledged budget in July.