

## India to continue co-op for countering misuse of communication technologies by terrorists: NSA

MOSCOW, Apr 24 (PTI)

INDIA will continue cooperation for countering misuse of information and communication technologies by terrorists and criminals, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval said on Wednesday as he called for international cooperation for an open, stable, secure, reliable and inclusive framework for ensuring information security. Speaking at a plenary session on Ensuring Information Security in the Polycentric World in St Petersburg, Doval underscored India's policy to use digital technology for inclusive economic development.

Doval emphasised that India shall continue cooperation for countering misuse of information and communication technologies by terrorists and criminals, as also for countering terror funding. In that context, the UN Convention on cybercrime will be an important initiative at the international level, he said.

He called for international cooperation for an open, stable, secure, reliable and inclusive framework for ensuring information security.



National Security Adviser Ajit Doval.

Doval, who participated at the XII International Meeting of High Ranking Officials Responsible for Security Matters, said that the roadmap for such cooperation should include: All stakeholders from Governments to Private Sector, Academia, Technical Communities and Civil Society, and Regular institutional dialogues to help develop common understanding on critical issues.

# DRDO's **lightest** bullet-proof jacket protects from **highest threat level**

NEW DELHI, Apr 24 (IANS)

A UNIT of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully developed the lightest bullet-proof jacket for security forces in the country designed to withstand the highest threat level, known as Level 6, officials said.

The jacket, according to a DRDO official statement, provides protection against 7.62 x 54 R API ammunition and novel material along with new processes has been used to develop it.

“DRDO’s Defence Materials and Stores Research and Development Establishment (DMSRDE), Kanpur, has successfully developed the lightest bullet-proof jacket in the country for protection against

7.62 x 54 R API (level 6 of BIS 17051) ammunition. Recently, this bullet-proof jacket was successfully tested at TBRL, Chandigarh, as per BIS 17051-2018,” the statement said.

The front Hard Armour Panel (HAP) of the jacket is a standout feature, capable of withstanding multiple hits (up to 6 shots) of 7.62 x 54 R API (Sniper rounds) in both I C W (in-conjunction with) and

standalone designs. What sets this jacket apart is its ergonomically designed front HAP, crafted from a monolithic ceramic plate with polymer backing. This design not only ensures maximum protection but also enhances wearability and comfort.



# New strategic arena of competition: Army chief

NEW DELHI, Apr 24 (PTI)

EVOLUTION of technology has impacted warfare but technological advantage may just be reduced to a tactical level when it is taken away from the larger strategic context and regarded as the "sole driver" of success in a war, Army chief General Manoj Pande said on Wednesday.

In his address at a seminar here, he also said technologies are emerging in new uncharted domains, and

"revolutionising and establishing a 'new normal' in different fields".

General Pande further said that technology has also emerged as the "new strategic arena of competition, driving geo-political powerplays and is being leveraged for weaponisation of many domains, ranging from information to supply chains".

The Army chief was addressing a gathering during a seminar on "Year of Technology Absorption: Empowering the

Soldier" organised by a defence think-tank at Manekshaw Centre at Delhi Cantonment.

Technology from a warfighting perspective, has undergone significant evolution over the centuries, and has "impacted warfare in a profound manner," he said.

Army chief General Manoj Pande and Chairperson of Startup20 India Dr Chintan Vaishnav inspect stalls during a seminar in New Delhi on Wednesday. (ANI)



# SCO Defence Ministers meet in Astana; Aramane leading Indian delegation

NEW DELHI, Apr 24 (PTI)

DEFENCE Secretary Giridhar Aramane is leading the Indian delegation to Kazakhstan for the annual meeting of the defence ministers of member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation during which the "regional security issues" within the SCO will be reviewed, officials said on Wednesday.

Aramane is leading the delegation to Astana from April 25-26, the defence ministry said in a statement.

The meeting will review the regional security issues, includ-

ing the defence cooperation initiatives, within the SCO, it said. The defence secretary will deliver India's statement at the ministerial meeting. He will also hold meetings with the defence ministers of the friendly countries of the SCO to discuss issues of bilateral defence cooperation, it said.

The SCO was founded at a summit in Shanghai in 2001 by the presidents of Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

India and Pakistan became its permanent members in 2017.

# US warns of sanctions as Pak inks deals with Iran

Omer Farooq Khan | TNN

**Islamabad:** Islamabad and Tehran agreed on Wednesday to "expeditiously finalise" a free trade agreement (FTA) and hold the next sessions of business and trade bodies soon after the US cautioned Pakistan of the risk of sanctions for engaging in business deals with Iran.

Following Iranian Prez Ebrahim Raisi's three-day visit to Pakistan, the two countries issued a joint statement stating that they reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations. "They (Pakistan and Iran) reiterated the importance of cooperation in the energy domain, including trade in electricity, power transmission lines and Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project," a joint Iranian-Pakistani statement said, recalling their aim to increase the volume of bilateral trade to \$10 billion over the next five years from the current \$2 billion. "There was consensus to fully



Visiting Sri Lanka after his trip to Pakistan, Prez Raisi said Iran has proven the West doesn't have a monopoly on technology while inaugurating a hydropower project

operationalise barter trade mechanisms between the two sides to facilitate economic and commercial activity." The gas pipeline project has languished for more than a decade because of political turmoil and international sanctions.

On Tuesday, the US state department warned Islamabad of the risk of sanctions. "We advise anyone considering business deals with Iran to be aware of the potential

## K-issue should be resolved through 'peaceful means': Pak-Iran statement

Pakistan and Iran have agreed that the Kashmir issue should be resolved through "peaceful means based on the will of the people" of the region, said a joint statement issued by the two countries after Iranian Prez Ebrahim Raisi's maiden visit on Wednesday. Raisi paid an official visit to Pakistan from April 22-24 at the invitation of PM Shehbaz Sharif. Kashmir found its way into the joint statement issued at the conclusion of Prez Raisi's visit. "Both sides highlighted the need to resolve the issue of Kashmir through dialogue and peaceful means based on the will of the people of that region, and in accordance with international law," it stated. India has previously rejected such statements by other countries on the Kashmir issue. During a joint press conference after their talks on Monday, Sharif raked up the Kashmir issue and thanked Iran for its stance. However, Raisi refrained from mentioning Kashmir and instead talked about Iran's support for those fighting against oppression especially in Palestine, creating an impression that he had snubbed the desire of the Pakistani prime minister to say something on the issue. PTI

risk of sanctions. But ultimately, govt of Pakistan can speak to their own foreign policy pursuits," US state department spokesperson Vedant Patel said during a news briefing.

The implied threat of sanctions, observers said, comes at

a difficult time for Pakistan, which is struggling economically and is looking to its allies for financial support, especially important allies like the US, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates, three nations that are seen as Iran's adversaries.

# Biden Signs War Aid Bill, Israel To Get \$26.4Bn, Ukraine \$61Bn

## \$8.1Bn Is Allocated To Counter Chinese Threats In Taiwan & Broader Indo-Pacific

Washington: US Prez Joe Biden signed a \$95.3 billion package of aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan on Wednesday, reaffirming US support for Ukraine in the fight against Russia's military assault after months of congressional gridlock put the centerpiece of the White House's foreign policy in jeopardy.

The aid is broken up into four pieces: a measure for each of the three US allies. The bill includes \$60.8 billion for Ukraine; \$26.4 billion for Israel and humanitarian aid for civilians in conflict zones, including Gaza; and \$8.1 billion to counter Chinese threats in Taiwan and the broader Indo-Pacific. It also includes sanctions against Iranian and Russian officials. The House also added a provision that would require the prez to seek repayment from the Ukrainian govt of \$10 billion.

"It's a good day for world peace," Biden said from the White House. "It's going to make America safer, it's going to make the world safer and it continues America's leadership in the world and everyone knows it."

The Senate voted overwhelmingly to approve the package Tuesday night, a sign of bipartisan support after increasingly divisive politics raised questions on Capitol Hill and among US allies over whether the US would continue to back Ukraine. The 79-18 vote provided Biden another legislative accomplishment. Even as he hailed the package, Biden said the process should have "been easier, and should have gotten there sooner. But in the end we did what America always does. We rose to the moment."

As he manages support for two wars, Biden is also facing backlash in the US over his support of Israel in the war in the Gaza Strip. "My commitment to Israel," Biden said, "is ironclad." He added the package included \$1 billion for humanitarian aid that the president says



Biden said, "It's a good day for world peace. It's going to make America safer, it's going to make world safer"

## US quietly shipped long-range ATACMS missiles to Ukraine

The US in recent weeks secretly shipped long-range missiles to Ukraine for use in its battle to fight off Russian invaders, and Ukraine last week used them for the first time, a US official said on Wednesday. The missiles were contained in a \$300 million military aid package for Ukraine that US Prez Joe Biden approved on March 12, said the US official. The official would not say how many of the missiles were sent. The missiles were used for the first time on April 17, launched against a Russian airfield in Crimea, the official said. Whether to send the Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS) with a range up to 300km was a subject of debate within the Biden administration for months. Mid-range ATACMS were supplied last Sept. REUTERS

will be rushed to Gaza. "Israel must make sure this aid reaches all of the Palestinians in Gaza, without delay," he said.

The signing capped a long road for the White House, one of careful political maneuvering with a new House speaker. It involved impressing upon members of Congress that Ukraine could lose the war without the desperately needed aid. Biden also instructed his top aides to prove Speaker Mike Johnson with regular security briefings on the risks of not sending aid, according to administration officials. Johnson has said the briefings were key factor to winning over his support. NYT

## TikTok says will fight US ban law in court

► Continued from P1

Asked about the Senate's vote, the Chinese foreign ministry referred on Wednesday to comments the ministry had made in March when the House of Representatives passed a similar bill. At the time, it criticised the legislation, arguing "though the US has never found any evidence of TikTok posing a threat to the US's national security, it has never stopped going after TikTok."

TikTok is set to challenge the bill on First Amendment grounds and its users are also expected to again take legal action. A US judge in Montana in Nov blocked a state ban on TikTok, citing free speech grounds. The American Civil Liberties Union said banning or requiring divestiture of TikTok would "set an alarming global precedent for excessive govt control over social media platforms".

TikTok, which says it has not shared and would not share US user data with Chinese govt, has told employees it would quickly go to court to try to block the legislation. "This is the beginning, not the end of this long process," it told staff Saturday in an email seen by Reuters.

The Senate voted 79 to 18 in favour of the bill. The TikTok divestment directive won fast-track approval after being introduced just weeks ago.

If ByteDance failed to divest TikTok, app stores operated by Apple, Google and others could not legally offer TikTok or provide web hosting services to ByteDance-controlled apps or TikTok's website. The bill would also give the White House new tools to ban or force the sale of other foreign-owned apps it deems to be security threats.

It could also be an issue in the Nov prez election race, Biden's signing sets a Jan 19 dead-



Biden's re-election campaign plans to continue using TikTok, a campaign official said Wednesday

## TikTok halts reward feature on app in EU over addiction worries

TikTok said Wednesday that it's halting a feature on its new app rewarding users in Europe for watching videos, after facing pressure from regulators worried about its addictive features. The company backed down days after the EU warned that the TikTok Lite app might have breached the bloc's digital regulations when it launched earlier this month. The EU's executive Commission threatened to order the suspension of features that pose a risk to kids. AP

line for a sale — one day before his term is set to expire — but he could extend the deadline by three months if he determines ByteDance is making progress. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump said Monday that Biden was "pushing" for a ban on TikTok and would be the one responsible if a ban were imposed, urging voters to take notice. Biden's re-election campaign plans to continue using TikTok, a campaign official said Wednesday. Trump's campaign has not joined TikTok.

In 2020, then-Prez Trump was blocked by the courts in his bid to block TikTok. However, the new law is likely to give the Biden administration a stronger legal footing to ban TikTok if ByteDance fails to divest the app, experts say. REUTERS

# Won't go by 'Marxist interpretation' of wealth redistribution, says SC

Dhananjay.Mahapatra  
@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** With the political slugfest over redistribution of wealth escalating, Supreme Court on Wednesday said it will not adhere to Justice V R Krishna Iyer's 1977 Marxian interpretation of Article 39(b) of the Constitution that a community's "material resources" would include private properties for reallocation to subserve the common good.

Engaged in interpreting the ambit of Article 39(b) of Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution, a nine-judge bench of CJI D Y Chandrachud and Justices Hrishikesh Roy, B V Nagarathna, S Dhulia, J B Pardiwala, Manoj Misra, R Bindal, S C Sharma and A G Masih said there must be a distinction between community resources, held in trust by the present generation for future generations,

## 'CANNOT TAKE PERSONAL PROPERTY'

➤ Bench says there **must be a distinction between community resources**, held in trust by the present generation for future generations, **and privately owned property**

➤ **Community property would include natural resources** as these too are held in trust for future generations, **hints CJI**

➤ Adds that Article 39(b) **'should not be taken to the level of taking someone's personal property** for distribution'

and privately owned property.

"We don't have to go as far as the Marxist socialist interpretation by Justice Krishna Iyer [of Article 39(b) in Ranganatha Reddy case of 1977]. But community resources will surely include resources which the present generation holds in trust based on inter-generational equity," the CJI said.

He said there were two extreme views on this: "The Marxist socialist view is everything belongs to the state and the community. The capitalist view puts importance on individual rights. And there is the Gandhian view of holding resources in trust for protecting inter-generational equity."

Speaking for the bench, the CJI indicated community property would include natural resources, exploitation of which is governed by the SC-defined sustainable development norms, as these are held in trust by the present community for future generations. However, he caveated it by saying forests, lakes and mines, even if held privately, would constitute community resources, benefits arising from which for the greater common good could not be stultified invoking individual rights.

► **Continued on P 11**