

Government ready for discussion on NEET

But that should happen by maintaining decorum, Pradhan

NEW DELHI, June 28 (PTI)

UNION Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday said the Government is ready for discussion on the medical entrance exam NEET but that should take place as per tradition and by maintaining decorum.

Interacting with reporters after the Lok Sabha was adjourned for the day amid protests by the Opposition demanding a discussion on the alleged irregularities in the conduct of the exam, the minister appealed to them not to confuse the students.

"The Government is ready for



Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan during Parliament session, in New Delhi, on Friday. (PTI)

Centre's panel on exam reforms seeks suggestions from stakeholders till July 7

NEW DELHI, June 28 (PTI)

THE Centre's high-level panel on examination reforms has sought suggestions and feedback from stakeholders, including students and parents, till July 7, Ministry of

Education officials said on Friday. Amid a raging row on alleged irregularities in exams, the panel headed by former ISRO chief R Radhakrishnan has been tasked with making recommendations on reforms in the examination process.

Indefinite sit-in by students enters 3rd day, agitation against NTA continues

NEW DELHI, June 28 (PTI)

THE agitation against alleged irregularities in NEET-UG, PG and UGC-NET continued on Friday, with protests by several student groups entering the third day of their indefi-

nite strike here at Jantar Mantar. Left-backed student outfit All India Student Association and Delhi University's Krantikari Yuva Sangathan, along with various other groups gathered, at Jantar Mantar for protest.

every kind of discussion, but everything should happen following norms and maintaining decorum. The President spoke about the exam in her speech yesterday and it shows the Government's intention that we are ready to face any issue," Pradhan said. He said the Government's responsibility is towards the youth and students of the country.

CBI SEEKS REMAND OF 4 GODHRA-BASED ACCUSED ARRESTED BY GUJ POLICE: THE CBI on Friday sought 4-day remand of four of the five persons arrested by Gujarat police for alleged involvement in irregularities in the May 5 NEET-UG exam held in Godhra in Panchmahal district. CBI lawyer Dhruv Malik informed the district court that though Gujarat police had conducted a probe earlier, the agency needed the custody of these accused as it is conducting a fresh investigation.

Navy bids farewell to UH-3H helicopter after 17 years

NEW DELHI, June 28 (PTI)

THE Indian Navy on Friday bid adieu to UH-3H helicopter -- a versatile platform that has played a crucial role in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations -- after 17 years of glorious service, officials said.

The de-induction ceremony was held at INS Dega, Visakhapatnam.

The event was presided by Vice Admiral Sameer Saxena, Chief of Staff, Eastern Naval Command. Veteran officers and sailors of the UH3H squadron graced the event with

families reminiscing the yeoman service of the helicopter.

The UH-3H helicopter will be replaced by Sea King 42C helicopter at INS 350. "We will continue and deliver operational power and capability," a spokesperson of the Navy said in a statement.

The de-induction ceremony of UH-3H helicopter marks the end of a remarkable era that introduced innovative capabilities in special operations and search and rescue (SAR) missions, the officials said.

The operational role of the UH-3H in the constantly evolving and dynamic maritime



A UH-3H helicopter 'Saaras' of the Indian Navy during its de-induction ceremony after 17 years of service at INS Dega in Visakhapatnam on Friday. (PTI)

environment will remain forever etched in the history of the Indian naval aviation, they said.

Brought to the Indian shores in 2007 along with INS Jalashwa, the UH-3H helicopter was inducted into INAS 350 christened 'Saaras' on March 24, 2009 at INS Dega, Visakhapatnam, the statement said. This versatile helicopter played a crucial role in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations, security of offshore installations and special operations. Its advanced SAR capabilities and logistical support were vital during natural disasters.

Xi lauds relevance of *Panchsheel* to end world conflicts

■ By K J M Varma

BEIJING, June 28 (PTI)

CHINESE President Xi Jinping on Friday highlighted the relevance of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which gained traction with the Non-Aligned Movement, to end the present-day conflicts and sought to expand influence in the Global South amid its tussle with the West.

Xi, 71, invoked the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, termed as Panchsheel by India, at a conference here to mark its 70th anniversary and also sought to juxtapose them with his new concept of Global Security Initiative envisaging a shared future for mankind.

The Panchsheel pointers were first formally enunciated in the Agreement on Trade and



Intercourse between the Tibet region of China and India signed on April 29, 1954, according to the Ministry of External Affairs.

The five principles formed part of the legacy of the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his Chinese counterpart Zhou Enlai in their unsuccessful quest to find a solution to the vexed boundary issue.

"The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence answered

the call of the times, and its initiation was an inevitable historic development. The Chinese leadership in the past specified the Five Principles in their entirety for the first time, namely, 'mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity', 'mutual non-aggression', 'mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs', 'equality and mutual benefit', and 'peaceful coexistence'," Xi said. "They included the Five Principles in the China-India and China-Myanmar joint statements which jointly called for making them basic norms for state-to-state relations," Xi said at the conference where the invitees included former Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa and several political leaders and officials from various countries closely associated with China over the

years.

The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence were born in Asia but quickly ascended to the world stage. In 1955, more than 20 Asian and African countries attended the Bandung Conference, Xi recalled in his address.

The Non-Aligned Movement that rose in the 1960s adopted the Five Principles as its guiding principles, he said.

"The Five Principles have set a historic benchmark for international relations and international rule of law," he said, highlighting their relevance to ending the present-day conflicts. They fully conform with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, with the evolving trend of international relations of our times, and with the fundamental interests of all nations, Xi said.

Putin calls for resuming intermediate-range missiles production

- Intermediate-range missiles were banned under the now-scrapped INF Treaty with the US



MOSCOW, June 28 (AP)

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin has called for resuming production of intermediate-range missiles that were banned under the now-scrapped INF Treaty with the US.

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty, which banned ground-based missiles with a range of 500-5,500 kilometers (310-3,410 miles) was regarded as an arms control

landmark when Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and US President Ronald Reagan signed it in 1988.

The United States withdrew from the treaty in 2019, citing Russian violations. "We need to start production of these strike systems and then, based on the actual situation, make decisions about where - if necessary to ensure our safety - to place them," Putin said at a meeting of Russia's national security council.

Biden, Trump trade charges during 1st presidential debate

ATLANTA, June 28 (PTI)

PRESIDENT Joe Biden and his Republican rival Donald Trump sparred over the economy, border, foreign policy, abortion and national security during the first of presidential debates as they called each other a liar and the worst president in the history of the US.

During their roughly 90-minute debate defined by personal attacks on Thursday night, Biden called Trump a sucker and loser. "I was recently in France for D-Day, and I spoke to all about those heroes that died. I went to the World War II cemetery - the World War I cemetery he refused to go to," Biden, the presumptive



Joe Biden

candidate of the Democratic Party, said, referring to Trump, who declined to visit the ceme-



Donald Trump

tery in 2018.

"He was standing with his four-star general, and he told

me, he said, 'I don't want to go in there, because they're a bunch of losers and suckers. My son was not a loser. He's not a sucker. You're the sucker. You're the loser,'" Biden said.

Trump said that the quotes were made up in a third-rate magazine and he later fired the general.

On the age factor, 81-year-old Biden reminded that 78-year-old Trump is just three years younger than him.

Trump called Biden a criminal after the latter called him a "convicted felon," referring to his conviction in a New York hush-money case.

"Joe could be a convicted felon with all of the things that he's done, he's done horrible

things. This man is a criminal. This man, you're lucky, you're lucky, I did nothing wrong. We have a system that was rigged and disgusting," Trump said.

"When he talks about a convicted felon, his son (Hunter Biden) is a convicted felon, at a very high level," he alleged.

As the two leaders sparred over various issues, Biden accused Trump that he does not know what he is talking about.

"He has no idea what the hell he's talking about. I've never heard so much foolishness. This is the guy who wants to get out of NATO. You're going to stay in NATO? He's going to pull out of NATO," Biden said.

Biden alleged that Trump has the morals of an alley cat.

China expert Misri is new foreign secy

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Govt announced Friday deputy NSA Vikram Misri, an IFS officer of 1989 batch, will take over as foreign secretary from incumbent Vinay Kwatra on July 15. While there has been no formal word yet, Kwatra is widely tipped to be the next Indian ambassador to the US.

Before joining as deputy NSA, Misri's most high-profile posting was as ambassador to China from early 2019 to 2021. Misri handled relations with Beijing during one of the most tumultuous periods in the bilateral ties in recent times that saw the eruption of the ongoing military standoff in eastern Ladakh



Misri's most high-profile posting was as ambassador to China from early 2019 to 2021

in May 2000 and the subsequent Galwan clash from which the relationship is yet to recover.

Speaking a month after the clash in 2020, Misri had said the only way to resolve the standoff was for China to

realise that trying to change the status quo by resorting to force or coercion, is not the right way forward.

He had then warned China that such actions won't just damage the peace and tranquility that existed at the border earlier but will also have "ripples and repercussions" for the broader bilateral relationship. India continues to officially maintain that there won't be business as usual with China till the time disengagement is completed in the remaining areas in eastern Ladakh, even though Beijing doesn't want the border issue to block normal bilateral exchanges.

Misri, who has worked as private secretary to three

PMs—IK Gujral, Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi, is also well versed in neighbourhood affairs as he has served as India's ambassador to Myanmar and also in Pakistan and Sri Lanka in different capacities. He has also served as ambassador to Spain and as political counselor in the Indian embassy in Washington. Misri has worked a joint secretary in the PMO too.

The appointments committee of the Cabinet has approved the name of Misri, the deputy NSA in the National Security Council Secretariat, to the post of foreign secretary with effect from July 15, an official notification said. Kwatra had earlier been given extension till Oct.

FATF: India has reached high level of compliance to curb laundering

But Stresses Need To Boost Steps In Some Non-Financial Sectors

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Financial Action Task Force has said that India has reached a high level of technical compliance and backed its anti-money laundering and counter terror financing efforts, while underlining the need for improvements to strengthen supervision and implementation of preventive measures in some non-financial sectors and address delays in concluding prosecutions. It also sought checks to prevent the non-profit sector from being abused for terror financing.

India has been placed in the "regular follow-up" category, along with four other G20 members, the finance ministry said.

Following an evaluation of the Indian regime, the agency that leads the action to tackle money laundering, terrorist and proliferation financing, said the good results included access to basic and beneficial ownership information, use of financial intelligence, and depriving criminals of their assets and counter-proliferation financing measures.

MEA called it a good and an astounding outcome for India. "It is a significant achievement in that sense," said the



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spokesperson.

Govt sources said they were waiting for FATF to publish its report, which will give detailed recommended actions, which will be analysed in detail. "India has also developed an action plan as part of its national risk assessment. A fresh national risk assessment is also due in 2025 and all the issues flagged by FATF will be addressed in due course. But, again the issues flagged by FATF are not significant deficiencies," said a source.

Commenting on the non-financial sector, sources said players such as real estate agents, dealers in precious metals and stones, professional accountants, virtual asset service providers were brought under PMLA recently and India substantiated the sustainability of the framework.

"India's performance on FATF Mutual Evaluation holds significant advantages for the country's growing economy, as it demonstrates the overall stability and in-

tegrity of the financial system. Good ratings will lead to better access to global financial markets and institutions and increase investor confidence. It will also help in the global expansion of UPI," an official statement said.

It said that FATF recognised gov't's efforts in measures implemented to transition from a cash-based to a digital economy to reduce money laundering (ML) and terror financing (TF) risks, as well as steps on financial inclusion.

"This recognition from the FATF is a testament to the rigorous and effective measures implemented by India over the last 10 years to safeguard its financial system from ML/TF threats. It underscores the country's commitment to international standards and its proactive stance in the global fight against financial crimes," the statement said.

In what was probably a reference to Pakistan, which was until recently on the "gray list", the gov't said: "This sets a benchmark for countries in our region to effectively implement international standards on terrorist financing."

FATF also took Turkey, often linked to dirty money, out of the gray list.

Highest June Day Rainfall In 88 Years Leaves Five Dead & A Flood Of Woes

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New Delhi: Scorched and parched by record heat and dry spell over the past two months, Delhiites had been yearning for the monsoon. But when it arrived unexpectedly on Friday morning, it brought with it a deluge the likes of which the city hadn't seen in nearly three decades.

The city's base station Safdarjung recorded 228.1mm of rain in 24 hours — the highest on a single day since 1996 and the wettest day in June since

▶ EDIT PG: How To Tackle Our Cities' Monsoon Mess

1936 — with as much as 148.5mm falling in just three hours from 2.30am to 5.30am.

IMD promptly declared the arrival of monsoon in Delhi, revising its earlier onset forecast of May 29-30. The agency had forecast light to moderate rain for Friday but Safdarjung recorded "extremely heavy" showers, turning it into a day of traffic trauma and rain-related mishaps. In Vasant Vihar, three labourers fell into a rainwater-filled pit at a construction site and were feared dead, with search still on to

Photos: Rajesh Mehta/PTI



A car lies submerged in a rainwater-filled Mangi Bridge next to Red Fort on Friday; (right) a car falls into a caved-in section of a road in northwest Delhi's Rohini locality

228.1 mm rain in 24 hours, wettest day in city in 28 yrs & highest in June since 1936

30% of Delhi's annual rain fell in a single day

8th day of 100mm+ rain in city in last 4 yrs

Traffic nightmare as jams on 376 stretches

As many as 68 major locations and 308 other stretches in the city witnessed traffic jams as roads were flooded with rainwater, or blocked by fallen trees and vehicles that had broken down. **P5**

find the bodies. Two boys, aged 8 and 10, drowned in a ditch in northeast Delhi's New Usmanpur. In Greater Noida, three kids died in a wall collapse

Pragati tunnel goes under, shut down

The showpiece Pragati Maidan transit corridor, inaugurated by the PM just two years ago, was flooded once again and inaccessible to commuters. So was the Minto bridge underpass. **P5**

Flooding across Delhi with a traffic gridlock and waterlogged underpasses — with spots like Minto Bridge and Pragati tunnel turning into ri-

Hindon & Yamuna levels under watch

The Noida administration issued an advisory, urging people living in the Hindon and Yamuna floodplains to stay alert. Currently, water levels in the two rivers are below the danger mark. **P4**

vers as drain capacities were breached — forced office-goers to rework their schedules.

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Jaishankar to attend SCO summit in Kazakhstan

NEW DELHI, June 28 (ANI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will lead the Indian delegation at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit next week, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced on Friday.

The SCO summit will take place from July 3-4 in Astana, the capital city of Kazakhstan.

“The External affairs minister will be leading our delega-

tion there,” MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said during a weekly briefing here.

Kazakhstan took over the SCO presidency from India, which was the president last year. India hosted the SCO summit virtually in July 2023. This year’s host is Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, who has proposed, among other initiatives, the establishment of a joint investment fund.