

Indian Navy participates in RIMPAC naval exercise

NEW DELHI, June 29 (PTI)

THE Indian Navy has joined the world's largest naval military wargame Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) in Hawaii.

Twenty-nine nations, 40 surface ships, three submarines, over 150 aircraft and more than 25,000 personnel are going to train and operate in and around the Hawaiian Islands during the exercise, according to the US Navy. The Indian Navy has deployed frontline warship INS Shivalik for the RIMPAC.

"Indian multi-role stealth frigate INS Shivalik, mission deployed in South China Sea and North Pacific Ocean, has reached Pearl Harbour in Hawaii to take part in the RIMPAC exercise," Indian Navy spokesperson Commander



Vivek Madhwal said on Saturday. The harbour phase of the exercise is taking place from June 27 to July 7.

The sea phase of RIMPAC is divided into three sub-phases which will witness ships undertaking various exercises.

The exercise will witness the participation of an aircraft carrier battle group, submarines, maritime reconnaissance aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles,

remotely piloted surface ships and also an amphibious force landing operations, Commander Madhwal said.

The RIMPAC exercise will run till August 1.

"The Rim of the Pacific exercise has grown over the years to be the world's largest and premier joint combined maritime training opportunity," said Vice Admiral John Wade, commander, the US 3rd Fleet.

Lt Gen Dwivedi to take over as Army chief today

NEW DELHI, June 29 (ANI)

LIEUTENANT General Upendra Dwivedi will on Sunday take over as the next chief of the Indian Army on Sunday succeeding General Manoj Pande on completion of his 26-month tenure.

Lt. Gen. Dwivedi would be the 30th Chief of the Army Staff and is taking over at a time when the force is undergoing major modernisation through indigenisation along with structural reforms.

Lt. Gen. Dwivedi has had a long tenure as the Northern Army Commander where he has had long exposure to the ongoing operations in the military stand-off on the LAC in eastern Ladakh.

The Government appointed Lt. Gen. Upendra Dwivedi, as the next Chief of the Army Staff with effect from the afternoon of June 30, 2024.

Born on July 1, 1964, Lt. Gen. Upendra Dwivedi was commissioned into the Jammu & Kashmir Rifles of the Indian Army on December 15, 1984.

During his long and distinguished service spanning nearly 40 years, he has served in a

variety of Command, Staff, Instructional and foreign appointments.

The Command appointments of Lt. Gen. Dwivedi include Command of 18 Jammu & Kashmir Rifles Battalion 26 Sector Assam Rifles

brigade, Inspector General, Assam Rifles (East) and 9 Corps.

In the rank of Lt. Gen., the officer has tenanted important appointments including that of Director General Infantry.

An alumnus of Sainik School Rewa, National Defence College and US Army War College, Lt. Gen. Upendra Dwivedi has also undergone courses at the DSSC Wellington and Army War College, Mhow.



ALL eyes on healthcare reforms in Union Budget

■ Experts and industry leaders highlight the importance of prioritising preventive healthcare measures, strengthening infrastructure, and increasing healthcare spending



NEW DELHI, June 29 (PTI)

ECHOING the urgency of healthcare reforms ranging from restructuring of Ayushman Bharat Yojana (AB-PMJAY) to accelerating the digital health mission, experts and industry leaders have outlined key priorities for the Modi Government in its third consecutive term.

Their statements highlight the importance of prioritising preventive healthcare measures, strengthening infrastructure, and increasing healthcare spending.

Healthcare experts have expressed concern about whether the Government in its new term will make any difference by increasing public expenditure on healthcare to the desired level in India.

Notably, the National Health Policy (NHP) 2017, which promises to increase public health spending to 2.5 per cent of the GDP, remains overdue even as Indians rely heavily on private services.

Dr Girdhar Gyani, Director General, AHPI (Association of Healthcare Providers, India) said, "In the upcoming term, we urge the Government to pri-

oritise a comprehensive approach to fostering a 'Healthy India'. This entails promoting preventive health measures focusing on sanitation, clean drinking water, and nutrition, alongside the rapid implementation of health and wellness centres for preventive health education and screening." Intensifying the 'Fit India Movement', strengthening occupational health schemes, and restructuring the Ayushman Bharat Yojana to reach all SECC-2011 beneficiaries are also crucial steps, Dr Gyani said.

He also highlighted the

importance of incentivising the private sector to establish tertiary care facilities in tier-III cities, promoting the indigenisation of medical equipment, and accelerating the National Digital Health Mission to address healthcare infrastructure gaps and achieve universal health coverage through increased Government spending. Expressing his views, Probal Ghosal, Chairman and Director, Ujala Cygnus Group of Hospitals said, "As we embark on the next five-year term under the newly-elected Government, there's a prime opportunity to catalyse transformation in the healthcare infrastructure, enhancing the lives of millions."

"Increased healthcare spending, coupled with initiatives like AB-PMJAY, can benefit both the public and private sector, albeit requiring adjustments in pricing structures. Addressing the shortage of healthcare staff and providing

regulatory relief, particularly in GST input credit, will alleviate burden on the industry," Ghosal said.

"Moreover, focusing on India's potential as a medical tourism destination can boost revenue for private hospitals and establish the nation as a global healthcare leader," he pointed out. Abhishek Kapoor, CEO, Regency Health, said the new Government faces a critical opportunity to prioritise universal healthcare.

"A comprehensive roadmap is essential, focusing on long-term infrastructure financing, expanding medical education, and implementing fiscal reforms in health insurance. Elevating the healthcare budget to 2.5 per cent of GDP is pivotal for progress," Kapoor said.

Streamlining the GST framework, enhancing healthcare professional skills, and strengthening infrastructure in tier II and III cities are equally crucial, he added.

Wrong to equate judges with God: CJI

KOLKATA, June 29 (IANS)

THE Chief Justice of India (CJI), DY Chandrachud, on Saturday, observed that the trend of equating judges with God is dangerous since the task of judges is to serve public interest.

"Too very often, we are addressed as Honour or as Lordship or as Ladyship. There is a very grave danger when people say that the court is a temple of justice. There is a grave danger that we perceive ourselves as the deities in those temples," CJI Chandrachud said while addressing the Regional Conference of National Judicial Academy here on Saturday morning.

Judiciary must be pure, free of political bias: Mamata

KOLKATA, June 29 (PTI)

WEST Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday called for a judiciary free of any political bias, maintaining that it should be "absolutely pure."

Banerjee also said the judiciary is the big pillar of India's foundation to save democracy, the Constitution and people's interests.

"Please see to it that (there is) no political bias in the judiciary. The judiciary must be

absolutely pure, honest and sacred. Let people worship it," the CM said at the inauguration of the East Zone II regional conference of the National Judicial Academy here.

Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court T S Sivagnanam were among those present at the programme. The judiciary is an important temple for people and the supreme authority for delivering justice, Banerjee said.

The CJI said that he feels reticent when he is told that the court is the temple of justice because the temple postulates that the judges are in the position of a deity.

"I would rather recast the role of the judge as a server of the people. And when you regard yourselves as people who are there to serve others, then you bring in the notion of compassion, of empathy, of judging but not being judgmental about others," the CJI said.

He said that even while sentencing anyone in a criminal case, the judges do that with a sense of compassion, since at the end, a human being is being sentenced.

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Pak seeks small arms from US

WASHINGTON/ISLAMABAD, June 29 (PTI)

PAKISTAN'S Ambassador to the US has urged the US to provide small arms and modern equipment to his country to ensure the success of Operation Azm-i-Istehkam, Islamabad's newly approved counter-terrorism initiative.

The decision to launch the 'Azm-e-Istehkam' operation was taken on June 22 at the apex committee meeting of the National Action Plan, a strategy approved in 2014 to eliminate militancy from the country. The federal Government recently approved the reinvigorated national counter-terrorism drive.

"Pakistan has launched Azm-i-Istehkam (...) to oppose and dismantle terrorist networks. For that, we need sophisticated small arms and communication equipment," Ambassador Masood Khan was quoted as saying by the 'Dawn' newspaper. He made these remarks while addressing US policymakers, scholars, intelligentsia, and corporate leaders at a Washington think tank, the Wilson Centre, earlier this week. Khan elaborated that 'Azm-i-Istehkam' comprises three components: Doctrinal, societal, and operational. He noted that work on the first two phases has already begun, with the third phase set to be implemented soon.

5 soldiers swept away in Ladakh flash floods

NEW DELHI, June 29 (PTI)

FIVE soldiers, including a Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO), were killed during an exercise early Saturday as their Russian-origin T-72 tank was swept away following flash floods in the Shyok river near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, officials said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said he was deeply saddened by the unfortunate accident that occurred in the river near Saser Brangsa.

Two T-72 tanks were trying to cross Shyok around 1 am and one of them got stuck in high currents in the river, the officials said, adding the melting of snow resulted in the increase in the water levels.

The Army deployed rescue teams but the mission didn't succeed in view of the raging waters in the river.

The deceased personnel are MRK Reddy, Subhan Khan, Bhupendra Negi, E Teibam and Sadarbonia Nagaraju. "Deeply saddened at the loss of lives of five of our brave

Indian Army soldiers in an unfortunate accident while getting the tank across a river in Ladakh," Singh said on X.

"We will never forget exemplary service of our gallant soldiers to the nation. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families," he said.

"The nation stands firm with them during this hour of grief," he said.

The soldiers belonged to the 52 Armoured Regiment deployed at Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO) military base in the strategically located region close to the LAC with China.

"...While de-inducting from a military training activity, an army tank got stuck in the Shyok River, near Saser Brangsa, Eastern Ladakh due to sudden increase in the water level," the Army's Leh-based Fire and Fury Corps said.

"Rescue teams rushed to the location, however, due to high current and water levels, the rescue mission didn't succeed, and the tank crew lost their lives," it said.

"The Indian Army regrets
(Contd on page 5)

Two T-72 tanks were trying to cross Shyok around 1 am and one of them got stuck in high currents in the river

Kharge, Rahul, Priyanka express grief

NEW DELHI, June 29 (PTI)

CONGRESS President Mallikarjun Kharge and party leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra expressed sorrow at the death of five soldiers who drowned when their T-72 tanks sank due to a flash flood in the Shyok river in Ladakh on Saturday. "Deeply distressed at the loss of lives of five Indian Army brave hearts, including a JCO (junior commissioned officer), while getting a T-72 tank across a river in Ladakh," Kharge said in a post on X.

"Our heartfelt condolences to

the families of the Army personnel who fell victim to this painful tragedy. In this hour of grief, the nation stands together in saluting the exemplary service of our valiant soldiers," he added.

Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, said the news of the soldiers' death was extremely sad.

"The news of the martyrdom of five Indian Army soldiers in an accident during a military exercise of a tank crossing a river in Ladakh is extremely sad," he said in a post in Hindi on X.

"While paying my humble
(Contd on page 5)

India's Cup of Glory

Rohit the Captain : Virat the Winner

Rahul Dravid the Master

By R Kaushik
BRIDGETOWN, June 29

ROHIT Sharma sprawled on the turf on his belly at cover, pounding the grass with his open right palm. His side had staged one of the great escape acts, overturning near certain defeat into a scarcely believable victory, by seven runs, to wrap their hands around the T20 World Cup for the first time since 2007.

In a fascinating final that produced a great contest which wasn't necessarily of the highest quality, India's formula of putting runs on the board and defending them, which has worked for them since they moved to the Caribbeans for the Super Eight stage, again paid handsome dividends at the Kensington Oval on Saturday.

South Africa, in their first World Cup final, were on track for a cracking win after Heinrich Klaasen trumped Virat Kohli's measured 76 with a 23-ball half-century. India's



176 for seven was beginning to look too few when Klaasen was taking the spinners, especially Axar Patel, to the cleaners; at 151 for four after 16 overs, South Africa needed just 26 from 24 deliveries when Hardik Pandya, sparingly used, turned the match on its head.

With his first ball of the spell, the vice-captain elicited a waft from Klaasen that nestled in Rishabh Pant's gloves. Energised by that dismissal, India lifted themselves; having almost resigned themselves to a third defeat in as many finals in the last 13 months, they found a second wind, Pandya and Jasprit Bumrah and Arshdeep Singh bowling superbly, the fielding agile and switched on. South Africa felt the heat and allowed the equation to get out of hand, taking it down to 16 off the last over.

Pandya's first ball was a full toss which David Miller swung with all his might. As the ball hovered around long-off, Suryakumar Yadav ran to his left, clutched the ball in both hands, then tossed it up in the air as he was getting out of the field of play. He sauntered back in and pouched it as if it was the easiest thing to do, pressure or no pressure. The rest was routine business as South Africa slumped to 169 for eight.
(Contd on page 5)



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Jaishankar to visit Qatar today

NEW DELHI, June 29 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will travel to Qatar on Sunday to hold talks with Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al



Thani with a focus on exploring ways to expand bilateral cooperation in areas of trade, investment and energy.

Jaishankar's visit comes four-and-half months after Qatar released eight former Indian Navy personnel, who were sentenced to death after being arrested in August 2022.

"During the visit, he will meet the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

It said the visit would "enable both sides to review various aspects of bilateral relations, including political, trade, investment, energy, security, cultural and people-to-people as well as the regional and international issues of mutual interest".

It is expected that Jaishankar and Al Thani would also deliberate on the overall situation in West Asia against the backdrop of Israel's continuing military offensives in Gaza.