

India, UK to hold next round of talks on proposed trade agreement this month

NEW DELHI, July 7 (PTI)

WITH THE new Government taking charge in Britain, senior officials of India and the UK will hold the next round of talks this month for the proposed free trade agreement to resolve the pending issues and close the negotiations, an official said. The India-UK talks for the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) began in January 2022. The 14th round of talks stalled as the two nations stepped into their general election cycles.

The official said the two sides are in touch, and the next round would start this month only.

Britain's newly-elected Prime Minister Keir Starmer spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday and said he stood ready to conclude an FTA that

worked for both sides.

The two leaders agreed to work towards the early conclusion of a mutually beneficial India-UK FTA. There are pending issues in both the goods and services sectors.

The Indian industry is demanding greater access for its skilled professionals from sectors like IT and healthcare in the UK market, besides market access for several goods at nil customs duty. On the other hand, the UK is seeking a significant cut in import duties on goods such as scotch whiskey, electric vehicles, lamb meat, chocolates and certain confectionary items.

Britain is also looking for more opportunities for UK services in Indian markets in segments like telecommuni-

cations, legal and financial services (banking and insurance). The two countries are also negotiating a bilateral investment treaty (BIT).

There are 26 chapters in the agreement, which include goods, services, investments and intellectual property rights.

The bilateral trade between India and the UK increased to USD 21.34 billion in 2023-24 from 20.36 billion in 2022-23.

The Labour Party's election manifesto for the recent polls also committed to clinching the deal. The new Starmer-led Government's new Foreign Secretary David Lammy is also on the record saying that he wants to finish the job on the FTA and plans to visit India within the first month of being elected.

Austria visit will strengthen close ties: PM Modi

NEW DELHI, July 7 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that his visit to Austria, starting July 9, will further strengthen the 'ever-close partnership' between the two nations.

Ahead of his visit to Austria, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday the shared values of democracy, freedom and the rule of law form the bedrock upon which the two countries will build an ever-closer partnership. Modi's remark came a day after Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer posted on 'X', "I very much look forward to welcoming Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, the world's largest democracy, next week in Vienna." "This visit is a special honour as it marks the first visit by an Indian PM in over 40 years and a significant milestone as we celebrate 75 years of diplomatic relations with India," he said.

"We will have the opportunity to talk about further deepening our bilateral relationship on the many geopolitical challenges," the Austrian chancellor said. Responding to Nehammer, Modi said, "Thank you, Chancellor Karl Nehammer. It is indeed an honour to visit Austria to mark this historic occasion. I look forward to our discussions on strengthening bonds between our nations."

Adversary across border using foreign mercenaries to create **FEAR**: J&K DGP

DODA/JAMMU, July 7 (PTI)

THE adversary across the border is using foreign mercenaries to create a fear psychosis among the people to sustain terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, police chief R R Swain said on Saturday.

Swain, the Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police, asserted that his force along with other security agencies is committed and determined to eliminate terrorism in the Union Territory.

Talking to reporters in Doda after promoting seven Special Police Officers (SPOs) as constables for their exemplary

bravery during a recent anti-terrorist operation in the Gandoh area of the district, the police chief said people are fully cooperating with the security agencies and it is a matter of time when the terrorists start getting eliminated. Three foreign terrorists were killed in a gunfight in the Gandoh area of the Doda district on June 26. This was the first encounter in Gandoh in more than a decade.

Without naming Pakistan, Swain said, "Our adversary and enemy has posed a challenge, thinking that this is a border

area and they can take advantage of it by pushing foreign terrorists to revive militancy by creating fear (among the people). "They (foreign terrorists) are not in big numbers and we are fully determined to defeat them, like we have done in the past, with the help of other forces and cooperation of the public," he said.

The DGP, who was accompanied by Additional Director General of Police (law and order) Vijay Kumar and ADGP (Jammu zone) Anand Jain, said the foreign mercenaries do not belong to anyone and they also

do not fall in the ambit of law.

"They are involved in mass killings, taking sheep without paying money and their aim is to create fear and force the public into submission and create disturbance. But it cannot be achieved because the people are with us and we will fight them out," the DGP said.

"Police and its security partners are fully determined and committed to defeating the terrorists with the active support of village defence guards, SPOs and commoners. It is only a question of time when they will start getting killed, and they will start getting eliminated," he added.



R R Swain

A F
Ste

Macron votes in legislative elections that could force him to share power

PARIS, July 7 (AP)

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron voted in high-stakes legislative elections on Sunday that could force him to share power with the rising far right.



Macron called the surprise vote after the anti-immigration, nationalist National Rally made huge gains in the June 9 European elections, taking

a huge gamble that French voters would block the far-right party as they always have in the past.

But the National Rally instead won a larger share than ever in the first round on June 30, and its leader Marine Le Pen called on voters to give the party an absolute majority in Round 2. Sunday's vote determines which party controls the National Assembly and who will be Prime Minister. If no party wins an absolute majority, forming a Government comes only after extensive negotiations. The snap elections in this nuclear-armed nation will influence the war in Ukraine, global diplomacy and Europe's economic stability, and they're almost certain to undercut President Emmanuel Macron for the remaining three years of his presidency.

Wickremesinghe to contest Presidential polls as independent

COLOMBO, Jul 7 (PTI)

SRI Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe will contest the Presidential election as an independent candidate, his aide said on Sunday.

Deputy Chairman of the United National Party Ruwan Wijewardene confirmed that the Presidential election will definitely be held and Wickremesinghe, 75, will contest the election as an independent candidate, News 1st reported. "Only one leader possesses the knowledge to solve Sri Lanka's economic crisis. That is Ranil Wickremesinghe. He has proved it with his actions," he was quoted as saying by the news portal.

In April 2022, the island nation declared its first-ever sovereign default since gaining



Independence from Britain in 1948. The unprecedented financial crisis led President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to quit office in 2022 amid civil unrest over his inability to handle the crisis. In July 2022, Wickremesinghe was elected through parliament to become stop-gap president for the balance term of Rajapaksa.

Wickremesinghe, also the finance minister, hasn't made

any public statement on his bid for re-election.

"This election isn't merely about selecting individuals but about choosing the most effective system for our country's progress. If you believe in the merits of the current approach, let us proceed accordingly," the President's Media Division quoted him as saying earlier.

The Government under Wickremesinghe has set in place hard economic reforms as dictated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme.

President Wickremesinghe last month said that his government has finalised a long-delayed debt restructuring agreement for USD 5.8 billion with its bilateral lenders, including India and China, in Paris to meet a key condition of an IMF bailout.

SL Election Commission to announce presidential poll date by July end

COLOMBO, July 7 (PTI)

SRI Lanka's Election Commission on Sunday said that it will announce the date for the next presidential poll before the end of this month.

Election Commission Chairman R M A L Ratnayake said the electoral body would be legally empowered after July 17 to announce the date for the election. The Election Commission in May said the presidential election would be conducted between September 17 and October 16.

Ratnayake said the commission is currently in the

process of putting final touches to the 2024 electoral register which will be the basis for the election. Over 17 million would be eligible to vote in the election as per the revised list, officials said.

His comments came ahead of a court case scheduled for Monday on holding the election. Last week, an individual filed a fundamental rights petition urging the court to hold back the election until a clarification could be made on an ambiguity in the presidential term about articles 30(2) and 82 in the Constitution.



2nd FRONT PAGE

Wickremesinghe to contest Presidential polls as independent

COLOMBO, July 7 (PTI)

Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe will contest the Presidential election as an independent candidate, his aide said on Sunday.

Deputy Chairman of the United National Party Ruwan Wijewardene confirmed that the Presidential election will definitely be held and Wickremesinghe, 75, will contest the election as an independent candidate, News 1st reported. "Only one leader possesses the knowledge to solve Sri Lanka's economic crisis. That is Ranil Wickremesinghe. He has proved it with his actions," he was quoted as saying by the news portal.

In April 2022, the island nation declared its first-ever sovereign default since gaining



Independence from Britain in 1948. The unprecedented financial crisis led President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to quit office in 2022 amid civil unrest over his inability to handle the crisis. In July 2022, Wickremesinghe was elected through parliament to become stop-gap president for the balance term of Rajapaksa.

Wickremesinghe, also the finance minister, hasn't made

any public statement on his bid for re-election.

"This election isn't merely about selecting individuals but about choosing the most effective system for our country's progress. If you believe in the merits of the current approach, let us proceed accordingly," the President's Media Division quoted him as saying earlier.

The Government under Wickremesinghe has set in place hard economic reforms as dictated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme.

President Wickremesinghe last month said that his government has finalised a long-delayed debt restructuring agreement for USD 5.8 billion with its bilateral lenders, including India and China, in Paris to meet a key condition of an IMF bailout.

SL Election Commission to announce presidential poll date by July end

COLOMBO, July 7 (PTI)

Sri Lanka's Election Commission on Sunday said that it will announce the date for the next presidential poll before the end of this month.

Election Commission Chairman R M A L Ranmayake said the electoral body would be legally empowered after July 17 to announce the date for the election. The Election Commission in May said the presidential election would be conducted between September 17 and October 16.

Ranmayake said the commission is currently in the

process of putting final touches to the 2024 electoral register which will be the basis for the election. Over 17 million would be eligible to vote in the election as per the revised list, officials said.

His comments came ahead of a court case scheduled for Monday on holding the election. Last week, an individual filed a fundamental rights petition urging the court to hold back the election until a clarification could be made on an ambiguity in the presidential term about articles 30(2) and 82 in the Constitution.

4 killed in shooting during home party at Kentucky

FLORENCE (US), July 7 (AP)

Four people were killed and three others were wounded in an early Saturday shooting during a party at a home in northern Kentucky, police said.

The shooting suspect later died after fleeing the home and leading police on a vehicle pursuit that ended with the suspect's car falling into a ditch, police said. Police heard shots being fired when they arrived at a home in Florence at about 2:50 am, said Jeff Mallory, the city's police chief. Police found seven shooting victims at the home, Mallory told media during a news conference.

Four people were found dead, police said. Three peo-

ple were taken to a hospital in Cincinnati in critical condition. They were expected to recover, Mallory said.

The suspect led police on a chase that ended after his vehicle went off a road and fell into a ditch. The suspect had a self-inflicted gunshot wound and died at a hospital, police said. Police said the suspect acted alone and there was no ongoing threat to the public. People had gathered at the home for a birthday party for the 21-year-old son of the homeowner, Mallory said. The homeowner died in the shooting, the police chief said. It appeared that the 21-year-old suspect knew people at the party but he had not been invited, Mallory said.



Indian Navy personnel pose for a photo upon their arrival for the multinational maritime exercise RIMPAC 2024 in Hawaii, USA. (PTI)

16 killed in Israeli air strike on Gaza school

GAZA, July 7 (IANS)

At least 16 people have been killed while several others injured in an Israeli air strike on a school in the Gaza Strip, Palestinian officials have said.

According to the Hamas-run Health Ministry, the building was sheltering thousands of displaced people.

In a statement posted on social media platform X on Saturday, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) said that the Air Force struck "several terrorists operating in structures located in the area of UNRWA's Al-Jaouni School in central Gaza".

"This location served as both a hideout and operational infrastructure from which attacks against IDF troops operating in Gaza were direct-



Palestinians look at the aftermath of the Israeli air strike on a UN-run school in the Nussirat refugee camp in the Gaza Strip on Saturday. (AP/PTI)

ed and carried out," it added. The IDF further said that numerous steps were taken pri-

or to the strike in order "to mitigate the risk of harming civilians, including the use of pre-

cise aerial surveillance and additional intelligence".

HAMAS CLEARLY THE WAY FOR A POSSIBLE CEASEFIRE: HAMAS has given its initial approval of a US-backed proposal for a phased ceasefire deal in Gaza, dropping a key demand that Israel commit up front to a complete end to the war, a Hamas official and an Egyptian official said Saturday. The apparent compromise by the militant group, which controlled Gaza before triggering the war with an October 7 attack on Israel, could deliver the first pause in fighting since November and set the stage for further talks on ending a devastating nine months of fighting. But all sides cautioned that a deal is still not guaranteed.

Apna Da(S) leader shot dead in UP over land dispute

FRAYAGRAJ, July 7 (PTI)

A 24-YEAR-OLD local leader of the Apna Da(S) (Soneyla) was shot dead in a village here on Sunday over a land dispute, police said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Gangaganj) Abhishek Bharti said Indrajit alias Momu Patel (24) was murdered by his neighbour Sarvesh Patel in Harchakwapur village under the Soran police station area. He said Sarvesh Patel was arrested from the spot, and added that Mona Patel and the accused were engaged in an old land dispute. According to local villagers, Momu Patel (24) was a secretary in the legal cell of the state-level political party.

Cannot push back B'deshi refugees, Mizo CM tells PM

AIZAWL, July 7 (PTI)

THANKING the people for protesting against his arrest in

TDP will regain past glory in T'gana soon: Naidu

HYDERABAD, July 7 (PTI)

HYDERABAD, July 7 (PTI)



We will restructure the party very soon (in Telugu), Naidu said amid cheers by the party cadre.

Business

SEBI sends

Hindenburg shared Adani report with client two months before publishing it

46-page

show cause notice to Hindenburg

NEW DELHI, July 7 (PTI)

US SHORT-SELLER Hindenburg Research had shared an advance copy of its damning report against Adani group with New York-based hedge fund manager Mark Kingdon about two months before publishing it and profited from a deal to share spoils from share price movement, according to market regulator Sebi.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), in its 46-page show cause notice to Hindenburg, detailed how the US short seller, the New York hedge fund and a broker tied to Kotak Mahindra Bank benefited from the over USD 150 billion routs in the market value of Adani group's 10 listed firms post-publication of the report.

SEBI charged Hindenburg of making "unfair" profits from "collusion" to use "non-public" and "misleading" information and induce "panic selling" in Adani Group stocks.

Hindenburg, which made public the SEBI notice, in its response, has described the show cause as an attempt to "silence and intimidate those who expose corrup-



tion and fraud perpetrated by the most powerful individuals in India" and revealed that the vehicle used to bet against Adani's flagship firm Adani Enterprises Ltd belonged to Kotak Mahindra (International) Ltd, a Mauritius-based subsidiary of Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.

KMIL's fund placed bets on Adani Enterprises Ltd for its client Kingdon's Kingdon Capital Management.

SEBI notice includes extracts of time-stamped chats between an employee of the hedge fund and KMIL traders for selling future contracts in AEL.

Kotak Mahindra Bank has stated that Kingdon "never disclosed that they had any

(Contd on page 5)

Alaska's top-heavy glaciers are approaching an irreversible tipping point

■ By Bethan Davies, Newcastle University
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, July 7 (The Conversation)

THE MELTING of one of North America's largest icefields has accelerated and could soon reach an irreversible tipping point. That's the conclusion of new research colleagues and I have published on the Juneau Icefield, which straddles the Alaska-Canada border near the Alaskan capital of Juneau.

In the summer of 2022, I skied across the flat, smooth and white plateau of the icefield, accompanied by other researchers, sliding in the tracks of the person in front of me under a hot sun. From that plateau, around 40 huge, interconnected glaciers descend towards the sea, with hundreds of smaller glaciers on the mountain peaks all around.



Our work, now published in *Nature Communications*, has shown that Juneau is an example of a climate "feedback" in action: as temperatures are rising, less and less snow is remaining through the summer (technically: the "end-of-summer snowline" is rising). This in turn leads to ice being exposed to sunshine and higher temperatures, which means

more melt, less snow, and so on.

Like many Alaskan glaciers, Juneau's are top-heavy, with lots of ice and snow at high altitudes above the end-of-summer snowline. This previously sustained the glacier tongues lower down. But when the end-of-summer snowline does creep up to the top plateau, then suddenly a large amount of a top-heavy glacier will be newly exposed to melting.

That's what's happening now, each summer, and the glaciers are melting much faster than before, causing the icefield to get thinner and thinner and the plateau to get lower and lower. Once a threshold is passed, these feedbacks can accelerate melt and drive a self-perpetuating loss of snow and ice which would continue even if the world were to stop warming.