

EAM meets Brazil V-P

NEW DELHI, Oct 17 (IANS)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar on Friday held a meeting with the visiting Brazilian Vice President Geraldo Alckmin in New Delhi as both sides discussed ways to enhance cooperation across several sectors, including trade, investment, energy, connectivity, health and technology.

Alckmin is also Brazil's Minister of Development, Industry, Trade and Services.

"A pleasure meeting Geraldo Alckmin, Vice-President and Minister of Development, Industry, Trade and Services of Brazil. Discussed the potential for greater cooperation in trade, investment, energy, connectivity, health and technology," EAM posted on X after the meeting.

On Thursday, Vice President C P Radhakrishnan met his Brazilian counterpart, with talks focused on enhancing energy



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar during a meeting with Vi-P of Brazil Geraldo Alckmin in New Delhi. (PTI)

cooperation, deepening partnerships in pharmaceuticals, defence, research investments, connectivity, and collaborations in emerging areas such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digitalisation.

3 Army personnel hurt in attack by ULFA(I) in Assam

TINSUKIA/DIBRUGARH, Oct 17 (PTI)

THREE Army personnel were injured when members of the banned outfit ULFA(I) fired at the security force's camp in Kakopathar area in Assam's Tinsukia district early on Friday, an official said.

The Army and the police launched a search operation in the area to arrest the militants, he said.

"Around 12.30 am, unidentified terrorists fired at the Kakopathar Company location from a moving vehicle. The troops on duty retaliated immediately and effectively took caution to avoid collateral damage to civilian houses in the vicinity," a defence spokesperson said.

He said the terrorists fled the spot after "carrying out speculative firing using automatic weapons" due to retaliation by the Army personnel. The proscribed ULFA(I), in a statement, claimed responsibility for the attack as part of its "operation vengeance".

"No major injuries were sustained other than minor abrasions to three personnel. The area has been sanitised and joint searches in coordination with the police are being carried out," the spokesperson added. The area where the attack was conducted on security personnel is close to the interstate boundary between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

Hamas reaffirms its commitment to ceasefire

DEIR AL-BALAH, Oct 17 (AP)

HAMAS moved on Friday to shore up its brittle ceasefire agreement with Israel by reaffirming its commitment to the terms of the deal, including a pledge to hand over the remains of all dead Israeli hostages.

The militant group's statement released in the early hours on Friday follows a dire warning from US President Donald Trump that he would green-light Israel to resume the war if Hamas doesn't live up to its end of the deal and return all of the hostages' bodies. Hamas, however, maintains that some bodies were buried in tunnels that were later destroyed by Israel, and heavy machinery is required to dig through rubble to retrieve them.

The group also criticised Israeli



Palestinians walk among destroyed buildings in Gaza City. (AP/PTI)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over his call to cut aid to Gaza, saying it was an attempt to manipulate humanitarian needs "for political gains."

In a follow-up statement on Friday, Hamas urged mediators to increase the flow of aid into Gaza, expedite the opening of the Rafah border crossing with

Egypt and start the reconstruction process, especially for homes, hospitals and schools. It also called for steps to bring to justice "those who committed war crimes" against Palestinians.

The ceasefire plan introduced by Trump had called for all hostages — living and dead — to be handed over by a deadline that expired on Monday. But under the deal, if that didn't happen, Hamas was to share information about deceased hostages and try to hand them over as soon as possible.

Netanyahu has said that Israel "will not compromise" and demanded that Hamas fulfil the requirements laid out in the ceasefire deal about the return of hostages' bodies. Hamas has assured the US that it's working to return dead hostages.

Modi discusses devpt ties with Lankan PM

NEW DELHI, Oct 17 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Friday discussed a range of issues such as development cooperation and the welfare of Indian fishermen with Sri Lankan Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya.

Amarasuriya met Modi at his official residence here.

"Glad to welcome Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Ms. Harini Amarasuriya. Our discussions covered a broad range of areas, including education, women's empowerment, innovation, development cooperation and welfare of our fishermen," Modi said in a post on X.

"As close neighbours, our cooperation holds immense importance for the prosperity of our two peoples as well as the shared region," Modi said.

Meanwhile, Amarasuriya on



Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Sri Lankan Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya during her official visit to India. (PTI)

Friday visited the Sarvodaya Co-Ed Vidyalaya in Rohini, accom-

panied by Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood. The visit

aimed to showcase the capital's modern school infrastructure, innovative teaching methods and digital learning environment.

According to an official, both sides discussed areas of possible collaboration, including teacher training, vocational education and sustainability in schools.

During the visit, Sood briefed the Sri Lankan Prime Minister on the transformative changes brought about in Delhi's education system, including state-of-the-art infrastructure, smart classrooms, modern teaching techniques and an advanced digital learning environment.

Sood, in a post on X, said he had the privilege of accompanying the visiting dignitary during the tour, which "showcased modern infrastructure, innovative teaching practices and a digital learning environment."

MAHINDRA GROUP, EMBRAER tie up for C-390 Millennium military transport aircraft

NEW DELHI, Oct 17 (PTI)

MAHINDRA Group on Friday said it has inked a pact with Embraer Defence & Security for introduction of C-390 Millennium military transport aircraft in India.

Embraer Defense & Security and Mahindra Group have signed

The agreement builds upon the memorandum of understanding signed in February 2024 at the Embassy of Brazil in New Delhi, deepening the scope of cooperation to include joint marketing, industrialisation and developing India as a hub for the C-390 Millennium. Since the signing, the C-390 Millennium



a landmark strategic cooperation agreement (SCA) to advance the C-390 Millennium solution for the Indian Air Force's Medium Transport Aircraft (MTA) programme, the Mumbai-based Mahindra Group said in a statement. This agreement was inked alongside the inauguration of Embraer's national office in Aerocity, New Delhi.

aircraft has further increased its operator base globally.

Embraer and Mahindra Group will work closely with stakeholders in the country and engage with India's military and aerospace ecosystem to identify opportunities for local manufacturing, assembly facilities, supply chain and MRO activities, it stated.

Bihar Assembly polls



Over 1,250 file nominations for 1st phase

PATNA, Oct 17 (PTI)

ELECTION fever gripped Bihar on Friday as the filing of nomination papers for the first phase of Assembly polls concluded, with the ruling NDA projecting a resolute campaign in sharp contrast to the disarray seen in the Opposition INDIA bloc.

According to the Election Commission, more than 1,250 candidates filed their papers for the 121 seats which go to polls on November 6, and the number was likely to go up as data was still flowing in from districts.

In at least half-a-dozen constituencies, more than one INDIA bloc candidate has filed nomination papers and these seats may end up witnessing "friendly fights" among the constituents unless one of the nominees pulls

NDA projecting a resolute campaign in sharp contrast to the disarray seen in the Opposition INDIA bloc

out by October 20.

The alliance comprising RJD, Congress, three Left parties and former State Minister Mukesh Sahani's Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP) has still not been able to declare how many seats were being contested by which party and confusion seemed to prevail among them with regard to the constituencies, too.

The Congress agreed to let RJD leader Rishi Mishra fight on its symbol from the Jale seat, but the domineering regional ally failed to reciprocate with a similar gesture in Lalganj where Shivani Shukla, daughter of local don-turned-politician Munna Shukla, filed her nomination papers

despite Aditya Kumar Raja, fielded by the grand old party, having entered the fray.

An RJD-Congress face-off seems on the cards in adjoining Vaishali as well, besides in Kahalgaon.

The Congress may end up fighting against CPI candidates in at least three seats — Bachhwara, Rajapakar and Rosera.

Although the VIP has stayed in the coalition, notwithstanding speculations that Sahani was not happy with the deal offered by the RJD, it may end up fighting against Lalu Prasad's party in Tarapur and Gaura Bauram.

Sahani, whose party had won

four seats in 2020, though he lost his own, has opted to stay away from the contest himself this time, and when journalists broached the subject with him, he asserted "it is not that I want to enter Rajya Sabha. I want the INDIA bloc to form the next Government with me as the Deputy Chief Minister".

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, the INDIA bloc's de facto chief ministerial candidate, is seeking a third consecutive term from Raghapur.

Other prominent leaders whose fate will be sealed in the first phase of polls include deputy CMs Samrat Choudhary (Tarapur) and Vijay Kumar Sinha (Lakhisarai), both from the BJP, besides ministers Mangal Pandey (BJP) and Vijay Kumar Chaudhary (JDU).

'OUR AIM ► 100% domestic defence production'

NASHIK, Oct 17 (PTI)

INDIA is looking at taking domestic defence production to 100 per cent as dependence on foreign military supplies creates "strategic vulnerability", Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Friday.

Singh said this after inaugurating a third production line of Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)-Mk1A and a second manufacturing facility of trainer jet HTT-40. With opening of the new facility for Tejas jets, the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) is expected to produce at least 24 LCA aircraft. "There was a time when the country was dependent on other countries to meet its defence needs, and almost 65-70 percent of defence equipment was imported," Singh said in his address

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Defence Minister Rajnath Singh flags off the first made-in-India Tejas Mk1A fighter jet from the newly-inaugurated production facility at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, in Nashik on Friday. (PTI/ANI)

Over 210 Maoists surrender in Jagdalpur

■ Our Correspondent
JAGDALPUR, Oct 17

A MAJOR breakthrough in the fight against Naxalism has taken place in Chhattisgarh's Bastar division, as over 210 Maoists from the Dandakaranya region laid down their arms and embraced the mainstream, marking what officials have hailed as a decisive turning point in the State's decades-long struggle with Left-Wing Extremism.

The event, organised at Jagdalpur Police Lines, was part of the State Government's comprehensive anti-Naxal policy and the 'Poona Margeyam - From Rehabilitation to

This is the largest mass surrender in the history of anti-Naxal ops in Chhattisgarh
With this, a total of 288 Naxalites have quit the path of violence in the State in last three days

Rejuvenation' programme. Notably, this is the first instance in the region where such a large contingent of senior Maoist cadres, including a Central Committee member, four Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC) members,



Naxalites hold copies of the Constitution of India after their surrender at the Police Lines, Jagdalpur in Bastar district, Chhattisgarh on Friday.

21 Divisional Committee members, and several prominent leaders, surrendered together. With this, a total of 288 Naxalites have quit the path of violence and joined the main-

stream in the State in the last three days as 78 others had surrendered on Wednesday.

In a symbolic gesture marking the end of an era of violence, the surrendered rebels handed over 153 sophisticated weapons, including AK-47s, SLRs, INSAS rifles and LMGs.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai's multi-pronged anti-Naxal strategy emphasising peace, dialogue, and development laid the foundation for what officials described as "an era of trust, security, and development" in Bastar. The coordinated efforts of the police, security forces, administration, social organisations, and vigilant citizens were credited with

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