

SC signs MoU with Bhutan SC for exchange of law clerks

NEW DELHI, Jan 5 (PTI)

CHIEF Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant on Monday said that the Supreme Court has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the apex court of Bhutan to facilitate the exchange of young legal professionals. The CJI, at the outset of the proceedings, said that under the MoU, two law clerks from Bhutan will be engaged by the Supreme Court here for a period of three months.

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The clerks will receive the same honorarium as Indian law clerks, and their travel expenses will be borne by the Supreme Court, the CJI said. Introducing the law clerks to the packed courtroom, the CJI described them as "young and bright" and said they would be assigned to work in different

courts during their tenure.

"We have entered into an Memorandum of Understanding with the Supreme Court of Bhutan and on the basis of which there will be two law clerks who will be paid on the basis of our honorarium and will be there for period of three months, we will

be taking care of their travelling, both will be working in different courts, both are very bright," the CJI said. The initiative is aimed at strengthening judicial cooperation and enhancing institutional ties between the two countries, he said.

Earlier, CJI Surya Kant had also said that digitisation of judicial records and data would make the system more user-friendly and enhance access to justice for the poor, marginalised and vulnerable sections of society.

HPCL commissions 1st residue hydrocracking unit at Vizag

NEW DELHI, Jan 5 (PTI)

HINDUSTAN Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) has commissioned a residue upgradation facility (RUF) at its Visakhapatnam refinery, significantly enhancing the plant's deep-conversion capability, distillate output and profitability, the company said on Monday.

The 3.55 million tonnes-per-year facility includes India's first residue hydrocracking unit and the world's first LC-Max unit, capable of converting about 93 per cent of low-value bottom-of-the-barrel oils into high-value petroleum products.

The project marks a major step in upgrading India's refining complexity and reducing dependence on imported fuels.

HPCL in a statement said the new unit will raise distillate yields at the Visakh refinery by up to 10 per cent from pre-modernisa-



tion levels, and substantially improve gross refining margins by enabling the processing of heavier and opportunity crudes and delivering a superior product slate.

The commissioning follows the Visakh Refinery Modernisation Project and lifts the refinery's Nelson Complexity

Index to 11.6, placing it among India's most advanced deep-conversion refineries, the company said.

"Visakh Refinery will now have the capability of enhancing its distillate yield by up to 10 per cent (from pre-VRMP [Visakh Refinery Modernization Project] levels). The Gross Refining

Margins (GRMs) of the Visakh Refinery are set to increase substantially on account of superior product slate, flexibility to process many heavier or opportunity crudes, and higher value realisation per barrel," the statement said.

This significant increase in middle-distillate output helps HPCL to reduce the gap between its HSD marketing and refining volumes, lowers dependence on external sourcing, strengthens the supply chain, and drives higher profitability through improved product realisation and margin capture.

The facility features three LC-Max reactors, each weighing about 2,200 tonnes, among the heaviest globally. Several critical equipment components were manufactured domestically, aligning with the Government's Aatmanirbhar Bharat self-reliance initiative.

Army chief holds talks with UAE's top commander

NEW DELHI, Jan 5 (PTI)

ARMY chief General Upendra Dwivedi on Monday held wide-ranging talks with Commander of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Land Forces, Major General Yousef Maayouf Saeed Al Hallami, with a focus on expanding bilateral military cooperation.

General Dwivedi is on a two-day visit to the UAE in the first leg of his two-nation tour. He will travel to Sri Lanka after concluding his January 5 to 6 trip to the UAE.



Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi meets Commander, United Arab Emirates Land Forces, Major General Yousef Maayouf Saeed Al Hallami in Abu Dhabi on Monday. (ANI)

The Army chief's visit to the UAE comes in the midst of fast-paced developments in the Gulf region including escalating tensions between the UAE and Saudi Arabia over the situation in Yemen.

The Army said the talks between General Dwivedi and Major General Al Hallami centred around ways to advance bilateral defence cooperation.

The discussions focused on enhancing positive military engagement, training convergence and advancing bilateral defence cooperation between India and UAE.

SBI to promote India-Israel bilateral trade in rupee

■ By Harinder Mishra

JERUSALEM, Jan 5 (PTI)

AMID deepening strategic ties and discussions around Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and Israel gaining momentum, the State Bank of India (SBI), the only Indian bank with a presence in Israel, is looking to facilitate bilateral trade in Indian rupees.

“In view of India’s significant trade flows from/to its partner countries and growing interest among the global trading community to trade in the Indian rupee, it has been envisaged by our banking regulators, i.e. Reserve Bank of India, to



permit Indian banks to facilitate settlement of exports and imports of their respective corporate clientele in INR. Israel has been identified as one of the partner countries under this mechanism,” CEO of SBI Israel, V Manivannan, told PTI.

Israeli entities undertaking exports/imports through this mechanism shall receive and make payments in INR, which shall be credited into the Special
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Rajnath commissions ICG's 1st indigenously built pollution control vessel **SAMUDRA PRATAP**



PANAJI, Jan 5 (PTI)

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh commissioned the Indian Coast Guard's (ICG) first indigenously designed and built pollution control vessel 'Samudra Pratap' in Goa on Monday.

The 114.5-metre vessel, built by the Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL), has over 60 per cent of indigenous content. The 4,200-tonne vessel boasts a speed of more than 22 knots and an endurance of 6,000 nautical miles, officials said.

It will serve as a critical platform for enforcing marine pollution control regulations, maritime law enforcement, search and rescue operations, and safeguarding India's Exclusive Economic Zone.

As the largest and most advanced pollution control vessel built in India, Samudra Pratap stands as a testament to the nation's shipbuilding excellence and long-term vision for a cleaner, safer, and self-reliant maritime future, the ICG said in a statement.

The vessel was formally delivered in December to the Coast Guard at GSL.

Trump says Venezuela's V-P could face fate worse than Maduro



of State Marco Rubio had spoken with her and that she was willing to do what the US thinks is needed to improve the standard of living in Venezuela.

But Rodríguez has criticized Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro's removal from the country and has demanded that the US return him.

Trump told the magazine that "if she doesn't do what's right, she is going to pay a very big price, probably bigger than Maduro." The President told the New York Post in an interview Saturday that the US wouldn't need to station troops in Venezuela if she "does what we want."

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'32 Cuban officers killed in US op in Venezuela'

HAVANA, Jan 5 (AP)

AN AMERICAN military operation in Venezuela killed 32 Cuban officers over the weekend, the Cuban Government said Sunday in the first official death count provided of the American strikes in the South American nation.

The Cuban military and police officers were on a mission the Caribbean country's military was carrying out at
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Trump warns Cuba, Colombia and Mexico over drugs, security

WASHINGTON, Jan 5 (IANS)

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump issued sharp warnings to Cuba, Colombia, and Mexico, saying US patience is wearing thin with Governments as he accused them of enabling drug trafficking and regional instability, while signaling that his administration is prepared to act if conditions do not
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WASHINGTON, Jan 5 (AP)

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump told 'The Atlantic' on Sunday in a telephone interview that Delcy Rodríguez, Venezuela's Vice President, could "pay a very big price" if she doesn't do what he thinks is right for the South American country.

That contrasted with the Republican president's comments about Rodríguez on Saturday when he said Secretary