

Japanese Prime Minister's party secures sweeping majority in Lower House

TOKYO, Feb 8 (AP)

THE governing party of Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi secured a more than two-thirds majority in a key parliamentary election on Sunday, Japanese media reported, citing preliminary results.

Takaichi, in a televised interview with public television network NHK, said that after the sweeping victory she is now ready to pursue her policies.

NHK, citing results of vote counts, said Takaichi's Liberal Democratic Party, or LDP, alone secured 316 seats by early Monday, comfortably surpassing a 261-seat absolute majority in the 465-member Lower House, the more powerful of Japan's two-chamber Parliament. That marks a record since the party's foundation in 1955 and surpasses the previous record of 300 seats won in 1986 by late Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone.

A smiling Takaichi placed a big



Sanae Takaichi

red ribbon above each winner's name on a signboard at the LDP's headquarters, as accompanying party executives applauded.

Despite the lack of a majority in the other chamber, the upper house, the huge jump from the pre-election

share in the superior Lower House would allow Takaichi to make progress on a right-wing agenda that aims to boost Japan's economy and military capabilities as tensions grow with China and she tries to nurture ties with the United States. Takaichi said that she would firmly push forward her policy goals while trying to gain support from the opposition.

"I will be flexible," she said.

Takaichi is hugely popular, but the governing LDP, which has ruled Japan for most of the last seven decades, has struggled with funding and religious scandals in recent years. She called Sunday's early election only after three months in office, hoping to turn

that around while her popularity is high.

PM MODI GREETES JAPANESE COUNTERPART ON 'LANDMARK VICTORY': Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday greeted his Japanese counterpart Sanae Takaichi on her "landmark victory" in the elections to the House of Representatives.

Japanese Prime Minister Takaichi's ruling coalition, led by her Liberal Democratic Party, is almost certain to win a single-party majority in the parliamentary election Sunday.

"Congratulations Sanae Takaichi on your landmark victory in the elections to the House of Representatives," Modi said in a post on X.

The Prime Minister said India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership plays a vital role in enhancing global peace, stability and prosperity. "I am confident that under your able leadership, we will continue to take the India-Japan friendship to greater heights," Modi said.

No compromise on terrorism: PM Modi in Malaysia

India, Malaysia sign 11 pacts, including a framework pact for deeper engagement in the semiconductor sector.

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 8 (PTI)

INDIA and Malaysia on Sunday vowed to expand their ties in the high-priority sectors of trade and investment, defence, energy, advanced manufacturing and semiconductors with Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserting that both sides are committed to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Following his wide-ranging talks with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Modi reiterated India's position on combating terrorism as he said: "Our message on terrorism is clear; no double standards, no compromise."

The two sides inked a total of

11 agreements and documents to expand cooperation in a range of key areas, including a framework pact for deeper engagement in the semiconductor sector. Both Modi, who arrived in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday, and Ibrahim appreciated efforts to promote the usage of local currencies -- the Indian Rupee and Malaysian Ringgit -- for trade settlement.

"We will pave the way for economic transformation through strategic trust," Modi said, describing the India-Malaysia relationship as "special".

"We are maritime neighbours. For centuries, our peoples have had deep and cordial ties," he said in his media statement.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. (PTI)

Modi also announced India's decision to establish an Indian Consulate General in Malaysia.

In his remarks, Ibrahim noted India's economic growth and said his country would benefit immensely if it could secure more ways and opportunities to collaborate with New Delhi.

"It (India's economic growth) is one spectacular rise in the international eco and trade scene," he said, describing the decision to use local currencies for bilateral trade as "remarkable". In the talks, Malaysia extended its support for India's permanent membership in a reformed UN Security Council.

Elaborating on engagement in the security domain, Modi said cooperation in counter-terrorism, intelligence sharing, and maritime security will be strengthened, adding that both sides will further expand defence ties.

"Along with AI and digital technologies, we will advance partnerships in semiconductors, health, and food security," he said, noting that the discussions at the CFO Forum opened new opportunities for trade and investment.

The Prime Minister touched upon India's position on Indo-Pacific and its steadfast views on the 10-nation grouping ASEAN's centrality in the region.

"The Indo-Pacific region is emerging as the world's growth engine. We, along with ASEAN, are committed to development, peace, and stability throughout the Indo-Pacific region," he said.

"With the support of friendly countries like Malaysia, India will further expand its relations with ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). We agree that the review of the ASEAN-India Trade Agreement, (Contd on page 5)

'Will be easy to purchase goods valued much more than USD 500 bn from US'

NEW DELHI, Feb 8 (PTI)

INDIA will have no difficulty in purchasing goods worth USD 500 billion from the US over the next five years, as envisaged under the bilateral trade pact, and in fact, this is an "extremely" conservative number for a country which aspires to become a USD 30 trillion economy, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday. "My sense is we need at least a 100 billion dollar plus only for the aviation sector, in addition to oil, LNG, LPG, and crude oil," Goyal said in an interview with PTI Videos.

According to a joint statement issued by both sides on Saturday on the framework for the first phase of the bilateral trade agreement, India has expressed its intention to purchase USD 500 billion of US energy products, aircraft and aircraft parts, precious metals, technology products and coking coal over the next five years.

The Commerce and Industry Minister said that Indian goods facing 18 per cent tariffs will still have a competitive advantage in US markets compared to products from China and other com-



Piyush Goyal

petitor countries, which face higher levies. China has been slapped with 35 per cent tariffs, and other countries in Asia face 19 per cent and up.

At present, he said, India could source imports worth about USD 300 billion from the US that it currently buys from other countries. "We are even today importing 300 billion dollars of goods that can be imported from the US. We are importing from all over the world. That is going to grow up to two trillion in the next five years...I told my counterparts that look, I can assure you that there is demand in India, but you have to be competitive," he said.

Goyal said that as the country's

economy is growing at a faster pace, demand for a variety of goods ranging from semiconductor chips, high-end machinery and data centre equipment to aircraft, aircraft parts and energy goods is also increasing.

He said at present, India is importing goods worth about USD 40-50 billion from the US every year.

Citing examples where purchases from the US can be enhanced, he said big tech firms have announced large investments in India and, therefore, "my sense is that we will see 10 gigawatts of data centres" in the country, and for that India will need equipment, which the US can supply.

"We are going to need aircraft. We are going to need engines for aircraft. We are going to need spare parts. We already have USD 50 billion worth of orders on Boeing alone for aircraft. We have orders for engines," he added.

"So, almost 80-90 billion (dollars) is already on order for the next five years. We will actually need more than that. I read the other day that Tata plans to place some more orders," Goyal said.

'India-AI Impact Summit' to focus on 7 CHAKRAS for real-world applications



NEW DELHI, Feb 8 (IANS)

THE upcoming 'India-AI Impact Summit 2026' is being organised through seven Chakras or Working Groups, structured around seven interconnected thematic areas, and each Chakra focuses on a core area of AI impact, and translates the Sutras into concrete areas of action across policy and real-world applications, an official statement said on Sunday.

Each Chakra fosters multilateral collaboration on AI's societal

impacts, from building skills to ensuring ethical deployment. These are: Human Capital; Inclusion for Social Empowerment; Safe and Trusted AI; Science; Resilience Innovation and Efficiency; Democratizing AI Resources; and AI for Economic Development and Social Good.

"Through these Chakras, India aims to shape global AI norms while addressing local challenges. The outcomes of the Summit will guide policy makers, investors, and industry leaders in the years

ahead," said the statement. Over 100 countries worldwide have engaged through these Working Groups to shape a future of responsible and inclusive AI. The India-AI Impact Summit 2026, from February 16-20, has attracted significant high-level engagement, with 15-20 Heads of Government, over 50 international ministers, and more than 40 global and Indian CEOs expected to participate.

The Summit is guided by three foundational pillars, referred to as Sutras, which articulate the core

principles guiding global cooperation on AI: People, Planet and Progress.

The India-AI Impact Summit 2026 strengthens India's role as a key platform for shaping the global AI agenda. Anchored in the Seven Chakras and the Three Sutras of People, Planet, and Progress, the Summit advances a development-oriented framework for artificial intelligence.

"By linking policy with implementation and innovation with public purpose, the Summit establishes a structured approach

to responsible AI deployment. It aligns technological advancement with inclusive growth and sustainable development," it added.

The Summit positions India as a convener and partner in global AI cooperation, supporting shared standards, collaborative frameworks, and scalable solutions for public good. It marks a transition from dialogue to delivery, reinforcing India's commitment to responsible, inclusive, and development-focused AI pathways.

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India-France eyeing major Euro 300 million deal for SCALP cruise missiles

■ **By Ajit Dubey**

NEW DELHI, Feb 8 (ANI)

INDIA and France are looking to sign a major deal for buying a significant number of SCALP cruise missiles that were used by the Indian Air Force to destroy the terrorist headquarters of Jaish-e-Mohamed and Lashkar-e-Toiba inside Pakistan during Operation Sindoor last year.

A significant number of SCALP Cruise missiles are being ordered by the Indian Air Force from France, and discussions are underway. A decision in this regard is expected to be made soon, defence officials told ANI.

The SCALP missiles were launched by the Indian Air Force Rafale fighter jets along with the BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to take out the terrorist headquarters in Muridke and Bahawalpur districts of Pakistan. The targets were completely

destroyed in the attacks by the Indian Air Force with pinpoint accuracy, they said.

The Indian Air Force will use cruise missiles with its fleet of Rafale aircraft. After the successful destruction of terrorist headquarters in Pakistan on the night of May 6-7, the Air Force used them again in a big way to strike at Pakistan Air Force bases.

The Indian Air Force had hit 12 major air bases of the Pakistan Air Force and destroyed a large number of high-value targets, including fighter jets and spy planes on the ground.

The IAF is also in the process of ordering a huge number of Meteor air to air missile for its fleet of Rafale jets.

The missile will also be integrated into the 26 Rafale Marine fighters ordered for the Indian Navy, which are expected to arrive over the next three to four years.

India's Russian oil buy to dwindle, some irreplaceable imports to continue for now

NEW DELHI, Feb 8 (PTI)

INDIA is likely to begin scaling back its crude oil purchases from Russia under an agreement reached with the United States in exchange for lower trade tariffs, sources said, adding that these imports will continue for now, as refiners like Nayara Energy have limited alternatives.

While Indian refiners, which process crude oil into fuels such as petrol and diesel, have not received any formal directive to halt Russian purchases, they have been informally advised to begin scaling back buys from Moscow, three sources with knowledge of

the matter said.

Most refiners will continue to honour purchase commitments made before the announcement - orders typically placed six to eight weeks in advance - but will not place new orders thereafter, they said. Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd, Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd and HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd had stopped buying oil from Russia soon after the US last year slapped sanctions on Moscow's key exporters, while others like Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) will wind down their purchases, sources said.