

V-P Radhakrishnan meets Sri Lankan President, PM

Discusses various initiatives, including the Indian housing project

COLOMBO, Apr 19 (Agencies)

VICE President C P Radhakrishnan met Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and Sri Lankan Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya here on Sunday and held discussions on various initiatives, including the Indian housing project, and fishermen issues between the two South Asian neighbours.

He also discussed the importance of further strengthening bilateral ties, including people-to-people bonds with the Sri Lankan Prime Minister.

“Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Harini Amarasuriya hosted the Vice President of India, Shri CP

Radhakrishnan during (MEA) spokesperson his ongoing visit to Sri Lanka,” Sandhir Jaiswal said in a post Ministry of External Affairs on X.



Vice President Radhakrishnan with Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya during a meeting, in Sri Lanka. (X via PTI)

India-Sri Lanka oil pipeline discussed

COLOMBO, Apr 19 (PTI)

VICE President C P Radhakrishnan and Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake discussed the proposed link between India and the island nation through an oil pipeline.

Radhakrishnan and Dissanayake also had productive discussions on further deepening the multifaceted bilateral ties, housing projects and fishermen issues.

North Korea launches multiple short-range missiles toward sea



US and Japan.

In an emergency meeting of the National Security Council, senior South Korean officials expressed concerns about North Korea's repeated ballistic missile tests and urged it to stop them immediately. Sunday's launches came hours before South Korean President Lee Jae Myung left the country to visit India and Vietnam.

The US and Japanese militaries also said they detected the launches. The US Indo-Pacific Command said it remains committed to the defence of the US homeland and its allies in the region. Japan's Defence Ministry said Tokyo strongly protested to Pyongyang, saying the launches threaten regional and international peace and violate UN Security Council resolutions that ban any ballistic activities by North Korea.

to build nuclear weapons.

The missiles fired from the North's Sinpo area flew about 140 kilometres (87 miles) each in a direction toward the country's eastern waters, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said. It said South Korea maintains a readiness to repel any provocations by North Korea and is closely exchanging information with the

■ **By Hyung-Jin Kim and Mari Yamaguchi**

SEOUL, Apr 19 (AP)

NORTH Korea launched multiple short-range ballistic missiles toward the sea on Sunday, its neighbours said, days after the UN's nuclear watchdog warned that North Korea was making "very serious" advances in efforts

IAF'S GARUD SPECIAL FORCES to get compact UAV system

NEW DELHI, Apr 19 (PTI)

THE Government has started the process for procurement of a compact unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) system for the elite Special Forces unit of the IAF that can operate in extreme environmental conditions, and at altitudes up to 16,400 feet above mean sea level, according to officials.

The planned system is intended for "high-altitude surveillance" and operational support across a range of terrain and climatic conditions. It is also envisaged to have an increased range and endurance level, compared to the existing system, they said.

The Defence Ministry recently issued a request for informa-



tion (RFI) for procuring a 'Micro UAV' system for the IAF's Garud Special Forces. The proposed system should also be able to support day and night surveillance, target acquisition and real-time

situational awareness, the officials said. The 'Micro UAV' system is envisaged as a compact, lightweight, man-portable platform designed for Special Forces' operations, they said.

This elite unit of the Indian Air Force presently has a "similar system", and the new one will be an upgraded system, and an "Indian-made one with latest specifications," a senior official, aware of the project, said. "The system is required to operate in extreme environmental conditions, including temperatures ranging from minus 20 degrees Celsius to plus 50 degrees Celsius, and at altitudes up to 16,400 feet above mean sea level," the official added.

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India, US trade talks from today

NEW DELHI, Apr 19 (PTI)

ABOUT a dozen officers from India will reach Washington on April 20 for three-day talks with the US authorities on the first phase of the bilateral trade agreement (BTA), an official said. As the tariff landscape has changed in the US, both sides may like to relook at the framework of the agreement, the text of which was released on February 7.

Following the decision of the US Supreme Court against the sweeping tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump on a number of countries, the Trump administration imposed a 10 per cent tariff on all countries from February 24 for 150 days. "The meeting will happen from

April 20-22 in Washington DC. India's chief negotiator Darpan Jain (Additional



Secretary in the Department of Commerce) is leading the team. Officers from Customs and External Affairs Ministry are also part of the Indian team," the official said.

Further, the two unilateral investigations launched by the US Trade Representative (USTR) may also figure in the three-day deliberations.

India has strongly rejected allegations made by the US

Trade Representative in those two investigations under its Section 301 of trade law and has requested to terminate the probes as the initiation notice has failed to provide cogent rationale to substantiate the claims.

According to that framework, the US had agreed to reduce tariffs on India to 18 per cent, from 50 per cent. It had removed the 25 per cent tariffs on Indian goods for buying Russian oil and was to cut the remaining 25 per cent to 18 per cent under the pact.

But on February 20, the US Supreme Court ruled against Trump's reciprocal tariffs which were imposed under the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).

Stand-off escalates after Iran closes Strait of Hormuz

DUBAI, Apr 19 (AP)

IRAN reversed its decision to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and warned that it would continue to block transit through the strait as long as the US blockade of Iranian ports remained in effect.

The escalating stand-off over the critical choke point threatened to deepen the energy crisis rolling the global economy and push the two countries toward renewed conflict, even as mediators expressed confidence that a new deal was within reach.

The strait is closed until the US blockade is lifted, Iran's Revolutionary Guard Navy said on Saturday night. Hours earlier, two gunboats from Iran's Revolutionary Guard opened fire on a tanker transiting the Strait of Hormuz, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre said. It report-

2 gunboats from Iran's Revolutionary Guard open fire on a tanker transiting the Strait of Hormuz

Hezbollah commander among 150 fighters killed in strikes just before ceasefire, says Israel



ed that the tanker and crew were safe without identifying the vessel or its destination.

Meanwhile, a 10-day truce between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon appeared to be holding. The fighting in the Middle East conflict, which is approaching the two-month mark, has killed at least 3,000 people in Iran, nearly 2,500 in Lebanon, 23 civilians and 15 soldiers in Israel, and more than a dozen in Gulf Arab states. Thirteen US service members have also been killed.

The Israeli Army says it carried out a series of strikes that killed more than 150 Hezbollah fighters. Among those killed was Ali Rida Abbas, who it said was Hezbollah's commander in Bint Jbeil. The southern Lebanese town and its surroundings were the site of intense clashes

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US negotiators will be in Pak for talks with Iran: Trump

WASHINGTON, Apr 19 (AP)

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump said that American negotiators will be in Pakistan on Monday for talks with Iran.



Trump, in a post on social media on Sunday, didn't detail which officials the US would send to a second round of in-person talks with Iran in Islamabad. The White House and the office of US Vice President JD Vance, who led the first round of talks, didn't immediately respond to messages on Sunday morning.

In his post, Trump accused Iran of violating the ceasefire agreement by firing bullets on Saturday in the Strait of Hormuz and threatened to destroy civilian infrastructure in Iran if it doesn't take the deal that the US is offering. "If they don't, the United States is going to knock out every single Power Plant, and every single Bridge, in Iran," Trump wrote.