

Trump and Xi conclude 'very successful' talks



NO DEALS ANNOUNCED

Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump attend a meeting on the sidelines of their visit to the Zhongnanhai Garden in Beijing on Friday. (AP/PTI)

BEIJING, May 15 (PTI)

CHINESE President Xi Jinping and his US counterpart Donald Trump on Friday hailed their talks as “historic” and “landmark”, as the American leader wrapped up his three-day visit on a high note, but no deals on any contentious issues were announced.

Both Presidents, who held several rounds of talks covering a range of global issues, including the Iran war and bilateral trade frictions, concluded their dis-

cussions with a private meeting at Zhongnanhai, the well-guarded compound in Beijing where top leaders reside. Trump and Xi

walked and talked at the well-curated compound, occasionally stopping to admire the trees and flowers in the garden. Trump described the

trip as “very successful, world-renowned, and unforgettable,” according to the Chinese account.

Calling Xi “an old friend of mine,” the US President said he
(Contd on page 3)

Read Editorial
**TENTATIVE
HANDSHAKE**
on page 6

India offers support for peace in W Asia

PM Modi secures energy, defence and tech deals with UAE



PM Modi condemns attacks on UAE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan during the exchange of Memorandums of Understanding between India and the UAE in Abu Dhabi. (PMO via PTI)

ABU DHABI, May 15 (PTI)

INDIA is ready to extend all possible support to bring peace in West Asia, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday, during his talks with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, as both sides signed agreements to firm up strategic collaborations in the areas of energy, defence and technology.

The UAE has also announced investments worth USD 5 billion

in India, Modi said.

The Modi-Al Nahyan meeting took place shortly after the Prime Minister landed in the Gulf nation in the first leg of his five-nation tour that also includes four European countries.

The UAE was a roughly two-and-a-half-hour stopover for the Prime Minister, following which he left for the Netherlands.

"We condemn the attacks on the UAE," Modi said in his opening remarks in the meeting with the UAE leader.

The UAE, which hosts a prominent US military base, has been at the receiving end of Iranian strikes during the ongoing US-Israeli war on Iran that started on February 28.

Modi further said, "The way UAE has been targeted is not acceptable" but "the way UAE has handled the current situation with restraint is praiseworthy." The Prime Minister highlighted how the impact of the West Asian conflict is being felt globally, adding: "India is ready

to extend all possible support to bring peace in West Asia."

During the meeting, the two leaders inked strategic collaborations in broadly seven areas.

"This UAE visit also saw the conclusion of key agreements across vital areas such as energy, defence, infrastructure, shipping and advanced technology, giving fresh impetus to the India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," Modi said on social media. "In another important development, UAE announced investments worth USD 5 billion in India. This will further deepen economic ties," he said.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited - a public sector company responsible for maintaining the country's strategic petroleum reserves - has signed a deal with the Abu Dhabi National Oil Co aimed at "strategic collaboration".

It is aimed at energy security, "enhancing India's petroleum reserves and potential cooperation on Liquid Natural Gas and Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) storage facilities," it said.

The two leaders also signed a strategic collaboration pact in LPG, aimed at long term supply

(Contd on page 3)

Rajnath lays foundation stone for combat aircraft infra project in Andhra Pradesh

PUTTAPARTHI, May 15 (PTI)

RAJNATH Singh and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday laid the foundation stone for a Rs 16,000 crore Combat aircraft infrastructure project here in Sri Sathya Sai district, with the Defence Minister saying it marks a historic chapter in India's defence history.

Also, a new era was starting in Andhra Pradesh, he said.

Singh and Naidu laid the foundation for the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) programme infrastructure.

"A new era is starting today in



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Andhra Pradesh CM N Chandrababu Naidu being presented mementos during the foundation stone laying ceremony. (PTI)

Andhra Pradesh's history and a

historic chapter is being written in India's defence history. Four major projects are starting in today's foundation stone laying ceremony. Beside them, eight drone companies are also starting a drone city in Kurnool," said Rajnath Singh, addressing a public meeting.

Observing that the world is facing many challenges today, he said during these difficult times if we can stand with our own strength.

However, he noted that India is still dependent on other countries for its national security, underscoring the importance of the projects starting from today.

BRICS conclave ends without joint statement

NEW DELHI, May 15 (PTI)

THE Foreign Ministers of the BRICS nations failed to issue a joint statement at the end of a two-day conclave on Friday in view of sharp differences over the West Asia conflict, with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi appearing to blame the UAE for the lack of consensus on it.

As the impasse persisted, New Delhi, in its capacity as host, issued a chair's statement and outcome document featuring two specific paragraphs where

Focus on West Asia during Jaishankar,

Sharp differences between Iran and UAE block efforts to bring out joint statement.

unanimity could not be reached.

The paragraphs included references to the importance of unifying the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under the Palestinian Authority and calling for navigational rights and freedoms of vessels of all states in the Red Sea and Bab Al-Mandab Strait.

India, as the current chair of the BRICS, hosted the conclave of the Foreign Ministers ahead of the annual summit of the grouping in September.

Sharp differences between Iran and the United Arab Emirates

(UAE) over the West Asia crisis were on full display on Thursday during the opening day of the meeting. "Everybody knows that which country blocked anything against Israel, and that was very unfortunate. The same country did help the US and Israel in their attack, in their aggression against Iran," Araghchi said at a media briefing. The Iranian Foreign Minister was asked about who blocked efforts to have a joint statement. "The same country, provided the US and Israeli forces with their airspace, territories,

military bases and as far as we are concerned they are a direct party to this aggression and should be held responsible," he said, seeking to blame the UAE.

In the outcome document and chair's statement, India said: "there were differing views among some members as regard to the situation in the West Asia/Middle East region."

In his remarks, Araghchi said Iran has "no difficulty with that certain country" and that it has not been Tehran's target in the current war.

"We only hit American military bases and American military installations which are unfortunately on their soil," he said.

Focus on West Asia during Jaishankar, Araghchi talks

NEW DELHI, May 15 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi on Friday held wide-ranging talks focusing on the West Asia crisis and its impact on energy supplies and maritime stability. The Iranian Foreign Minister is on a three-day visit to New Delhi to attend a BRICS conclave.

“Had a detailed conversation with FM Abbas Araghchi of Iran this morning in Delhi,” Jaishankar said on social media.

“Discussed the situation in West Asia and its implications. Also exchanged views on bilateral issues of mutual interest,” he said. EAM also appreciated Araghchi’s participation at the BRICS foreign ministerial meeting.

Drones, UAS are like 'claws in the sky' now: IAF chief

NEW DELHI, May 15 (PTI)

IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal A P Singh on Friday said drones and other unmanned aerial systems (UAS), being an extension of air power, are no more just eyes in the sky, rather they are now akin to "claws in the sky".

In his address at a defence seminar themed on unmanned aerial systems and counter-UAS, he asserted that in any modern aerial threat, complete domain awareness is the key, and there should be "total coordination" among the three services which will be operating in the same air space.

"We have seen what happens... If you don't have domain awareness, you don't know where your people are and where others are. We've seen what happened to F-15s in Kuwait. The fratricide part. So we can't afford to have things like that," he said.

Petrol, diesel prices hiked by Rs 3/litre, CNG up by Rs 2/kg

NEW DELHI, May 15 (PTI)

PETROL and diesel prices were hiked by Rs 3 per litre each on Friday, marking the first increase in more than four years, as state-run fuel retailers passed on part of the hit from surging global crude prices triggered by the Iran war. Alongside, CNG prices in cities like Delhi and Mumbai were raised by Rs 2 per kg.

Petrol price in the national capital has been increased to Rs 97.77 per litre from Rs 94.77 while diesel now costs Rs 90.67 as against Rs 87.67 per litre previously, industry sources said.

Rates vary across States due to

differences in value-added tax.

CNG in Delhi now costs Rs 79.09 per kg and in Mumbai it costs Rs 84. However, prices of both natural gas piped into household kitchens for cooking, called piped natural gas, as well as domestic cooking gas LPG remained unchanged.

Global crude oil prices have surged more than 50 per cent since US-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28 and Tehran's subsequent retaliation disrupted energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz, a key artery for global oil shipments.

Despite the surge in crude prices, retail fuel rates were kept



frozen as part of what the Government said was an effort to shield price-sensitive consumers from higher global energy costs. But the Opposition parties

saw political motives behind the move as key States went to polls. The increase in fuel prices followed completion of elections and the ruling Bharatiya Janata

Party expanding its influence after winning three of five States, including West Bengal.

After the increase, petrol and diesel prices are now the highest since May 2022. Prices have remained on freeze since April 2022 but for a one-off reduction by Rs 2 a litre each on petrol and diesel in March 2024, just before Lok Sabha elections. Rates were last hiked in April 2022. Petrol in Mumbai now costs Rs 106.68 a litre and diesel comes for Rs 93.14 per litre. In Kolkata, petrol now costs Rs 108.74 per litre and diesel Rs 95.13, while in Chennai, prices increased to Rs 103.67 for petrol and Rs 95.25 for diesel.

Industry sources said the price hike is modest relative to the rise in crude prices and still leaves retailers absorbing losses estimated at Rs 11 per litre on petrol and Rs 39 per litre on diesel.

Friday's move follows Excise Duty cuts announced in March and comes as the Government rolls out measures to curb fuel consumption and contain the country's oil import bill. Prime Minister Narendra Modi this week urged fuel conservation, work-from-home practices and reduced travel as higher energy prices strain India's foreign exchange reserves and threaten

(Contd on page 3)