

# IAF's **SURYAKIRAN** to celebrate its 30th anniversary in K'taka's Bidar



Indian Air Force's Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team (SKAT) performs manoeuvres during a full-dress rehearsal ahead of the team's 30th anniversary commemoration, in Bengaluru. (PTI)

BENGALURU, May 23 (PTI)

THE Suryakiran Aerobatic Team of the Indian Air Force will commemorate its 30th anniversary at Air Force Station Bidar on May 26, celebrating three glorious decades of breath-taking air displays across India and abroad, officials said on Saturday. Popularly known as the "Ambassadors of the Indian Air Force", the nine aircraft formation acrobatic team has inspired millions through professional flying in close formation encompassing thrilling manoeuvres at low levels, they said.

According to a statement issued by the defence wing of the press information

bureau, the team, "Suryakiran" - meaning "Rays of the Sun" - was formed on May 27, 1996 at Air Force Station Bidar, initially flying the Kiran Mk-II aircraft.

In September 1996, the team made its public debut with a spectacular display in Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu), marking the beginning of an inspiring journey in precision aerobatics.

Officials noted that over the past three decades, Suryakiran has conducted more than 800 breath-taking air displays, captivating audiences across India and abroad, including China, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, and the United Arab Emirates.

# Modi gets US invite during talks with Secy of State Marco Rubio



Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, in New Delhi on Saturday. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, May 23 (PTI)

**INDIA** and the United States will continue to work closely for the global good, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday, after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio briefed him on the West Asia crisis and bilateral cooperation in defence, strategic technologies, trade and energy security.

Rubio, who met Modi shortly after landing in New Delhi, invited the Prime Minister on behalf of President Donald Trump to visit the White House in the "near future," according to US Ambassador Sergio Gora.

The US Secretary of State's four-day India trip is largely seen as an attempt to recalibrate bilateral relations that have

faced headwinds since mid-last year.

"Happy to receive the US Secretary of State, Mr Marco Rubio. We discussed sustained progress in the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and issues related to regional and global peace and security," Modi said on social media.

The US State Department said, Secretary Marco Rubio and Prime Minister Narendra Modi agreed to deepen trade and defence cooperation and accelerate collaboration on critical and emerging technologies.

After the meeting with the Prime Minister, Rubio, addressing an event at the US embassy,

*(Contd on page 3)*

# Major Abhilasha Barak to receive 2025 UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award

■ By Yoshita Singh

UNITED NATIONS, May 23 (PTI)

**INDIAN** peacekeeper serving with the UN mission in Lebanon, Major Abhilasha Barak, has been named the recipient of a prestigious military gender advocate award by the world body.

Barak has been honoured with the 2025 United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award for her outreach efforts with women and girls during her deployment in the West Asian nation.

“Proud to announce that Major Abhilasha Barak has been awarded the 2025 @UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award. She is being recognised for her outreach and community engagement activities for women and adolescent girls and gender sensitisation training for peacekeepers,” the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations said in a post on X



Abhilasha Barak

Friday.

Barak is serving with the Indian Battalion as the Commander of the Female Engagement Team (FET) in UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). She is also the first woman combat helicopter pilot of the Indian Army. She will be honoured at the UN headquar-

ters when the world body commemorates the International Day of UN Peacekeepers that is marked annually on May 29.

In a moment of pride for India, Barak is the third recipient of the award from the country, following Major Suman Gawani and Major Radhika Sen, who were honoured for their commendable work while serving in United Nations Peacekeeping missions.

Gawani had served with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and received the 2019 United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award. She was a co-recipient of the 2019 recognition along with Commander Carla Monteiro de Castro Araujo, a Brazilian Naval officer working in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

Major Radhika Sen, who served with the United Nations

Organization Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), received the prestigious 2023 United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award.

Created in 2016 by the Office of Military Affairs within the Department for Peace Operations (DPO), the award recognises the dedication and efforts of an individual military peacekeeper in promoting the principles of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. It underlines the contribution of the military peacekeeper who has best integrated a gender perspective into peacekeeping activities.

Each year, the awardee is selected from among candidates nominated by Force Commanders and Heads of Mission from all peace operations, according to United Nations Peacekeeping.

# Progress made in negotiations between US and Iran: Rubio

NEW DELHI, May 23 (PTI)

SOME progress has been made in the negotiations between the US and Iran, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Saturday, signalling that the over two-month conflict in West Asia could be nearing a resolution.

Rubio said the conflict has to be resolved, as President Donald Trump said, "one way or the other." "There has been some progress made. Even as I speak to you now, some work is being done," Rubio said.

The top diplomat also said that Washington might have something to say on the issue in the next couple of days.

"There's been some progress done, some progress made, even as I speak to you. There's some work being done. There is a chance that, whether it's later today, tomorrow, or in a couple of days, we may have something

## Trump may decide on resuming war with Iran today: Report

WASHINGTON, May 23 (PTI)

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump on Saturday said he was meeting with his negotiators to discuss Iran's latest offer and would likely decide by Sunday whether to resume the war, US media outlet Axios reported.

Trump told Axios that it was a "solid 50/50" as to whether he would be able to make a "good" deal or else "blow them to kingdom come."

The US President said he would meet with special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to discuss the proposal from Tehran.

to say," he added. His comments came as hectic behind-the-scenes negotiations between the US and Iran are underway.

In his remarks, Rubio reiterated Washington's firm position that Iran will not be allowed to have a nuclear weapon.

The US Secretary of State also asserted that Iran must open the Strait of Hormuz for shipping without charging any tolls.

"Iran can never have a nuclear weapon. The strait must remain open without tolls, and they need to hand over their enriched and highly enriched uranium. These have consistently been the President's positions," he said.

"We hope this matter is resolved diplomatically, and perhaps there will be more to discuss on this topic during my visit," he added.

Rubio was speaking after dedicating a new consular wing at the embassy.

# India to become biggest arms exporter in 25-30 yrs: Rajnath

SHIRDI, May 23 (PTI)

**DEFENCE** Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said no power can stop India, once considered an importer of weapons, from becoming the biggest exporter in 25-30 years.

After inaugurating an ammu-

munition manufacturing unit in Shirdi, Singh said a nation that makes its weapons writes its own future. He said the role of private players in defence manufacturing was negligible a few years back, which now stands at 25-30 per cent, while the Government has set a target to increase it fur-

ther to 50 per cent. 'The private sector is not just a supplier of nuts and bolts for defence, but also a producer of state-of-the-art weapons systems,' he added.

Singh said India was considered a weapons importer, but no

power can now stop it from being the biggest exporter in 25-30 years. He said that when the Government's vision and the private sector's innovation align, then the country reaches new heights.

'All have to work together to make India the hub of munitions and automation,' he added.

During the rule of the British East India Company, potassium nitrate was used as raw material to make gunpowder, and the company strengthened its military capability, Singh said.

He said India has come a long way as far as its defence industry is concerned.

Singh said that while ordnance factories existed even before Independence and the defence industry is deeply rooted in the country, after Independence,

(Contd on page 3)

## Future wars will be multi-domain with cyber and cognitive aspects, says CDS

SHIRDI, May 23 (PTI)

**CHIEF** of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan on Saturday said future wars will be multi-domain with land, sea, air, cyberspace, and cognitive warfare operating together.

Speaking at the inauguration of a defence manufacturing unit here in Ahilyanagar district, General Chauhan said modern warfare is not just based on manpower, conventional weapons or platform-centric operations.

(Contd on page 3)



Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh (C), Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis (L) and Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan during the inauguration of an ammunition manufacturing unit, in Shirdi, Ahilyanagar district on Saturday. (PTI)

## Fadnavis warns against black-marketing of fuel

SHIRDI, May 23 (PTI)

**MAHARASHTRA** Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday said that while fuel is not readily available in the rural areas, he has instructed authorities to ensure an uninterrupted supply of diesel to farmers.

Talking to reporters here, Fadnavis issued a stern warning against black-marketing of fuel in the name of farmers, noting that some parts of the State had witnessed a sudden 20 to 30 per cent spike in sales.

(Contd on page 3)

# FUEL PRICES HIKE AGAIN

## Rates jump nearly Rs 5/ltr in 10 days



A worker updates the revised prices of petrol and diesel at a petrol pump, in Nadia, West Bengal, on Saturday. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, May 23 (PTI)

**PETROL** and diesel prices were raised by 87-91 paise per litre on Saturday, taking the cumulative increase in retail fuel rates to nearly Rs 5 a litre in under 10 days as state-owned firms passed on soaring international oil prices.

Alongside, compressed natural gas (CNG) prices were raised by Re 1 per kg, marking the third increase in recent days and taking the cumulative hike to Rs 4 per kg. The latest revision pushed petrol prices higher by 87 paise per litre and diesel by up to 91 paise across the country, according to industry sources.

The back-to-back increases follow a prolonged freeze in retail fuel prices and come amid elevated crude oil prices in the global market, tightening refining margins, and

- **Petrol: Increased by 87 paise per litre across the country**
- **Diesel: Pushed higher by up to 91 paise per litre**
- **CNG: Increased by Re 1 per kg across major cities**

a weaker rupee, which have sharply raised the cost of imports. Petrol price was increased by 87 paise in Delhi to Rs 99.51 per litre from Rs 98.64 earlier. Similarly, diesel price was hiked by 91 paise to Rs 92.49 a litre from Rs 91.58 previously.

(Contd on page 3)