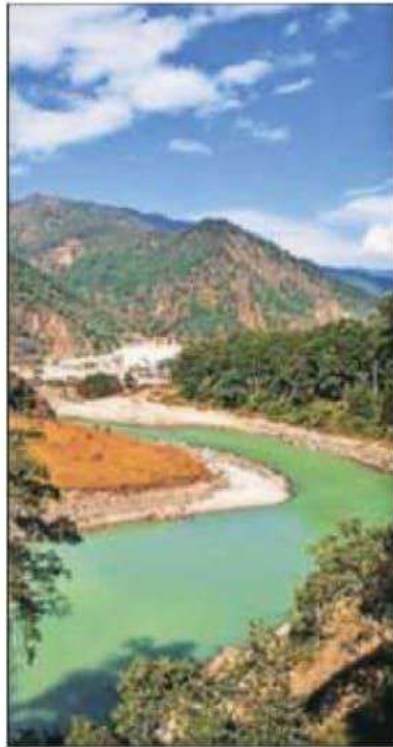


Don't want ties with India to deteriorate over Teesta: B'desh minister



DHAKA, Aug 18 (PTI)

BANGLADESH does not want its friendly ties with India to deteriorate over the long-pending Teesta water-sharing agreement, a senior minister has said, urging New Delhi to take into account Dhaka's interests while pursuing its own.

"The neighbouring country is a friendly country. They have to think that while they have their interests, we also have ours," Water Resources Minister Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee was quoted as saying by news portal tbsnews.Net at a seminar here.

"A friend should protect the interests of a friend. We never want our friendly relations with them to deteriorate," he said.

Anee's remarks come amid a renewed push by Bangladesh to address the Teesta issue, including through the proposed Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project with China's support, as Dhaka seeks to tackle recurring floods, river erosion and dry-season water shortages in the country's northern districts.

He said the Government had organised several seminars and consultations since the February

election to gather expert views on the proposed Teesta project.

A detailed study based on those recommendations would help the Government take concrete steps, Anee said at the seminar titled 'Sustainable Management of the Teesta River', jointly organised by the Ministry of Water Resources and the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology. Describing the project as a major challenge, the minister said people in five to six northern districts had high expectations from it after suffering for years from river erosion and other problems.

"If we fail to implement it, the damage and problems faced by families in those areas will continue to increase. We have to overcome this challenge anyhow," he said. The Teesta issue has remained a major irritant in India-Bangladesh water cooperation for decades.

The Teesta originates in the Himalayas and flows through Sikkim and West Bengal before entering Bangladesh, where it eventually joins the Jamuna, the Bangladeshi name for the Brahmaputra.

While the river is particularly important for agriculture and livelihoods in northern Bangladesh, it is vital for irrigation and power generation in West Bengal. Several hydropower projects are located in the river's upper catchment areas, and nearly half a dozen districts in North Bengal depend on its waters.

India and Bangladesh have discussed sharing the Teesta waters since the 1980s. An interim arrangement reached in 1983 provided for 39 per cent of the water to India and 36 per cent to Bangladesh, with the remaining 25 per cent unallocated. It was followed by further negotiations, but no comprehensive long-term agreement was reached.

A draft interim agreement was finalised in 2011, which envisaged a sharing formula for the dry season.

'India, US must address friction points as true partners'

MUMBAI, Aug 18 (PTI)

US AMBASSADOR Sergio Gor on Tuesday said India and the US must address friction points as true partners and work on predictable taxation and regulatory frameworks to allow business to thrive.

Speaking at the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce here, Gor stressed the need for candid, trust-based engagements on export controls and rock-solid intellectual property protections to give innovators confidence to invest, create and scale without fear.

The Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC) held its national convention, themed "Redefining the India-US Comprehensive Strategic Partnership."

Gor said that the US embassy in India topped the list among US embassies worldwide in attracting over USD 20 billion in



Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis welcomes US ambassador to India Sergio Gor, in Mumbai on Tuesday.

(ANI)

investment.

When Indian companies invest in America, it is a win-win situation. They get access to one of the world's most dynamic markets, he said.

"This relationship has unbelievable and incredible potential. To unleash the full power of the economic engine, we must address friction points together as true partners. We need predictable taxation and regulatory frameworks that allow business to thrive," he said.

The US envoy said when companies around the world tell him that their intellectual property rights have been stolen and they want to move their firms to India, they ask whether it is safe here and his answer is a resounding yes.

"We do trust India," he said, adding that President Donald Trump has trusted India and invested heavily in this relationship from day one.

Trump says US has no planned talks with Iran

WASHINGTON, Aug 18 (AP)

PRESIDENT Donald Trump on Tuesday said the US has no planned talks with Iran but insisted the Strait of Hormuz remains “open and operating,” despite limited traffic and a reported strike on a ship exiting the waterway. Trump wrote on social media that a US blockade there remains “in full force and effect,” and asserted that all water mines have been removed.

The post comes after a 60-day negotiating period ended this week between the US and Iran with no clear end to the war in sight.

Brics opposes EU carbon tax, other 'such trade barriers'

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New Delhi: Brics nations Tuesday opposed EU's carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM) and any other such trade barriers, calling them "unilateral, punitive, discriminatory and protectionist measures".

CBAM, which entered its operational regime on Jan 1, is a tool to put a price, through imposing a border tax, on carbon-intensive goods, such as iron and steel, aluminium and cement, entering the 27 EU nations.

India opposed the proposal from the start, arguing that the unilateral move placed an additional burden on businesses from developing economies due to embedded emissions in their products.

Besides Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, other members of the group are Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. These countries account for 40% of global GDP. Ministers or heads of delegations of all member countries, except Saudi Arabia, attended the ministerial meeting.

Delivering his keynote address at the meeting Union environment minister Bhupender Yadav highlighted the growing global environmental challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and disaster risks, and called for stronger cooperation among 11 member countries of the group on forest fire prevention, preparedness, early warning, response and post-fire recovery.

The meeting unveiled four knowledge compendiums prepared by the Brics Environment Working Group.

The countries also adopted four outcome documents including terms of reference for a network of Brics institutions to advance knowledge sharing, research and innovation in sustainable lifestyles, and integrated landscape management for combating desertification.

Govt notifies 405 key defence items worth Rs 3,070 cr for indigenous manufacturing

NEW DELHI, Aug 18 (IANS)

THE Department of Defence Production has notified the sixth 'Positive Indigenisation List' comprising 405 strategically important items with an estimated business potential of Rs 3,070 crore, aimed at strengthening local manufacturing and reducing dependence on imports, according to a statement issued by the Defence Ministry on Tuesday.

The list contains line replaceable units, sub-systems, sub-assemblies, spares, components and raw materials. These include 16 items of the Indian Coast Guard and 389 items of Defence Public Sector Undertakings.

The items cover a broad range of defence platforms and systems, including air platforms



Konkurs-M

such as Advanced Light Helicopter, Light Utility Helicopter, Su-30MKI, Light Combat Aircraft and AL-31FP Engine for the Indian Air Force. Armoured platforms including T-72, T-90 and BMP-II for the Indian Army also figure on the list. Besides, warships missile systems such as Konkurs-M, Invar and MRSAM, defence electronics including radars, sonars, fire control systems and satellite communication sys-



MRSAM

tems as well as high explosive anti-tank ammunition and other critical defence equipment form part of the list. The detailed list of items is also available on the SRIJAN Portal. Each item has an indicative timeline for indigenisation. Upon successful indigenous development, these items will be procured from Indian industry. The defence PSUs and Indian Coast Guard will undertake indigenisation through various

routes, including their 'Make' procedure and in-house development, with participation from the industry, particularly MSMEs, the statement said.

This sixth positive indigenisation list marks another step in the Government's efforts to promote self-reliance in defence manufacturing under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative. It is expected to further expand opportunities for the Indian industry, strengthen the domestic defence manufacturing ecosystem, promote investment and innovation, and contribute to reducing dependence on imports, the statement said.

The SRIJAN Defence Portal was launched in August 2020 as a dedicated platform, through which the defence PSUs and Service Headquarters

(SHQs) offer defence items to Indian industry, including MSMEs and startups, for indigenous development and production. Since its launch, the portal has facilitated the offer of more than 33,000 defence items for indigenisation by defence PSUs and SHQs up to June 2026. These include 5,012 items notified under the first five 'Positive Indigenisation Lists'. More than 15,700 defence items have been successfully indigenised, resulting in an estimated import substitution value of about Rs 9,000 crore over the last five years. In addition, defence PSUs have placed procurement orders, including in-house production, worth approximately Rs 10,000 crore on domestic vendors up to March 2026, the statement added.

Four-tier paper checking system, new experts: Education Ministry

NEW DELHI, Aug 18 (PTI)

THE Government on Tuesday announced a major overhaul of the examination system at the National Testing Agency, including a four-tier paper checking process, removal of 600 experts along with onboarding of new ones and CISF-secured office premises.

Under fire over the recent lapses in the UGC-NET papers and earlier the NEET-UG exam paper leak, the Education Ministry has gone into overdrive to set things in order.

After a meeting chaired on Monday by Education Minister Pralhad Joshi, who came in after his predecessor Dharmendra Pradhan had to resign following protests over the NEET-UG paper fiasco, the Ministry announced this evening that Joshi had directed that all necessary security and related infrastructural facilities should be put in place for the

smooth conduct of examinations. Following directions from the Minister, NTA Director General Abhishek Singh apprised the ministry of actions taken by the Agency, which is responsible for several examinations in the country.

"A revamp of the examination team was undertaken with 600 experts being removed and new experts being onboarded," the ministry said while listing out the steps taken so far.

A four-tier question paper checking system will also be put in place to strengthen the scrutiny of examination papers, it added.

Besides, 20-25 officials will be inducted in the next two to three weeks, while further induction plan was also reviewed.

Also, NTA offices will be shifted to new premises on a war-foot-

ing, where security will be reinforced with CISF teams, the ministry said.

Sources said the NTA office will be moved to Minto Road from Okhla in the national capital.

The decisions come after the NTA faced renewed flak from Opposition parties and several protesting student groups following the

Sunday night announcement of the re-test for the UGC-NET examination for scholars. They were demanding that the NTA be scrapped, saying its "repeated lapses" have put students' academic and career plans at risk.

NTA sources, however, asserted that it had acted in the interest of students and said internal processes and protocols are being reviewed to ensure that all exams are fair and error-free in the future.

The agency proactively looked into the complaints and decided to conduct re-tests, with all corrective measures being taken in the overall interest of candidates and to strengthen the foundation of a more accountable examination system, sources said.

In a major crackdown in the NEET paper leak controversy, the National Testing Agency terminated 47 officials in July. Later, it axed more officials, taking the total number to over 50.

Ten new professional leadership positions, including chief technology officer, chief finance officer, CISO, GM (test security) and GM (R and D and psychometrics), have been advertised and are being onboarded.

Domain specialists are also being brought in from the private sector for cybersecurity, psychometrics, question paper design and other specialised areas, it said.

NTA OVERHAUL