

India, Canada to begin 5th round of talks from today

NEW DELHI, Oct 4 (PTI)

THE Chief negotiators of India and Canada will begin the fifth round of negotiations for the proposed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in Ottawa from October 5, with an aim to conclude the talks by the end of this calendar year, an official said.

The five-day talks may end on October 9.

The fourth round of negotiations concluded here on September 18.

The talks are moving at a faster pace as both countries are targeting to conclude the negotiations by the end of this year.

The negotiations are important as Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to visit Canada around December this year,

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has said last month.

To give a further impetus to the talks, Canada's Trade Minister Maninder Sidhu will visit New Delhi later this month with a 300 strong business delegation. Sidhu and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal met in Mumbai last month to review the progress of negotiations.

CEPA is a kind of free trade agreement in which two countries either significantly reduce or eliminate customs duties on the maximum number of goods traded between them. They also ease norms for the movement of skilled professionals and attract investments.

The bilateral trade in goods declined 8.23 per cent to USD 7.95 billion in 2025-26 from USD 8.7 billion in 2024-25.

India-US discuss security, maritime ties in Indo-Pacific

NEW DELHI, Oct 4 (IANS)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar held a meeting with the Commander of the United States Pacific Command, Admiral Samuel J. Paparo, in New Delhi on Sunday, during which discussions were held on advancing the security partnership and maritime cooperation.

US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor was present at the meeting.

"Glad to meet Commander of the US Pacific Command, Admiral Samuel J. Paparo. Discussed advancing our security partnership and maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific," EAM Jaishankar posted on X.

On Saturday, Admiral Samuel J. Paparo arrived in New Delhi for a six-day official visit to strengthen the defence partnership between the two nations. Sergio Gor extended a warm welcome to Admiral



EAM S Jaishankar meets US Indo-Pacific Command Commander Admiral Samuel J Paparo, in New Delhi. (PTI)

Samuel Paparo.

During his visit, Admiral Paparo will hold talks with Indian counterparts on shared security priorities, including harnessing digital transformation and

emerging technologies, maintaining regional strategic stability, strengthening defence energy resilience, and navigating an increasingly competitive technology landscape.

"From emerging technology to maritime security, the United States and India are building a defence partnership equipped to meet the challenges of the future," the US Embassy in India said in a statement.

"Admiral Paparo's visit underscores the strength of the Major Defence Partnership and reaffirms the United States' enduring presence and interests in the Indian Ocean region," it added.

"Lieutenant General Joel B Vowell, Deputy Commanding General, USARPAC, called on General Dhiraj Seth, COAS, on 28 September. The leaders discussed the evolving security landscape in the Indo-Pacific and explored opportunities to advance bilateral defence engagement across multiple domains," the Indian Army's Additional Directorate General of Public Information posted on X.

Lockheed Martin to expand production in India, if it wins transport aircraft bid

WASHINGTON, Oct 4 (PTI)

LOCKHEED Martin is looking to further expand its production capabilities in India if it wins the bid to supply medium transport aircraft for its armed forces, a senior official of the aerospace company said.

In August, India issued a tender for procurement of 60 medium transport aircraft at a cost of USD 10.5 billion.

Five Indian companies -- Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL), Mahindra Group, Adani Defence & Aerospace, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Reliance Defence -- are in the fray for the contract and are expected to bring global aircraft manufacturers into the programme.

"We have a long partnership with Tata that produces components and empennages of the C-130J aircraft. It is a very

In August, India issued a tender for procurement of 60 medium transport aircraft at a cost of USD 10.5 billion.

robust capability that will be expanded in our current bid," Dan Tenney, Senior Vice President, global business development and strategy, Lockheed Martin, said in response to a question from PTI. "We are looking to expand that capability with production and other things that occur within India," he said.

TASL has partnered with Lockheed Martin, while Mahindra has joined hands with Brazil's Embraer for the contract. "So we're very excited by that. India has been a great partner in helping to enable advanced capabilities for that aircraft and beyond," Tenney said. He said if Lockheed Martin and TASL are success-

ful in that bid, the network will be expanded. "So we are looking to do that," Tenney said.

Lockheed Martin said its proposal would include 12 aircraft in flyaway condition and 48 manufactured in India.

The company has also proposed upgrading the Indian Air Force's (IAF) existing fleet of 12 C-130Js to the same advanced configuration, potentially giving the force a common fleet of 72 aircraft. The IAF's current C-130J fleet has accumulated more than 58,000 flight hours and is used for high-altitude operations in Ladakh, humanitarian missions during the Nepal floods and the evacuation of Indian nationals from Sudan in 2023.

Trump-linked drone firm's Pak deal raises questions over US arms thaw

Same Co Has Indian Presence Too, Tied Up With Mumbai Firm To Make Counter-Drone Interceptors

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: An obscure US defence start-up has suddenly acquired outsized geopolitical significance after signing a memorandum of understanding with the Pakistan army and securing an initial order for unmanned aerial systems, raising questions in Indian strategic circles over whether the deal could be an indicator of a wider reopening of US military supplies to Pakistan.

Powerus, a Florida-based company barely a year old, signed the agreement during a Sept visit to Pakistan led by its president and co-founder Brett Velicovich, a former US army special operations intelligence analyst. The company says the initial order is limited, but Velicovich has said its longer-term ambition is to combine American and Pakistani technology and potentially establish manufacturing in Pakistan. "We are proud to support Pakistan's ministry of defence, and the memorandum gives both sides a strategic framework to build upon," Velicovich said.

The Pakistan deal is particularly notable because Powe-



A Russian drone hits a bridge in Kyiv Sunday. Ukrainian drone technology, brought into a US defence company, is now being transferred to Pakistan

rus has access to Ukrainian defence tech developed during the war with Russia. In March, it established Powerus USA, in partnership with Wyoming-based G1 Exploration, to commercialise Ukrainian autonomous defence systems. Powerus owns 51% of the venture, while G1 contributed intellectual property covering seven fully developed products and other systems under development.

The partnership produced the Guardian family of counter-drone interceptors, designed to destroy hostile unmanned aircraft. Powerus says Guardian has been developed with Ukrainian technology and batt-

lefield experience, which have drawn rave reviews in US. This creates an unusual – and in Indian eyes an unprecedented – chain: Ukrainian drone technology, brought into a US defence company, is now potentially being transferred to Pakistan, a country whose military has been rapidly expanding its own drone capabilities.

The political sensitivity is heightened by Powerus's links to the Trump family. Powerus completed its merger with Nasdaq-listed Aureus Greenway Holdings on Oct 1 and now trades as Powerus Corporation under the symbol PUSA. Donald Trump Jr.

and Eric Trump are reported to be investors in Aureus through American Ventures.

Ironically, the deal has also caused unease in some Pakistani circles because of Powerus' Israeli links, with one of its co-founders reported to be former IDF officer Ziv Marom. Some analysts are questioning why Pakistan, which already builds its own drones and buys others from China and Turkey, is buying from a company that was founded only last year and sells drones to India too. Others view it as Pakistan diversifying its suppliers.

Indeed, the most intriguing aspect of the Pakistan deal is that Powerus had already entered the Indian defence market. In June, Powerus subsidiary Tandem Defense was reported to have granted Mumbai-based Paras Defence and Space Technologies exclusive licence to manufacture and commercialise the Guardian-1 counter-drone interceptor in India. So effectively, the same American company is now pursuing defence cooperation with both India and Pakistan.

The juxtaposition is attracting close attention in military circles in India. Of course, US

has a long history of supplying arms to rival states, and the Powerus arrangements do not by themselves demonstrate a change in policy towards India. The larger question though is whether Powerus represents something more consequential: a gradual restoration of the US-Pakistan defence ties.

The Trump administration itself began loosening controls last Dec when it approved a \$686 million package to modernise Pakistan's existing F-16 fleet. The consignment included 92 Link-16 tactical data systems, cryptographic equipment, avionics, training and logistical support. The stated US rationale was "to preserve Pakistan's interoperability with US and partner forces and support counterterrorism."

Powerus could empower the Pakistani military even more. Drones, counter-drone systems, communications, surveillance and electronic warfare are less politically conspicuous than supplying Pakistan with new fighter aircraft or major offensive weapons, but they are also the technologies whose importance has been demonstrated by the wars in Ukraine and the India-Pakistan conflict.

India, Cyprus hold first Joint Maritime Committee meeting

NICOSIA, Oct 4 (IANS)

INDIA and Cyprus held the first meeting of their Joint Maritime Committee (JMC) in Limassol, co-chaired by Joint Secretary (International Cooperation) in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Venkatesapathy S, and Acting Permanent Secretary in the Shipping Deputy Ministry of Cyprus, Theodoulos Mesimeris, the High Commission of India in Nicosia said on Saturday.

"The first India-Cyprus Joint Maritime Committee (JMC) met under the 2017 bilateral Agreement on Merchant Shipping," the High Commission stated on X, calling it a new chapter in India-Cyprus maritime cooperation. The meeting was held on September 29.

India's High Commissioner to Cyprus, Manish, and the High

Commission of India in Nicosia joined the Indian delegation's engagements with Cypriot maritime authorities and industry

Singh Bisen.

The talks covered maritime education and training, investment opportunities in both sec-



Delegations from India and cyprus pose for a group photo. (X)

from September 28 to October 1.

The delegation also included Deputy Director General, Directorate General of Maritime Administration, Deependra

tors, the exchange of policies and strategies as best practices, and cooperation on matters of mutual interest at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

India in striking distance of 8% growth, says Das

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Indian economy is within striking distance of 8% growth, on the back of GST and ban-



king reforms, flexible inflation targeting, digital payments and fiscal prudence, a top PMO official said Sunday.

"Many of the reforms undertaken over the past decade were not designed as one-off measures, but as strategic buffers to enable the economy to absorb disruptions and recover rapidly," principal secretary to PM Shaktikanta Das said at the Kautilya Economic Conclave.

The Indian economy expanded 7.8% in the June quarter after a 7.9% growth last financial year and the former RBI governor attributed it to the strong domestic demand and investment. "India's resilience is not accidental. It is the outcome of broad and mutually reinforcing reforms," he said.

The former economic affairs secretary said India's financial sector and prudent management of the external sector had also emerged as strong pillars of economic growth. External sector indicators have remained broadly resilient, supported by export diversification, free trade agreements, a sustained surplus in services trade and steady inward remittances, he said.

Listing out a host of reforms undertaken by govt, Das said: "The journey ahead is focused on capitalising on the emerging opportunities."

Going forward, he said, the pace of activity will accelerate in five years, including AI, which can enhance productivity, improve public service delivery, accelerate scientific discovery, strengthen healthcare outcomes, and transform education.

He also called for deepening of the corporate bond market, pension and insurance funds, municipal finance and innovative infrastructure financing.

India is going 'beyond advocacy' on Ukraine conflict: Jaishankar



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said in his address at the Munich Security Conference on Sunday. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Oct 4 (PTI)

INDIA has moved beyond advocacy and stepped up its efforts in recent months for the resolution of the Ukraine conflict by engaging in conversations with

both Kyiv and Moscow, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Sunday, in a first public acknowledgement of New Delhi's role in ending the lingering war.

Jaishankar's comments at an event came days after Russian President Vladimir Putin said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has "good ideas" to find a mutually acceptable solution to the conflict. Ukraine Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said on Friday that Kyiv received separate proposals from India and three other nations for a possible ceasefire.

Sharing some details of New Delhi's efforts, Jaishankar said it is focusing on ensuring the safety of shipping in the Black Sea as well as on grain exports and energy supplies. For over four years, India has been consistently pushing for resolving the Ukraine conflict through dialogue and diplomacy.

(Contd on page 5)

EAM compares US-China rivalry to Goldilocks scenario

NEW DELHI, Oct 4 (IANS)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar on Sunday compared the US-China rivalry to a Goldilocks scenario, quipping that "You don't want it to be too hot, you don't want it to be too good".

"In the context of a US-China rivalry. I think we are looking at what is often called a Goldilocks scenario: You don't want it to be too hot; you don't want it to be too good. You want it somewhere in between, at the right temperature," the EAM said

(Contd on page 5)

Asian Games end with India earning 85 medals

NAGOYA, Oct 4 (IANS)

THE buses will stop running, accreditation cards will soon become souvenirs and athletes rushing through airports will once again replace the colourful chaos of the past two weeks.

The Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games have come to an end.

It was a simple farewell, much like the opening ceremony. There was music, colour, dancing, flags and athletes enjoying perhaps their first opportunity in days to simply breathe and take in what they had achieved.

For India, it was a closing night filled with pride.

Shooter Neeru Dhanda led the Indian contingent as flag-bearer, carrying the Tricolour into the stadium after an exceptional campaign for the country. Yet her presence was just one part of a much bigger Indian story. India finished fourth in the medal table with 85 medals — 21 gold, 27 silver and 37 bronze.

China dominated the Games, followed by Japan and South Korea, while India's medal haul once again highlighted its growing presence across a wide range of sports.

And some of the loudest celebrations came from a sport that needs little introduction in India — cricket.

Cricket once again proved that its place in the Asian Games is no longer merely symbolic.

India's men's and women's teams both returned with gold

21 GOLD, 27 SILVER AND 37 BRONZE



India's flagbearer Neeru Dhanda and others during the closing ceremony marking the conclusion of the 20th Asian Games, in Nagoya, Japan on Sunday. (PTI)

medals. For Indian cricket, these were not just two more medals on a crowded tally.

The Asian Games offered another reminder of how far the sport has reached beyond its traditional boundaries—and of the weight the Indian jersey carries even outside the world's biggest cricket tournaments.

For some Indian athletes, however, there was no glamour

attached to their journey.

There were early morning starts, long journeys to venues and hours spent waiting for competition. Some travelled hundreds of kilometres simply to compete for a medal that may never make the front pages.

Yet they kept showing up.

That perhaps became the defining characteristic of India's campaign.

Archery produced a stunning five gold medals. Boxing added three golds, while wrestling contributed two. Hockey and kabaddi brought the familiar roar of team triumphs, with both men's and women's teams winning gold. Athletics again produced its share of drama, with India's runners and field athletes battling through pressure and weather to add precious medals.