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**STATE TIMES**

# ASSOCHAM-ARISE IIP to organize B2B Meetings on Business Opportunities in Africa on Saturday

## ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) in collaboration with ARISE IIP to announce the forthcoming B2B Meetings on Business Opportunities in Africa scheduled for October 28, at Hotel Radisson Blu in Jammu.

This event offers a unique opportunity for businesses to explore the untapped potential of the African continent and unlock numerous avenues for growth under special government schemes.

Africa is endowed with an abundance of natural resources, including minerals, oil, gas, and fertile agricultural land. These resources present significant investment opportunities in a wide range of industries, such as mining, energy, textiles, agricul-

ture, food processing, FMCG, and pharmaceuticals. With an ever-expanding middle class and a potential consumer spending of USD 2.2 trillion by 2030, as projected by the African Development Bank, Africa is poised to become one of the most profitable regions for foreign direct investment (FDI).

"India, as the second-largest trading partner of Africa globally, has played a pivotal role in strengthening the India-Africa relationship. Over the past two decades, India's private sector has been at the forefront of investments in Africa, contributing approximately \$54 billion, which amounts to around 19% of Africa's foreign direct investment. Key sectors for collaboration include pharmaceuticals, ICT and services, the auto-

mobile industry, and the power sector", said Manik Batra, Chairman, ASSOCHAM J&K Council.

"In light of the paramount importance of strengthening the economic ties between India and Africa, ASSOCHAM, in partnership with ARISE IIP, is organizing these B2B Meetings on Business Opportunities in Africa. The event aims to bridge industrial gaps, unlock Africa's potential for sustainable local transformation, promote manufacturing, stimulate export growth, and enhance trade promotion," he added.

ARISE IIP, a leading infrastructure developer in Africa, specializes in conceiving, financing, constructing, and operating integrated and tailor-made industrial zones. These ecosystems play a pivotal

role in promoting industrialization within Africa, facilitating job generation and value addition to natural and agricultural resources.

Key Features of ARISE IIP SEZs include, Tax Benefits: 0% Income Tax, 0% Tax on Property, 0% Taxes on services, 100% capital repatriation of profit or fund VAT exemption, Ready to move in sheds, World Class Infrastructure, Single Window Approvals and many more.

Key Industries targeted for growth in these SEZs include Pharmaceuticals, Cashew Processing, Cotton & Textiles, Agro Processing, Packaging Industries, Industrial Products, Wood, FMCG goods, Marbles and granite, and Minerals, Chemicals & Fertilizers.

"The primary focus of

these meetings is to reveal investment and enterprise opportunities available for Indian businesses in Africa. This can be achieved through the establishment of manufacturing units or processing units under special government schemes, leveraging Africa as a base to enter and capture markets in other Gulf countries," said Amit Kaushik, Business Development Manager, Arise IIP.

To attend this exclusive event, registration is mandatory. Interested participants are encouraged to confirm their attendance using the provided registration link for the Jammu event: Registration Link: <https://forms.office.com/r/7XWbWj6iK> or contact J&K headquarter of ASSOCHAM at By pass Road Narwal.

# Rajnath performs 'Shastra Puja' in Tawang; hails troops for guarding frontier with unwavering commitment

## ■ AGENCY

TAWANG/NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday performed Shastra Puja in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang and celebrated Dussehra with Army soldiers in the strategically key region that is close to the frontier with China.

Singh, accompanied by Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande, also carried out a comprehensive review of India's military preparedness along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Arunachal Pradesh and lauded the troops for guarding the border with "unwavering commitment and unparalleled courage."

In 1962, Chinese troops had clashed with Indian forces in the region, and significantly, Tawang town was over-run on October 24 that year.

During an interaction with soldiers after visiting Bum-La and number of other forward posts, Singh asserted there is no option but to bolster the country's security apparatus in view of the current global scenario.

Singh's celebration of Dussehra with the soldiers at a military base that is not very far from the LAC comes at a time India and China have been engaged in a bitter stand-



off in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh for over three years.

Dussehra signifies the victory of good over evil, Singh said after performing Shastra Puja (worship of weapons) at a military base.

The defence minister also visited the Tawang war memorial, where he laid a wreath and offered tributes to the soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice during the 1962 war with China.

Tawang is a centre for Buddhism and key region having significant strategic importance. The sixth Dalai Lama was born in a village near Tawang town in 1683.

India has been ramping up military infrastructure in the region in the last few years. Indian and Chinese troops were engaged in a clash along the LAC at Yangtse in the Tawang sector on December 9 last year.

"No amount of appreciation is enough for the way you are guarding the border in difficult circumstances. I want to tell you that people of the country are proud of you," he told the troops.

The defence minister expressed gratitude to the soldiers for their "unyielding spirit, unwavering commitment and unparalleled courage" while guarding the borders in

tough conditions, and ensuring that the nation and its people are safe.

In his remarks, Singh said all efforts are being made to strengthen the nation's military prowess through indigenous production of defence equipment.

"Earlier, we used to rely on imports to upgrade our military. But today, a number of major weapons and platforms are being manufactured within the country," he said.

"Foreign companies are being encouraged to share their technology and produce the equipment in India with domestic industry. In 2014, the value of defence exports was about Rs 1,000 crore, but today we are exporting defence equipment worth thousands of crores," he said.

In his address to the soldiers, the defence minister described the "righteousness and dharma" of the brave armed forces personnel as the living testament to the ethos of the festival of Vijaydashmi.

Singh has been performing "Shastra Puja" during Dussehra for the last several years, including during his tenure as the Union Home Minister in the previous NDA government.

The defence minister said the valour and commitment of the armed forces is one of the main reasons behind India's rising stature globally and that it is now among the most powerful nations.

Singh cited India's success in the economic sphere as one of

the reasons for the country's growing global profile. But at the same time noted that if the armed forces hadn't guarded the country's border effectively, then its stature would not have risen.

Citing his recent tour of Italy, the defence minister recalled his visit to Montone memorial which has been built to honour the contribution of Naik Yaswant Ghadge and other Indian soldiers who fought in the Italian campaign to liberate Montone in World War II.

He added that not just Indians, but even Italian people pay their respects at the memorial, which is proof that the bravery of Indian soldiers is recognised globally.

The defence ministry said Singh was briefed on the infrastructure development along the LAC, and the deployment of cutting-edge military equipment to enhance the operational efficiency of the troops.

Indian and Chinese troops are locked in an over three-year confrontation in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh, even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks.

India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas.

The Army has significantly bolstered deployment of troops and weaponry along the nearly 3,500 km-long LAC, including in the Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh sectors following the eastern Ladakh standoff.

# PM Modi cannot escape accountability by completely ignoring Manipur crisis: Congress

## ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Tuesday again attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not visiting Manipur since the outbreak of violence in May and alleged that he "abandoned" the state at a time when his intervention and outreach were needed the most.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said it is the 175th day since Manipur erupted and social harmony in the state was devastated.

But five questions continue to be asked by the people of Manipur and by all those who want the process of reconciliation and trust-building in the state to gather momentum, he said in a post on X.

"The people of Manipur and the entire Northeast are closely watching how the

prime minister has abandoned the state of Manipur at a time when his intervention and outreach were needed the most," he said.

"He cannot escape accountability and responsibility by completely ignoring the crisis," the Congress leader said.

Ramesh asked why the prime minister has not met the chief minister of Manipur and elected MLAs of the state, a large majority of whom belong to his party or are its allies.

He also asked why the Union Minister of State of External Affairs who represents Manipur (Inner) in Lok Sabha not been able to meet the PM.

"Why has the PM who pontificates on all subjects not seen it fit to speak on

Manipur publicly for more than 4-5 minutes at most, that too in a routine manner and after immense pressure from the Opposition?

"Why has the PM who loves to travel at the drop of a hat not seen it fit to spend even a few hours in Manipur to show his concern," Ramesh asked.

"Why is the CM who is so thoroughly discredited across sections of Manipur's society still being allowed to continue," the Congress MP also asked.

The Congress has been critical of the Modi government's handling of the Manipur crisis. The opposition party has also been demanding the sacking of Chief Minister N Biren Singh, accusing him of not being able to control the situation.

# Youth can't be ignored if those in govt want to retain power: Sharad Pawar

## ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

PUNE: Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar on Tuesday said that if those in the government want to keep power in their hands, they cannot ignore the youth who are carrying out the 'Yuva Sangharsh Yatra' in Maharashtra.

The 'Yuva Sangharsh Yatra', a foot march from Pune to Nagpur to highlight the issues faced by youth in Maharashtra, led by NCP MLA and Sharad Pawar's grandnephew Rohit Pawar, was flagged off from here on Tuesday. Participants of the march will travel to 13 districts, covering more than 800 km. The 45-day march will end in Nagpur during the winter session of the state legislature.

"This march will encourage the youth from the state, and I am sure that the process of transformation and fulfillment of your demands will get initiated from this Yuva Sangharsh Yatra. The best example of this yatra is that the moment you decided to start (this march), the decision of contractual

recruitment was withdrawn by the government," Sharad Pawar said.

"By the time the yatra reaches Nagpur; if those in the government want to keep the power in their hands, they cannot ignore the youth who are carrying out this yatra in a peaceful democratic way, and if the government takes that kind of approach (to ignore the march by youth), they will have to pay a heavy price," he said.

The NCP leader said the charter of demands of the youth includes that educational institutes do not charge exorbitant fees and return the excess fees charged from parents of the wards. "The other demands are recruitment on vacant posts of teachers and professors in schools and colleges, the recruitment process should be done through the MPSC; and the development of Information Technology sectors in two-tier cities like Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Solapur, Kolhapur and Amravati," he said.

The other demands include withdrawal of the school adop-

tion scheme and cluster school project, enactment of a law against exam paper leaks, start the process of recruitment of over 2,50,000 candidates (across various departments) and waiver of interest on education loans given to students.

For all these demands, a dialogue is needed with the government, Sharad Pawar said.

"You clutch all these demands together and submit them to the chief minister and if you wish, I will speak to the CM to convene a meeting for all these demands made by the youth, and I will personally be present at the meeting with you people," the NCP chief said addressing the youth gathered at the event.

He said the CM will be asked about the timeline for a decision on these demands and if the demands are fulfilled, the CM will be congratulated. "But if the work is not done, will decide what to do," he said.

"But I am sure that the CM of the state will look into all these issues with great seriousness and resolve these issues," he added.

# Qatar becomes a key intermediary in Israel-Hamas war as fate of hostages hangs in the balance

## ■ AGENCY

JERUSALEM: The gas-rich nation of Qatar has become a key intermediary over the fate of some 200 hostages held by Hamas militants after their unprecedented attack on Israel, once again putting the small Arabian Peninsula country in the spotlight.

The negotiations have also thrust Qatar into a delicate international balancing act as it maintains a relationship with those viewed as militant groups by the West while trying to preserve its close security ties with the United States.

Under arrangements stemming from past Hamas cease-fire understandings with Israel, the gas-rich emirate of Qatar has paid the salaries of civil servants in the Gaza Strip, provided direct cash transfers to poor families and offered other kinds of humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza.

Qatar has also hosted Hamas' political office in its capital of Doha for over a decade. Among officials based there is Khaled Mashaal, an exiled Hamas member who survived a 1997 Israeli assassination attempt in Jordan that threatened to derail that country's peace deal with Israel. Also there is Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas' supreme leader.

The US sanctioned Mashaal in 2003 for being "responsible for supervising

assassination operations, bombings and the killing of Israeli settlers". Washington sanctioned Haniyeh in 2018, saying he had "close links with Hamas' military wing and has been a proponent of armed struggle, including against civilians".

Mashaal, in an interview with Sky News this week, said hostages taken during Hamas' attack on October 7 could be released if Israel stops its airstrikes something incredibly unlikely as Israel prepares for a ground offensive inside the Gaza Strip. Israel's military says 222 people, including foreigners, were believed captured by Hamas during the incursion and taken into Gaza. Four of those have been released, a mother and daughter on Friday and two more on Monday.

"Let them stop this aggression and you will find the mediators like Qatar and Egypt and some Arab countries and others will find a way to have them released and we'll send them to their homes," Mashaal said of the hostages.

Hosting the Hamas leaders has brought scrutiny to Qatar, both in the past and since the attack over two weeks ago that killed more than 1,400 people in Israel.

However, the Biden administration has repeatedly praised Qatar for its efforts in working to free the hostages and US Secretary

of State Antony Blinken visited Doha during his recent shuttle diplomacy trip in the region.

"Qatar is a longtime partner of ours who is responding to our request, because I think they believe that innocent civilians ought to be freed," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday.

Meanwhile, Qatar's ruling emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, channelled the wider anger in the Arab world over Israel's unrelenting airstrikes and siege of the Gaza Strip after the October 7 attack.

The Hamas-controlled Health Ministry says the strikes have killed over 5,000 Palestinians so far.

During Qatar's hosting of the FIFA World Cup last year, Palestinian flags were prominently displayed and Israeli journalists sometimes harassed.

"It is untenable for Israel to be given an unconditional green light and free license to kill, nor it is tenable to continue ignoring the reality of occupation, siege and settlement," Sheikh Tamim said on Tuesday in a speech to the country's Shura Council, an advisory and legislative body.

He slammed Israel's siege, saying that it "should not be allowed in our time" to use as weapons the cutting off of water and preventing medicine and food supplies to an entire population.

Qatar, a peninsula sticking out like a thumb into the Persian Gulf with a small population and military, has always looked warily at its larger neighbours Saudi Arabia and Iran.

It faced a yearslong boycott by four Arab nations, including Saudi Arabia, over a political dispute, which Kuwait's ruler at the time warned could have sparked a war.

It also bore withering criticism from the US and others over its pan-Arab satellite news network Al Jazeera. It aired statements from the late al-Qaida mastermind Osama bin Laden and has been providing nonstop coverage of the toll of Israel's punishing airstrikes in this war with Hamas, including images of the dead and dying that have fuelled demonstrations across the Middle East and wider world.

But those concerns about larger powers have seen Qatar balance the risks through its diplomacy and hosting of the forward headquarters of the US military's Central Command at its sprawling Al-Udeid Air Base. The US considers Qatar as a major non-NATO ally and Doha has widening defence trade and security cooperation with America, including priority delivery for certain military sales.

The Al-Udeid base served as a key node in America's chaotic withdrawal from

Afghanistan, while Qatar also hosted the Taliban officials with whom Washington earlier negotiated to end the longest US war.

But Qatar's negotiations have led to headaches in the past.

Most recently, Qatar agreed to have just under USD 6 billion in Iranian assets once frozen in South Korea transferred to Doha as part of a September prisoner swap between Tehran and the US.

After the Hamas attack, Qatar and the US agreed not to act on any request from Tehran to access those funds for humanitarian goods as initially planned at least for now.

enraged sanctions-choked Iran and left Qatar "walking the tightrope of international relations", said David B. Roberts, who has long studied Qatar as an associate professor at King's College London and recently published the book "Security Politics in the Gulf Monarchies".

"The reality is it is quite straight forward that so many senior government people in Israel and America want Qatar to have this role and ... Qatar ultimately will be seen in a broadly positive light in trying to free these hostages," Roberts said.

"If you do want this unique spot," he added, "then you're not signing yourself up for an easy life." (AP)

# 13,000 posts in Delhi Police to be filled by July next year: LG Office

## ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: At least 13,013 vacant posts of head constables and constables in the Delhi Police will be filled by July, 2024, according to a statement issued by the Raj Niwas on Tuesday.

Of these 13,013 posts, 3,521 posts are in the advanced stage of recruitment, and are expected to be filled by December this year, the statement said.

"Written examinations, PE

MT (Physical endurance and measurement test), and typing tests have been conducted. These posts are to be filled in a phased manner between December 2023 and July 2024," the statement added.

The posts being filled include 1,692 head constables and 1,411 constables (drivers).

At least 418 technical posts of photographer, draftsman, store clerk, fitter, mast

lasker, MT helper, MT storeman, statistician, assistants and radio technician in various ranks are also being filled.

In addition to this, 840 posts of multi-tasking staff is also being filled, according to the statement.

Of the recruitments being made by the SSC, 11,214 are in different stages of being filled up and 1,799 vacancies are to be advertised soon, the statement said.