

India, Bangladesh ink pact to boost ties in maritime sphere, blue economy

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: India and Bangladesh on Saturday firmed up a futuristic vision to expand cooperation in several new areas and inked a raft of agreements, including to boost ties in the maritime sphere and blue economy.

The pacts were finalised at the wide-ranging talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his visiting Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina.

The key pacts signed by the two sides included one on forging strong ties in the digital domain and another on having a "green partnership." "Today we have prepared a futuristic vision for cooperation in new areas. The youth of both the countries will benefit from the consensus reached on cooperation in areas such as green partnership, digital partnership, blue economy



and space," Modi said in his statement to the media.

In her remarks, Hasina described India as Bangladesh's major neighbour and a trusted friend.

"India is our major neighbour, trusted friend and regional partner. Bangladesh greatly values our relations with India, which were born out of the War of Liberation in 1971," she said.

"I recall with gratitude the contribution of the government and the people of India to Bangladesh's independence," she said.

Hasina also paid homage

to the "brave fallen heroes of India" who sacrificed their lives in the 1971 war.

"Today, we had very productive meetings where we discussed cooperation in areas of security, trade, connectivity, sharing of water from common rivers, power and energy, and regional and multilateral cooperation," she said.

"We agreed to collaborate with each other for the betterment of our people and countries," she added.

The Bangladesh prime minister began her two-day visit to India on Friday.

It is the first incoming bilateral state visit by a foreign leader after the formation of the new government in India following the Lok Sabha elections.

In the morning, Hasina visited Rajghat and paid rich tributes to Mahatma Gandhi.

Ahead of the talks, the visiting leader was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Officials said the focus of the Modi-Hasina talks would be to impart a new momentum to the bilateral ties, including in areas of trade, connectivity and energy.

Hasina was among the seven top leaders from India's neighbourhood and the Indian Ocean Region who attended the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Modi and the Union council of ministers on June 9.

PPA MLA to prioritise resolving Assam-Arunachal border issue

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

ITANAGAR: Newly elected People's Party of Arunachal legislator Nabam Vivek on Saturday asserted that he would prioritise resolving the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border dispute in his Doimukh constituency.

Despite the 2022 agreement between the two governments to resolve the longstanding issues, people of some villages under the Doimukh assembly segment strongly objected to the boundary demarcation.

"I have requested Chief Minister Pema Khandu to reconstitute the regional committee immediately so that a consensus can be reached between the villagers of both the states and to draw the boundary line," Vivek told PTI.

On July 15, 2022, the historic Namsai Declaration was signed between the two governments, and



Arunachal Pradesh got 86 villages as compared to its claim of 123.

There is no problem between the governments of the two states, he said, adding that the issues lie at the ground level.

"The boundary issue is a major concern for me. In the disputed border region, I am the only representative from the Arunachal side, while Assam, which shares a long boundary with my constituency from Bedeti in Biswanath district to

Boginadi in Lakhimpur district, has 6-7 MLAs," he said.

Both governments are determined to resolve the issues amicably, he said.

"I will go to the ground level, discuss with the people and try to convince them. Resolving the border dispute was a poll promise," the 51-year-old lawmaker said. Assam and Arunachal Pradesh share an 804.1-km-long border.

Arunachal Pradesh, which

was made a union territory in 1972, has been maintaining that several forest tracts in the plains traditionally belonged to hill tribal chiefs and communities and these were "unilaterally" transferred to Assam earlier.

After Arunachal Pradesh achieved statehood in 1987, a tripartite committee was appointed, which recommended that certain territories be transferred from Assam to Arunachal Pradesh.

Assam contested this and the matter was in the Supreme Court for a long time.

Vivek also said that he would work to construct an RCC bridge to connect Doimukh with Yupia, the Papum Pare district headquarters, besides concentrating on health and education.

UGC-NET exam: CBI questions suspect in UP in connection with paper leak

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The CBI on Saturday questioned a man in Uttar Pradesh's Kushinagar in connection with the UGC-NET paper leak case, officials said.

The suspect, who allegedly posted a portion of the paper on instant messaging service Telegram, was taken to Padrauna Kotwali in the district where he is being questioned by the team of CBI anti-corruption branch, they said.

It is understood that the suspect had undertaken coaching for the examination in Kota, Rajasthan, they said.

The CBI had registered an FIR into the UGC-NET paper leak case on Thursday against unidentified people on a reference from the Union education ministry.

The UGC-NET-2024 exam

for the selection of junior research fellows, assistant professors and PhD scholars was conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) on June 18 in two shifts across the country.

The next day, the University Grants Commission received inputs from the National Cyber Crime Threat Analytics Unit of the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) that the paper was available on the darknet and allegedly being sold for Rs 5-6 lakh on messaging platforms, sources said.

According to the complaint from the education ministry, the inputs from I4C, which functions under the Union home ministry, "prima-facie indicate that the integrity of the examination may have been compromised", officials said.

SANKALP Team celebrates 10th International Day of Yoga at Kishtwar



Participants performing yoga at Kishtwar.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KISHTWAR: The SANKALP-Hub for Empowerment of Women team celebrated the 10th International Day of Yoga at Elite Public School Kishtwar.

The team organized a special event aiming to foster wellness and empowerment among students, teachers, and the

local community highlighting the role of yoga in enhancing physical, mental, and emotional health among women and students as part of their self care and important section of society.

The students participated in the yoga session, which included basic asanas, pranayama and a guided meditation.

YSRCP's under construction central office demolished disregarding court orders: Jagan

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

AMARAVATI: YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Saturday said the Chandrababu Naidu-led NDA state government has demolished the under construction central office of the opposition party at Tadepalli in Guntur district.

Reddy alleged that the demolition was carried out disregarding high court orders.

"Chandrababu took vendetta politics to the next level. Like a dictator, he got YSRCP's central office demolished with excavators and bulldozers, which was almost complete," said Reddy in a post on X.

According to a YSRCP statement, the demolition commenced around 5.30 am on Saturday.

"The demolition proceeded even though the YSRCP had



approached the High Court the previous day (Friday), challenging the preliminary actions of the CRDA (Capital Region Development Authority)," said the statement.

YSRCP noted that the court had ordered a halt to any demolition activity, which was conveyed to the CRDA commissioner by a party lawyer, but the authority still went ahead and demolished the structure.

According to YSRCP, CRDA's action amounts to con-

tempt of court.

The former chief minister alleged that law and justice completely vanished in the southern state under the NDA government, comprising TDP, BJP and Janasena, and added that the demolition indicates how Naidu's reign in the next five years would be.

The YSRCP chief said that the opposition party will not be intimidated by these vendetta politics. He promised that the party will fight for the people.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

UNITED NATIONS: Yoga has roots in India and is now embraced globally, uniting people with its values of balance, mindfulness and peace, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said.

In his message on the 10th International Yoga Day, Guterres urged people to be inspired by the ancient practice's timeless values and its call for a more peaceful and harmonious future.

In December 2014, the UN proclaimed June 21 as the International Day of Yoga, recognising its universal appeal. The draft UN General Assembly resolution establishing the International Day of Yoga was proposed by India and endorsed by a record 175 member states.

"The International Day of Yoga recognises the ancient practice's unmatched power to deliver healing, inner peace and physical, spiritual and mental well-being," Guterres said in his message on Friday as the world celebrated the 10th International Yoga Day.

"With roots in India but now embraced worldwide by people of all faiths and cultures, Yoga unites people with its values of balance, mindfulness and peace with people and planet alike," Guterres said in the message posted on X by the Permanent Mission of India to the UN here. He noted that this year's theme 'Yoga for Self and Society' reminds "us of Yoga's important role in enhancing people's lives and the wider community."

Soren, 48, has strongly denied land grabbing charges saying the money laundering case was foisted against him by the BJP-led central government as part of a political vendetta.

He was arrested by the ED on January 31 from the Ranchi Raj Bhavan minutes after he resigned as the Jharkhand chief minister.

"On this important day, let us all be inspired by Yoga's timeless values and its call for a more peaceful and harmonious future," the UN chief said. The Permanent Mission of India to the UN organised the commemoration of the 10th International Yoga Day at the North Lawn Area of the UN Headquarters, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the Yoga Day last year in a historic celebration, nine years after he proposed from the UN General Assembly podium for June 21 to be marked as International Yoga Day. The event was attended by UN envoys, personnel, officials and members of the diaspora as well as yoga enthusiasts and practitioners.

UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed greeted the attendees with a 'Namaste' and said that at its heart, yoga is about unity, the unity of mind, body and spirit.

"It is about you, it is about me, it is about us. And at the UN today, we see how it unites people across cultures and countries," she said.

Mohammed added that since the UN General Assembly declared June 21 as the International Day of Yoga 10 years ago, the celebration and momentum have grown steadily.

"Today, it brings millions of us together of all ages and diverse backgrounds to honour this ancient tradition," Mohammed said as she referred to the Guinness World Record created at last year's Yoga Day commemora-



tion for most nationalities practising Yoga together.

At least 135 countries were represented at the 2023 Yoga session. "And I was the proud one of those many. That achievement was a wonderful and powerful symbol of Yoga's global popularity, its universal appeal, and its power to bring people together in their shared interests and their shared humanity," she said.

Extending greetings for the day with a 'Namaste', President of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly Dennis Francis said in a virtual message that Yoga has been an integral part of India's cultural tradition for millennia.

"Over the years, it has spread through the currents of cultural diffusion to every corner of the world, with millions of practitioners who turn to its mental, physical and spiritual benefits," he said.

He said that Yoga's benefits, such as a sense of contentment and happiness, physical strength and flexibility, mental fortitude, a sense of empathy and compassion, and inner peace, are all qualities that "should also guide our efforts on the multilateral stage."

Francis added that Yoga's ethical guide to living advocates for nonviolence, truthfulness and contentment.

"These principles resonate deeply with the core values of the United Nations, which strive to promote peace, justice, and human dignity worldwide. I therefore see in Yoga a powerful metaphor for the United Nations itself," he said.

Bihar Police detain six from Jharkhand's Deoghar in NEET 'paper leak' case

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

DEOGHAR: The Bihar Police detained six people from Jharkhand's Deoghar district in connection with the alleged irregularities in medical entrance exam NEET, an official said on Saturday. They were detained from a house near AIIMS-Deoghar in Devipur police station area on Friday night, he said.

"The Bihar Police gave us a tip-off. On our identification, they were taken into custody. All the suspects have been taken to Bihar," SDPO (Deoghar Sadar) Ritvik Srivastava told PTI.

The suspects were allegedly

living at the house of one Jhnu Singh, he said.

They were identified as Paramjit Singh alias Bittu, Chintu alias Baldev Kumar, Kaju alias Prashant Kumar, Ajit Kumar, Rajiv Kumar alias Karu, all residents of Nalanda district of Bihar, and Panku Kumar, according to a statement issued by the Deoghar Police. NEET-UG was conducted by the NTA on May 5 with around 24 lakh candidates taking part in it. The results were announced on June 4, but they were followed by allegations of question paper leaks in states such as Bihar, besides other irregularities.

ED raids in Ranchi recovers Rs 1 cr cash, 100 bullets in land grab case

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RANCHI: The Enforcement Directorate has seized Rs 1 crore in cash and 100 live bullet rounds following raids in Ranchi as part of an alleged land grab-linked money laundering investigation against former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren and others, officials said Saturday. The seizure was made on Friday evening from the Kanke road premise of a person identified as Kamlesh Singh. The raids were being carried out in the alleged land grab case against former CM and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader Hemant Soren but pertains to a different land plot, according to sources. The federal agency has also registered a police case under the Arms Act in connection with the seizure of the live ammunition, they said.

More than 25 persons including Soren, IAS officer and former Ranchi deputy commissioner Chhavi Ranjan, Bhanu Pratap Prasad and others have been arrested by the ED as part of the investigation into the case. Land parcels worth Rs 266 crore, including a clutch of plots spread across 8.86 acres in the Bargain area of Ranchi allegedly acquired illegally by Soren in Ranchi, have been attached by the agency till now and four chargesheets have been filed by it till now.

Soren, 48, has strongly denied land grabbing charges saying the money laundering case was foisted against him by the BJP-led central government as part of a political vendetta.

He was arrested by the ED on January 31 from the Ranchi Raj Bhavan minutes after he resigned as the Jharkhand chief minister.

granting MSP at C2+50 per cent," SKM leaders said in a statement issued at the press conference. "The increase is not even keeping pace with the market inflation of food prices. While annual retail inflation is around 5 per cent, food prices inflation is 7.9 per cent and vegetable prices increase by more than 10 per cent," the SKM, an umbrella body of farmer unions, said. They also said that no announcement has been made regarding guaranteed purchase in vegetable mandis even at the given prices.

"Unless the govt institutes some mechanism to guarantee the prices in the mandis, the farmers are fleeced and it is the middlemen who benefit from costly food in the

market," they said. "The BJP has been notorious in its mocking at farmers demand for raising MSP for all crops as per Swaminathan Commission recommendations. Though recently it has given Bharat Ratna to Dr Swaminathan, it is grossly manipulating the figures to severely under state the price," the SKM said.

The SKM said the declared MSP for paddy at Rs 2,300 per quintal is just about equal to the actual cost of production as per estimates made by several states and studies by agriculture universities. The farmer leaders also said that the problem originates from the terms used by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and

Prices, which fixes the MSPs. "The CACP has averaged the C2 cost for paddy in 2023-24 at Rs 1,911 which is a gross under estimation. Even this value, with a nominal inflation rate of 7 per cent for this kharif season, the C2 cost will be Rs 2,044 and 1.5 times will be Rs 3,066," the release said.

"Thus, the actual MSP should be at least Rs 3,100 to 3450 (for paddy)," it added.

The leaders said the MSP for jowar has been raised by Rs 191, which is a 5.66 per cent hike, while for Bajra, it's an increase of Rs 125 from Rs 2,625, ie, 4.76 per cent. Similarly, the increase in the price of Ragi is Rs 444 (10.34 per cent), Maize, Rs 135 (6.6 per cent), Arhar, Rs 550 (7.28 per cent),

Moong, Rs 124 (1.42 per cent), among others. They said when they compared the C2 price for 14 crops with the C2 estimates of crops by state governments and multiplied it by 1.5, it was found that for every quintal of produce the farmers will lose up to Rs 2,224 on cotton, Rs 2,296 on niger, and Rs 2,961 on sesamum. The calculation results also showed that a loss of Rs 2,611 would be incurred on sunflower, Rs 2,344 on urad, Rs 2,274 on moong, Rs 2206 on arhar, Rs 1,713 on groundnut, Rs 1,555 on soyabean, Rs 1,066 on jowar and Rs 712 on paddy and similar on other crops.

The SKM accused the BJP of cheating farmers to help corporate. "While the BJP

itself had promised an MSP of Rs 3,100 per quintal for paddy in Odisha during state elections and a similar amount last year during Chattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh elections, it has now recommended Rs 2,300," the statement said. "It is also shamelessly claiming that the prime minister is giving importance to farmers. This is only to help the big corporate houses and foreign exploiter MNCs who are rooting for Indian agriculture markets for cheaper produce," it added. The government on Wednesday raised the MSP for paddy by 5.35 per cent to Rs 2,300 per quintal for the 2024-25 kharif marketing season, a move that comes ahead of key state assembly polls.

