

# People recognise country's global stature has risen, says Jaishankar

Says he will continue with his predecessor Swaraj's social media outreach to help Indians abroad

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Most Indians recognise that India's global stature has risen in the last five years and this played a role in the NDA government retaining power for a second consecutive term, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Thursday.

A "global rebalancing" is taking place and its "sharp manifestation" is the rise of China and, to an extent, the rise of India as well, Jaishankar said during an interaction at a seminar.

"A large majority of people in India recognised that India's stature in the world has risen in the last five years," the minister said, adding that the government has kept alive and perhaps even strengthened expectations of change in India.

The government looks different from outside than from inside, Jaishankar, who served as foreign secretary from 2015-18, said without elaborating.

In his first public event after becoming the external affairs minister, he also said the elections were a vote of confidence in the management of national security and foreign policy was integrated with it.

In addition to this, a large part of India's economy has been externalised and there is need for India's foreign policy to help Indian companies gain better access to overseas



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar (2nd R) during The Growth Net Summit 7.0, in New Delhi, Thursday. Also seen in the picture are Jamshyd Noorji Godrej, Managing Director and Chairman of Godrej & Boyce, (2ndL) Claude Smadja, President Smadja & Associates (L) and Harshavardhan Neotia (R), chairman, Ambuja Neotia Group

markets. Jaishankar was addressing The Growth Net Summit 7.0, being organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Ananta Centre.

The minister said he will continue with his predecessor Sushma Swaraj's social media outreach to help Indians abroad.

He said "enormous emphasis" will be given to Indians in distress and they now expect the government to reach out to them.

This has changed the image of the foreign ministry, he

added. The external affairs minister also called for greater integration between government departments to create a stronger focus on the economic issues being faced by Indian companies, especially in overseas markets.

While highlighting India's relationship with its immediate neighbourhood, Jaishankar said the priority has been to focus on the regional grouping BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) rather than

SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation).

BIMSTEC, he said, is witnessing a great deal of positive energy. It was decided to leverage that and invite the leaders of BIMSTEC nations to the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Modi last month, he added.

According to the minister, changes the world is witnessing are very sharp and globalisation is under stress, especially in terms of market access and mobility of labour.

Second is the growth of nationalism, which he said

## Jaishankar to embark on two-day visit to Bhutan from today

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will embark on a two-day visit to Bhutan from Friday, his first overseas trip after assuming charge of the ministry.

MEA Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said during the visit, Jaishankar would call on Bhutanese Prime Minister Lotay Tshering and is expected to receive an audience with King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.

He will also hold talks with his Bhutanese counterpart Tandi Dorji.

"It will be Jaishankar's first visit abroad as the external affairs minister and reflects the importance that India attaches to its relationship with Bhutan, a close friend and neighbour," Kumar said.

Bhutan has been a close ally of India and bilateral ties between the two countries are on an upswing in the last few years.

"India and Bhutan share a unique and time tested bilateral relationship, characterised by utmost trust, goodwill and mutual understanding," said Kumar.

is being validated electorally across the globe, and the third is the global rebalancing taking place, especially with the rise of China.

He said some of the changes are contradictory in nature. For example, some nations are increasing tariffs while others are focused on improving connectivity.

In addition, there has been a rise in bilateral FTAs (free trade agreements) in light of the fact that the World Trade Organization (WTO) system is not working. He was of the view that India needed to find

ways to fix architecture such as the WTO and make it more effective.

"We can build a closer region through regional connectivity projects," Jaishankar added.

"If we want to propel economic growth, then there is greater responsibility for Indian foreign policy to focus on external aspect of it," the minister said.

There is big responsibility on the External Affairs Ministry to focus on project execution which has strategic significance, he added.

## Cricketing ties on agenda during PM's Maldives visit

GAUTAM LAHIRI



NEW DELHI: When Prime Minister Narendra Modi embarks on a two-day visit to Maldives on Saturday (June 8), cricketing ties will be one of the top agendas which will be discussed during the bilateral talks between the leaders of the two nations.

The Ministry of External Affairs is working with the BCCI to train Maldivian cricketers after the island nation's President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih sought India's assistance in developing the sport to international standard in his country, a top government official said on Thursday.

Addressing reporters, Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said India is also looking into constructing a stadium in the South Asian country, which is another request made by it.

He said that India has agreed to build a cricket stadium in Male with the Line of Credit extended to the Maldivians government. The island nation will be the fifth country to become a cricketing nation in the South Asia. Other countries which play cricket are India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.

Gokhale also said that India provided training to Afghanistan cricket team and now they are regularly playing international cricket.

In April, Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih attended an Indian Premier League (IPL) match in Bengaluru and subsequently expressed interest to develop a cricket team in the Maldives and sought India's assistance in training this team and bringing

it up to the requisite standard.

The Foreign secretary said the Board of Control for cricket in India has been advised to give Maldives required technical assistance in this regard and India has also sent cricket kits for upcoming players for both men and women team of that nation.

Replying to a question, Gokhale said that Maldives basically wanted India's help for training for their players, umpires, scorers and other matters related to the game.

Initially, the BCCI was not every keen to help the country, but after realising the potential of bilateral relation, the board has agreed to send one representative to study the ground situation for playing cricket.

During Solih's visit to Bengaluru, he was presented jerseys by Indian Cricket team captain Virat Kohli, former skipper M S Dhoni and IPL Chief Operating Officer Hemang Amin.

On the occasion, top BCCI officials, including General Manager Saba Karim, had given a presentation to the entire Maldives contingent.

Cricketer Board of Maldives governs the sport in the island nation. It became a member of the Asian Cricket Council and an affiliate of the International Cricket Council in 1998.

## PM Modi assures all help to Kamal Nath



NEW DELHI: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath calls on Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his residence 7 Lok Kalyan Marg in New Delhi on Thursday.

Nath gave his good wishes to Modi on assuming the office of Prime Minister for the second term.

During the half-an-hour-long meeting with the PM, Nath discussed in detail about the various issues pending with the Centre at different levels

for approval and thereby funds not being released to state government.

The MP CM also urged the PM to intervene in the matter and get the pending issues cleared and fund released to the state at the earliest. However, the PM assured the Nath that he will instruct the concerned ministries to clear the pending issues and disburse the funds as early as possible. Modi further assured of all possible help to the state in future also. MPOST

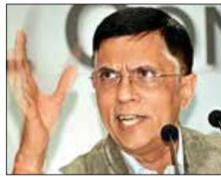
## Cong blames govt for MTNL & BSNL crisis

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Congress leader Pawan Khera has on Thursday accused the BJP-led government for making the government-run telecom service provider - BSNL—a loss making entity.

"It's the industry-friendly policies of the BJP government that have destroyed the prospering PSU. During the UPA regime, the MTNL had recorded a profit of Rs 7,838 crore. We turned around the PSU into a profit making company which has been demolished by the BJP government," Congress leader Pawan Khera said. Similarly, the condition of BSNL was also better during the UPA regime, but now it has turned out to be a loss-making entity.

"The balance sheet of BSNL has fallen by 16 per cent in just one year. The liability of the BSNL has increased to Rs 14,601 crore and assets of the PSU is Rs 9,918 crore," Khera said, adding that we are raising



the demands of all the 45,000 BSNL employees as why the government is not able to pay their wages.

Raising the pertinent issue, Khera asked the government as where is the fault line in their policy? Why is a company, which was a profitable venture under the UPA, is registering losses every year for the last five years consecutively?, he asked. "Why are the hands of MTNL and BSNL tied? 5G is something which is now being provided by other private players and you don't allow these companies to even go beyond 3G - why? As a result, you see these companies bleeding to a slow death; slow but certain death," the Congress leader said.

## Amid tussle with Capt, Sidhu loses key portfolios in Punjab cabinet reshuffle

OUR CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH: Punjab minister Navjot Singh Sidhu, who is at loggerheads with Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, was divested of the crucial Local Government department and was given the Power and New and Renewable Energy Sources portfolio in a cabinet reshuffle on Thursday.

The rejig took place hours after the first state Cabinet meeting following the Lok Sabha elections and it was skipped by the minister who is under fire from Singh for Congress' "poor performance" in the state's urban areas in the elections. Singh had recently said he intended to change the cricketer-turned-politician's portfolio and blamed Navjot Sidhu's inept handling of the department for the Congress performance in the urban areas. Barring four ministers, there are some changes in the portfolios of all the others as a result of the reallocation, according to an official state-



ment. Singh, who changed the portfolios of most of his ministers, said this will help further streamline the government and bring more transparency and efficiency in the functioning of departments.

With the Congress government in the state nearing its mid-term mark, he hoped that the exercise will re-energise his team and bring freshness into the working of major departments. Singh, who had hinted at a reshuffle after the completion of the poll process, has allocated the Local Government department to his senior-most colleague Brahm Mohindra.

Navjot Sidhu has been given Power and New and Renewable Energy Sources, and his Tourism and Cultural Affairs portfolio has been given to Charanjit Singh Channi.

However, Navjot Sidhu Thursday said he has always been a "performer" and claimed that urban areas had played a pivotal role in the party's victory in Punjab.

"I cannot be taken for granted. I have been a performer throughout in 40 years of my life be it international cricket, or world class commentary with Geoffrey Boycott, TV shows or 1,300 motivational talks," he said, adding that his

department has been "singled out". The simmering tension between the chief minister and Navjot Sidhu came out in the open on May 19 when Singh accused him of damaging the Congress's prospects just before the election with his "irresponsible actions".

The Health and Family Welfare portfolio, which was with Mohindra, has now been assigned to Balbir Sidhu.

Channi has retained the Technical Education, Industrial Training and Employment General departments and his Science and Technology portfolio has been taken over by the chief minister. Balbir Sidhu's portfolio of Animal Husbandry, Fisheries and Dairy has been given to Tript Bajwa along with Higher Education.

Bajwa retained the Rural Development and Panchayat portfolios. He was divested of Housing and Urban Development, which Amarinder Singh has handed over to Sukhbinder Singh Sarkaria, in place of Revenue.

## Badal urges Shah to probe Operation Bluestar again

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Badal, who called on Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday, demanded a proper inquiry into Operation Bluestar - the military operation carried out in 1984 to flush out heavily-armed terrorists holed up in Sikh holy shrine Golden Temple in Amritsar. Thursday marks 35 years since Operation Bluestar.

The SAD also took up the issues of return of rare manuscripts and documents taken from the Sikh Reference Library in the Sri Harmandir Sahib complex in Amritsar by the army authorities during Operation Bluestar back to Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) with Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

A high-level SAD delegation led by party president appraised Shah that the army authorities had carted away a large number of manuscripts, documents and relics belonging to various Sikh Gurus from the Golden Temple premises. Badal urged Shah to take steps in locating valuable assets and return it back to the Sikh community.

## Puri launches Swachh Survekshan 2020 League

NEW DELHI: Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Thursday launched Swachh Survekshan 2020 League. The league will be a quarterly cleanliness assessment of cities and towns in India and will be integrated with Swachh Survekshan 2020, the 5th edition of the annual cleanliness survey of urban India to be conducted between January-February 2020.

The objective of the Swachh Survekshan survey, which is conducted by an independent third party, is to encourage large scale citizen participation, ensure sustainability of initiatives taken towards garbage free and open defecation free cities and create awareness amongst all sections of society about the importance of working together towards

making towns and cities a better place to live in. Speaking on the need for a quarterly evaluation mechanism, Puri said, "Every year, the Swachh Survekshan is redesigned innovatively, to ensure that the process becomes more and more robust, with focus on sustaining the changed behaviours."

MoHUA Secretary Durga Shanker Mishra said, "The SS League 2020 will be conducted in three quarters (April- June, July-September and October-December 2019) and will have a weightage of 2,000 marks for each quarter to be evaluated on the basis of monthly updation of SBM-U online MIS by cities along with citizen's validation on the 12 service level progress indicators through outbound calls." MPOST

## Amit Shah to get late PM Vajpayee's Krishna Menon Marg residence

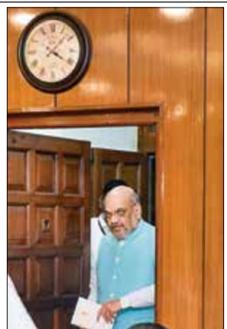
BUNTY TYAGI

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah is likely to be allotted late prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Krishna Menon Marg residence in central Delhi, government sources said on Thursday.

Vajpayee had moved to the Krishna Menon Marg bungalow in 2004 after his government was voted out, and stayed there with his family for nearly 14 years. His family vacated the house in last November after his death in August.

"The official bungalow of former prime minister on Krishna Menon Marg has been allotted to Union Home Minister Amit Shah," a government source told PTI.

According to sources, Shah,



who is also the BJP president, recently visited the house and suggested some changes following which renovation work has started. "The renovation work should be completed in a month or two," another source

said. Shah, who took charge as a Union minister for the first time earlier this week following a landslide victory of the BJP-led NDA, is currently staying at 11 Akbar Road residence.

When Vajpayee had moved to the Krishna Menon Marg house, he had got the municipal number of the bungalow changed from 8 to 6-A.

After the Modi government came to power in 2014, it was decided that no government bungalow previously occupied by a leader in Delhi would be converted into any memorial after their death. The government has already built memorial for Vajpayee 'Sadaiva Atal', near the Rashtriya Smriti Sthal, a place designated for last rites of presidents, vice-presidents and prime ministers. PTI

## Mayawati expresses concern over high unemployment rate

LUCKNOW: Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) supremo Mayawati Thursday expressed concern over the high unemployment rate in the country.

In a statement issued here, she said, "The Union Labour Ministry, in its data released after the Lok Sabha election, has confirmed that joblessness in the country was 6.1 per cent of total labour force, highest in the last 45 years. For the victims of poverty and unemployment, there is no point of regretting now." She also said the dip in growth rate "is result of fall in agricultural and industrial output".

"The point of concern is that how true welfare will be done for the poor people of the country," Mayawati said.

On May 31, the government confirmed the unem-

ployment rate projected in a pre-election leaked report and said joblessness in the country was 6.1 per cent of total labour force during 2017-18, the highest in 45 years.

The data released by the Labour Ministry on a day when Modi 2.0 Cabinet took charge, showed 7.8 per cent of all employable urban youths being jobless, while the percentage for the rural was 5.3 per cent.

The joblessness among male on all India basis was 6.2 per cent, while it was 5.7 per cent in case of females.

India's economic growth rate slowed to a five-year low of 5.8 per cent in January-March 2018-19 due to poor performance in agriculture and manufacturing sectors, according to official data. MPOST

## AIADMK slams efforts to create rift in alliance with BJP

CHENNAI: The ruling AIADMK in Tamil Nadu on Thursday claimed that efforts were being made to create a rift in its alliance with the BJP, but indicated the two parties were ideologically inclined beyond mere friendship.

The party also claimed that "misinformation" was being spread about the Centre trying

to "impose a three-language formula" in the country, a reference to the state opposition parties' stand against the imposition of Hindi.

"Though the AIADMK-BJP alliance for the Lok Sabha polls was an extension of (their) friendship, the two speak in one voice on primary intent like patriotism and worship of

God," AIADMK mouthpiece "Namathu Amma," said.

The write-up comes amidst reports of differences between the two alliance partners post the Lok Sabha drubbing where the combine could win just the Theni Parliamentary seat.

The write-up in the party organ slammed efforts by a section of "family-owned media",

an apparent reference to those of the DMK, to "create rift between the leaf and flower."

While the AIADMK's symbol is the Two Leaves, that of the BJP is a Lotus.

The friendship between the high command of the two parties, beyond politics, was "unblemished", it said. The AIADMK-BJP alliance

winning the lone Theni Lok Sabha seat or the ruling party netting nine of the 22 Assembly seats where bypolls were held in April was a "public evaluation" of the combine, it added.

This evaluation was being "accepted wholeheartedly" to take efforts to ensure a better performance for the alliance in the future, it said. It also

alleged that "misinformation" was being carried out regarding the draft education policy of the Union HRD Ministry that the Centre was trying to impose a three-language formula in the country.

"But people have started to see through their designs," it said. The opposition in Tamil Nadu led by the DMK is up

in arms against any "imposition" of Hindi in the state, an emotive issue that found great resonance with the citizens of the state in the 1960s, leading to the anti-Hindi agitation. DMK leader MK Stalin and other opposition leaders have claimed the Centre was trying to impose Hindi under the three-language formula. MPOST