

Dhankhar submits his resignation to President

The 14th Vice-President of India leaves office with two years left in his term; decision comes on the first day of Monsoon Session of Parliament; stepping down to abide by medical advice, he says

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, 74, resigned from his post citing health reasons on Monday.

"To prioritise health care and abide by medical advice, I hereby resign as the Vice President of India, effective immediately, in accordance with Article 67(a) of the Constitution," the resignation letter addressed to President Droupadi Murmu, which was posted on the Vice-President's official X account, said. He had called on President Murmu in the evening.

Mr. Dhankhar had suffered a cardiac event in March but was said to have recovered and had been participating in his engagements since.



Final session: Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar greets the members of the Rajya Sabha on Monday. ANI

The rest of the letter expressed his "deep gratitude" to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the

Council of Ministers as well as the "warmth, trust and affection" that he had received from MPs.

Mr. Dhankhar was elected India's 14th Vice-President in August 2022, and has two years left for his term to complete.

President Murmu has not indicated whether she had accepted the resignation.

The move has come as a surprise to many leaders, as Mr. Dhankhar had presided over Rajya Sabha proceedings on the first half of the first day of the Monsoon Session of Parliament on Monday, which included an important intervention in the Opposition-led motion for removal of High Court judge Justice Yashwant Varma. He did not return for the post-lunch Session but spoke to MPs and floor leaders till evening.

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145 LS, 63 RS MPs submit notices for Justice Varma impeachment

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 21

CUTTING ACROSS party lines, 145 members of Lok Sabha and 63 of Rajya Sabha Monday gave notices to move a motion seeking the removal of former Delhi HC judge Justice Yashwant Varma, currently posted at Allahabad HC.

Justice Varma is at the centre of a row after a panel set up by the Supreme Court found credence in the allegations that wads of currency notes were discovered at his official residence when a fire broke out there on March 14.

Congress Rajya Sabha MP Jairam Ramesh said, "Today 63 Rajya Sabha MPs belonging to various Opposition parties submitted a notice of motion to the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, for the removal of Justice Yashwant Varma under the Judges (Inquiry Act, 1968). A similar motion for the removal of Justice Shekhar Yadav had been submitted to the Chairman Rajya Sabha way back



HC judge
Justice
Yashwant
Varma

on Dec 13, 2024."

A notice for the removal of a judge has to be signed by not less than 100 members in the Lok Sabha and 50 in the Rajya Sabha, as per the Judges Inquiry Act, 1968.

Once the MPs submit the motion, the presiding officer of the House can either accept or reject it. If accepted, a three-member committee, comprising two judges and a jurist, will be constituted to probe the complaint and determine if it is a case fit for initiating the process of impeachment.

Dhankhar said that he had received a notice of motion under Article 217 (1B) and Article 124, sub-article 4 of the Constitution, along with section 31B of Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, to constitute a committee for removal of

Justice Varma. "It has been signed by more than 50 members of the Council of States, and thus it meets the numerical requirement of signing by members of Parliament for setting in motion the process for removal of a high court judge," he said.

Dhankhar read out the specific provisions from the Judges Inquiry Act if a similar motion is presented in both Houses of Parliament on the same day. After Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal confirmed that over 100 members had submitted a motion in Lok Sabha, Dhankhar said that the relevant sections of (Judges Inquiry Act) will come into effect and the Secretary General will take necessary steps in this direction.

Under the Judges Inquiry Act if notices of motion are submitted for the removal of a judge on the same day in both Houses of Parliament, no committee shall be constituted unless the motion has been admitted in both Houses.

NISAR, first joint satellite of NASA and ISRO, scheduled to be launched on July 30

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

NISAR, the first joint satellite of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), will be launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota at 5.40 p.m. on July 30. The GSLV-F16 rocket will inject the Synthetic Aperture Radar satellite into a 743-km sun-synchronous orbit with an inclination of 98.4 degrees.

According to the ISRO, the NISAR satellite, weighing 2,392 kg, is a unique earth observation satellite, and the first satellite to observe the earth with a dual frequency Synthetic Aperture Radar – the NASA's L-



An artist's concept of the NISAR satellite. NASA/JPL-CALTECH

band and the ISRO's S-band – using the NASA's 12m unfurlable mesh reflector antenna, integrated to the ISRO's modified I3K satellite bus.

NISAR will observe earth with a swathe of 242 km and high spatial resolution, using SweepSAR technology for the first time. "The satellite will scan the

entire globe and provide all weather, day and night data at 12-day intervals, and enable a wide range of applications. NISAR can detect even small changes in the earth's surface, such as ground deformation, ice sheet movement, and vegetation dynamics. Further applications include sea ice classification, ship detection, shoreline monitoring, storm characterisation, changes in soil moisture, mapping and monitoring of surface water resources, and disaster response," the ISRO stated.

It added that the launch is the result of strong technical cooperation between the ISRO and the U.S. space agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory for more than a decade.

UN concerned
by Taliban's
arrest of
women, girls

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD

The United Nations on Monday expressed concern about the Taliban's arrest of Afghan women and girls for their alleged failure to comply with the authorities' dress code.

The UN mission in Afghanistan said it was concerned by the arrest of "numerous" women and girls in Kabul between July 16 and 19, who authorities claimed had not followed instructions on wearing the hijab, or the Islamic headscarf.

Indian embassy in contact with Irish officials following attack on Indian national

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

The Embassy of India in Ireland has reached out to the Irish authorities and the civil society after an Indian citizen was viciously assaulted by right-wing gangs in Dublin over the weekend, Ambassador of India Akhilesh Mishra told *The Hindu* on Monday.

"The horrible attack has naturally caused widespread concern and fear in the local Indian community. The embassy is in touch with the victim, the larger

community and has taken up the matter with various Irish authorities." Ambassador Mishra said over a phone call from Dublin. He also informed that the male victim, an employee of Amazon, is currently receiving medical attention.

'New reality'

The victim, who is in his forties, had arrived in Ireland only a week ago, sources told *The Hindu*. The sources added that attacks against Indians and people of colour from other Asian and African coun-

tries are on the rise in Ireland.

"Ireland was not unsafe earlier, but over the past three years, the situation has dramatically changed because of the rise of violent racist gangs that target foreigners," a diplomatic source said.

Ireland has around one lakh Indians who are part of the high-income segment of the Irish economy.

However, the recent spurt in racist attacks against foreigners has drawn attention from the expat Indian community.

Iran, European countries to hold n-talks in Turkey

China, Russia officials to discuss likely 'snapback' if discussions fail to succeed

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TEHRAN, JULY 21

IRAN SAID Monday it would hold renewed talks this week with European nations over the country's nuclear programme, with talks to be hosted by Turkey.

The discussions, to be held in Istanbul on Friday, will be the first since a ceasefire was reached after a 12-day war waged by Israel against Iran in June, which also saw the US strike nuclear-related facilities in the Islamic Republic. A similar meeting had been held in the Turkish city in May.

The discussions will bring Iranian officials together with officials from Britain, France and Germany — known as the E3 nations — and will include the European Union's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas. "The topic of the talks is clear, lifting sanctions and issues related to the peaceful nuclear programme of Iran," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said.

Under a 2015 deal designed to cap Iran's nuclear activities, Iran agreed to tough restrictions on its international programme in exchange for an easing of sanctions.

The deal began to unravel in 2018, when the United States

pulled out of it and began to reimpose certain sanctions. European countries have recently threatened to trigger the 2015 deal's "snapback" mechanism, which would allow sanctions to be reimposed in the case of non-compliance by Tehran.

German Foreign Ministry spokesperson Martin Giese, asked who Germany will send to the talks and what its expectations are, said that "the talks are taking place at expert level".

"Iran must never come into possession of a nuclear weapon... This course of action is also coordinated with the US... It's very clear that, should no solution be reached by the end of August... snapback remains an option for the E3," Giese told reporters in Berlin.

Iran, Russia and China will meet on Tuesday to discuss Tehran's nuclear programme and the risk of sanctions being reimposed under the United Nations' snapback mechanism, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said.

Baghaei said there were currently no plans to resume nuclear talks with the US.

The meeting between Iran, China and Russia will take place in Tehran at the level of foreign ministry director generals.

Ishiba to stay on as Japan PM despite loss in House polls

Associated Press

TOKYO

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said on Monday he will stay in office to tackle challenges such as rising prices and high U.S. tariffs after a weekend election defeat left his coalition with a minority in both parliamentary chambers and triggered calls for his resignation.

Mr. Ishiba's ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its junior coalition partner Komeito were short three seats to maintain a majority in the 248-seat Upper House in Sunday's vote.

The loss of a majority does not lead to a change of government because the Upper House lacks power to file a no-confidence motion against a leader.



Shigeru Ishiba

Mr. Ishiba said he takes the result seriously but that his priority is to avoid creating a political vacuum and to tackle impending challenges, including the August 1 deadline for a tariff deal with the U.S. "While I feel my serious responsibility over the election results, I must also fulfill my responsibility I bear for the country," Mr. Ishiba said.

Russia, Ukraine to meet in Turkiye tomorrow for talks

Agence France-Presse

KYIV

Russia and Ukraine will hold new peace talks on Wednesday as a follow-up to two rounds in Istanbul that made little progress on ending their war, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced.

"Today, I discussed with (Ukrainian Security Council chief) Rustem Umerov the preparations for the exchange and another meeting in Turkiye with the Russian side. Umerov reported that the meeting is scheduled for Wednesday," Mr. Zelenskyy said in his daily address on Monday.

The rival sides met in Istanbul on May 16 and June 2 amid U.S. pressure to agree a ceasefire. Despite the urging of U.S. President

Donald Trump, no breakthrough was made.

Ukrainian and Russian negotiators have so far only agreed to hold prisoner exchanges. And Russia has since launched intense air attacks on Ukraine and seized more territory.

After Mr. Trump last week gave Russia 50 days to negotiate a deal or face heavy sanctions – and also renewed arms supplies to Ukraine – the Kremlin said it was ready for more talks.

The two sides exchanged ideas at the earlier talks on what a peace deal could look like, but remain far apart.

"A lot of diplomatic work lies ahead," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday, commenting on the prospects for a breakthrough.

CHINA-MADE JET FACED MECHANICAL FAULT, PROBE ON: MILITARY

20 killed, 171 injured as Bangladesh Air Force plane crashes into school

Pilot tried to steer aircraft away from densely populated areas, but failed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DHAKA, JULY 21

A BANGLADESH Air Force training fighter jet crashed into a school building in Dhaka shortly after takeoff on Monday, killing at least 20 people, mostly students, and injuring 171, in one of the deadliest aviation accidents in the country's history.

The F-7 BGI aircraft, a training fighter jet manufactured in China, experienced a "mechanical fault" moments after takeoff and crashed into the two-storey building of Milestone School and College at Diabari in Dhaka's Uttara area, officials said.

The pilot, Flight Lieutenant Mohammad Towkir Islam, was killed in the crash. "Twenty people, including Flight Lieutenant Towkir Islam, have so far been killed and 171 others injured in the crash," according to an updated statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR) - the media wing of the military.

The pilot attempted to steer the aircraft away from densely



Firefighters and army personnel at the crash site in Dhaka on Monday. *Reuters*

populated areas. However, despite his efforts, the aircraft tragically crashed into the two-storey building of the school, said the ISPR. The jet crashed "due to a mechanical fault" (the details of which will be informed after investigation) after taking off from the Bangladesh Air Force Base AK Khandaker in Kurmitola at 01:06 pm as part of a regular training, the statement said.

"All injured individuals are being promptly transported to

the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) and nearby hospitals for necessary treatment, with assistance from Air Force helicopters and ambulances," it said.

It said that the chief of army staff and senior military officers rushed to the crash site where rescuers, including firefighters, army troops, police and elite Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), continued their rescue operations.

A high-level investigation committee has been formed by

the Bangladesh Air Force to determine the cause of the accident, the statement added.

Earlier, Md Sayedur Rahman, the special assistant to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus for the Health Ministry, said that injured people, mostly students, were being treated at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH), Dhaka Medical College Hospital, and the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery (NIBPS).

PM MODI SAYS INDIA READY TO EXTEND ALL POSSIBLE SUPPORT

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday expressed deep shock at the loss of lives in an aircraft crash in Dhaka. India stands in solidarity with Bangladesh and is ready to extend all possible support and assistance, he said. "Deeply shocked and saddened at the loss of lives... Our hearts go out to the bereaved families," he said. "We pray for the swift recovery of those injured. India stands in solidarity with Bangladesh and is ready to extend all possible support and assistance," he added. **PTI**

"The number of injured people being brought to our facility is rising," a doctor at NIBPS told reporters.

The interim government has declared a one-day state mourning on July 22 when the national flag will be flown at half-mast across Bangladesh and its missions abroad.

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus expressed shock and sorrow over the casualties caused by the crash.

At FTA's heart, the promise of Global Capacity Centres

As the United Kingdom and India move steadily toward signing of their historic Free Trade Agreement (FTA), there is growing recognition of the FTA's potential to redefine bilateral economic engagement. Among the most promising areas of collaboration is the rapidly evolving ecosystem of Global Capability Centres (GCCs) – a sector where India leads, and the U.K. can be a pivotal partner.

India is already home to more than 1,500 GCCs, employing over 1.9 million people and contributing significantly to the global innovation and digital transformation agendas of multinational corporations. Increasingly, British companies are looking to India not just as a cost-effective back office, but as a strategic partner for research and development, analytics, cybersecurity, and emerging tech solutions.

The FTA could be a catalyst for deeper engagement in this space. By easing regulatory barriers, facilitating smoother movement of professionals, and harmonising digital and data governance standards, the agreement can support the expansion of GCCs that serve U.K.-headquartered businesses – or leverage British expertise to serve global markets from India.

Much potential

The U.K.'s Foreign Secretary David Lammy visited India within weeks of his taking office, demonstrating commitment towards the partnership with the U.K. The Business and Trade Secretary, Jonathan Reynolds' visit ahead of resuming FTA negotiations, following suit. At the UK India Business Council (UKIBC), we think that there is real potential to further increase our trade, investment, and wider partnership. Prime Ministers Keir Starmer and Narendra Modi also had an extremely productive meeting at the G-20 Summit in Brazil, in 2024, agreeing to take the relationship to new heights.

From the U.K.'s perspective, the FTA is a timely opportunity to secure access to one of the world's fastest-growing digital economies, while reinforcing its global services and innovation



Kishore Javaraman

is OBE, India Chair, UK India Business Council (UKIBC)

The United Kingdom-India Free Trade Agreement could be a catalyst for deeper engagement in the GCCs, a rapidly evolving ecosystem

footprint post-Brexit. For India, greater U.K. investment and collaboration in the GCC space aligns perfectly with its digital economy ambitions, skilling objectives, and goal of becoming a global hub for high-value services.

The UKIBC has long championed the idea that the future of trade lies not just in goods but also in the services, skills and technology that power the new global economy. The GCCs stand at the intersection of all three.

The FTA can pave the way for easier cross-border collaboration, robust intellectual property frameworks, and smart mobility solutions that allow talent to move where it is most needed.

A well-crafted agreement can also address the practical challenges businesses face such as double taxation, data localisation mandates and misaligned standards, that often inhibit the scaling of GCCs. Addressing these through the FTA, or individually, will send a strong signal to investors and businesses in both nations.

According to a white paper released by Deloitte India, the country is making strides in the global GCC game, as India-based GCCs have emerged as strategic hubs for multinational companies to manage complex global tax operations, including corporate tax, indirect tax, transfer pricing, and litigation.

India's current policy environment is highly conducive for GCC growth, even without a dedicated national GCC policy at the moment.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has formed an industry-led panel – including the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM), Zinnov, KPMG, and Invest India – to design the national GCC framework outlined in Budget 2025. Its goal is to guide States in promoting GCCs, improving talent, infrastructure, innovation, and legal facilitation.

State government policies

Other than central government endeavours, we also see State governments rolling out landmark policies. Uttar Pradesh hosted its first "GCC

Conclave" under Invest UP, bringing together policymakers and industry heavyweights (Microsoft, TCS, HCL, Standard Chartered). The event showcased U.P.'s infrastructure, incentives, and intent to host GCCs beyond National Capital Region cities, in Lucknow, Varanasi, Kanpur and Prayagraj.

In this context, the UKIBC recently held a closed-door consultation to bring together a distinguished group of leaders and experts to explore the expanding role of GCCs in driving innovation and economic growth in India. The group deliberated on a set of recommendations including global best practices from a governance perspective to help India achieve its economic ambitions set for GCCs. It also discussed these: whether there is a need for a dedicated national GCC policy now; whether organic growth from the past is best achieved in the absence of any such policies; or if having multiple State-level policies create unwanted competition instead of overall national progress. The need for honing talent diversity as well as skilfully managing the diversity of GCC's themselves, was also underscored.

Some of the legal hurdles and the market outlook was touched upon, with some practical experiences of Indian and U.K. companies being shared. Additionally, the overall impact of India's economic diplomacy efforts through FTAs on the Indian GCC ecosystem was touched on. These included aspects of how the U.K.-India FTA can be leveraged to help Indian GCCs climb up the global value chain, with a focus on talent diversity in terms of professional mobility across the two countries.

A knowledge corridor

As the two governments fine-tune the final provisions, industry leaders must continue to voice the importance of services, digital trade and mobility – the lifelines of modern commerce. GCCs, in particular, stand to gain from – and contribute to – this evolving partnership, shaping a resilient, knowledge-based corridor between the U.K. and India.