

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri Gets One-Year Extension In Service

NEW DELHI, JUL 1: Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri was given a one-year extension on Wednesday, till July 14 next year.

Widely regarded as an expert on China, Mr. Misri was appointed to the post in June 2024.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the extension for a period of one year beyond July 14, 2026, that is, up to July 14, 2027, under the provisions of Fundamental Rule 56(d).

The rule has a provision for extension in service for the Defence Secretary, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, Director of the Intelligence Bureau, Secretary of Re-



search and Analysis Wing, and a few others beyond the age of retirement of 60 years. Career diplomat Mr. Misri, a 1989-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, was working

as the Deputy National Security Adviser (Dy NSA) before his appointment as the Foreign Secretary. He has the rare distinction of serving as Private Secre-

tary to three Prime Ministers — Inder Kumar Gujral, Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi.

Before he was appointed as the deputy NSA, Mr. Misri served as India's Ambassador to China from 2019-2021.

Mr. Misri is believed to have played a key role in talks between India and China after tensions flared significantly following the Galwan Valley clashes in June, 2020. He has also served as India's Ambassador to Spain (2014-2016) and Myanmar (2016-2018) besides having stints in many Indian missions including Pakistan, the U.S., Germany, Belgium and Sri Lanka.

mRNA Vaccines Protect Against Severe Infectious Diseases, Review Confirms

NEW DELHI, JUL 1: A new review has analysed billions of administered doses of messenger RNA, or mRNA, vaccines and confirmed that they protect against infectious diseases, including severe COVID-19, across diverse populations, including children, pregnant women and immunocompromised people.

mRNA vaccines act by delivering genetic instructions to human cells to manufacture harmless viral proteins which train the immune system to recognise and fight the real virus.

Researchers, including those from the University of British Columbia in Canada and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said existing evidence reinforces that mRNA vaccines are safe.

They noted that serious adverse events, including myocarditis, are rare, with protection against severe disease, hospitalisation, and death substantially outweighing risks.

The review, published in The Lancet journal, provides evidence on vaccine components, manufacturing quality controls and regulatory standards that underpin safety, alongside data from randomised trials, surveillance and active pharmacovigilance systems.



"After billions of doses, we now have an extraordinary amount of scientific evidence," lead author Anna Blakney, assistant professor at the University of British Columbia, said.

"This review affirms that mRNA vaccines are a safe and highly effective platform, supported by rigorous testing and real-world monitoring. It provides an evidence-based foundation as this technology continues to expand into new areas of medicine," Blakney said.

While the technology was discovered in the early 1960s, mRNA vaccines were first developed against COVID-19.

mRNA vaccines offer a scalable, cost-effective and adaptable platform for a rapid deployment against infectious diseases and the success of the vaccines in producing strong immune responses during the COVID-19 pandemic shows promise and potential future uses for vaccines against influenza, RSV, among others, as well as personalised cancer vaccines and RNA-based therapeutics.

The breadth in potential applications signals a future in which mRNA technology could be tailored to individual patients and specific disease threats, offering rapid, flexible, and effective tools

for public health, the researchers said.

"Expanding manufacturing capacity and ensuring equitable access in low- and middle-income countries is essential if mRNA vaccines are to fulfill their promise as a global public good," co-author Robin Shattock, of the UK's Imperial College London, said.

"By investing in technology transfer, local production, and robust regulatory systems, we can shorten supply chains, reduce costs, and ensure that people everywhere benefit from safe, effective vaccines beyond pandemics," Shattock said. (Agencies)

CJP Protest Day 12

Wangchuk Says Stable But Tired; AISA Flags Health Concerns Of Fasting Students

NEW DELHI, JUL 1: The protest by the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) at Jantar Mantar entered its 12th day on Wednesday, with activist Sonam Wangchuk continuing his hunger strike for the fourth day, saying he was feeling fine though slightly tired, while students associated with the All India Students' Association (AISA) reported health concerns among those on an indefinite fast.

In a health update, Wangchuk said that doctors had advised him to increase his water and salt intake after his blood pressure was found to be low. His blood sugar level remained at 66, which he attributed to not having food for three days.

"My sugar level is low at 66, but that's because of no food for 3 days, as ketosis takes over, the body starts consuming fats, etc. In a prolonged fast, it may consume muscles and organs, resulting in death, but I'm nowhere near that," Wangchuk said.

He said his weight had reduced by two kilograms, adding that a loss of around 650 grams per day was normal.

"My inconveniences are nothing compared to the 20+ students who gave their lives and the five youths who died in Ladakh last September," he said, thanking supporters for their



support. Tourist Destinations Meanwhile, CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke said a student, Inesh, who had been on hunger strike at the protest venue for eight days and was shifted to a hospital after his condition deteriorated on Tuesday night, was recovering. "Inesh is recovering well at the hospital. Our team is in touch with him and monitoring the situation," Dipke said in a post on X.

Renewing his attack on the government, Dipke said the demand for accountability had come after multiple incidents, including alleged paper leaks and student suicides. "What it takes today to seek accountability: Countless paper leaks, Millions of dreams shattered, 20+ stu-

dent suicides, A hunger strike by an educationist and the youth," he said in a post on X.

He alleged that India had never before seen such an "arrogant" government.

The AISA, meanwhile, said the health condition of students on hunger strike had started worsening as their indefinite fast entered the fourth day alongside the on-going protest.

In a statement, the organisation said JNUSU Joint Secretary Danish's blood sugar level had dropped to 61 mg/dL, claiming doctors had warned that continuing the fast could have serious consequences.

AISA also claimed that Aameen and Deepak had

been advised by doctors not to continue the hunger strike, alleging that Aameen's blood pressure was critical and Deepak's blood sugar level was 70.

The organisation demanded the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, alleging that the government was not responding to students' concerns.

The CJP protest began on June 20 over alleged irregularities in the examination system, including NEET. Dipke has said the agitation will also raise other accountability-related issues, including electoral matters such as the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. (Agencies)

HC directs removal of objectionable posts against MP Raghav Chadha

NEW DELHI, JULY 1: The Delhi High Court on Wednesday directed removal of certain objectionable social media content targeting MP Raghav Chadha.

Chadha, who has exited the Aam Aadmi Party to join the BJP, earlier filed a lawsuit in the high court against the publication of alleged malicious and fabricated social media posts, that, he said, were gravely prejudicial to his reputation and personality rights.

"I said no personality rights is involved. However, I have asked to take down (certain content)," Justice Subramonium Prasad said while pronouncing the interim order in the matter.



"Rest all, the content is not defamatory prima facie," the judge added.

A detailed copy of the order is awaited.

The court had reserved verdict on the aspect of interim relief to take down the alleged offending content on May 21.

Chadha, in his plea, had sought immediate removal and takedown of false, AI-generated and deepfake content circulating widely across social media platforms.

His lawsuit contended that artificial intelligence and deepfake technology

were being used in an unauthorised manner to create and disseminate manipulated content, which was a serious infringement of Chadha's legal and constitutional rights.

Several public figures, like actors Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Abhishek Bachchan and Salman Khan, Art of Living founder Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, journalist Sudhir Chaudhary, podcaster Raj Shamani and Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, have previously approached the high court seeking protection of their personality and publicity rights. The high court had granted them interim relief. (PTI)

Ayodhya donation row: Police record Champat Rai's statement; Congress leaders stopped from temple visit

AYODHYA (UP), JUL 01: Widening its probe, Ayodhya Police on Tuesday recorded the statement of Ram temple trust general secretary Champat Rai in connection with alleged embezzlement of donations and the role of private security personnel hired by the trust also came under the scanner.

As the political firestorm triggered by the case intensified, authorities prevented a Congress delegation led by its Uttar Pradesh unit chief Ajay Rai from visiting the temple in Ayodhya, with the opposition party claiming that they were put under "house arrest".

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath accused the Congress and the Samajwadi Party (SP) of hypocrisy, saying those who had once questioned the existence of Lord Ram were now eager to visit Ayodhya.

The developments came as the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust prepared for a crucial meeting next week to decide on the resignations of two of its senior functionaries - Champat Rai and Anil Mishra.

Opposition parties and the Faizabad Bar Association have demanded legal action against the two functionaries, who have not been named in the FIR.

A police official confirmed to PTI that Champat Rai's statement had been recorded as part of the investigation into the alleged donation embezzlement. "Yes, his statements have been recorded," the official said, declining to disclose when, where or for how long the questioning lasted.

Sources said Ayodhya Circle Officer Ashutosh Tiwari, who is heading the investigation, visited Champat Rai's Bharat Kuti residence at Karsevakpura and sought details and documents relating to the alleged theft.

Asked about reports that Champat Rai had admitted that delaying the registration of an FIR was a mistake, another police official told PTI, "Sorry, (we) can't say anything on that. What transpired is confidential and can't be shared." The police on Tuesday also questioned accused Avinash Shukla inside the district jail after obtaining court permission, sources said.

They said that the Trust had recovered Rs 20 lakh from Shukla on June 5. The investigation has also expanded to examine the role of around 400 private security personnel deployed at the temple complex.

Sources said police were scrutinising duty rosters, CCTV footage, entry-exit records and statements of security personnel posted at entry and exit points, darshan routes and the routes used for carrying offerings to ascertain whether prescribed security protocols were followed.

The controversy first erupted on June 7 after SP chief Akhilesh Yadav alleged embezzlement of temple donations, a charge then dismissed by Champat Rai. A Special Investigation Team (SIT), constituted by the Uttar Pradesh government on June 13, reportedly found widespread violations of standard operating procedures governing donation

management.

Based on its preliminary findings, an FIR was lodged on June 25 and eight persons associated with the donation-counting process were arrested.

Police have said nearly Rs 80 lakh in cash and some foreign currency have been recovered from six of the accused.

One of the arrested accused, Ramashankar Yadav alias Tinnu Yadav, is a former driver of Champat Rai and, according to the SIT, he was in possession of keys to several donation boxes in violation of the prescribed standard operating procedures.

Repeated calls made by PTI to Champat Rai for his comments on the investigation went unanswered.

Meanwhile, the Congress accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Adityanath and the BJP-RSS machinery of protecting those involved in the embezzlement and demanded that the SIT report be made public.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said it was "utterly condemnable" that Congress leaders en route to pay obeisance at Lord Shri Ram Temple were put "under house arrest in a dictatorial manner".

He was reacting after UP Congress chief Ajay Rai and other members of a Congress delegation were prevented from visiting the Ram temple.

Ajay Rai claimed he had been placed under "house arrest" and said he would not leave Ayodhya until he was allowed to offer prayers.

NEW DELHI, JUL 01: India has signed 28 Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreements (MMPAs) or their equivalents with 26 countries and negotiations are underway with several others, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Tuesday.

In his address at Human Resource Mobility Forum hosted by the Ministry of External Affairs here, Jaishankar also underlined the importance of collective responsibility of nations to combat illegal migration and human trafficking, and asserted that "trusted mobility pathways" can contribute to stronger economies.

He said New Delhi views mobility as a "very important pillar" of international cooperation, adding these partnerships are based on "mutual benefit, shared responsibility, and long-term sustainability".

When managed effectively, such partnerships create value for the source countries, the destination countries, and for employers, workers, and for the communities, the external affairs minister (EAM) said.

"We also recognise the need for bilateral collaborations in ensuring safe, or-

derly and legal migration. As on date India has signed 28 Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreements (MMPAs) or their equivalents with 26 countries and several others are currently under negotiation," he said.

Jaishankar said that equally important is the collective responsibility of nations to combat illegal migration, exploitative practices, fraudulent intermediaries, and human trafficking.

challenges compromise the credibility of legal mobility ecosystems and can place vulnerable individuals at risk," the EAM said.

Several policymakers, industry leaders, employers, and practitioners have gathered for the Forum that seeks to offer opportunities to exchange ideas, learn from experiences, and explore new approaches towards mobility. Jaishankar said the world is undergoing a "profound transformation", and as part of that, demographic patterns are changing sharply across continents.

Technological innovation is reshaping industries at an unprecedented pace. Artificial intelligence, automation, digitalisation, and green transition are also redefining

skills that are required for tomorrow's economy, he said.

"But the challenges of yesteryears also remain with us, be they of health, manufacturing, construction or agriculture. At the same time, societies are becoming increasingly interconnected, and the ability of nations to think creatively will significantly influence their prospects for future prosperity," he underlined.

Human resource mobility therefore represents far more than the movement of people from one place to another. It is about "connecting aspirations with opportunities", linking "talent with demand".

"It is about creating pathways through which individuals can contribute to economic progress, and this is the bottomline; it is both economic growth and social wellbeing that we are talking about," he added.

The EAM said India's vision for mobility is "not limited to facilitating overseas employment opportunities".

"We in fact view mobility as a very important pillar of international cooperation. These partnerships are based on mutual benefit, shared responsibility, and long-term sustainability.

"India's commitment to safe and legal mobility is reflected in the eMigrate platform. And since its inception, more than 50 lakh, i.e. five million emigration clearances have been issued. This digital ecosystem has become a global example of leveraging technology to protect migrant workers while facilitating mobility," he said.

The green economy will create demands for new skills and capabilities. But, the orthodox demands also continue. Healthcare and care giving services will become especially important with ageing populations. So the "silver economy" is as important as the tech one", he added.

In his address, Jaishankar also underlined that "we must ensure that workers are prepared not just for today's opportunities, but also for the demands of tomorrow".

On the Forum, he said, such a dialogue is "essential because the opportunities and challenges associated with mobility transcend national boundaries".

"No country can address them in isolation. And no department within the government similarly can do it alone," the EAM said.