

Trump to lift US sanctions on Syria in big policy shift

Likely To Meet Syrian Prez Ahmed al-Sharaa, A Former Al-Qaida Commander, Who Was In US Jail For 5 Years

Riyadh/Damascus: President Donald Trump said on Tuesday he would order the lifting of sanctions on Syria at the behest of Saudi Arabia's crown prince, a major US policy shift ahead of an expected meeting with Syria's interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa.

Trump is set to say hello to Sharaa on Wednesday in Saudi Arabia, a White House official said, setting up an encounter between the president and the former al-Qaida commander who took power after Bashar al-Assad was toppled. Two Syrian presidential sources told Reuters that they would meet on Wednesday morning.

"I will be ordering the cessation of sanctions against Syria in order to give them a chance at greatness," Trump told an investment forum in Riyadh, at the start of a tour of Gulf Arab states. "It's their time to shine. We're taking them all off," Trump said. "Good luck Syria, show us something very special." Trump said he had made the decision after discussions with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, whose govts have both strongly urged the lifting of sanctions.

The surprise move was announced despite deep Israeli suspicion of Sharaa's administration. Israeli officials have continued to describe Sharaa as a jihadi, though he severed ties with al-Qaida in 2016.

Syrian foreign minister Asaad al-Shibani, in a statement to Reuters, said it marked a turning point for the Syrian people in their efforts to rebuild. Sharaa was for years



Trump is greeted by Mohammed bin Salman in Riyadh on Tuesday

Red carpet welcome? Saudi Arabia rolls out a lavender one for US prez

No, don't call it purple. When President Trump disembarked from Air Force One in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, he stepped onto the rich lavender-coloured carpet unfurled before him, just one feature of the lavish welcome extended to the visiting American president on the first day of his Gulf tour. Along with a fighter-jet escort in the air and riders on Arabian horses on the ground, the lavender carpet is one of the distinctive and symbolic Saudi protocols for greeting high-profile dignitaries. Saudi Arabia swapped red carpets for lavender in 2021, as the ruling royal family sought to define its own protocols and celebrate national identity, according to a report by the official Saudi Press Agency published at the time. "Lavender in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia is associated with blossoming wildflowers that carpet the kingdom's desert landscapes in the spring and is a symbol of Saudi generosity," the report said. **NYT**

the leader of al-Qaida's official wing in the Syrian conflict. He first joined al-Qaida in Iraq, where he spent five years in a US prison. The US removed a

\$10 million bounty on Sharaa's head in Dec. The UN, which has been pushing countries to lift sanctions on Syria, welcomed the move. **REUTERS**

US agrees to sell Saudi \$142 billion arms package

The US agreed on Tuesday to sell Saudi Arabia an arms package worth nearly \$142 billion, according to a White House fact sheet that called it "the largest defence cooperation agreement" Washington has ever done. The agreement, signed during US President Trump's visit to Riyadh, covers deals with more than a dozen US defence companies in areas, including air and missile defence, air force and space advancement, maritime security and communications, the fact sheet said. "The package signed today is a clear demonstration of our commitment to strengthening our partnership," the fact sheet said.

Saudi is the largest customer for US arms. **REUTERS**

Trump vows Iran won't get N-weapon

US President Donald Trump called Iran the "most destructive force" in West Asia, blaming Tehran for instability across the region and warning the US will never allow it to obtain a nuclear weapon. Offering what he described as both a final warning and a potential opening for diplomacy, Trump said Iran has a choice between continuing its "chaos and terror" or embracing a path toward peace. The US president said he was willing to strike a new deal with the Islamic Republic but only if its leaders changed course. **REUTERS**

Anita Anand is Canada's foreign minister

Three More MPs Of Indian-Origin Make It To Carney Cabinet

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After 22 Indian-origin candidates won the April 28 federal elections in Canada, four made it to PM Mark Carney's newly sworn-in cabinet on Tuesday. Two of them — Anita Anand and Maninder Sidhu — were appointed as ministers, while the other two, Ruby Sahota and Randeep Singh Sarai, will serve as secretaries of state.

Anand, 57, a seasoned politician and legal scholar, was appointed as minister of foreign affairs. A prominent Liberal voice, she previously served in key roles under both



Anita Anand takes oath at Rideau Hall in Ottawa on Tuesday

Justin Trudeau and Carney, including as minister of innovation, science and industry, and minister of national defence.

A native of Oakville, Ontario, Anand is the daughter of Indian immigrant physicians. She first entered Parliament in 2019 and quickly rose through the ranks. During the pande-

mic, she played a crucial role as minister of public services and procurement, managing vaccine and PPE procurement. She also led Canada's military aid efforts to Ukraine during her tenure as defence minister. She started her political career as an MP from Oakville riding in Ontario.

Sidhu, 41, representing Brampton East, was promoted to minister of international trade after previously serving as a secretary of state. First elected in 2019, Sidhu has held his seat in three consecutive elections. He has served on the standing committees on natural resources and on transport, infrastructure and communities, and was appointed parliamentary secretary for international development in 2021.

Sahota, 45, was appointed secretary of state for comba-

ting crime. A lawyer by training, she represents Brampton North and has won four consecutive terms as a Liberal MP. She served as minister of democratic institutions from Dec 2024 to March 2025 and as chief govt whip in Trudeau's final months in office.

Sarai, 50, represents Surrey Centre in British Columbia, and was appointed secretary of state for international development. Born and raised in Vancouver to Punjabi immigrant parents, he has served in Parliament since 2015. Sarai holds a law degree and has consistently retained his seat across four elections.

Ontario emerged as the key province in Indo-Canadian representation, with three of the four new cabinet appointees — Anand, Sidhu and Sahota — hailing from the province.

Retail inflation eases to lowest since July 2019

At 3.2% In April, It's Below RBI's Target For 3rd Mth | Triggers Hopes Of More Rate Cuts

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

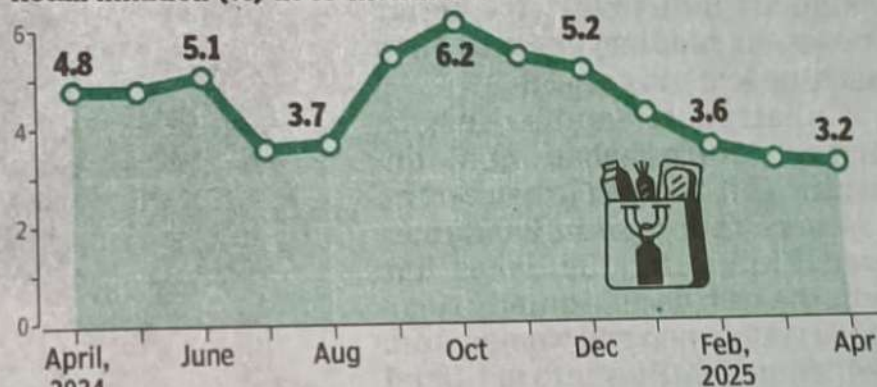
New Delhi: Retail inflation eased to a 69-month low in April due to sustained moderation in food prices, triggering hopes that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will persist with its interest rate-cutting cycle for now.

Data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) on Tuesday showed retail inflation, as measured by the consumer price index (CPI), slowed to 3.2% in April — lowest since July 2019 — from 3.3% in March. Rural inflation was at 2.9%, while urban inflation was higher at 3.4%. This is the third month in a row that the retail inflation rate has been below the central bank's target of 4%.

Food inflation was at 1.8% in April, lower than the 2.7% in March. The food inflation in April was the lowest since Oct 2021. The decline in overall inflation and food inflation in April was largely led by a dip in the inflation of vegetables, pulses and products, fruits, meat and fish, and cereals and products. Vegetable inflation contracted nearly 11% in April, while pulses and pro-

FOOD PRICES MODERATE

Retail inflation (%) at 69-month low



Relief points (Change in April %)	
-11	Vegetables
-5.2	Pulses & products
-3.4	Spices
-0.4	Meat & fish

Pain points (Price rise in April %)	
Oil & fats	17.4
Fruits	13.8
Personal care & effects	12.9

Source: Govt

ducts were down 5.2%. Two pressure points remained, with fruits and oil & fats inflation rates in double digits during April.

Experts expect the RBI to cut rates in June when it meets to review monetary policy, given the headroom provided by the sharp moderation in price pressures. "We anticipate the CPI inflation to average 3.5% in FY26, with the prints for Q2 and Q3 sharply trailing the MPC's projections for these quarters, allowing for an addi-

tional 75 basis points of rate cuts in this calendar year," said Aditi Nayar, chief economist at ratings agency ICRA.

"A 25 basis points (bps) rate cut appears forthcoming in the June 2025 policy, followed by easing of 25 bps each in the Aug and Oct 2025 policy reviews. If GDP growth print for Q4 FY2025 does not report an acceleration from the 6.2% seen for Q3, the MPC may consider front-loading the rate easing, with a 50 bps cut in the upcoming review," said Nayar.

India briefs 70 nations on 'new normal' in Pak ties

New Delhi: India on Tuesday amplified the "new normal" in its relations with Pakistan to the international community by spelling it out to foreign defence and military attaches of 70 nations. Defence Intelligence Agency director general Lt Gen D S Rana briefed the attaches on Operation Sindoor.

India did not invite China's defence attache for the briefing. Turkiye was invited but when it said it would send a junior officer, India refused. China and Turkiye are major arms suppliers to Pakistan.

Lt Gen Rana also said that India conducted strikes on nine terror hubs in Pakistan and PoK in the early hours of

Pak says 11 soldiers, 40 civilians killed

Pakistan military said Tuesday that 11 soldiers and 40 civilians were killed and 199 injured in last week's Indian strikes. Seven women and 15 children were among the dead. Pak army's media arm released the names and pictures of the soldiers who died, including a squadron leader. **P 18**

May 7 after "a deliberate planning process for selection of targets with confirmed terror linkages". TNN

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Days before fresh trade talks, India initiates WTO action on US steel duties

New Delhi: Days before commerce & industry minister Piyush Goyal visits Washington for a fresh round of talks on the proposed bilateral trade agreement, govt has for the first time threatened to act against the US after a barrage of attacks by American President Donald Trump, who called India "tariff king".

Govt's decision to initiate steps at WTO for a possible "retaliatory action" against 25% tariffs on steel and aluminum product imports came on the same day as Trump's claim that India-Pakistan ceasefire became possible after he suggested the US will stop trade. Govt sources have denied any such discussion.

NOT 1ST SUCH ACTION

- Not the 1st time India has moved WTO on US duties. Similar action was taken during **Trump's 1st term**, when he had slapped **25% duty** on some steel products
- On Monday, **Japan & EU** too moved WTO on US tariffs
- Commerce minister **Piyush Goyal** scheduled to hold **BTA talks** with US officials from **May 17 to 20**

Officials argued that govt was already planning to initiate safeguard action against the US at the WTO which had to be done by April 12, the stipulated period. TNN

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CBSE Class 12: 95 percenters rise but 90 percenters dip

88.4% Students
Pass Exam, Up
From 88% in '24

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New Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education announced the results for the Class 12 exams on Tuesday, revealing a success rate of 88.4%, a slight improvement from last year's 88%. This year, 24,867 students achieved an aggregate score of over 95%. Girls outperformed boys once again, securing a pass percentage of 91.6% compared to 85.7% for boys.

There was an increase in the candidate pool, rising from 16.2 lakh in 2024 to 16.9 lakh in 2025. However, the number of students scoring above 90% dipped slightly by 4,601, settling at 1.1 lakh, which constitutes 6.6% of the total examinees.

The count of students achieving 95% and above increased slightly, rising from

ONCE AGAIN, GIRLS HAVE MORE REASONS TO SMILE

Photo: Tarun Rawat



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> In Lakshadweep, 100% of girls cleared the exam, followed by 99.8% in T'gana

TOP REGIONS

	Pass percentage
Vijayawada	99.6
T'puram	99.3
Chennai	97.4
B'luru	96
Delhi West	95.4
Delhi East	95

Class 12 students rejoice at a central Delhi school. Overall, 91.6% of girls passed as compared with 85.7% of boys

24,068 in 2024 to 24,867 in 2025. In contrast, the number of students scoring above 90% saw a slight decline, dropping from nearly 1.2 lakh in 2024 to 1.1 lakh in 2025. Top-performing regions overall included Vijayawada, which topped the charts with a 99.6% pass rate.

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Slight improvement in Class 10 results

CBSE's Class 10 results too showed a marginal improvement of 0.06% in the pass rate which was recorded at 93.66%, with 94.8% of girls cleared the exam as opposed to 92.6% of boys. Delhi, where nearly 3.3 lakh students appeared for the exams, led with a success rate of 95.1%. The performance of foreign schools affiliated with CBSE saw a marginal dip. Overall, 8.4% of candidates who had appeared scored above 90%, with 1.9% scoring above 95%. Institution-wise, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya topped the charts with a success rate of 99.5%.