

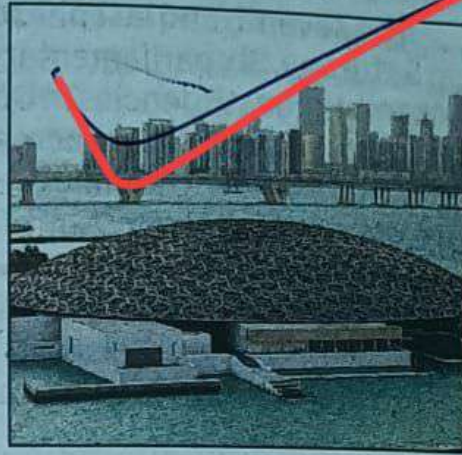
# India in focus as UAE set to open cultural district in '25

Jincy.Jacob@timesgroup.com

Two over-a-millennium-old statues of Nataraja and Jina, a 12th century Pala dynasty manuscript, a sandstone frieze from Rajasthan dating to the short-lived Ghurid empire, and SH Raza's 'Bindu'. There's "an imprint of Indian history" on almost every gallery of Louvre Abu Dhabi, said Mohamed Al Mubarak, chairman of the department of culture and tourism (DCT) Abu Dhabi.

India will be a central focus when Abu Dhabi unveils its Saadiyat Cultural District, with seven world-class cultural venues, next year. The district on Saadiyat Island aims to be a melting pot of global cultures while being rooted to the land, foster dialogue, and challenge the Western lens of looking at art.

Three institutions are operational: Louvre Abu Dhabi, whose architecture is no less than the art it hosts; Ber-



Abu Dhabi's Saadiyat Island aims to be a melting pot of global cultures

klee Abu Dhabi that offers music, performing arts and educational programmes; and Manarat Al Saadiyat, which hosts cultural events. The remaining—Zayed National Museum, the national museum of UAE; TeamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi, an immersive digital art space; Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi; and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, a contemporary art museum—are 76% complete and on track to meet the 2025 deadline, said DCT Abu Dhabi.

Al Mubarak said the dis-

trict "embodies 'cultural hope'... will convey a message of cultural diversity that will become more powerful over time, creating global connections, inspiring cultural exchange, and fostering new ways of thinking to support the region, the Global South and the world".

Asserting that one cannot tell the history of art without India, he told TOI in an exclusive chat that the country is, "to some extent, the epicentre of culture".

Positioning the district's significance within the Global South, he said while places in Europe or North America may have taken a step back from investing in culture, "places in this part of the world, whether they are in Asia, Arabian Peninsula or Africa, they are investing... You're seeing an explosion of cultural intellect. And that's not just coming from museums."

*(The writer was in Abu Dhabi at DCT Abu Dhabi's invitation)*

# UN Peacekeepers Day

## India's contributions to global peace, security exceptional: Kamboj



India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ruchira Kamboj with Major Radhika Sen. Major Sen will be honoured with the UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award on May 30, 2024 for her outstanding service in DR Congo. (PTI)

NEW YORK, May 29 (ANI)

**INDIA'S** Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ruchira Kamboj lauded the country's exceptional contributions to global peace and security on the occasion of International Day of UN Peacekeepers adding that the country's peacekeepers have time and again shown unwavering courage to protect vulnerable communities around the world.

In a video message on Wednesday, Kamboj remembered those who laid their lives as part of UN peacekeeping forces and noted they have made "ultimate sacrifice under the blue flag," in the pursuit of peace.

*(Contd on page 5)*

**It's a matter of honour and privilege, says Major Radhika Sen, UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Awardee**

# ADB commits USD 2.6 bn in sovereign lending to India

NEW DELHI, May 29 (PTI)

---

ASIAN Development Bank (ADB) committed USD 2.6 billion (about Rs 21,500 crore) in sovereign lending to India in 2023 for various projects.

The fund is aimed to strengthen urban development, support industrial corridor development, promote power sector reforms, build India's climate resilience, and enhance connectivity.

ADB also extended USD 23.53 million in technical assistance and USD 4.1 million in grants under the sovereign portfolio. In addition, ADB committed over USD 1 billion for private sector projects during the past year, the Manila-based multi-lateral develop-

ment bank said in a statement.

"ADB's portfolio in 2023 supported the Government's priority agenda. We will continue to focus on projects and programmes that accelerate India's structural transformation, create jobs, address infrastructure gaps, promote green growth, and foster social and economic inclusiveness while deploying smart technologies," ADB Country Director for India Mio Oka said.

In 2023, ADB approved additional funding to support India's national industrial corridor development programme to enhance its manufacturing competitiveness along with a loan for Visakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor Development, it said.

# Hot hills: Mercury at record high in U'khand, HP, J&K

Gaurav Talwar  
@timesgroup.com

**Dehradun:** Not just the northern plains and central India, the Himalayan states such as Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir are also experiencing record-breaking temperatures this May.

In Dehradun, the maximum temperature reached a record 43°C on Wednesday, which was seven notches above normal and equaled the all-time record of maximum temperature in the month of May, recorded in 2012. Incidentally, the maximum temperature has surpassed 40°C for eight days this month, a record high. Earlier, in May 2018, the temperature exceeded 40°C Celsius for four days, according to the regional meteorological centre.

"The ongoing heat wave conditions will continue for the next 48 hours. Rain and thunderstorm activity is ex-



Smoke billows during a forest fire, amid heatwave conditions, in Shimla district on Wednesday

pected in the state from June 1 onwards," said Bikram Singh, director of the regional meteorological centre in Dehradun, predicting heatwave and severe heatwave conditions in parts of Garhwal and Kumaon for the next few days. Singh also said that dry winters and less rainfall in the pre-monsoon season have exacerbated the problem.

Similar conditions are prevailing in Jammu & Kashmir. On May 25, the maximum temperature in Srinagar reached 32.7°C, the

highest in the past decade. "The whole valley is experiencing rising temperatures. Qazigund recorded an all-time high maximum temperature for the month of May at 34°C on May 27," said Mukhtar Ahmed, director of the regional meteorological centre in Srinagar.

Calling it "climate variability", Ahmed attributed this "unusual trend" to prolonged dry spell in the month of May. "We witnessed similar heatwave conditions in the valley during Sept last year," he added.

Himachal Pradesh is also experiencing scorching temperatures, with maximum readings hovering around or above 30°C in state capital Shimla. The mercury in the hill town settled at 31.7°C on Wednesday, about six notches above the average normal temperature and the highest since 2012. Sundernagar in Himachal recorded a temperature over 40°C, the highest in the past decade.

# China arming Pakistan along LoC in Kashmir

■ By Sumir Kaul

KUPWARA, May 29 (PTI)

**PAKISTAN'S** key ally China has been actively bolstering the defence capabilities of the Pakistani army along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir over the past three years which includes the construction of steelhead bunkers and the provision of Unmanned Aerial and Combat Aerial Vehicles, officials said on Wednesday.

Chinese assistance also extends to the installation of highly encrypted communication towers and the laying of underground fibre cables along the LoC.

Moreover, advanced radar systems of Chinese origin, such as the 'JY' and 'HGR' series, have been deployed to enhance medium and low altitude target detection capabilities, providing crucial intelligence support for army and air defence units, they said. Additionally, the presence of the SH-15, a 155 mm truck-mounted howitzer gun manufactured by a Chinese firm, has been noticed at various locations along the LoC.

This move is seen as part of efforts to strengthen China's ties with Pakistan and safeguard Chinese investments in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, particularly related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Though the presence of senior PLA officials at forward posts, as was detected in 2014, was not found, some intercepts suggest-

ed that Chinese troops and engineers were setting up infrastructure along the LoC, including building underground bunkers, officials said. Chinese experts were engaged in tunnel construction in the Leepa Valley of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), signalling preparations for an all-weather road to connect with the Karakoram highway, they said.

This strategic move is linked to Beijing's ambitious 46-billion-dollar CPEC project, aiming to establish a direct route between Gwadar Port in Pakistan and Xinjiang

province in China through the Karakoram highway, an area under the illegal occupation of China. In 2007, a Chinese telecom company had taken over a Pakistani tele-

com company and formed China Mobile Pakistan (CMPak) -- a 100 per cent owned subsidiary of China Mobile Communications Corporation. In August 2022, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), while renewing the mobile licence of CMPak (Zong) for PoK, gave permission to expand Next Generation Mobile Services (NGMS) in the region.

While the Indian Army has maintained silence on the matter, intelligence agencies are reportedly being kept informed of the developments.

The continued presence of Chinese military personnel in the region has raised concerns, with India voicing objections to Chinese activities in Gilgit and Baltistan areas in the past.

