

Airtel deal with Musk's Starlink to bring high-speed net to India

Will Use SpaceX Co's Network To Widen Coverage

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New Delhi: Airtel gained a significant edge in the domestic telecom market by striking an agreement with Elon Musk's Starlink to market the broadband and internet sa-

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telite services of the American company, while also using the latter's network to supplement its coverage across the country.

SATELLITE-BASED CONNECTIVITY

► Starlink is SpaceX's satellite-based internet service provider

► It uses nearly 7,000 low Earth orbit (LEO) satellites to deliver internet connectivity

► In US, standard Starlink service costs \$120 (about ₹10,500) a month. Pricing in India is not yet known



► As of Dec 2024, Starlink was present in 72 countries with a subscriber base of nearly 5 million

► India has 945 million internet subscribers, majority of them wireless

► Starlink's service has been critical for Ukraine during war, supporting both military and civilian communications

Work on the partnership will, however, start only after Starlink – which is awaiting official approval – gets a go-ahead from the security establishment, even as govt works out pricing and other modalities to accord satellite spectrum to satcom companies on

an administrative basis.

"This is the first agreement to be signed in India, which is subject to SpaceX receiving its own authorisations to sell Starlink in India," Airtel said in a statement on Tuesday. "It enables Airtel and SpaceX to further explore how Starlink

can complement and expand Airtel's offerings, and how Airtel's expertise in the Indian market complements SpaceX's direct offerings to consumers and businesses."

Airtel closed the deal even as the company and its promoter Sunil Mittal has a stake in Eutelsat One Web, which has received a govt licence to operate satcom services in India and is awaiting spectrum.

The deal is also surprising as Airtel had recently joined hands with Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio to oppose administrative spectrum to satcom companies such as Starlink, demanding that airwaves should only be auctioned.

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Pakistani envoy denied entry into US, deported from LA

Ambassador K K Wagan was deported over "controversial visa references"

ISLAMABAD, Mar 11 (IANS)

IN A major embarrassment to Islamabad, the United States denied entry to a top Pakistani diplomat and deported him from Los Angeles over "controversial visa references", local media in Pakistan reported on Tuesday.

Pakistan's Ambassador to Turkmenistan, K K Wagan was reportedly travelling to Los Angeles for a personal visit when he was stopped by the US immigration authorities upon arrival.

The US authorities flagged



Ambassador K K Wagan

Wagan over "controversial visa references", leading to his immediate deportation even though it remains unclear what specific concerns triggered this response from the American authorities.

The Pakistani Foreign Office confirmed on Tuesday that their officer had gone to the US on a private visit. The Foreign Office

spokesperson said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was looking into the matter of the envoy's deportation from the US and that an investigation was underway.

"Ambassador K K Wagan was deported from the US. He had an immigration objection, which led to his deportation," a senior Pakistani Foreign Ministry official was quoted as saying by the Pakistani media.

Several reports indicate that Wagan is likely to be summoned to Islamabad to explain his side of the story.

The incident comes amid reports that US President Donald Trump would soon impose a travel ban on travellers from Pakistan to effectively stop their entry into the country.

Russia shoots down 337 Ukrainian drones over 10 regions in a night

MOSCOW, Mar 11 (AP)

THE Russian military said its air defences shot down 337 Ukrainian drones over 10 Russian regions overnight in what appears to be the biggest Ukrainian drone attack on Russia in three years, hours before key Ukraine-US talks were to start on Tuesday.

The attack, which killed one person and wounded several, came as a Ukrainian delegation was to meet with America's top diplomat in Saudi Arabia about ending the three-year war with Russia. There was no immediate comment from Ukrainian officials on the attack.



The site where one of the shot down Ukrainian drones fell, outside Moscow, Russia, on Tuesday. (AP/PT)

The talks in Saudi Arabia reflect a new diplomatic push after an unprecedented argument erupted during President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's February 28 visit to the White House.

Most of the drones — 126 of them — were shot down over the Kursk region across the border from Ukraine, parts of which Kyiv's forces control, and 91 were shot down over the Moscow region, according to a statement by Russia's Defence Ministry.

Other regions listed in the statement included Belgorod, Bryansk and Voronezh on the border with Ukraine and those deeper inside Russia, such as

Kaluga, Lipetsk, Nizhny Novgorod, Oryol and Ryazan.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said over 70 drones targeted the Russian capital and were shot down as they were flying toward it.

The Governor of the Moscow region surrounding the capital, Andrei Vorobyov, said that one person was killed and nine were wounded in the attack, which also damaged several residential buildings and a number of cars.

Another person was wounded on a highway in the Lipetsk region, Governor Igor Artamonov said.

PM: Mauritius is family, links India to wider Global South

Island Nation To Confer On PM Top Award

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: For India, Mauritius is not just a partner country but family, connecting India to the wider Global South, PM Narendra Modi said on Tuesday as he invoked Ram, Ramayan and Ganga Maiya to emphasise the bond between the two countries.

Speaking at a public reception, Modi recalled the struggle of indentured labourers who were duped by British colonisers to leave their homes in Bihar and travel to Mauritius. He emphasised that 200 years ago, Indian labourers — deceptively brought as 'Girmitiyas' to toil on plantations — found strength in Lord Ram and the Ramcharitmanas despite immense hardship.

He recalled his 1998 visit for the International Ramayan Conference while underlining that Mauritius had declared a half-day holiday to mark the consecration of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

Welcoming Modi at the



PM Modi with Mauritius counterpart Navin Ramgoolam at Port Louis on Tuesday. Earlier, Modi gifted Mauritius President Dharam Gokhool Ganga water collected from Prayagraj during the Maha Kumbh, emphasising the cultural affinity with the island nation where people of Indian origin account for nearly 70% of the population

event, Mauritius PM Navin Ramgoolam announced that the country will confer its highest civilian award 'Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean (GCSK)' on Modi during National Day celebrations on Wednesday. The two representatives will also hold delegation-level talks that will be followed by the signing of several agreements.

Modi thanked Ramgoolam, who received the Indian PM at the airport, for his warmth and friendship and for his contribution to strengthening the vibrant and spe-

cial ties between the two countries, Indian govt said. In a special gesture, Modi handed over OCI cards to Ramgoolam and his spouse Veena Ramgoolam.

Highlighting the shared heritage and familial connections that form the bedrock of the close people-to-people ties between the two countries, Modi appreciated how the Indian origin community in Mauritius had preserved and nurtured their cultural roots. "To further strengthen these bonds, a special carve out for Mauritius has been made whereby OCI cards can

be made available to the seventh generation of people of Indian origin in Mauritius. The PM underscored that India would be supporting several initiatives to nurture the Girmitiya legacy," govt said.

Modi also noted that India was privileged to be a close development partner of Mauritius. He further said India-Mauritius special ties played a key role in India's 'Sagar' Vision and its engagement with the Global South. "Speaking about tackling the shared challenge of climate change, he appreciated Mauritius's partnership in the International Solar Alliance and the Global Biofuels Alliance initiatives," the govt said.

With many in the audience tracing their ancestry to Bihar and UP, Modi, an MP from Varanasi, promised efforts to restore Bihar's glory and predicted that Bihar's Makhana would become a global snack staple. He described Mauritius as a "Mini India" and a vital bridge to the Global South. He also announced plans for a global Girmitiya database, a university-led study of their legacy, and a potential world Girmitiya conference to trace their journeys and settlements.

Trump doubles planned tariffs on Canadian steel, aluminum to 50 pc

WASHINGTON, Mar 11 (AP)

PRESIDENT Donald Trump says that he will double his planned tariffs on steel and aluminum from 25 per cent to 50 per cent for Canada, escalating a trade war with the United States' northern neighbour.

Trump says the increase of the tariffs set to take effect on Wednesday is a response to the price increases that the provincial government of Ontario put on electricity sold to the United States.

"I have instructed my Secretary of Commerce to add an ADDITIONAL 25 per cent Tariff, to 50 per cent, on all STEEL and ALUMINUM COMING INTO THE UNITED STATES FROM CANADA, ONE OF THE HIGHEST TARIFFING NATIONS ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD," Trump posted Tuesday on Truth Social.

The US stock market promptly fell following the social media post.

After a brutal stock market sell-off because of his tariff threats, President Donald Trump faces pressure on Tuesday to show he has a legitimate plan to grow the economy instead of perhaps pushing it into a recession.

Trump was set to deliver an afternoon address to the Business Roundtable, a trade association of CEOs that during the 2024 campaign he wooed with the promise of lower corporate tax rates for domestic manufacturers. But his plans for tariffs on Canada, Mexico, China, steel, aluminum — with more to possibly come on Europe, Brazil, South Korea, pharmaceutical drugs, copper, lumber and computer chips — would amount to a massive tax hike.

The stock market's vote of no confidence over the past two weeks puts the president in a

bind between his enthusiasm for taxing imports and his brand as a politician who understands business based on his own expe-

riences in real estate, media and marketing.

Harvard University economist Larry Summers, a former treasury secretary for the Clinton administration, on Monday put the odds of a recession at 50-50.

"All the emphasis on tariffs and all the ambiguity and uncertainty has both chilled demand and caused prices to go up," Summers posted on X. "We are getting the worst of both worlds - concerns about inflation and an economic downturn and more uncertainty about the future and that slows everything."

The investment bank Goldman Sachs revised down its growth forecast for this year to 1.7 per cent from 2.2 per cent previously. It modestly increased its

recession probability to 20 per cent "because the White House has the option to pull back policy changes if downside risks begin to look more serious".

Trump has tried to assure the public that his tariffs would cause a bit of a "transition" to the economy, with the taxes prodding more companies to begin the years-long process of relocating factories to the United States to avoid the tariffs. But he set off alarms in an interview broadcast on Sunday in which he didn't rule out a possible recession.

"I hate to predict things like that," Trump said on Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures."

"There is a period of transition, because what we're doing is very big. We're bringing wealth back to America. That's a big thing. And there are always periods of — it takes a little time. It takes a little time. But I don't — I think it should be great for us. I mean, I think it should be great."



Baloch separatists hijack train, kill 20 Pak soldiers

Take 182 People Hostage After Bombing Tracks

Islamabad: Ethnic Baloch insurgents hijacked a passenger train in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province Tuesday, killing at least 20 soldiers and taking 182 hostages in a remote mountainous area. Banned separatist group Balochistan Liberation

► **EDIT: Wheels Coming Off**

Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for South Asia's first train hijack by militants, reports Omer Farooq Khan.

The insurgents warned of "severe consequences" if security forces attempted a rescue operation.

"If the Pakistani military attempts to approach, all hostages will be executed," it said in a statement.

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REBELS WARN OF 'SEVERE CONSEQUENCES'

► **Jaffar Express with 500 passengers** was en route from Quetta to Peshawar, a distance of 1,600km, when it was hijacked

► **Train was attacked around 1.30pm (IST) near Sibi**, and brought to a halt near a tunnel

► Militants bombed tracks before storming the train, **severely wounding the driver**

► A rly officer in Quetta said around **60 passengers** had left the train and **arrived safely at Panir**

► **Balochistan Liberation Army** warned of 'severe consequences' if forces attempt a rescue op



9-coach Jaffar Exp started from Quetta str



Train was attacked 160km from Quetta

Pak diplomat deported from LA despite visa

US authorities denied entry to Pakistan's ambassador to Turkmenistan and deported him from Los Angeles, a media report said on Tuesday. Ambassador K K Wagan, who holds a valid US visa and all necessary travel documents, was stopped at LA airport by US immigration authorities, The News quoted diplomatic sources as saying. **P 22**