

China, Russia plan to build N-plant on moon to power lunar station: Official

Shanghai: China is considering building a nuclear plant on moon to power International Lunar Research Station (ILRS) it is planning with Russia, a presentation showed Wednesday.

China aims to become a major space power and land astronauts on moon by 2030, and its planned Chang'e-8 mission for 2028 would lay the groundwork for constructing a permanent, manned lunar base.

In the presentation, the 2028 mission's chief engineer, Pei Zhaoyu, showed the lunar base's energy supply could depend on large-scale solar arrays, and cables for heating and electricity built on the moon's surface. Russia's space agency said last year it planned to build a reactor on moon's surface with China's space administration by 2035 to power ILRS. "An important question for ILRS is power supply, and Russia has a natural advantage, when it comes to nuclear power plants, especially sending them into space, it leads the world," said the chief designer of China's lunar exploration programme. REUTERS

Vance outlines plan for Ukraine that sharply favours Russia

Proposal Includes A Freeze Of Territorial Lines, Acceptance Of Russia's Annexation Of Crimea & No Entry Of Ukraine In Nato

US vice-president JD Vance on Wednesday called on Ukraine to accept an American peace proposal that closely mirrors longstanding Russian demands, including a "freeze" of territorial lines in the three-year war, acceptance of the annexation of Crimea by Russia and a prohibition on Ukraine becoming part of the Nato alliance.

It was the first time a US official had publicly laid out a ceasefire deal in such stark terms and the comments appeared designed to increase pressure on Ukraine, which has long refused to accept Russia's claims on its lands, particularly in Crimea.

Vance, speaking during a trip to India, said the US would "walk away" from the peace process if both Ukraine and Russia refused to accept the American terms. But President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine was clearly the target.

"We've issued a very explicit proposal to both the Russians and the Ukrainians, and it's time for them to either say yes or for the US to walk away from this process," Vance told reporters. "The only way to really stop the killing is for the armies to both put down their weapons, to freeze this thing and to get on with the business of actually building a better Russia and a better Ukraine."

The V-P's comments came just hours after Zelensky said his country will never accept Russia's 2014 occupation of Crimea as legal, adding that doing so would violate Ukrai-



Rescuers work at the site of a Russian air strike in Sloviansk

Trump slams Ukraine prez's Crimea stance

US President Trump said a deal to halt the Ukraine war was "very close" on Wednesday but hit out at President Zelensky over his refusal to formally cede Crimea to Russia. "It's inflammatory statements like Zelensky's that makes it so difficult to settle this War," Trump said in a post on Truth Social, adding that his remarks will do nothing but prolong the 'killing field.' He added: "We are very close to a Deal, but the man with 'no cards to play' should now, finally, GET IT DONE." AFP

ne's constitution. He also said Ukraine could not accept any prohibition against becoming part of Nato. "There is nothing to talk about. This violates our constitution. This is our territory, the territory of the people of Ukraine," Zelensky said.

On Wednesday, Yulia Svyrydenko, the Ukrainian economy minister, also vowed that her country "will never recognise the occupation of Crimea." Writing on X, she

said that "Ukraine is ready to negotiate — but not to surrender. There will be no agreement that hands Russia the stronger foundations it needs to regroup and return with greater violence."

The threat by Vance were similar to comments last week from secretary of state Marco Rubio and from President Trump, who said in the Oval Office that if the two sides don't agree quickly to a deal, "we're just going to say, 'You're foolish, you're fools, you're horrible people, and we're going to just take a pass.'"

On Wednesday, Vance told reporters in India that under the American proposal, "We're going to freeze the territorial lines at some level close to where they are today... Now, of course, that means the Ukrainians and the Russians are both going to have to give up some of the territory they currently own." He did not say what territory Russia would have to give up. Russia currently occupies 18.7% of Ukraine, according to DeepState, an online research group with ties to the Ukrainian army. A freeze would essentially force Ukraine to effectively surrender huge swaths of land to Russia.

A Kremlin spokesman welcomed Vance's remarks. "The US is continuing its mediation efforts, and we certainly welcome those efforts," Dmitri Peskov, the spokesman, said. "Our interactions are ongoing but to be sure, there is a lot of nuances around the peace settlement that need to be discussed." NYT

India downgrades diplomatic ties with Pakistan

Suspends Indus Water Treaty with immediate effect

NEW DELHI, Apr 23 (PTI)

INDIA on Wednesday suspended the Indus Water Treaty and announced downgrading diplomatic ties with Pakistan including expulsion of its Military attaches in view of cross-border links to the Pahalgalam terror attack.

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) met this evening under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and firmed up the responses to the terror attack.

The CCS also decided to close the Integrated Check Post at Attari with immediate effect, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said at a late evening press briefing. It is learnt that the CCS lasted for around two-and-a-half hours, Pakistani nationals will not be permitted to travel to India under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) and any such visas issued in the past to Pakistani nationals are deemed cancelled, Misri said.

The CCS decided that the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 will be held in abeyance with immediate effect, until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism, he said.

Expels Pak Diplomats, Military Attaches

Closes Attari Wagah Border

Not to permit SAARC Visas for Pak citizens

Declares Pak Military Advisors personae non-grata

To withdraw Military advisors from Pakistan

Gabinet Committee on Security takes precipitate decisions

On closing of the Integrated Check Post at Attari, Misri said those who have crossed over with valid endorsements may return through that route before May 1. Misri said, "The defence, military, naval and air Advisors in the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi are declared Persona Non Grata."

They have a week to leave India, he said.

India will be withdrawing its own Defence, navy and air advisors from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad.

"These posts in the respective High Commissions are deemed annulled. Five support staff of the Service Advisors will



also be withdrawn from both High Commissions," he said.

"The overall strength of the High Commissions will be brought down to 30 from the present 55 through further reductions, to be effected by May 1," he said.

The CCS was briefed in detail on the terrorist attack on Tuesday in Pahalgalam that left 25 Indians and one Nepali citizen dead. "A number of others sustained injuries. The CCS condemned the attack in the strongest terms and expressed its deepest condolences to the families of the victims and

hoped for the early recovery of the injured," Misri said.

"Strong expressions of support and solidarity have been received from many Governments around the world, which have unequivocally condemned this terror attack," he said.

The Foreign Secretary said the CCS recorded its appreciation for such sentiments, which reflect zero tolerance for terrorism. In the briefing to the CCS, the cross-border linkages of the terrorist attack were brought out, he said. "It was noted that this attack came in the wake of the successful holding of elections in the Union Territory (Jammu and Kashmir

and its steady progress towards economic growth and development," he said.

"It resolved that the perpetrators of the attack will be brought to justice and their sponsors held to account," he said. "As with the recent extradition of Tahaywur Bana, India will be unrelenting in the pursuit of those who have committed acts of terror, or conspired to make them possible," he said.

**Read Editorial
HIT BACK HARD
on page 6**

PM Modi, Saudi Crown Prince condemn terror attack in J&K

NEW DELHI, Apr 23 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman have stressed that terrorism and violent extremism remain among the gravest threats to humanity and there cannot be any justification for any act of terror for any reason whatsoever, according to a joint statement issued on Wednesday.

The two leaders have stressed the need to prevent access to weapons, including missiles and drones, to commit terror acts against other countries.



Modi decided to cut short his two-day visit to Saudi Arabia and departed for New Delhi on Tuesday night following a terror attack in Kashmir's Pahalgam, where 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed. He was originally scheduled to return to India on Wednesday night.

"Both sides strongly condemned the gruesome terror attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir on 22 April, 2025, which claimed the lives of innocent civilians. In this context, the two sides condemned terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations, and emphasised that this remains one of the gravest threats to humanity. They agreed that there cannot be any justification for any act of terror for any reason whatsoever," the statement said.

"They rejected any attempt to link terrorism to any particular race, religion or culture. They welcomed the excellent cooperation between the two sides in counter-terrorism and terror financing," it added.

The two leaders condemned cross-border terrorism and called on all countries to reject the use of terrorism against others, dismantle terror infrastructure where it exists and bring perpetrators of terrorism to justice swiftly.

"Both sides stressed the need to prevent access to weapons including missiles and drones to commit terrorist acts against other countries," the statement said.

On Tuesday, Modi delayed his scheduled meeting with the

Saudi crown prince by at least two hours to assess the situation in Kashmir.

The Prime Minister, who held bilateral talks with the Saudi crown prince, skipped an official dinner before returning home on Tuesday night. During the talks, the two sides appreciated the deepening of the defence ties as a key pillar of the strategic partnership and welcomed the creation of a Ministerial Committee on Defence Cooperation under the Strategic Partnership Council.

"They noted with satisfaction the growth of their joint defence cooperation including numerous 'firsts'; like the first ever Land Forces exercise SADA TANSEEQ, two rounds of the Naval Exercises AL MOHED AL HINDI, many high-level visits, and training exchanges, towards ensuring the security and stability of the region," the statement said.

"They welcomed the outcomes of the 6th meeting of the Joint Committee on Defence Cooperation held in Riyadh in September 2024, noting the initiation of staff-level talks between all three services. Both sides also agreed to enhance defence industry collaboration," it added.



FTII Pune, SRFTI Kolkata, granted university status

NEW DELHI, Apr 23 (PTI)

RENOWNED film making schools-- Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune and Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI), Kolkata-- have been granted deemed-to-be university status, according to Ministry of Education.

The new status will empower them to award degrees rather than just diplomas and also offer doctoral programmes.

"FTII Pune and SRFTI Kolkata, have been granted deemed-to-be university status under section 3 of the UGC Act. The status has been notified following recommendation made by the University Grants Commission," a senior MoE official said.

"Both institutes will launch doctoral, research and innovative academic programmes. They will also participate in NIRF Rankings and integrate with Academic Bank of Credits (ABC). Aligned with vision of National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, this landmark decision will pave way for greater autonomy, innovation and academic excellence in film and media education," the official added.

FTII was set up by the Government of India in 1960, in the premises of the erstwhile Prabhat Studios in Pune. Formerly known as the 'Film Institute of India', it was a department of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

In 1971, FTII came to be known as the 'Film and Television Institute of India' (FTII) and soon started in-service training programs for Doordarshan, India's public broadcaster. The Television Training wing, which was earlier functioning in New Delhi, shifted to Pune in 1974. Thereafter, the institute became fully aided by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

In 2017, the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) had granted equivalence to six PG Diploma Programmes of the institute with Master's Degree.

Located in Kolkata and named after the legendary maestro Satyajit Ray, the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute was the second national centre of cinema education established in 1995 by the Government of India as an autonomous academic institution under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

India set to maintain its leadership in global economic growth: Centre

NEW DELHI, Apr 23 (IANS)

DESPITE global uncertainties and downward revisions in growth forecasts for other large economies, India is set to maintain its leadership in global economic growth, the Government said on Wednesday. Supported by strong fundamentals and strategic Government initiatives, the country is well-positioned to navigate the challenges ahead. "With reforms in infrastructure, innovation, and financial inclusion, India continues to enhance its role as a key driver of global economic activity," said the Ministry of Finance.

India is poised to lead the global economy once again, with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projecting it to remain the fastest-growing major economy over the next two years.



According to the April 2025 edition of the IMF's World Economic Outlook (WEO), India's economy is expected to grow by 6.2 per cent in 2025 and 6.3 per cent in 2026, maintaining a solid lead over global and regional peers. It shows a downward revision in the 2025 forecast compared to the January 2025 update, reflecting the impact of heightened global trade tensions and growing

uncertainty. "Despite this slight moderation, the overall outlook remains strong.

This consistency signals not only the strength of India's macroeconomic fundamentals but also its capacity to sustain momentum in a complex international environment. As the IMF reaffirms India's economic resilience, the country's role as a key driver of global growth continues to gain prominence,"

said the Ministry. The IMF's projections reaffirm India's resilience, further solidifying its importance in shaping the global economic future.

The April 2025 edition notes that after several years of overlapping shocks, the global economy has entered a phase of cautious stabilisation. Growth remains modest, and projections for global output have been revised downward from the January 2025 update.

This reflects a steep rise in tariff rates, policy uncertainty, and slowing progress in international cooperation.

"For India, however, the growth outlook is relatively more stable. The IMF projects steady expansion for the Indian economy, supported by firm private consumption, particularly in rural areas," the Ministry noted.