

# 'India all set to overtake Japan as 4th largest economy by '25'

NEW DELHI, May 12 (ANI)

**CITING** various macroeconomic parameters that are doing pretty well, India's G20 Sherpa and former CEO of Niti Aayog Amitabh Kant projected that the country is all set to overtake Japan as 4th largest economy in the world by 2025.

The size of India's GDP is currently ranked 5th, after the US, China, Germany, and Japan. It overtook the UK in 2022.

Just a decade ago, Indian GDP was the eleventh largest in the world. Currently, India's GDP is estimated to be around USD 3.7 trillion. Some highlights of India's journey to the top 5 economies of the world in 2024 from Fragile 5 in 2013, according to Kant, among others, record GST collection, over 8 per cent GDP growth in the past three quarters, trading in Indian currency Rupee with various countries (to be precise 27), inflation at manageable levels.

The term Fragile 5 was coined by a Morgan Stanley analyst in 2013 and refers to a

set of five emerging countries, including India, whose economy was not doing well back then. The other four countries were Brazil, Indonesia, South Africa, and Turkey.

Double-digit growth in the steel, cement, and automobile manufacturing sectors; global leader in digital public infra-



**Amitabh Kant**

structure, with e-transactions surging to 134 billion, accounting for 46 per cent of all global digital payments; accounts opened under Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile trinity have over Rs 2.32 lakh crore

as current balance; average annual inflation between 2013-14 and 2022-23 declined to 5 per cent from 8.2 per cent between 2003-04 and 2013-14 are some other things he attributed to India's firm growth. Firm GDP growth forecasts, inflation at manageable levels, political stability at the Central Government level, and appreciable central bank monetary policy, have all contributed to painting a bright picture for the Indian economy in recent quarters.

# EAM Jaishankar expresses concern over delay in implementation of IMEC

The reason being the current situation in West Asia; The Minister said the expectation generated has to be 'adjusted' a bit

NEW DELHI, May 12 (PTI)

THE delay in implementation of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) in view of the current situation in West Asia is a matter of "concern" and the expectation generated following firming up of the initiative in September last has to be "adjusted" a bit now, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said.

In an exclusive interview to PTI, Jaishankar said all the stakeholders of the IMEC -- a ship-to-rail transit network -- are committed to it as they feel it is a "great" initiative.

"It has definitely been a source of concern for us and the kind of expectation we had when the agreement was signed in September, we have had to adjust it a bit," he said

when asked whether the ongoing crisis in West Asia would delay the project by at least a few years.

"On the other hand, all the parties to the agreement have reconfirmed that 'we think it is a great idea' and all are committed to it," he said.

Billed as a path-breaking initiative, the IMEC envisages a vast road, railroad and shipping networks among Saudi Arabia, India, the United States and Europe with an aim to ensure integration among Asia, Middle East and West.

"So we will have to wait for things to stabilise a bit. I think it is a matter of great concern and it is also a very complex

issue. Because it is not a single issue on which you have a black and white judgement," Jaishankar said.

"I think you have a range of concerns

there, from terrorism to hostages to humanitarian corridor to a two-state solution," he said in the interview late Thursday.

"So how do you get the balance right and more important, how do you make it actually work on the ground," he added.

The initiative also envisages an electricity cable network, a hydrogen pipeline, high-speed data cable network to facilitate overall economic growth in the partner countries.



## 'Impetus to domestic manufacturing will lend space to foreign policy toolkit'

NEW DELHI, May 12 (PTI)

**BOOSTING** India's domestic manufacturing and the overall economy will provide much more respite in its foreign policy toolkit to expand the country's influence globally and compete with China on the economic front, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said.

India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been focusing on enhancing domestic manufacturing in the last 10 years as there was a neglect of the sector before 2014 and it created many problems for the country, Jaishankar told PTI in an exclusive interview. He also suggested that lack of focus in the past in the manufacturing sector is linked to the upward trajectory in India-China trade notwithstanding New Delhi's position that normalisation of ties with Beijing is dependent on the resolution of the eastern Ladakh border row.

**HOPE THERE IS RESOLUTION OF REMAINING ISSUES: JAISHANKAR ON EASTERN LADAKH BORDER ROW WITH CHINA:** As the eastern Ladakh military standoff entered its

fifth year, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said India hopes for a resolution of the remaining issues with China and asserted that a return to normal bilateral ties hinges on

peace and tranquillity at the border. In an exclusive interview to PTI, he said the remaining issues mainly pertained to "patrolling rights" and "patrolling abilities".

Specifically asked when a resolution to the row can be expected in the backdrop of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks to Newsweek magazine last month, Jaishankar said he only provided a "big picture" viewpoint on the matter.

"We would hope that there is a resolution of the remaining issues out there. These issues mainly pertain to patrolling rights and patrolling abilities here," he said.

"I would not link it to the Prime Minister's interview per se. I think the Prime Minister was giving a big picture viewpoint and his big picture view-

point was a very reasonable viewpoint which is -- after all as neighbours, every country wants good relations with its neighbours," he said.

"But today, our relations with China are not normal because the peace and tranquillity in the border areas has been disturbed. So the (PM) was expressing the hope that the Chinese side should realise that the present situation is not in its own interest," Jaishankar said.

Modi had said that the border situation needs to be addressed urgently and that stable and peaceful ties between India and China are important for not just the two countries but for the entire region and world.

Jaishankar said diplomacy is a work of patience and India continues to discuss the issues with the Chinese side.



# China largest trading partner of India; US 2nd

NEW DELHI, May 12 (PTI)

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**CHINA** has emerged as the largest trading partner of India with USD 118.4 billion two-way commerce in 2023-24, slightly edging past the US, according to the data of economic think tank GTRI.

The bilateral trade between India and the US stood at USD 118.3 billion in 2023-24. Washington was the top trading partner of New Delhi during 2021-22 and 2022-23. The data showed that India's exports to China rose by 8.7 per cent to USD 16.67 billion in the last fiscal. The main sectors which recorded healthy growth in exports to that country include iron ore, cotton yarn/fabrics/madeups, handloom, spices, fruits and vegetables, plastic and linoleum. Imports from the neighbouring country increased by 3.24 per cent to USD 101.7 bn.

# Nongrang is 1st woman DGP of Meghalaya



SHILLONG, May 12 (IANS)

IDASHISHA Nongrang, a 1992 batch IPS officer coming from a tribal background, was on Saturday appointed the first woman Director General of Police (DGP) of Meghalaya.

Currently serving as the Director General of Civil Defence & Home Guard in Meghalaya, Nongrang will assume charge with effect from May 20, replacing L R Bishnoi who will retire on May 19, officials said. The move follows a recommendation by the Empanelment Committee of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

Congratulating Nongrang, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma posted on X: "Heartiest congratulations to Smti Idashisha Nongrang, IPS, on her appointment as the new DGP. Breaking barriers and making history, she became the first tribal lady from our state to hold this position, a moment of immense pride for all of us. Wishing her all the best!"



# Israel pushes deeper into Rafah, forcing 300,000 civilians to flee

## Egypt Plans to Join 'Genocide' Case Against Tel Aviv At ICJ

**Rafah:** Israeli forces pushed deeper into Gaza's southern city of Rafah on Sunday and battled Hamas in parts of the devastated north that the military said it had cleared months ago but where militants have regrouped. Rafah is considered the last refuge in Gaza for over a million civilians as well as Hamas' last stronghold. Some 300,000 people have fled the city following evacuation orders from Israel, which says it must invade to dismantle Hamas.

Neighbouring Egypt issued its strongest objection yet to the Rafah offensive, saying it intends to formally join South Africa's case at the International Court of Justice alleging Israel is committing genocide in Gaza, which Israel rejects.

US secretary of state Antony Blinken reiterated opposition to a major military assault on Rafah, and told CBS that Israel would "be left holding the bag on an enduring insurgency" without an exit from Gaza and postwar governance plan. Gaza has been left without a functioning govt, leading to a breakdown in public order and allowing Hamas' armed wing to reconstitute itself.

Palestinians reported heavy Israeli bombardment overnight in the urban Jabaliya refugee camp and other areas in northern Gaza, which has been largely isolated by Israeli forces for months. UN officials say there is a "full-blown famine" there. Residents said Israeli warplanes and artillery stru-



**NO END TO PAIN IN SIGHT:** People mourn Israeli soldier Sergeant Itay Livny, who was killed amid the ongoing conflict in Gaza, at his funeral in Tel Aviv, on Sunday. The Israeli military says 272 soldiers have been killed since the start of the ground offensive in Gaza on Oct 27

## 'Arms pause to Israel will strengthen Hamas'

**H**alting arms exports to Israel is "not a wise path" and would only strengthen Hamas, Britain's foreign secretary said Sunday. Asked whether the UK would follow the US in threatening to cut the supply of offensive weapons to Israel, foreign secretary **David Cameron**



said the two countries cannot be compared because unlike the US, Britain supplies a very small amount of Israel's weapons. "The UK provides less than 1% of Israel's weapons and it's not a state supplier," Cameron told the BBC on Sunday. "We have a licensing system and those licences can be closed if it's judged there's a serious risk of a serious international human rights violation." Britain's opposition Labour Party and human rights groups argue that the UK should stop the sale of British-made weapons or components in a Rafah offensive. AP

ck across the camp and the Zeitoun area east of Gaza City, where troops have battled militants for over a week. They have called on tens of thousands of people to relocate to nearby ar-

reas. First responders with the Palestinian Civil Defence said they were unable to respond to multiple calls for help from both areas, as well as from Rafah.

Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari,

## Hamas condemns Biden for saying 'truce tomorrow if hostages freed'

**Doha:** Remarks by US Prez Joe Biden that a ceasefire in Gaza would be possible if Hamas released its hostages are a "setback" to negotiations, the Palestinian militant group said Sunday. "We condemn this position by the US prez, we consider it a setback from the outcomes of the latest round of negotiations, which led to the movement's agreement to proposal put forward by mediators," Hamas said in a statement.

Biden said on Saturday that a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war would be possible "tomorrow" if Hamas gave up hostages seized in its Oct 7 attack. The US prez raised the topic of the hostages during a speech in Seattle.

Negotiations between Hamas and Israel for a truce and hostage exchange deal, mediated by Egypt, Qatar and the US, appear to have stalled amid Israeli military action in the southern Gaza city. Hamas said Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu had "rushed to overturn" the talks by launching an offensive in Rafah. AFP

the top Israeli military spokesman, said forces were also operating in the northern towns of Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun, which were heavily bombed in the war's opening days. AP



# Clashes in POK over wheat, power prices; 1 cop dead, 100+ hurt

## Mobile, Net Suspended In Many Parts

**Islamabad:** One police officer was killed and more than 100 people, mostly policemen, injured in violent clashes between security forces and protesters agitating against high prices of wheat flour and electricity in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, media reports said on Sunday.

The disputed region witnessed clashes Saturday between police and activists of a rights movement amid a "wheel-jam and shutter-down" strike across the territory, Dawn newspaper reported.

Mirpur senior superintendent of police (SSP) Kamran Ali told Dawn.com that sub-inspector Adnan Qureshi succumbed to a gunshot wound in the chest in Islamgarh town, where he was deployed along with other police personnel to stop a planned rally for Muzaffarabad via Kotli and Poonch districts under the banner of Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC).

JAAC spokesman Hafeez Hamdani said the committee had nothing to do with violence. "Such elements have been purposely planted in the ranks of protesters to bring a bad name to a struggle that aims nothing but the legitimate rights of the people."

The JAAC, which has traders at the forefront, has been seeking electricity as per hydropower generation cost in the region, subsidised wheat flour and an end to the privileges of the elite class.

On Wednesday and Thursday, around 70 JAAC activists were arrested by police during raids at their residences and those of their relatives in Muzaffarabad and Mirpur divisions, triggering serious clashes in Dadyal on

Thursday. JAAC subsequently announced a shutter-down and wheel-jam strike on Friday, a day ahead of its planned long march towards Mu-

zaffarabad on Saturday. A heavy contingent of Rangers and policemen has been deployed to stop the protests. Mobile phone and internet services were also suspended in several parts of the POK Sunday. Pakistan Prez Asif Ali Zardari has called an emergency meeting on Monday, said sources. PM **Shehbaz Sharif** said that he was "deeply concerned" about the situation in POK. "Unfortunately, in situations of chaos and dissent there are always some who rush in to score political points. I urge all parties to resort to peaceful course of action," he said. ۞۞





to whom, reality shows, cricket, which the thinking for us.

# 'Heat wave is linked to record global temperatures and waning El Nino's influence on wind circulation over Indian landmass'

Govindasamy Bala, professor at the Centre for Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences, IISc, Bengaluru, spoke to Bappa Majumdar on India's scorching summer and the fallout of climate change.

## ● India is facing an unprecedented heat wave, especially in the south and east. What are the reasons for it?

The unprecedented heat wave in April this year is linked to the record global temperatures in 2023 and in 2024. A waning El Nino in Pacific Ocean is also likely a contributor. The presence of persistent and intense anticyclones over Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal and their influence on wind circulation over the Indian landmass is contributing to the record dry and hot weather this April. The intensity of these anticyclones is likely influenced by the waning El Nino.



## ● Has the summer in India advanced by several weeks now?

Certainly. How do we define summer or winter? The definitions are purely based on temperatures. As temperatures rise, the length of summers increases and winters decrease. Here is an extreme example.

If we have a month-long hot condition at a certain location, the same hot conditions could persist over a six-month period when global mean warming is about 5-6°C under very high greenhouse gas emissions. For reference, the current global mean warming is slightly above 1°C.

## ● Do your study results match IMD's summer and monsoon forecasts?

Climate models project that the daily maximum temperature during the pre-monsoon period (March, April and May) in India could be harsh and treacherous because of climate change. However, the overall quantum of rainfall during the southwest monsoon season (June, July, Aug and Sep) is projected to increase in the future, particularly over northwest

India. The increase in monsoon rainfall over India in the future is attributed to an overall increase in water vapour in the atmosphere with global warming as warmer air can hold more vapour. The increase in rainfall in northwest India is attributed by a recent study to a westward shift in warm sea surface temperatures in Indian Ocean.

The above normal rainfall (6% above normal) predicted for 2024 summer monsoon season can be



have the largest population. Although the global level of net-zero emissions should be reached by 2050 to limit global warming to 1.5°C, we need more time as we need to eradicate poverty and our historical emissions are well below many of the developed countries.

## ● What is the future in store for us in India?

Climate change is manifesting in the form of changes in episodic daily weather events. Thus, most of us will experience climate change in the form of extreme temperatures and rainfall.

## ● Are there irreversible outcomes of climate change globally?

Yes. And a very good example for irreversible change due to global warming is the shrinking glaciers in the Himalayas. Once a glacier is gone, you cannot get it back on timescales relevant to humans. Sea level rise due to climate change is another example. Sea level rise cannot be reversed for multiple centuries. Thus, islands and coastal communities around the world will be impacted for generations by climate change. The shrinking ice cover over Greenland and Antarctica is another example of irreversible change. These ice sheets take tens of thousands of years to build and hence if you lost them, you lost them forever.

## ● What are other major environmental concerns?

It is not just climate change that we should be concerned about. We face several other environmental crises such as air and water pollution, noise and light pollution in cities, micro plastics, freshwater availability, biodiversity loss, ocean acidification etc. We need to take a holistic look at what we are doing to our environment. There is immense human pressure on the planet now. Current human actions are taking the planet away from conditions that allowed human civilisation to develop and thrive. If we continue the current path, we risk compromising the integrity of the whole Earth system. We need an integrated approach for addressing all the global environmental issues. Ultimately, we should strive for a safe and resilient Earth.

attributed mainly to the neutral or La Nina conditions (cooler sea surface temperatures) in Pacific Ocean after May.

## ● Where does India stand in terms of climate change mitigation?

Our per capita emissions are too low compared to the global average. Our past cumulative carbon dioxide emissions are also too little. Even today, our emissions contribute only about 7% to the annual global carbon dioxide emissions. But on a country-level basis, today we are the third largest emitter of carbon dioxide as we

# Srinagar votes today in 1st poll after Art 370 abrogation

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**Srinagar:** Srinagar-Ganderbal LS seat will vote Monday in the first J&K polls since the Aug 2019 abrogation of Article 370.

Srinagar will be the first of Valley's three constituencies to go to the ballot. Two dozen candidates are in the fray. But the contest is largely three-cornered among National Conference's (NC) Aga Ruhulla, PDP's Waheed Para and Apni Party's Ashraf Mir.

BJP has not fielded any candidate in Srinagar, nor in the other two Valley LS seats, Baramulla and Anantnag-Rajouri.

NC's Farooq Abdullah had won the seat in 2019 but he opted out this time. The 2019 elections saw low participation, logging one of the lowest turnouts in comparison to the preceding three elections. The average in these LS polls barely crossed 40%, often due to threats from terrorists and calls of boycott from separatists.

This time, such fears are not palpable. Campaigning has been low-key but tension-free, uninterrupted by stone-pelting or other violence that stalked the 2019 polls. Apni Party's Mir felt "a change in air". "We expect large numbers to come out and vote and are thrilled to conduct road-shows," said Mir.

NC's Ruhulla moved around in open vehicles, waving to people in Srinagar and adjoining Ganderbal district. PDP's Waheed highlighted youths "languishing in jail" and "children caught in drug addiction" among the "main problems of Kashmir".

The Srinagar seat has about 17.50 lakh voters, over 2 lakh of them first-timers in the age group of 18-20.