

# World Bank raises India's GDP growth projection to 7.2 per cent for FY26

NEW DELHI, Jan 14 (PTI)

THE World Bank has raised India's GDP growth forecast to 7.2 per cent for the current fiscal, up by 0.9 percentage points from its June projections, on the back of robust domestic demand and tax reforms.

In its flagship report "Global Economic Prospects", the World Bank also said growth in India is projected to slow to 6.5 per cent in 2026-27.

The projection is based on the assumption that the 50-per cent import tariffs by the US remain in place throughout the forecast horizon.

"Even so, India is expected to maintain the fastest growth rate among the world's largest economies," the report said.

The World Bank further said that despite higher tariffs on certain exports to the United States, the growth forecast has remained unchanged relative to June projections, primarily because

the adverse impact of those tariffs will be offset by stronger momentum in domestic demand and more resilient exports than previously anticipated.

The US accounts for about 12 per cent of India's merchandise exports.

"Growth is set to inch up to 6.6 per cent in FY2027/28, underpinned by robust services activity, as well as a recovery in exports and a pickup in investment," it added.

On the economic growth for the current year, the report said: "In India, growth is estimated to increase to 7.2 per cent in fiscal year (FY) 2025/26 (April 2025 to March 2026), as domestic demand has remained robust, reflecting strong private consumption, supported by earlier tax reforms and improvements in real household earnings in rural areas".

In June, the multilateral lending agency had estimated India's growth at 6.3 per cent.

According to the First Advance

Estimates released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), the Indian economy is expected to grow by 7.4 per cent in the current fiscal.

On the rupee, the World Bank said India's currency has depreciated since May amid capital outflows driven by higher US tariffs and heightened trade-related uncertainty.

The report also said the global economy has shown notable resilience to heightened trade tensions and policy uncertainty.

Last year, stockpiling of traded goods, strong risk appetite, and a surge in artificial intelligence (AI) spending supported activity, while supply chains adapted to rising trade barriers, it said.

The faster-than-expected pace of growth capped a five-year global recovery from the 2020 recession unmatched in more than six decades, but this masks a sharp divergence, it said.

# INSV Kaundinya reaches Muscat, gets rousing welcome

MUSCAT, Jan 14 (PTI)

TRADITIONALLY-built stitched ship INSV Kaundinya reached the shores of Muscat on Wednesday after a 17-day maiden overseas voyage from the coastal city of Porbandar in Gujarat, a completion of the challenging expedition that marked a symbolic revival of the arc of ancient maritime times between India and Oman.

The crew, comprising four officers and 13 naval sailors led by Commander Vikas Sheoran, was accorded a rousing welcome on arrival at a ceremony that was also attended by Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal, senior officials of the Indian Embassy in Muscat and Oman's Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and Royal Navy of Oman.

The 65-foot-long vessel has been constructed using traditional stitched shipbuilding techniques, employing natural materials and methods that date back several centuries.

The ship is a recreation of a



Traditionally-built stitched ship INSV Kaundinya, sails into the shores of Muscat on Wednesday after a 17-day maiden overseas voyage, from India to Oman. (Indian Embassy in Oman via PTI)

fifth-century vessel and inspired by a painting from the ancient Ajanta Caves.

Named after the legendary mariner Kaundinya, who is believed to have sailed from India

to Southeast Asia in ancient times, the ship embodies India's historic role as a maritime nation.

"This expedition, recalled the history, heritage and power of India in the maritime sector. The

crew has made India proud, and this voyage has also strengthened our centuries-old ties with Oman... Long live India-Oman friendship," Sonowal, who received the crew at Port Sultan

Qaboos in Muscat, told reporters here. Azzan bin Qassim Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of Oman's Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, was also present on the occasion.

# Looking forward to working closely with New Delhi: US Ambassador Sergio Gor

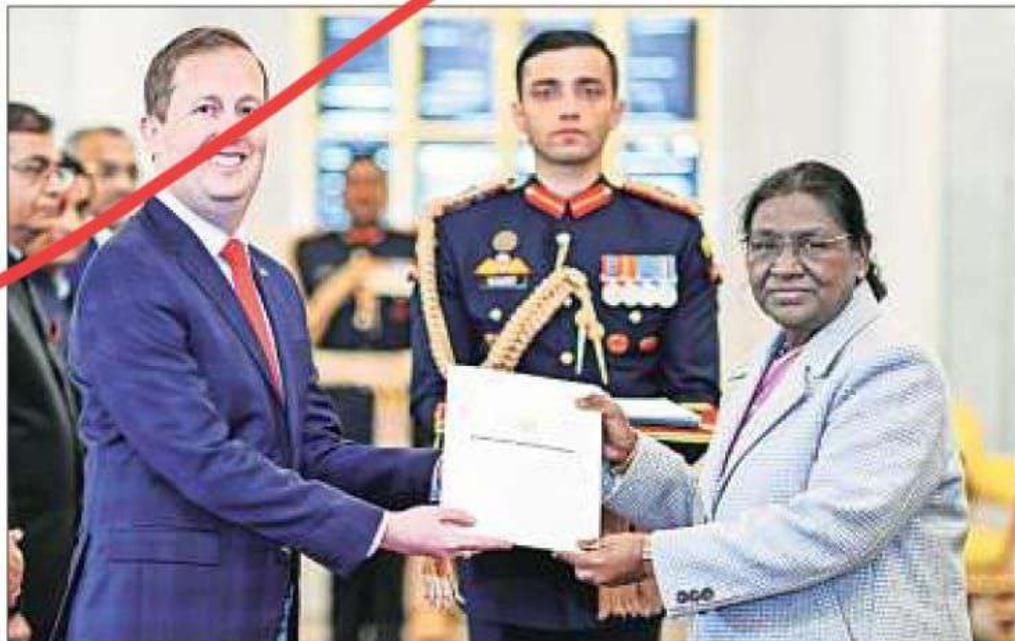
NEW DELHI, Jan 14 (PTI)

US Ambassador Sergio Gor on Wednesday said he was looking forward to working closely with New Delhi to advance shared priorities in areas of defence, trade, technology and critical minerals and to strengthen the overall partnership, as he presented his credentials to President Droupadi Murmu.

Gor, the 27th US ambassador to India, said it was an honour for him to “serve in India at a time of such promise and opportunity in the US-India relationship”.

He made the remarks after presenting his credentials along with the envoys of Austria and Trinidad and Tobago at an official ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

“It is an honour to present my credentials to Indian President Murmu and to serve in India at a time of such promise and opportunity in the US-India relationship,” he said.



President Droupadi Murmu accepts credentials from Ambassador of the United States of America Sergio Gor at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on Wednesday. (ANI)

“I look forward to working closely with the Government of India and the Indian people to advance our shared priorities in defence, trade,

technology, and critical minerals, and to further strengthen the partnership between our two great democracies,” he added.

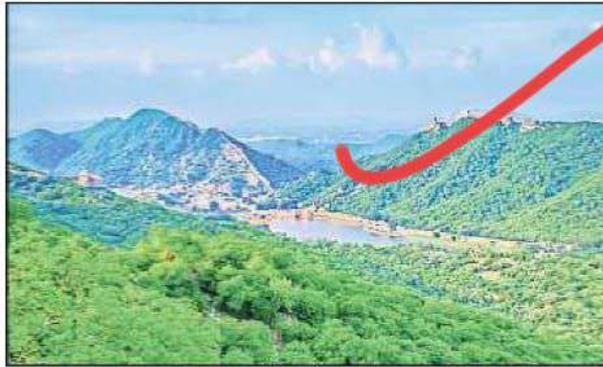
# Thousands of hectares in Aravalli region restored in last 2-3 yrs: Minister

NEW DELHI, Jan 14 (PTI)

UNION Minister for Environment Bhupender Yadav on Wednesday asserted that thousands of hectares in the Aravalli region have been restored in the last two to three years and the Government remains committed to continuing this work with ecology at the centre of development.

The Minister made the comments in his inaugural address at the 'National Conference on Eco-restoration of the Aravalli Landscape: Strengthening the Aravalli Green Wall' here.

"The Government is committed to the restoration and conservation of the Aravallis and similar ecosystems across the country. Thousands of hectares in the Aravalli region have been restored in the last two to three years and the Government remains committed to continuing this work with ecology at the



centre of development," he said.

Yadav said the Government launched the Aravalli Green Wall Project as part of India's commitment under the UNCCD to restore 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.

"Under this initiative, 6.45 million hectares of degraded land in the Aravalli region have been identified, with greening work initiated over 2.7 million hectares

across Gujarat, Delhi, Haryana and Rajasthan. Divisional forest officers from 29 Aravalli districts are implementing the project, focusing on plantations of native species suited to arid and semi-arid conditions," the Minister said.

The comments by the Minister come weeks after a controversy on the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

(MoEFCC) recommending a change in the definition of the Aravalli hills and ranges to protect the world's oldest mountain system in October this year. The Supreme Court accepted the recommendations in November but kept the order in abeyance on December 29.

Recalling a conservation decision, Yadav said that around 97 square kilometres of Aravalli revenue land, stretching from Naurangpur to Nuh in Haryana and heavily degraded land, has been identified for afforestation and has also been declared a protected forest by Haryana for better protection and management.

The Minister described it as a major policy intervention to protect and afforest the Aravallis after Independence.

Highlighting the ecological and historical importance of the region, Yadav said the Aravallis are the country's oldest mountain range and have sheltered

human civilisation for thousands of years.

"The Aravalli ecosystem is protected by four tiger reserves and 18 protected areas, while additional green interventions are being undertaken wherever required. India has taken global leadership in wildlife conservation and the country is home to five of the world's seven big cat species and nearly 70 per cent of the global tiger population, which continues to grow," he said.

The conference brought together policymakers, forest officials, experts, practitioners and civil society representatives to deliberate on the ecological significance of the Aravalli range and pathways for its restoration.

Yadav also released a report titled "Eco-restoration of the Aravalli Landscape," prepared by the Sankala Foundation, during the inaugural session.

# Trump says, anything less than having Greenland in US' hands 'unacceptable'

NUUK (Greenland), Jan 14 (AP)

PRESIDENT Donald Trump said Wednesday that NATO should help the US acquire Greenland and anything less than American control is unacceptable, hours before Vice President J D Vance was to host Danish and Greenlandic officials for talks.

In a post on his social media site, Trump reiterated his argument that the US "needs Greenland for the purpose of National Security." He added that "NATO should be leading the way for us to get it" and that otherwise Russia or China would — "AND THAT IS NOT GOING TO HAPPEN!"

"NATO becomes far more formidable and effective with

Greenland in the hands of the UNITED STATES," Trump wrote. "Anything less than that is unacceptable."

Greenland, a semiautonomous territory of NATO ally Denmark, is at the centre of a geopolitical storm as Trump insists he wants to own it — and residents of its capital,



Nuuk, say it isn't for sale. The White House hasn't ruled out taking the Arctic island by force.

Vance is to meet Denmark's Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen and his Greenlandic counterpart Vivian Motzfeldt in Washington later Wednesday to discuss

Greenland.

Along the narrow, snow-covered main street in Nuuk, international journalists and camera crews have been stopping passersby every few metres asking them for their thoughts on a crisis which Denmark's Prime Minister has warned could potentially trigger the end of NATO.

JAMMU, Jan 14 (PTI)

INDIAN Army troops opened fire to take down multiple suspected Pakistani drones that entered Indian territory from across LoC in the Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday evening, army officials said in Jammu.

However, the drones briefly hovered in the Manjakote sector before returning to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), officials said. The fresh drone sightings came as Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi said that the Indian Army

on Tuesday strongly raised with Pakistan's Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) about sightings of Pakistani drones along the border areas in the Jammu Sector in the last three days. Defence sources said that

the Indian Army implemented counter-Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) measures after drones were spotted along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir. Around 7 pm, troops fired upon a few Pakistani drones

when they entered Indian territory over Dunga Gala in the Chingus area of Rajouri. The drones subsequently vanished and are believed to have retreated to the other side, officials said. Officials noted that army per-

sonnel detected the movement of two drone-like objects over the forward Dheri Dhara village around 7.35 pm and fired several live rounds to target them. However, the suspected drones moved toward Kalali

before returning, officials said, adding that a search operation was initiated to ensure no weapons or narcotics were air-dropped by the drones. On Sunday, troops guarding the Nowshera sector fired medium and light machine guns after observing drone activity over Gania-Kalsian village.

## Army opens fire on Pak drones along LoC in J&K

# Leave Iran: Delhi asks Indian nationals

NEW DELHI, Jan 14 (PTI)

**INDIA** on Wednesday asked all its nationals residing in Iran to leave by available means and avoid any travel to the country as tensions mounted over possible military intervention by the US over Tehran's crackdown on nationwide protests that killed over 2,500 people.

In a fresh advisory, the Indian embassy in Tehran urged all Indians, including students, pilgrims, business persons and tourists, to leave Iran by available means of transport, including commercial flights.



Protesters in Zuerich, Switzerland demonstrate in support of anti-government protest in Iran on Tuesday.

(AP/PTI)

According to estimates, a little over 10,000 Indians, *(Contd on page 5)*

## Iran to execute 26-year-old protester; family given 10 minutes for final goodbye

NEW DELHI, Jan 14 (IANS)

**A 26-YEAR-OLD** Iranian protester detained during nationwide anti-Khamenei demonstrations is scheduled to be executed on Wednesday, in a case that has sparked international alarm and renewed concerns over Iran's use of capital punishment to suppress dissent.

*(Contd on page 5)*