

# First time since Fukushima, Japan restarts N-plant

**Kariwa:** The world's biggest nuclear power plant was restarted Wednesday for the first time since the 2011 Fukushima disaster, its Japanese operator said, despite persistent safety concerns among residents. The plant was "started at 19:02" (1002 GMT), Tokyo Electric Power Company spokesman Tatsuya Matoba said of the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant in Niigata prefecture. The regional governor approved the resumption last month, although public opinion remains sharply divided.

On Tuesday, a few dozen protesters braved freezing temperatures to demonstrate in the snow near the plant's entrance, whose buildings line the Sea of Japan coast. Residents raised concerns about the risk of a serious accident, citing frequent cover-up scandals, minor accidents and evacuation plans they say are inadequate.

TEPCO said on Wednesday it would "proceed with careful verification of each plant facility's integrity". AFP

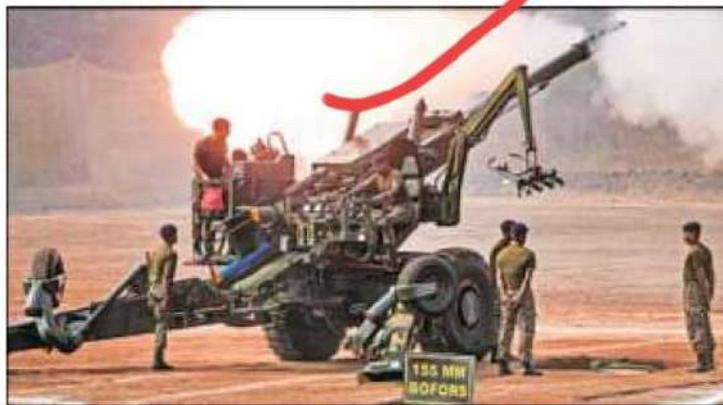
# BOOMING GUNS, HOVERING DRONES: Army's Regiment of Artillery puts up spectacular show of firepower

NASHIK, Jan 21 (PTI)

THE K-9 Vajra and M777 Ultra Light Howitzer breathed fire, even as several other guns, including indigenously manufactured artillery systems, went blazing. With the ear-shattering sound of booming long-range weapons that literally shook the ground, the Regiment of Artillery on Wednesday showcased the Indian Army's ammunition prowess during its annual drill, 'Exercise TOPCHI'.

The event highlighted the seamless integration of advanced firepower and surveillance technologies, including guns, mortars, rockets, drones and aviation assets.

Many of these assets were used in a range of offensives, including Operation Sindoor, according to the commentary during the drill, which was conducted



Indian Army soldiers operate a 155mm Bofors artillery gun during 'Exercise Topchi 2026', at Deolali in Nashik on Wednesday. (PTI)

at the School of Artillery, Deolali Field Firing Ranges, in Maharashtra's Nashik district. The K-9 Vajra Self-Propelled Gun, M777 Ultra Light Howitzer, 155 mm FH77802 (Bofors), Soltam, Dhanush, 105 mm Indian Field gun, Light Field Gun, 120 mm

Mortar, GRAD BM 21 and Pinaka Multiple Rocket Launcher mesmerised the audience with their firepower. For the first time, "Gun Dets" from the Border Security Force (BSF), and Indian Navy sailors with drones participated in the annual event.

Troopers from the Indian Army's Parachute Regiment, along with paramotors and hang-gliders, showcased their abilities during the exercise. This mega event was organised under the leadership of Lieutenant General Navneet Singh Sarna, Commandant, School of Artillery, and Colonel Commandant of Regiment of Artillery. The chief guest of the event was Lieutenant General Manish Erry, Commandant, Defence Services Staff College, Wellington. "The exercise served as a powerful testament to the professionalism and operational excellence of the Indian Artillery.

It underscores operational preparedness, technological advancement, and the emphasis on indigenous defence manufacturing, reflecting India's focus on self-reliance and modernisation," Sarna said.

# Illegal mining in Aravallis can lead to irreversible damage: SC

NEW DELHI, Jan 21 (PTI)

OBSERVING that illegal mining can lead to irreversible damage, the Supreme Court on Wednesday said it will constitute an expert committee comprising domain experts to undertake an exhaustive and holistic examination of mining and related issues in the Aravallis.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kanti and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi directed Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhat, amicus curiae K Parameshwar, to suggest in four weeks the names of environmentalists and scientists who have expertise in mining so that an expert body can be



## To constitute expert body to look into the aspects on Aravallis

constituted to look into the aspects. The committee will work under the direction and supervision of this court, the bench said.

The apex court also extended its order, which kept in abeyance its November 20 directions that

accepted a uniform definition of Aravallis hills and ranges.

During the hearing, the apex court was informed that illegal mining is taking place in scattered places, and the bench took on record assurance of Additional

Solicitor General K M Nataraj, appearing for the Rajasthan Government, that no such unauthorised mining shall take place.

Amid a row over the definition of the Aravalli hills approved by it, the apex court had taken suo

motu cognisance of the issue titled as 'In Re: Definition of Aravalli Hills and Ranges and Ancillary Issues'.

Amid the outcry over the new definition of Aravallis, the top court on December 29 last year had kept in abeyance its November 20 directions that accepted a uniform definition of these hills and ranges, saying there is a need to resolve "critical ambiguities" including whether the 100-metre elevation and the 500-metre gap between hills criteria will strip significant portion of the range of environment protection.

The top court had on November 20 accepted a uniform definition of the Aravalli Hills and ranges and banned the grant of fresh mining

leases inside its areas spanning Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat until experts' reports are out.

It had accepted the recommendations of a committee of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on the definition of the Aravalli Hills and ranges to protect the world's oldest mountain system.

The committee had recommended that "Aravalli Hill" be defined as any landform in designated Aravalli districts with an elevation of 100 metres or more above its local relief, and an "Aravalli Range" will be a collection of two or more such hills within 500 metres of each other.

# Atal Pension Yojana to continue till 2030-31

■ Delhi Bureau and Agencies

NEW DELHI, Jan 21

THE Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday approved the continuation of the Atal Pension Yojana (APY) up to the financial year 2030-31 along with extension of funding support for promotional and developmental activities and gap funding.

"The scheme will continue up to 2030-31 with Government support for Promotional and Developmental activities to expand outreach among unorganised workers, including awareness and capacity building. Gap funding to meet viability requirements and ensure sustainability of the scheme," according to a statement issued by the Finance Ministry

The APY scheme ensures old-age income security for millions of low-income and unorganised sector workers.

It aims to enhance financial inclusion and supports India's transition to a pensioned society. The scheme also strengthens the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047 by providing sustainable social security, the statement said.

The APY scheme was launched

on May 9, 2015, to provide old-age income security to workers in the unorganised sector. The scheme offers a guaranteed minimum pension of Rs 1,000 to Rs 5,000 per month, starting at age 60, based on contributions.

As of January 19, 2026, over 8.66 crore subscribers have been enrolled, making APY a cornerstone of India's inclusive social security framework.

Sustained Government support is essential for continued awareness, capacity building, and bridging of viability gaps to ensure the scheme's sustainability, the statement explained.

According to APY data, around 70.44 per cent of the total enrolments in the scheme have been done by public-sector banks, 19.80 per cent by regional rural banks, 6.18 per cent by private sector banks, 0.37 per cent by payment banks, 0.62 per cent by small finance banks and 2.39 per cent by cooperative banks.

The Government pension scheme achieved a growth of 24 per cent in gross enrolments at the end of FY 23-24 and is rap-

idly gaining popularity.

## Rs 5,000 crore equity support approved for SIDBI

THE Union Cabinet approved equity support of Rs 5,000 crore to Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).

"The equity capital of Rs 5,000 crore shall be infused into SIDBI by the Department of Financial Services (DFS) in three tranches of Rs 3,000 crore in financial year 2025-26 at the book value of Rs 568.65 as on March 31, 2025 and Rs 1,000 crore each in financial years 2026-27 and 2027-28 at the book value as on March 31 of the respective previous financial years," according to a Finance Ministry statement.

After equity capital infusion of Rs 5,000 crore, the number of MSMEs to be provided financial assistance is expected to increase from 76.26 lakh at the end of the financial year 2025 to 102 lakh, adding approximately 25.74 lakh new MSME beneficiaries by the

end of the financial year 2028.

According to the latest data (as on September 30, 2025) available from the official website of the Ministry of MSME, employment for 3016 crore people has been generated by 6.90 crore MSMEs. This works out to an employment generation of 4.37 persons per MSME. Considering this average, employment generation is estimated to be 1.12 crore with the expected addition of 25.74 lakh new MSME beneficiaries by the end of the financial year 2027-28, the statement explained. With a focus on directed credit and anticipated growth in that portfolio over the next five years, the risk-weighted assets on SIDBI's balance sheet are expected to rise significantly. This increase will necessitate higher capital to sustain the same level of Capital to Risk-weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR).

The digital and digitally-enabled collateral-free credit products being developed by SIDBI, aimed at boosting credit flow, along with the venture debt being offered to startups, will further escalate the risk-weighted assets, requiring even more capital to meet healthy CRAR, the statement said.

# EU parliament freezes US trade deal approval over Greenland

A trade deal between the US and EU is on hold after the European parliament decided to freeze a ratification vote in response to Trump's threats to seize Greenland. The parliament's trade committee postponed the vote indefinitely Wednesday, casting doubt on whether the pact will ever get across the finish line.

The deal has been swept into the deepening crisis between the EU and US over Greenland, which has brought the transatlantic alliance to the brink of rupture. Trump is currently vowing to slap tariffs on several European countries until he is allowed to buy the island, a Danish territory.

"By threatening the territorial integrity and sovereignty of an EU member state and by using tariffs as a coercive instrument, the US is undermining the stability and predictability of EU-US trade relations," said Bernd Lange, chair of parliament's trade committee, in a statement. "We have been left with no alternative but to suspend work" on the trade agreement, Lange added, "until the US decides to re-engage on a path of cooperation rather than confrontation."

The tariff threat, which Trump made over the weekend, prompted EU lawmakers to reconsider their expected ratification vote on the US trade deal, which was struck last July. The deal set a 15% tariff on most EU goods in exchange for a pledge to erase all tariffs on US industrial goods and some agricultural products. The agreement was partially implemented but still needs parliament's approval to be finalised. BLOOMBERG



**“By threatening the territorial integrity and sovereignty of an EU member state and by using tariffs as a coercive instrument, the US is undermining the stability and predictability of EU-US trade relations**

**BERND LANGE**

Chair, EU Parliament Trade Panel

## Trump mocks Macron sunglasses

US President Trump mocked French President Macron on Wednesday for the aviator sunglasses he was wearing during his own speech at Davos



the day before. "I watched him yesterday, with those beautiful sunglasses. What the hell happened?"

Trump said. Macron's office has said the choice to wear the dark, reflective sunglasses during his speech, which took place indoors, was to protect his eyes because of a burst blood vessel. Memes flourished across the internet after Macron's speech, some praising him for sporting a "Top Gun" look as he criticised Trump over Greenland, some criticising him. REUTERS

## Starmer says UK will not yield to pressure from US on Greenland

London: British PM Keir Starmer said he would not yield to Donald Trump on his opposition to US demands to acquire Greenland, adding that the US president had reversed his prior support for a Chagos Islands deal to put pressure on Britain. Starmer has sought close ties with Trump in order



to preserve trade and security ties, but in some of his sharpest criticism of Trump, Starmer said he would

not be bullied into changing his view that the future of Greenland should be decided by its people and by Denmark. "I will not yield, Britain will not yield, on our principles and values about the future of Greenland under threats of tariffs, and that is my clear position," Starmer told lawmakers.

## 'Foolhardy' to rip up relationship with US

In response to questions from lawmakers urging Starmer to go further in standing against Trump, Starmer said it was still important to work with the US. "That does not mean we agree with the US on everything," he said. "But it is foolhardy to think that we should rip up our ties with the US, abandon Ukraine and so many other things that are important to our defence." REUTERS

# Give up Greenland or else... Trump tells Europe and Nato

'Will Appreciate  
If It's Yes, Will  
Remember If No'

President Donald Trump upped the pressure on Europe to cede control of Greenland or face the consequences, saying Nato owes it to the US to grant it full rights to the Arctic island.

In a speech to WEF in Davos on Wednesday after prompting days of transatlantic tensions over his plans, Trump said that he was see-

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king "immediate negotiations" on acquiring the sovereign Danish territory for national security reasons.

The president ruled out the use of military force, but he insinuated that he would weigh Europe's response to

**'GREAT RESPECT FOR MODI, WILL HAVE GOOD TRADE DEAL'**

“I have great respect for your (India's) Prime Minister. He's a fantastic man and a friend of mine. We are going to have a good deal”

**On Greenland:** We want a piece of ice for world protection, and they won't give it... This enormous unsecured island is actually part of North America. That's our territory

**On Ukraine war:** I believe they're at a point now where they can come together and get a deal done. And if they don't, they're stupid

**On Switzerland:** A majority of the money they make is because of us, because we never charge them anything; **On Europe:** I love Europe, and I want to see Europe go good, but it's not heading in the right direction

**On PM Carney:** Canada lives because of the US. Remember that, Mark, the next time you make your statements



► European Parliament suspends work on a trade deal between EU and US following Trump's repeated requests over Greenland

► UN chief Antonio Guterres shoots a warning: 'When leaders run roughshod over international law, choosing which rules to follow — they are undermining global order, setting a perilous precedent'

► Norway, Germany, Sweden, France and Italy refuse to join Trump's Board of Peace for Gaza. China wary

► Canada PM Mark Carney says, 'In a world of great power rivalry, the countries in between have a choice: compete with each other for favour or combine to create a third path... the middle powers must act together because if we're not at the table, we're on the menu'

his demands when considering the US commitment to Nato going forward. "You can say yes, and we will be very appreciative, or you can say no, and we will remember," the president said. Denmark's immediate reaction was "no".

"We will not enter into any negotiations on the basis of giving up fundamental principles," Danish foreign minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen said. "That is something we will never do." It "goes without saying" that Danes reject

ceding Greenland, he added.

Trump, though, cast the request as a "small ask" compared to the defence shield that US has offered Nato countries for decades. **BLOOMBERG**

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