

# Stable policy environment, reforms driving India's growth: Consul General in Shanghai

BEIJING, Jan 23 (PTI)

A STABLE policy environment and a predictable, reform-oriented investment climate have ensured India's emergence as the world's fastest-growing major economy in recent times, Consul General in Shanghai Pratik Mathur said on Friday.

Speaking at the 11th Edition of the Shanghai International Business Cooperation Forum, Mathur highlighted initiatives like Make in India and Digital India as important drivers of New Delhi's rise through the global rankings, the Consulate said in

a post on X. He spoke at length about the increasing global interest in the upcoming AI Impact

Summit 2026, which India will host on February 19-20, focusing on the principles of 'People,

Planet, and Progress'. Mathur also spoke about India's Global South-oriented, people-centric, and inclusive AI policies, such as Bhashini, which have boosted the nation's ability to foster the world's largest startup ecosystem, with over 1,00,000 startups.

The Government's Bhashini AI platform allows translation of text, numbers, voice, images, and videos in a secure cloud environment. The Consul General added that in the process, India also ensured growth of unicorns in fintech, deep-tech, green technology and other new and emerging sectors.



# Japan's PM Takaichi dissolves Parliament, sets up early election

TOKYO, Jan 23 (AP)

JAPANESE Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi dissolved the Lower house of Parliament on Friday, paving the way for an early election on February 8.

The move is an attempt to capitalise on her popularity to help the governing party regain ground after major losses in recent years, but it will delay parliamentary approval for a budget that aims at boosting a struggling economy and addressing soaring prices.

Takaichi, elected in October as Japan's first female leader, has been in office only three months, but she has seen strong approval ratings of about 70 per cent.

Takaichi's Liberal Democratic Party could still face some challenges as it reels from a series of scandals about corruption and

the party's past ties to the Unification Church. But it's not clear if the new Opposition Centrist Reform Alliance can attract moderate voters, while Opposition parties are still too splintered to pose a serious threat to the LDP. Takaichi is also seeing rising animosity with China since making remarks on Taiwan. And US President



Sanae Takaichi

Donald Trump wants her to spend more on weapons, as Washington and Beijing pursue military superiority in the region.

The dissolution of the 465-member Lower House of Representatives paves the way for a 12-day campaign that officially starts Tuesday. When Speaker Fukushima Nukaga declared the dissolution, lawmakers stood up, shouted *banzai* — “long live” — three times and rushed out to prepare for the campaign.

# Trump withdraws invitation for Canada to join Gaza Board of Peace

Canada had severely criticised Trump's policies at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

WASHINGTON DC, Jan 23 (ANI)

US President Donald Trump on Friday withdrew the invitation from Canada to join the Board of Peace. In what appeared to be a curt post on Truth Social on Friday, Trump reiterated his stance of calling it the "most prestigious board" to ever be assembled.

He said, "Dear Prime Minister Carney: Please let this Letter serve to represent that the Board of Peace is withdrawing its invitation to you regarding Canada's joining, what will be, the most prestigious Board of Leaders ever assembled, at any time. Thank you for your attention to this matter!" The development follows after US President Donald Trump on Thursday signed the charter to formally launch his "Board of Peace" initiative at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, describing it as a major step towards global conflict resolution.

On Tuesday, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney warned that the world is witnessing a fundamental "rupture" in the global order rather than a gradual



US President Donald Trump speaks with reporters aboard Air Force One after leaving the World Economic Forum in Davos for Washington on Thursday. (AP/PTI)

## Canadian PM rejects Trump's claim of US dependence

OTTAWA, Jan 23 (IANS)

CANADIAN Prime Minister Mark Carney rejected US President Donald Trump's claim that Canada relies on the United States for its exis-



Mark Carney

tence.

Speaking in Quebec City, Carney emphasised Ottawa's sovereignty and addressed Trump's comments after returning from Switzerland.

"Canada and the

United States have built a remarkable partnership. In the economy, in security and in rich cultural exchange," Carney said. "But Canada doesn't live because of the United States. Canada thrives because we are Canadian."

ual transition, cautioning against weaponising trade, finance, and supply chains. In his address at the WEF, Carney opposed tariff coercion in a veiled reference to

Washington --including measures linked to Greenland--and urged renewed multilateral engagement to safeguard sovereignty, stability and prosperity.

He noted that the era of a stable, rules-based international system had given way to a harsher geopolitical reality marked by great power rivalry.

# IAF's Sarang helicopter team to perform at Singapore Airshow



SINGAPORE, Jan 23 (PTI)

THE Indian Air Force's Sarang helicopter display team will join several renowned military aerobatic teams for their precision flying performances at the Singapore Airshow 2026 early next month, show organisers said on Friday.

"Singapore, we've arrived! The Sarang Helicopter Display Team is gearing up for breathtaking manoeuvres at the Singapore Airshow 2026 at Changi Exhibition Centre. Get ready to look up. This is going to be spectacular!" the Sarang team said in an X post on Thursday.

Others in the helicopter display at the biennial show include the Indonesian Air Force's Jupiter aerobatic team and the People's Liberation Army Air Force's Bayi aerobatic team, organiser Experia Events of Singapore said.

The airshow will be held at the Changi Exhibition Centre on the East Coast of Singapore from February 3 to 9.

It will feature a total of eight aerial displays by six air forces and two commercial aircraft manufacturers.

This edition's flying display line-up brings together a mix of modern combat and commercial aircraft.

Making its debut at airshow is the Royal Australian Air Force's F-35A Lightning II, an advanced fifth-generation fighter aircraft. The Royal Malaysian Air Force's Sukhoi Su-30MKM fighter jet will again be performing at the show this year, having done so in the 2016 and 2018 editions, the organiser said.

# India, EU to chart global course at next week's summit

NEW DELHI, Jan 23 (PTI)

THE India-European Union summit next week will see both sides projecting global leadership to address pressing challenges in critical areas of trade, defence and supply chains in the context of the turbulent geopolitical environment, European officials said on Friday.

President of the European Council, Antonio Costa, and President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, will hold summit talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on January 27 against the backdrop of increasing global concerns over disruptions

caused by the Trump administration's economic and security policies. The two sides are set to announce the conclusion of the much-awaited free trade agreement, firm up a strategic defence partnership pact and a framework for mobility of Indian professionals at the summit.

Costa and Leyen will grace the Republic Day celebrations as chief guests on January 26.

"We are looking at a summit with clear messages from two global actors -- the two biggest democracies in the world; we will come together, show leadership on global issues," the officials said. The broad focus of the sum-

mit will be on trade, defence and security, and climate change, and more importantly, to strengthen the rules-based global order, they added. "We are expecting high-profile deliverables from the summit. Our strengths are complementary in trade, talent, technology, and, importantly, we see each other as reliable partners. So closer cooperation is not just logical, but it's necessary," said one of the officials.

The officials said India's interest in working more closely with Europe has been growing steadily, and there is political will on both sides to expand the overall trajectory of the relations. "We don't see eye-

to-eye on everything,

but we do share a core set of interests which include having a stable international order," they noted, adding the summit will also be an opportunity to discuss with India "Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine". President Costa will reiterate the message that this war represents an existential threat for Europe and poses a direct challenge to the rules-based international order, and that it has clear consequences also in the Indo-Pacific, they noted.

"We are aware of India's historic relationship with Russia, and in this context, it is important to encourage India to use its leverage in this regard towards the peace efforts," the officials said.

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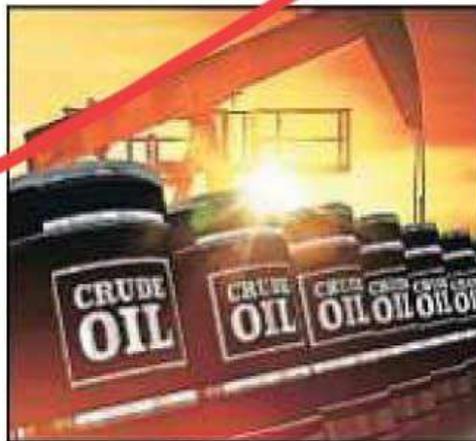
# Global energy markets stable despite geopolitical turmoil: Oil Minister Puri

NEW DELHI, Jan 23 (PTI)

GLOBAL energy markets remain stable with enough supplies to meet demand despite geopolitical upheavals, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Friday as he pitched for both producers and consumers playing a constructive role to ensure a viable and predictable market.

Refusing to be drawn into assessment of crude oil supplies from countries such as Russia or Venezuela, he said extremely low and high prices hurt both producers and consumers, and it was in the overall interest to have a stable and predictable regime.

"The world (in the last one year) has become more exciting, in some ways it has become more challenging. This is challenging in spite of the fact that there is no shortage of energy globally. But there are certain other fac-



tors," Puri said, describing the environment as "rapidly expanding and rapidly changing".

Talking to reporters about the India Energy Week starting in Goa on January 27, he said India has diversified its energy sourcing strategy, with the country now buying crude oil - which is processed in refineries and turned into fuels like petrol and diesel - from 41 countries, up from 27, allowing market dynamics to guide key decisions.

"It also means sometimes navigating through difficult scenarios. We have new suppliers," he said, referring to new supplies coming from countries like Guyana and Suriname.

Without naming Russia, he said, "Before February 2022, we had negligible supplies (coming) from one source and then it suddenly went up, went up quite a bit and now it is moderating a little (and in all this) market is a determinant".

India became a big buyer of Russian oil once it was available at a discount, following some countries in Europe and the West shunning it as a means to punish Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine. Russian oil accounted for about 40 per cent of India's oil imports, but a new wave of US sanctions against Russian suppliers has led to a tapering off of purchases.

# Lt Colonel Seeta Ashok Shelke to be honoured for work during 2024 Wayanad landslides

NEW DELHI, Jan 23 (PTI)

LIEUTENANT Colonel Seeta Ashok Shelke of Indian Army, who ran several high-risk rescue missions under adverse weather conditions in Kerala's Wayanad during the 2024 floods and landslides, has been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2026 in individual category.

The Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority (SSDMA) has won the award in the institutional category for significantly strengthening disaster preparedness and response by deploying 1,185 trained Aapda Mitras as disaster management officials since its inception in 2005, a Government statement said on Friday. The nominations for the award were solicited from May 1, 2025 onwards. In response, 271 nominations were received from institutions and individuals.

Lt Col Shelke was chosen for running large-scale Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations in Wayanad.

During the floods and landslides in 2024, Shelke supervised con-



Inset pic of Lt Col Seeta Ashok Shelke and her pic during rescue operation in Wayanad.

struction of a 190-foot Bailey Bridge at Chooralmala, within four hours in night restoring vital connectivity to remote villages.

She used innovative engineering solutions such as using a Komatsu PC210 excavator as a counterweight to build the footover bridge. Using Corps of Engineers skills, she enabled quick construction of bridges, access routes, and shelters in remote dis-

aster-hit areas, supporting relief and recovery. "She coordinated with civil authorities and local leaders to ensure rapid evacuation, relief distribution, and restoration of essential services. Lieutenant Colonel Seeta Ashok Shelke directed multiple high-risk rescue missions under adverse weather conditions, saving hundreds of civilians," the statement said. By mobilising 150 tonnes of

equipment, Shelke led operations that benefited thousands through timely relief and recovery efforts, it said. The officer trained over 2,300 personnel in disaster response and humanitarian operations and brought disaster risk reduction (DRR) into action through her engineering service, it said. "Her work reflects practical leadership and the growing role of women in operational DRR," it said. Established in 2005, the SSDMA was chosen for the award for strengthening disaster preparedness and response in the state. SSDMA deployed 1,185 trained Aapda Mitras as Disaster Management officials in three tiers at village level, at block headquarters, and at district headquarters.

With disaster management assistants posted in all gram panchayats, participatory planning, capacity-building initiatives, and panchayat-level committees have enhanced resilience to disasters and climate risks across all six districts, the statement said. "During critical events such as the 2016 Mantam landslide and the 2023 Teesta floods, SSDMA's real-time

coordination and trained first responders enabled the rescue of 2,563 people and reduced loss of life and damage," it said. The Authority institutionalised a proactive, community-centred disaster risk reduction approach and created a sustainable, scalable, and replicable model of community-centred disaster resilience, particularly relevant for other Himalayan and North Eastern states, it said.

The Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar has been set up by the government to recognise and honour invaluable contribution and selfless service rendered by individuals and organisations in India in the field of disaster management, the statement said.

"Under the guidance of Amit Shah, the country has significantly improved its disaster management practices, preparedness, mitigation and response mechanisms resulting in significant reduction in mortalities during natural disasters," it said.

The award is announced every year on January 23, the birth anniversary of Bose.

# ONE IN INDIA

# WEF to launch 5 new centres for 4th Industrial Revolution

■ By Barun Jha  
DAVOS, Jan 23 (PTI)

THE World Economic Forum has decided to establish five new Centres for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, including one in India's Andhra Pradesh.

Two such centres are already there in India -- one in Mumbai and the other in Telangana.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution Network is a platform for multi-stakeholder collaboration, bringing together public and private sectors to help ensure emerging technologies deliver benefits for society while minimising risks.

Launched by the WEF in 2017, the network brings together independent national and thematic centres across Europe, the Middle East, Asia and the Americas to advance the responsible development and application of exponential technologies.

Besides Andhra Pradesh, the other new centres will be in France, the UK and the UAE.

Each centre will work with governments and industry to deliver practical policy frame-



works and pilots, address regional priorities and advance international cooperation, the WEF said. Focus areas of these centres would include AI innovation, energy transition, cyber resilience and frontier technologies.

They will address regional needs while advancing international dialogue and cooperation. "The launch of five new

Government, the Centre for Energy and Cyber Resilience will promote innovation-led approaches to the energy transition while strengthening cyber resilience across industries.

Through pilots, consultations and knowledge exchange, the centre will develop scalable solutions spanning green energy systems, cybersecurity strategies and workforce develop-

ment, the WEF said.

"This partnership with the WEF echoes our commitment to building capacity where the

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world is most fragile: energy  
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## India emerges as major AI force: IMF

NEW DELHI, Jan 23 (IANS)

INDIA is emerging as one of the world's major forces in Artificial Intelligence (AI), supported by strong reforms, digital public infrastructure, and a skilled technology workforce, said Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, at World Economic Forum.

The IMF MD pointed to

India's rapidly built digital public infrastructure and deep pool of IT-skilled labour as major strengths, NDTV Profit reported.



Georgieva

Georgieva said the IMF holds India in high regard for the pace and quality of its recent economic reforms.

When asked about comments by Ashwini Vaishnaw, Georgieva said that the Fund believes India's prospects in AI are "remarkable".



Centres for the Fourth Industrial Revolution reflects the value of bringing governments, industry and experts together around shared technology challenges," WEF President and CEO Borge Brende said. "By contributing local and regional insights, partners strengthen a global effort to advance emerging technologies responsibly," he added.

Established in partnership with the Andhra Pradesh

## India seen as growth anchor: CII chief

DAVOS, Jan 23 (PTI)

AS THE World Economic Forum Annual Meeting drew to a close, apex industry body CII said on Friday India was cited as a long-term reliable growth anchor amid geopolitical concerns hogging the discussions.



Banerjee

CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee told PTI that the mood at Davos could be best described

as cautiously optimistic and strategically focused.

"Geopolitics clearly shaped the backdrop, but it didn't crowd out the economic agenda, rather it sharpened it. Leaders and investors used the moment to rethink supply chain resilience, trade diversification, and capital allocation toward economies that offer stability, scale, and policy predictability," he said.

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