

BTA unlocks \$30 trillion US market for India's exports

NEW DELHI, Feb 9 (IANS)

THE India-US Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) marks a major milestone in India's global trade engagement, securing sustained preferential access for exports in the US market valued at over \$30 trillion, according to an official statement issued on



Monday. The agreement delivers comprehensive tariff rationalisation, zero-duty access across large product cate-

gories, enhanced digital and technology cooperation, and a carefully calibrated framework to safeguard India's farmers, MSMEs and domestic industry.

With India's total exports to the United States standing at \$86.35 billion in 2024, the agreement significantly enhances competitive access

across key sectors including textiles, leather, gems and jewellery, agriculture, machinery, home decor, pharmaceuticals and technology-driven industries.

Under the agreement, tariffs on \$30.94 billion worth of these exports have been reduced from 50 per cent to
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Gold, silver prices jump as US dollar weakens

MUMBAI, Feb 9 (IANS)

GOLD and silver prices surged sharply on Monday due to a weaker US dollar and persistent geopolitical uncertainties.

MCX gold February futures jumped 1.31 per cent to Rs 1,57,484 per 10 grams around 10.45 am on an intraday basis.



Meanwhile MCX silver March futures climbed 4.81 per cent to Rs 2,61,900 per kg.

On the MCX, silver prices, earlier in the day, had jumped as much as 6 per cent to its day's high of Rs 2,64,885 per kg before a round of profit booking.

The US dollar touched its lowest level since February 4, making greenback-priced metals cheaper for overseas

buyers.

Even as Iran's top diplomat called US-Iran nuclear talks a "good start" on Friday, Tehran has reiterated that the country would retain its right to enrich uranium.

Experts anticipate that geopolitical tensions may
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India announces \$175 million economic package to Seychelles



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with President of Seychelles Patrick Herminie prior to their meeting at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Monday. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Feb 9 (PTI)

INDIA on Monday announced USD 175 million as development

assistance to Seychelles after Prime Minister Narendra Modi held wide-ranging talks with the island nation's President Patrick Herminie. The two sides also agreed on a broad vision to expand cooperation in areas of sustainability, trade and economy and security. Herminie is on a six-day visit to India.

Seychelles is a key maritime neighbour for India in the Indian Ocean Region.

"India and Seychelles are connected not just by geography, but by history, trust and a shared vision for the future," Modi said in his media statement.

The Prime Minister said the development partnership has been the strong foundation of India-Seychelles relations.

"All our efforts have been based on Seychelles' priorities and needs. Moving forward in this
(Contd on page 5)

Sweden's defence firm SAAB proposes induction of Gripen fighter jet in IAF

SINGAPORE, Feb 9 (PTI)

SWEDEN'S SAAB has proposed to the Indian Government the creation of the world's most advanced aerospace industry, comprising multi-layered design, production and maintenance as well as induction of fighter jet Gripen E.

"In our engagements with the Government of India, we have proposed the creation of the world's most advanced aerospace industry, comprising multi-layered design, production and maintenance," said Mikael Franzen, Chief Marketing Officer, Gripen, and Vice President of Business Area Aeronautics at the Swedish group.

He pointed out that Gripen E is the most modern and cost-effective fighter jet system on the market and could significantly improve Air Power within the Indian Air Force, with world leading sensor and networking capability.

"The highest availability of any fighter gives an unrivalled combat mass to counter any adversary. Gripen will fit perfectly in IAF together with Rafale and Tejas," Franzen said. While the IAF operates Rafale and Tejas fighters, there is a large space for a game changer like Gripen E at two levels: First, a fighter that can be inducted quickly and in large numbers; second, a technology powerhouse that



has already solved the recipe for constant updating, upgrading and incorporation of the latest technology to become the masters of Net Centric Warfare, Electronic Warfare and Kill Chain, he highlighted.

Gripen E not only ticks all the boxes as its rapidly increasing AI capabilities has already put it well ahead of every other fighter aircraft, he elaborated on the jet.

Gripen is the only fighter aircraft with the ability not only to incorporate new technology without significant fleet downtime due to its ability to rapidly qualify and certify new software.

Russia will actively support BRICS agenda presented by Indian chair, says Lavrov

■ By Vinay Shukla

MOSCOW, Feb 9 (PTI)

RUSSIA will actively support India's chairmanship of BRICS with its current agenda, which is "modern, highly-relevant" with an emphasis on counter-terrorism and energy security, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Monday.

India formally assumed on January 1, 2026, the chairmanship of BRICS, a 10-member bloc comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, along with five new members.

"India's chairmanship, in my view, presents a modern, highly relevant agenda that addresses today's challenges while preparing for the future. We will actively support it," Lavrov said in an interview with TV BRICS International Network ahead of



Russian Diplomats' Day, marked on February 10.

The Foreign Minister said that India places particular emphasis on counter-terrorism, which remains highly relevant.

"Terrorist activities are observed in Afghanistan, along its borders, and along the India-Pakistan-Afghanistan corridor, as well as in other hotspots," he said. "This priority is particularly significant for us, espe-

cially as we actively work with India in the UN to advance a global counter-terrorism convention, which is already drafted, although consensus has not yet been reached," Lavrov said.

He added that India's chairmanship also prioritises issues of food and energy security.

"Energy security will be particularly important in the context of actions taken by the Trump administration in the global energy sector. These are practical matters with tangible implications," Lavrov said.

"India also emphasises ICT (Information and Communication Technology) security, which we actively support. In the shortly, India will host an artificial intelligence summit, to which Russia is invited, and we are actively contributing to the agenda," he said.

India, Greece sign agreement to strengthen defence ties

NEW DELHI, Feb 9 (PTI)

INDIA and Greece on Monday signed a Joint Declaration of Intent on strengthening defence industrial cooperation between the countries, which marks a starting point for developing a five-year roadmap for boosting the partnership.

The agreement was inked after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held bilateral talks with Minister of National Defence of the Hellenic Republic, Nikolaos-Georgios Dendias, at the Manekshaw Centre here.

Later in a post on X, Singh also welcomed the announcement from the Greek side that an International Liaison Officer from that country will be positioned at the Information Fusion Center-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), Gurugram, to enhance maritime cooperation between both seafaring nations. "Delighted to meet the



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh receives Greek Defence Minister Nikolaos Georgios S Dendias ahead of a bilateral meeting at the Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi on Monday. (PTI)

Minister National Defence of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Nikolaos-Georgios Dendias in New Delhi today. India and Greece signed

the Joint Declaration of Intent on Strengthening the Bilateral Defence Industrial Cooperation and exchanged the Bilateral

Military Cooperation Plan for the year 2026.

"I welcome the announcement of positioning a Greek International Liaison Officer at Information Fusion Center-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), Gurugram, to enhance maritime cooperation between both seafaring nations," Singh said.

During the meeting, both ministers reiterated that the India-Greece Strategic Partnership is based on "shared values of peace, stability, freedom, and mutual respect". The two countries decided to expand capacity of their respective indigenous defence industries through partnership between India's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and Hellenic defence reforms under 'Agenda 2030', the Defence Ministry said. "A Joint Declaration of Intent on strengthening defence industrial cooperation between India and Greece was signed which is a starting point

for developing a five-year roadmap," it said in a statement.

The two ministers discussed various issues of regional peace and security and acknowledged deepening of their bilateral defence cooperation and strategic ties. A Bilateral Military Cooperation Plan for 2026 was also exchanged, charting the course for military engagements between the armed forces of both countries, it said.

Convergence between both the ancient seafaring nations on various key maritime issues was also highlighted. "The Greek side announced the positioning of a Greek International Liaison Officer at Information Fusion Center-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), Gurugram," it said.

Prior to the meeting, the Greek Defence Minister laid a wreath at the National War Memorial, and paid homage to the bravehearts who made sacrificed their lives in service of the nation.

ISRO identifies site for Chandrayaan-4 Moon landing

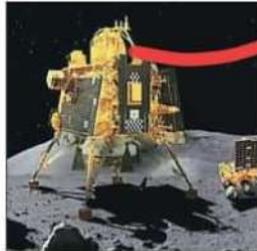
ISRO is targeting 2028 for Chandrayaan-4 mission, says ISRO Chairman V Narayanan

BENGALURU, Feb 9 (PTI)

THE Chandrayaan-4 Mission is at least two years away, but the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has identified a location in the South Polar region of Moon to land its lander.

The Union Government has approved the Chandrayaan-4 mission, designed as a lunar sample-return mission and it will be India's most complex lunar endeavour yet.

"We are targeting 2028 for Chandrayaan-4," ISRO Chairman V



Narayanan had earlier said.

According to ISRO officials, they had zeroed in on four sites of the Mons Mouton (MM) and found one of them suitable for landing on the lunar surface.

Mons Mouton is a region on the Moon.

Officials said they had identified locations -- MM-1, MM-3, MM-4 and MM-5. Of them, MM-4 was chosen for the landing.

"The four sites in Mons Mouton area were fully characterised with respect to terrain characteristics

using high resolution Orbiter High Resolution Camera (OHRC) multi view image datasets," they said.

It was found that one kilometre by one kilometre area around MM-4 contains "the less hazard percentage, mean slope of 5 degrees, mean height of 5334 metres and most number of hazard free grids of size 24 metres into 24 metres. Hence, MM-4 could be considered as the potential site of Chandrayaan-4 mission," officials said.

Chandrayaan-4 consists of a propulsion module (PM), a

Descender module (DM), an Ascender Module (AM), a Transfer module (TM) and a Re-entry Module (RM).

The DM and AM combined stack will soft land on moon surface at the designated site.

The main soft landing will be done by an appropriate stack (AM+DM) descent trajectory with navigation, guidance and control system while the safe landing can be ensured by a proper selection of the landing site that meets all the constraints of the Lander.