

# Waste management capacity expansion key to curb plastic pollution: Ocean Cleanup founder

■ According to a 2024 study published in the journal 'Nature', India is the world's biggest contributor to plastic pollution, accounting for nearly 20 pc of the total global plastic waste.

■ **By Alind Chauhan**  
NEW DELHI, Feb 22 (PTI)

INDIA needs to increase its waste management capacity and ensure that everyone has access to waste disposal to tackle the increasing plastic pollution in the country, said Boyan Slat, founder of The Ocean Cleanup.

The Netherlands-based non-profit organisation that devel-



ops technologies to remove plastic waste from the oceans, last week announced a new initiative to deploy barriers on the Trombay and Malad waterways in Mumbai to stop the flow of plastic waste into the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

The barriers, which will be placed before the arrival of the monsoon season, are expected to collect at least 62 tonnes of plastic waste per year once fully operational.

"While in the long run,

expanding waste management capacity will limit plastic pollution, in the short term, placing barriers will help clean the oceans and coasts. These interceptors will essentially buy cities the time till they fix the disposal problem," Slat told PTI.

According to a 2024 study published in the journal 'Nature', India is the world's biggest contributor to plastic pollution, accounting for nearly 20 pc of the total global plastic waste.

The country generates 9.3 million tonnes of plastic waste annually, of which 3.5 million tonnes are mismanaged and leak into the environment each year, the research has found, the study said.

"Much like other rising economies around the world, India also faces a plastic pollu-

tion problem, as people do not have adequate access to plastic collection systems and end up using rivers to get rid of waste.

"Also, with the rising population, there is a rapid increase in plastic consumption, due to which systems are not able to keep up with waste management," Slat said.

Marine plastic pollution can have several types of impacts. It can threaten food safety and quality, human health, and economic activities such as coastal tourism. The pollution can also severely affect marine ecosystems, damaging, for example, the health of mangroves and coral reefs.

Slat, however, is optimistic about the fact that India will be able to tackle the issue in the following decades.

# 'Global power' India to be part of 'hexagon' of alliances in and around the region: Netanyahu

■ By Harinder Mishra

JERUSALEM, Feb 22 (PTI)

DESCRIBING India as a “global power” and its Prime Minister Narendra Modi a “personal” friend, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday talked about his vision of a “hexagon” of alliances in and around the region that will include India.



“This week, expression will be given to the special relationship that has been forged over recent years between Israel and the global power that is India, and between myself and its leader, Prime Minister Modi”, Netanyahu said at the beginning of the weekly Cabinet meeting.

“We are personal friends; we speak frequently on the phone and visit one another. I have visited India, and Modi has visited here,” the Israeli Prime Minister said.

“We waded together in the waters of the Mediterranean, and much water has flowed since then in the Mediterranean, the Ganges, and the Jordan, though less in the Jordan”, he added in reference to pictures of the two leaders walking barefoot in the sea in 2017 that went viral with talk of “bromance”.

“In any case, one thing has happened: The fabric of this relationship has grown tighter, and he is coming here so we can tighten it further through a series of decisions related to strengthening cooperation between our governments and countries”, the Israeli leader emphasised.

# Indian Air Force's Surya Kiran, Sarang teams perform aerial display in Jaipur

JAIPUR, Feb 22 (PTI)

A LARGE crowd gathered at the iconic Jal Mahal promenade here on Sunday to witness a spectacular aerial display by the Indian Air Force's Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team and Sarang Helicopter Display Team.

Rajasthan Governor Haribhau Bagde and Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma also attended the event.

Praising the courage and technical excellence of the Air Force, Sharma said the event was a matter of pride for Jaipur.

"After the grand Army Day parade, this programme once again proves that Jaipur is fully prepared to host national events of such scale. Such events inspire youth to join the Armed Forces and strengthen the bond



Indian Air Force's (IAF) Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team (SKAT) performs manoeuvres over the Jal Mahal during full dress rehearsal ahead of the Sarang and Surya Kiran Air Show, in Jaipur, Rajasthan. (PTI)

between citizens and the military," the Chief Minister said.

Referring to the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi,

the chief minister said the prestige of the Armed Forces was rising and cited operations such as the Balakot air strike as examples of the Air Force's valour and preparedness.

He said the Air Force not only guards the nation's borders but also emerges as a ray of hope during natural disasters and health emergencies.

The Surya Kiran team performed manoeuvres including inverted runs, barrel rolls, bomb bursts and formations resembling a DNA structure and a heart in the sky, while the Sarang team showcased formations such as arrowhead, dolphin leap, cross-over break and diamond patterns. The pilots greeted spectators with "Khama Ghani" and "Ram-Ram Sa" from the cockpit, drawing loud applause.

# Embraer CEO pledges to make India global manufacturing base for KC-390 aircraft

■ **By Manash Pratim Bhuyan**  
NEW DELHI, Feb 22 (PTI)

BRAZILIAN aerospace giant Embraer on Sunday signalled its readiness to set up a major production hub for its KC-390 Millennium aircraft to support the broader Asia-Pacific market if it wins the Indian Air Force's contract for up to 80 transport planes.

In an exclusive interview to PTI, Embraer's President and CEO Francisco Gomes Neto pitched KC-390 Millennium as the "best" option for India, leveraging a wave of NATO acquisitions to position the plane as the new 'global benchmark' for tactical airlift. By choosing our aircraft, the Indian Air Force will have an alignment with a rapidly expanding, interoperable alliance of modern air forces, he

said as the force intensifies its hunt for a versatile tactical airlifter. Describing the KC-390 as

ket. The Embraer CEO said the company is eyeing to set up an exclusive regional MRO



**The Embraer CEO Francisco Gomes Neto said company is eyeing to set up an exclusive regional MRO (Maintenance, Repair, & Overhaul) hub for KC-390 operators in India**

a much superior multi-mission workhorse, Neto said if awarded the Indian contract, the company will turn India into its primary production hub for aircraft to support the Asia-Pacific mar-

(Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul) hub for KC-390 operators in India while looking at a long-term symbiotic relationship with the country in both defence and civilian aero-

space sectors.

The top executive, highlighting the acquisition of KC-390 by several high-profile NATO member nations, including Sweden, the Netherlands and Portugal, projected the plane as a strategic counter to the legacy dominance of Lockheed Martin's C-130J. Neto said the KC-390 Millennium is a better fit for the future needs of modern airforces as it is a new generation multi-mission transport and aerial refuelling aircraft.

"Our aircraft has been chosen by nine European countries. It's NATO's best choice. We believe that the KC-390 is very well positioned to address the Indian Air Force's requirement," Neto said.

The Embraer President and CEO was in New Delhi as part of Brazilian Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's delegation.

# Republicans divided on Trump's tariffs



Tariffs have been one of the only areas where the Republican-controlled Congress has broken with Trump. Republicans will have to keep answering voters over tariffs as the midterm elections near.

■ **By Stephen Groves**

WASHINGTON, Feb 22 (AP)

**FOR** a few hours on Friday, congressional Republicans seemed to get some relief from one of the largest points of friction they have had with the Trump administration. It didn't last.

The Supreme Court struck down a significant portion of President Donald Trump's global tariff regime, ruling that the power to impose taxes lies with Congress. Many Republicans greeted the Friday morning decision with measured statements, some even praising it, and party leaders said

# PM flags off Meerut Metro, Namo Bharat train



With a design speed of 180 km per hour, Namo Bharat is one of India's fastest train.

■ The Meerut Metro will be India's fastest metro system with a maximum operational speed of around 120 kmph

here, giving a fillip to high-speed intercity travel and swift intra-city movement.

From there, the Prime Minister also undertook a metro ride till Meerut South station.

The Prime Minister dedicated to the nation the entire 82 Km Delhi Meerut Namo Bharat corridor and inaugurated the remaining sections of India's first Namu Bharat Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS), which

## PM inaugurates projects worth Rs 12,930 crore in Meerut

MEERUT (UP), Feb 22 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated development projects worth around Rs 12,930 crore in Meerut and said the BJP's work

culture ensures the timely completion of projects once their foundation is laid.

Addressing a public meeting after flagging off the Meerut Metro and the Namu Bharat

(Contd on page 5)

include the 5 km section between Sarai Kale Khan and New Ashok Nagar in Delhi and the 21 km section between Meerut South and Modipuram in Uttar Pradesh.

With a design speed of 180 km per hour, Namu Bharat is India's first regional rapid transit system. It will connect major urban centres such as Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, Modinagar and Meerut with Delhi at a faster pace. Sarai Kale Khan station,

the originating station of the corridor, is one of the four Namu Bharat stations commissioned with this inauguration.

It is strategically located as a major multi-modal hub, seamlessly connecting Hazrat Nizamuddin railway station, Delhi Metro's pink line, Veer Haqueqat Rai ISBT, and the ring road. The other three Namu Bharat stations --- Shatabdi (Contd on page 5)

MEERUT (UP), Feb 22 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday flagged off the Meerut Metro and Namu Bharat train from the Shatabdi Nagar station