



Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard appears during a Senate Committee on Intelligence Hearing, in Washington, DC



Protesters light their mobile phones during a rally, for the victims of a massive night club fire in the town of Kocani, in Skopje, North Macedonia



CDU leader Friedrich Merz (L), & designated Parl Prez Julia Klöckner attend the constituent session of the newly elected German Parl Bundestag in Berlin, Germany



Afghan labourers with their wheelbarrows wait to transport food supplies distributed during the Islamic holy fasting month of Ramadan, in Kabul

Israeli strikes on Gaza kill 23 people overnight

PTI, DEIR BALAH: Palestinian medics said Israeli strikes killed at least 23 people in the Gaza Strip overnight into Tuesday.

The dead include three children and their parents, who were killed in a strike on their tent near the southern city of Khan Younis, according to Nasser Hospital, which has received a flood of dead and wounded since Israel resumed heavy bombardment of Gaza last week, shattering the ceasefire that had halted the 17-month war.

Israel's campaign in Gaza has killed more than 50,000 Palestinians and wounded more than 113,000, according to the Health Ministry, which does not say how many were civilians or combatants. Israel says



Palestinians fleeing Israeli bombardment drive vehicles carrying their belongings on a main axis in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip

it has killed around 20,000 militants, without providing evidence.

Israel launched the campaign vowing to destroy Hamas after its October 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel, in which militants

killed some 1,200 people and abducted 251.

Israel says it only targets militants and blames Hamas for civilian deaths because it operates in densely populated areas.

Here's the latest: Israeli

strikes in Gaza kill 23 Palestinian medics say Israeli strikes killed at least 23 people in the Gaza Strip overnight into Tuesday.

Nasser Hospital said it received four additional bodies from two other strikes in addition to the family of five.

In central Gaza, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital said it received the bodies of six people who were killed in three separate strikes. Three others were killed in a strike on a house in the built-up Nuseirat refugee camp, according to the Awda Hospital.

In Gaza City, an Israeli strike on a residential building killed 5 people, according to the Health Ministry's emergency service. Another 12 people were wounded, it said.

Isle of Man to legalise assisted dying

AFP, LONDON: The Isle of Man is set to become the first place in the British Isles to legalise assisted dying after clearing a final hurdle.

Lawmakers on the island, a self-governing British dependency lying between England and Ireland, approved a final reading of the assisted dying bill in its upper house.

It now only needs royal assent to become law.

Lawmaker Alex Allinson, who introduced the bill, was hopeful that it could become law later this year.

The bill allows terminally ill adults, with less than a year to live and who have been resident on the island for five years to end their lives.

ARTFUL DELUSIONS



Artist Sir Grayson Perry poses in front of one of his artworks on display at his exhibition called Grayson Perry: Delusions of Grandeur which includes ceramics, tapestries, furniture and collage at The Wallace Collection in London

India has intent and capability to interfere in election: Canadian intelligence officer

PTI, OTTAWA: India has the "intent and capability" to interfere in Canadian communities and democratic processes, a media report said quoting a top Canadian intelligence officer.

Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) deputy director Vanessa Lloyd also claimed that China, Russia and Pakistan too could interfere in the federal election campaign.

Lloyd was addressing a media briefing Monday on efforts to protect the integrity of the general election, voting for which takes place on April 28.

"We have also seen that the government of India has the intent and capability to interfere in Canadian communities and democratic processes to assert its geopolitical influence,"

Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) deputy director Vanessa Lloyd claimed that China, Russia and Pakistan too could interfere in the federal election campaign. Lloyd was addressing a media briefing Monday on efforts to protect the integrity of the general election, voting for which takes place on April 28

Lloyd said, according to CTV News.

Under a federal protocol introduced in 2019, the news channel said, a panel of bureaucrats has the power to warn the public if it decides one or more incidents threaten Canada's ability to hold a free and fair vote.

The panel receives regular updates from the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections Task Force, which is chaired by Lloyd.

Most threat actors "likely have adapted their trade-craft to conceal foreign in-

terference activity, making it even more challenging to detect," she said.

Lloyd said China is highly likely to use tools enabled by artificial intelligence (AI) to interfere in the federal election campaign and "highly likely to turn to social media to promote narratives favourable to its interests," the news channel said.

This would be done to specifically target Chinese ethnic, cultural and religious communities in Canada using deceptive means, it said.

Lloyd also alleged that Russia has tried to build "dissemination networks" across social media and news websites that amplify Kremlin talking points.

"It is possible that Russia will use these online networks to opportunistically conduct foreign information manipulation and interference operations directed at Canadians," CTV News said quoting Lloyd.

Pakistan could also conduct foreign interference activities against Canada in line with its strategic aims, she added.

Meanwhile, quoting unnamed sources, The Globe and Mail alleged Tuesday that agents of India and their proxies meddled in the 2022 election of Pierre Poilievre, a Conservative Party leader.

UN to reduce staff in Gaza, blames Israel for strike that killed its employee

PTI, DEIR BALAH: The United Nations said Monday it will reduce its footprint in the Gaza Strip after an Israeli tank strike hit one of its compounds last week, killing one staffer and wounding five others.

The world body will temporarily remove about a third of its approximately 100 international staffers working in Gaza, UN Secretary-General spokesman Stéphane Dujarric said.

He pointed to the increased danger after Israel relaunched its military campaign last week with bombardment that has since killed hundreds



Women mourn during the funeral for members of the Palestinian Abu al-Rous family who were killed when their house was hit by Israeli bombardment, at the Bureij camp for Palestinian refugees in the central Gaza Strip

of Palestinians. Israel has also cut off all food,

medicine, aid and other supplies to Gaza's popu-

lation for the past three weeks.

Dujarric's statement was the UN's first to point the finger at Israel in the March 19 explosion at the UN guesthouse in central Gaza. He said that based on the information currently available, the strikes on the site were caused by an Israeli tank.

The Israeli military did not immediately comment. Israel has denied it was behind the explosion, which came a day after it shattered Gaza's 2-month-old ceasefire with a surprise bombardment around the Gaza Strip.

businessday



A seller displays an attire, a black embroidered kurta-pyjama, styled according to the one actor Salman Khan dons in song 'Zohra Zabeen' of film Sikander, ahead of the Eid festival, at a shop in Old Delhi, on Tuesday

'DeepSeek narrows China-US AI gap to three months'

BEIJING/HONG KONG: China has narrowed the AI development gap with the United States to just three months in some areas, because firms such as DeepSeek have worked out how to use chips and apply algorithms more efficiently, the CEO of Chinese startup 01.AI Lee Kai-fu said. Lee, a prominent figure in the global artificial intelligence space and a former head of Google China, told Reuters that startup DeepSeek revealed that China had pulled ahead in areas such as infrastructure software engineering DeepSeek shook the global AI industry when it launched an AI reasoning model in January that it said was trained with less advanced chips and was cheaper to develop than its Western rivals. The announcement challenged the assumption that US sanctions were holding back China's AI sector. "Previously I think it was a six to nine month gap and behind in everything. And now I think that's probably three months behind in some of the core technologies, but actually ahead in some specific areas," Lee said in an interview in Hong Kong. Washington's semiconductor sanctions were a "double edged sword" that created short term challenges but also forced Chinese firms to innovate under constraints, he added, pointing out how Chinese companies had developed their algorithms.

voice of business

S&P cuts FY26 GDP growth forecast to 6.5%

PTI, NEW DELHI: S&P Global Ratings on Tuesday cut India's GDP growth projections to 6.5% for the next fiscal as it expects that economies in the APAC region will feel the strain of rising US tariffs and pushback on globalisation.

In its Economic Outlook for Asia-Pacific (APAC), S&P said despite these external strains, it expects domestic demand momentum to remain solid in most emerging-market economies.

"India's GDP will grow 6.5% in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026, we expect. Our forecast is the same as the outcome for the previous fiscal year, but less than our earlier forecast of 6.7%," S&P said.

The forecast assumes that the upcoming monsoon season will be normal and that commodity—especially crude—prices will be soft.

Cooling food inflation, the tax benefits announced in the country's budget for the fiscal year ending March 2026, and lower borrowing costs will support discretionary consumption in India, S&P said.

The global credit rating agency expects central banks in the Asia Pacific region to continue cutting benchmark interest rates through this year.

"The Reserve Bank of India will cut interest rates by another 75 bp-100 bp in the current cycle, we project. Easing food inflation and lower crude prices will move headline inflation closer to the central bank target of 4% in the fiscal year ending March 2026

“The Reserve Bank of India will cut interest rates by another 75 bp-100 bp in the current cycle, we project. Easing food inflation and lower crude prices will move headline inflation closer to the central bank target of 4% in the fiscal year ending March 2026 and fiscal policy is contained” — S&P Global Ratings

and fiscal policy is contained," S&P said.

Last month, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reduced the repo rate by 25 basis points from 6.50% to 6.25% in its monetary policy review.

S&P said Asia-Pacific economies will feel the strain of rising US tariffs specifically and a pushback on globalisation more generally.

However, we see domestic demand momentum broadly holding up, especially in the region's emerging-market economies

"Given the volume of policy measures and external pressures hitting Asia-Pacific, the robustness of our forecasts underscores the resilience of the regional economies," it added.

S&P said that the Donald Trump administration in the US is changing economic policy in key areas.

Domestically, immigration reduction, deregulation and cuts to taxes and government spending are in focus.

Externally, US import tariffs are rising across the board. So far the new US government has

imposed an additional 20% tariff on imports from China; 25% levies on some imports from Canada and Mexico, with levies on other products postponed for a month; and a global 25% tariff on steel and aluminium.

The US has also announced an intention to impose "reciprocal tariffs" and tariffs on cars, semiconductor and pharmaceuticals.

In our view, the import tariffs will lower growth in the US and abroad, and raise US inflation.

"We now expect the US Federal Reserve to cut its policy rate by 25 basis points (bp) only one time in 2025, in the end, and make three such cuts in 2026.

"The heightened uncertainty about US economic policy and its impact, notably around tariffs, is weighing on investment in the US and elsewhere," S&P said.

Over 30k taxpayers declare foreign assets, income of Rs 30,300 cr due thanks nudge campaign: FM

PTI, NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said more than 30,000 taxpayers have revised their I-T returns or filed belated returns and declared additional foreign assets and income of about Rs 30,300 crore.

"We carried out a 'nudge' campaign in which we nudged taxpayers to voluntarily disclose their Foreign Income and Assets. SMS and E-mails were sent to around 19,501 select taxpayers, asking them to review their Income Tax Returns filed for the 2024-25 based on information available to Income Tax of foreign deposits etc," she said in reply to Finance Bill 2025 in the Lok Sabha.

As a result of the campaign, she said out of 19,501 taxpayers, a total of

11,162 taxpayers revised their returns and filled out Schedule Foreign Assets Form, declaring total assets of Rs 11,259.29 crores disclosing foreign income of Rs 154.42 crore.

In addition to the above, she said 883 taxpayers revised their ITRs and corrected their status from resident to non-resident in the revised return for 2024-25.

Due to this outreach, there was a 'ripple effect', she said. An additional 13,516 taxpayers declared foreign assets of Rs 7,564 crore and foreign income of approximately Rs 353 crore in their revised ITR for 2024-25.

"Cumulatively, this simple nudge resulted in the declaration of foreign assets worth Rs 29,208 crore and foreign income of Rs 1,089 crore (Rs 30,297

New Income Tax Bill to be taken up for discussion in monsoon session: Sitharaman

PTI, NEW DELHI: The new Income Tax Bill will be taken up for discussion in the monsoon session of Parliament, Finance Minister Sitharaman said on Tuesday.

Replying to the discussions on the Finance Bill 2025 in the Lok Sabha, Sitharaman said the new income tax bill, which was introduced in the House on February 13, is currently being vetted by the Select Committee.

The Select Committee has been mandated to submit its report by the first day of the next session of Parliament. "...we will take it (new income tax bill) up in the monsoon session," Sitharaman said.

Sitharaman also said the digital record will also be taken into account for the assessment once the new Income Tax Bill is passed.

The 1961 Income Tax Act permits the examination of books of account, physically kept or every manual record, which shows income expenditure.

Since the 1961 Act does not mention the digital most often it becomes contentious and people go to the court and seek protection from not sharing passcode, she said.

"So, digital becomes an issue. What prevails now with the gap and that gap is getting filled up in the new Income Tax Bill, which is before the select committee," she said.

The new bill gives tax officers powers to override the access code of computer systems and virtual digital space, including online trading and investment accounts as well as cloud servers, in search and seizure cases.

crore) in Schedule FA (foreign assets) by 30,161 taxpayers," she said.

So, the nudge campaign about property abroad has yielded good results with

tax assessee disclosing their properties and also paying money due to them, she said.

Govt scraps Gold Monetisation Scheme

PTI, NEW DELHI: The government has decided to discontinue the Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS) starting from Wednesday in view of the evolving market conditions, the finance ministry said.

However, the banks may continue their short term gold deposit schemes (1-3 years), the ministry said in the statement on Tuesday.

Till November 2024, approximately 31,164 kilograms of gold have been mobilised under GMS.

The Gold Monetisation Scheme was announced on September 15, 2015, with the objective to reduce country's reliance on the import of gold in the long run and mobilise gold held by households and institutions in the country to facilitate its use for productive purposes.