

# Mid-air scare: Flight plunges as co-pilot stabs pilot, Israel says terror bid to bring down plane

Dubai-Tel Aviv flight: Passengers mostly Israelis, co-pilot overpowered, reserve crew lands plane in Saudi airport

Alexander Cornwell, Rami Amichay & Lina Obeid  
Jerusalem, September 30

THE CO-PILOT of a flight from Dubai to Tel Aviv tried to crash the plane after stabbing the pilot, but passengers subdued him while other pilots landed the plane safely in Saudi Arabia, Israeli officials said on Wednesday.

Describing the event as “a highly severe security incident”, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Saudi authorities would interrogate the co-pilot of flydubai flight FZ1073 from the United Arab Emirates to Israel, which had over 170 pas-



Israeli passengers who were aboard the flydubai aircraft welcomed at Ben Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv. AP

sengers — mostly Israelis — on board. The airline confirmed an “altercation in the flight deck”

but said the underlying reasons for the event remained »CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

[RELATED REPORT, PAGE 14](#)

## ‘Hero’ pilot identified as Indian, used ‘last moments of energy to open cockpit’

Sukalp Sharma  
New Delhi, September 30

THE PILOT who fought off the co-pilot and thwarted an alleged attempt to crash the plane has been identified as an Indian national.

Israeli media reports, citing officials, said the pilot was an Indian and the co-pilot an Omani national. Sources in the know identified the pilot as Smit Machchhar, who was earlier with SpiceJet.

The airline has not released the identities or nationalities of



Pilot Smit Machchhar. LINKEDIN

the pilot and co-pilot.

Israeli officials have said the co-pilot stabbed the pilot in the cockpit to try to crash the plane.

A Reuters report quoted Doron »CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

# Avoid travelling to Russia to join Army, govt. warns Indians

**Suhasini Haidar**

NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday “strongly discouraged” Indians from travelling to Russia to join the Russian Army, warning of the “mortal dangers” they would face there.

In its toughest travel advisory issued since the Indian Embassy in Moscow began to detect a growing number of Indian expatriates being recruited to serve at the Russia-Ukraine warfront, the External Affairs Ministry said that it continues to see reports of Indians signing up to join the Army despite several appeals and warnings.

“The government has on several occasions over the past two years underlined the risks and dangers inherent in this course of action and advised Indian citizens from time to time to be cautious while pursuing job opportunities abroad and not get lured by any job offers from unverified individuals,” the Ministry advisory said.

## **Lured by money**

“It is reiterated that this is a dangerous path and is strongly discouraged by the government,” it said, adding that it remains engaged with Russian authorities to ensure the safety and early discharge of all

## **External Affairs**

**Ministry said people should be wary of being misled by recruiting agents**

Indians in the Russian military.

Officials said the worrying trend continued as many in India were falling for what they saw as “attractive” job offers, but were being misled by recruiting agents.

During his visit to Moscow in July 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi raised the issue of Indian recruits who had signed contracts to join the Russian Armed Forces but wanted to return to India, with Russian President Vladimir Putin. However, officials said that even as dozens of recruits had been helped to return after a special dispensation from Moscow, more were joining up, hoping to earn money and possibly emigrate.

In particular, the Ministry advisory said that in “numerous instances”, Indian nationals had willingly joined the Russian armed forces, believing that once they had received adequate monetary benefits, they could approach the Indian government to secure their release.

# Registration of electric 2-wheelers rise 30%, EV push gathers pace

Devansh Mittal

New Delhi, September 30

A 30% rise in electric two-wheeler registrations, approval for 382 charging station sites, and the appointment of global consultancy KPMG as the Project Management Unit (PMU) – these are among the key steps taken in the first three months since Delhi launched its ambitious Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy, which seeks to make the city the EV capital of the country.

Introduced on July 1, the policy aims to achieve at least 30% electrification of Delhi's vehicle fleet by 2030 through incentives and mandates, alongside the creation of charging, vehicle scrapping and battery recycling infrastructure.

Officials told *The Indian Express* that registrations of electric two-wheelers rose 30% in the July-September quarter compared with April-June.

Two-wheelers shifting to electric is a key priority under the policy, as they account for nearly two-thirds of Delhi's vehicle fleet. The policy also provides for a complete ban on registration of new internal combustion engine (ICE) two-wheelers from April 2028.

Further, it offers front-loaded purchase incentives. Buyers of electric two-wheelers priced up to Rs 2.25 lakh (ex-showroom) are eligible for an incentive of Rs 10,000 per kWh, capped at Rs 30,000, in the first year after notification. The incentive will be reduced to Rs 6,600 per kWh, capped at Rs 20,000, in the second year and Rs 3,300 per kWh, capped at Rs 10,000, in the third year.

According to officials, four-wheeler goods vehicles recorded the highest increase, with registrations rising 83% over the previous quarter, while cars rose 27% and three-

wheelers 18%.

So far, 6,225 people have applied for subsidies through the Delhi EV subsidy portal, they added.

Moreover, officials said that 456 sites had been identified and aggregated to be developed as charging stations through the Revenue department, while another 49 sites were identified through the Delhi Transport Corporation.

"Of the 456 sites, the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) approved 382 sites. Over the last 90 days, all 382 sites were rigorously reassessed specifically for segment-wise deployment – categorised separately for two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and four-wheelers," an official said.

Under the policy, the Delhi government had to submit proposals to the MHI under the PM-DRIVE scheme and other Central government schemes for charging and battery-swapping infrastructure.

"A true EV revolution cannot rely solely on short-term financial payouts; it requires robust, reliable, and segment-specific charging infrastructure that eliminates range anxiety for everyday citizens," said Ashish Sood, Power Minister and Chairman of the Group of Ministers on EV Policy.

He added that the government was prioritising availability of power, grid feasibility and segment-specific charging nodes so that people shifting to electric two-wheelers, three-wheelers and commercial vehicles have access to charging infrastructure across the Capital.

"With KPMG onboarded as the PMU, the comprehensive site reassessment is now complete. The government is poised to float the tender for the first tranche of 160 to 180 high-readiness sites immediately," an official said.

# INDIA bloc to kick off campaign against CEC, SIR across country from tomorrow

**Sobhana K. Nair**

NEW DELHI

The Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) on Wednesday announced a nationwide campaign beginning Friday against the Election Commission (EC) and the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The graded agitation plan includes protest marches at district headquarters, a march to the Election Commission, and a joint appeal to the Chief Justice of India for expedited hearings in cases related to the SIR and alleged electoral “malpractices”.

The decisions were taken after a three-and-a-half-hour meeting attended by 33 leaders from 19



**United voice:** Leaders of INDIA bloc parties addressing the media after a meeting in New Delhi on Wednesday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

political parties. Independent MP and senior Supreme Court lawyer Kapil Sibal also participated.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the leaders had agreed to fight together. “With unanimity, everyone vowed to fight to-

gether,” he said at a press conference. While there was no direct reference to involving the Cockroach Janta Party, leaders agreed that the bloc should engage with civil society and secular parties outside the alliance.

## Poll body extends SIR dates for A.P., Meghalaya

NEW DELHI

A full bench of the Election Commission convened on Wednesday, in what was the second such meeting in four days, and decided to extend the dates for publication of the final electoral rolls under the SIR in Andhra Pradesh and Meghalaya. » **PAGE 11**

Notable absentees at the meeting included the DMK, which has refused to share a stage with the Congress after the Tamil Nadu election.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» **PAGE 10**

# LeT 'commander' killed in J&K: Army

**Peerzada Ashiq**

SRINAGAR

A Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) 'commander' active in the Pir Panjal Valley and south Kashmir was killed in an ongoing operation in Budgam district of Jammu and Kashmir, the Army said on Wednesday.

The body of the terrorist, identified as Mohammad Asif alias Hashim Moosa, was recovered along with "war-like stores" during a search in Palmaidan, the Army said, adding that the combing operation continued in the area.

Officials said the killing of Moosa is a breakthrough for the security forces, as he had remained active in



Security forces keeping watch in Budgam district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday. ANI

central and south Kashmir for several years. They said Moosa coordinated many attacks in the region and was part of the larger LeT group active in the Kashmir Valley.

**CONTINUED ON**

» **PAGE 10**

**'FOUR KILLED SINCE 2022'**

» **PAGE 10**

# All 4 LeT 'commanders' active in J&K since 2022 are dead: Home Ministry

**Vijaita Singh**

NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Wednesday said that with the killing of a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) 'commander' in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam district in an operation that started on Tuesday, all four senior LeT 'commanders' who had been operating in the Union Territory since 2022 are dead.

According to the Ministry, the LeT commander, identified by the Army as Mohammad Asif, alias Hashim Moosa, was killed in an intelligence-led joint operation by security forces at Gurwatkaln in the Khansahib area of Budgam district.

The Ministry said security agencies had been pursuing



him for a long time and recently put in place a specific multi-agency plan for his "neutralisation" after receiving technical and human intelligence inputs regarding his movements and presence. It described Moosa's killing as a major blow to the LeT ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir. It said that with his death, the entire four-member group of senior LeT com-

manders active in J&K since 2022 has been dismantled.

The Home Ministry said the group was responsible for several major attacks, including the Halan attack in August 2023, the Kandi attack in May 2023, the DKG attack in December 2023, the Shahsitar attack in May 2024, the Shiv Khori attack in June 2024, the Gagangir attack in October 2024, the Bootapathri attack in October 2024, and the Baisaran attack in April 2025.

## **Pahalgam perpetrator**

Suleman, one of these four commanders, was involved in the terror attack at the Baisaran meadow of Pahalgam on April 22, 2025, when 25 tourists and a local man were killed. Su-

leman was later killed during Operation Mahadev, along with two other Pakistani terrorists, on July 28, 2025.

Apart from Moosa and Suleman, two other LeT commanders who operated in J&K were also killed in separate operations, the Home Ministry said. Junaid Bhat was killed in an encounter at Dachigam on December 3, 2024, and Yasar was killed in Operation Asdhar on September 4, 2026.

The Ministry said the operation against Moosa was part of a sustained counter-terrorism campaign and reflected the close coordination among the Jammu and Kashmir Police, the Indian Army and the Central Armed Police Forces.

# Modi, Trump talk trade, defence, critical technologies over a call

**Suhasini Haidar**

NEW DELHI

In their first telephone call since the United States Congress passed the new Russian sanctions law, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he and President Donald Trump had a “productive conversation” and reviewed bilateral ties. Mr. Modi and Mr. Trump spoke amid growing concerns over the India-U.S. relationship, underlined by a talk by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in New York earlier this week where he spelt out a number of “issues”, including over tariffs, FTA negotiations, the U.S.’s treatment of Indian migrants and Pakistan.

The call between the two leaders followed talks between Mr. Jaishankar and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio as well as Foreign Secretary Vikram



Donald Trump and Narendra Modi. FILE PHOTO

Misri and U.S. Undersecretary of State Allison Hooker on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

## **Sanctions on Russia**

During both meetings, Indian officials had raised concerns over the U.S.’s new Lindsey O Graham Sanctions Against Russia and Iran Act (SRIA), which mandates Mr. Trump to levy up to 100% tariffs on goods imported from In-

dia, China and other countries that import Russian oil. Mr. Misri also raised the issues with a U.S. Congressional delegation in Delhi this week.

In a social media post, Mr. Modi said he and Mr. Trump discussed India-U.S. cooperation in “trade, defence, energy, critical technologies and other areas”, but made no direct reference to the SRIA.

## **‘Close engagement’**

“We agreed to maintain close engagement to take our Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership forward. We also exchanged views on regional and international issues, including ongoing efforts to advance global peace and security,” he said.

Mr. Modi is expected to travel to Florida in December to attend the G20 summit hosted by Mr. Trump.

# Cabinet approves ₹1.86 lakh crore Green Energy Corridor

**Saptaparno Ghosh**

NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet announced the third phase of the Green Energy Corridor (GEC) that seeks to integrate up to 135 gigawatts of renewable energy into grids across States and Union Territories by fiscal year 2032-33.

The scheme would further strive to address curtailment, that is a situation when grid operators limit the power output from



**Power play:** About ₹1.36 lakh crore would be spent on developing intra-state transmission systems in phase 3. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

renewable sources to maintain grid stability.

*The Hindu* had reported

August 10 that the government was in the final planning stages of instituting

the third phase of the GEC.

## Project outlay

The third phase of the scheme accounts for a total project outlay of more than ₹1.86 lakh crore.

This comprises ₹1.36 lakh crore for developing intra-state transmission systems in the third phase. As a first, the latest phase of GEC also provisions a ₹50,000-crore dedicated component for deploying 50 GWh of battery energy storage system (BESS).

# Iran says it has received an official U.S. response to its offer to end war

Iranian officials have not disclosed whether Washington accepted or rejected the proposal; Araghchi briefs Pezeshkian and the Cabinet, with Iranian President calling for a 'win-win strategy'; Trump earlier rejected the offer, calling it 'unacceptable'

**Associated Press**  
DUBAI

**I**ranian officials indicated on Wednesday they have received an official U.S. response to Tehran's latest proposal to end the seven-month war, which U.S. President Donald Trump had publicly rejected just days earlier.

The officials did not say what the response contained, and whether it was a rejection or not.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi presented the U.S. response to President Masoud Pezeshkian at a Cabinet meeting, government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani told the



Abbas Araghchi speaks to the media during the 81st session of the UN General Assembly at United Nations headquarters. AP

state-run *IRNA* news agency. "We will make every effort to bring the agreement to fruition and will firmly stand up for the rights of the Iranian people," Mr.

Pezeshkian said. "The agreement must now be based on a win-win strategy."

The Cabinet meeting follows Mr. Araghchi's return

to Iran after travelling to New York for the UN General Assembly last week. While there, officials held indirect talks with U.S. officials and also met with Qatari and Pakistani mediators on the sidelines of the annual gathering of world leaders.

Mr. Araghchi briefed the Cabinet on his trip to New York and the meetings he held there, including Iran's conditions for reopening the Strait of Hormuz, which Ms. Mohajerani said had been conveyed through mediators.

Mr. Araghchi last week said he floated the proposal to reopen the strait in a week if the U.S. agreed to

lift its blockade of Iranian ports, release frozen Iranian assets and waive sanctions on Iranian oil sales, among other conditions.

Mr. Trump swiftly rejected the proposal, saying Iran wanted to make a deal because it was "losing so badly" but that its offer "would not be acceptable".

Meanwhile, the U.S. Treasury Department, as part of "Operation Economic Outcast" campaign, unveiled new sanctions on Tuesday targeting people and companies around the globe that it accuses of being financial facilitators or enablers of Iran's military supply chain.

# Full re-entry into EU is an option for U.K.: Burnham

**Sriram Lakshman**

LONDON

The U.K. rejoining the European Union (EU) was an option for the country, British Prime Minister Andy Burnham said on Wednesday, a day after he told the Labour party conference in Liverpool that the country had to decide on the kind of long-term ties it wanted with the bloc.

The Prime Minister had said that Brexit had “caused more harm than good” yesterday in Liverpool. The question of reversing Brexit, Britain’s departure from the bloc in 2016, would likely be a deeply divisive process as Brexit itself was.

“We could stay as we are...if people think this is the right place to stay,” Mr. Burnham told *BBC Radio*



Andy Burnham

4's *Today* programme on Wednesday.

Other options would include looking at a customs union as suggested by former Conservative Chancellor George Osborne, or entering the Single Market (area for free movement of goods, services, people and capital) as suggested by the Liberal Democrats, Mr. Burnham said.

“...Or we could go all the way,” he said, suggesting

the U.K. could become part of the EU again.

The options would have to be weighed as per their pros and cons, Mr. Burnham said.

Prior to becoming Prime Minister, Mr. Burnham had said he was not looking to take the country back into the bloc but had said he hoped the return to the EU would happen during his lifetime.

Under his predecessor Keir Starmer’s administration, the U.K. was in the process of strengthening ties with the EU, its largest trading partner. The Starmer government had launched a new ‘U.K.-EU Strategic Partnership’ which sought greater collaboration on defence, security, youth mobility and agriculture among other sectors.

# 23 years after invasion, U.S. troops pull out of Iraq; Iran's influence stays

## NEWS ANALYSIS

**Stanly Johnny**

On May 1, 2003, nearly two months after launching the invasion of Iraq, the then U.S. President George W. Bush landed on the deck of the aircraft carrier *USS Abraham Lincoln*, which was off the San Diego coast after returning from combat operations in the Persian Gulf.

Arriving in a Lockheed S-3 Viking and dressed in a flight suit, Mr. Bush posed for photographs with pilots and crew members. A few hours later, he announced the end of major combat operations in Iraq. "In this battle, we have fought for the cause of liberty and for the peace of the world. Our nation and our coalition are proud of this accomplishment, yet it is you, the members of the United States military, who achieved it," Mr. Bush said from the flight deck of the carrier. Above him hung the warship's now-famous banner: "Mission Accomplished".

Except that it wasn't. On September 30, more than 23 years after Mr. Bush gave his "mission accomplished" speech, the U.S. forces withdrew from their last military base in Iraq, wrapping up their combat operations and leaving the country in the hands of a divided government and powerful Iran-backed Shia militias. Iran, which is currently at war with the U.S., and the militias have welcomed the U.S. withdrawal as a victory.

### Stuck in Iraq

The U.S. invaded Iraq saying Saddam Hussein's regime had possessed weapons



Members of the Iraqi security forces drive in a convoy as they celebrate the U.S. withdrawal, in Najaf, Iraq, on Wednesday. REUTERS

of mass destruction and harboured al-Qaeda terrorists. The invasion was the second stop in Mr. Bush's 'war on terrorism'.

Before launching the attack, Mr. Bush had grouped Iraq, Iran, and North Korea together as the 'Axis of Evil', indicating that Iran could be the next target. The claim about weapons of mass destruction turned out to be false. Al-Qaeda gained a foothold in Iraq only after the U.S. invasion toppled the Saddam Hussein regime.

Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), one of the most violent branches of the terrorist organisation, later transformed into the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and spread terror across the region and beyond. Iraq also fell into a deadly sectarian civil war between Shias and Sunnis.

Perhaps the most consequential effect of the invasion was the expansion of Iranian influence across Iraq. Saddam's Iraq, which had fought an eight-year-long war with Iran, had remained a buffer between the Islamic Republic and Gulf monarchies.

Once Saddam was gone, Iran, which had built historical ties with Iraq's Shia parties that had been suppressed by the Baathist re-

gime, extended and deepened its reach. It also supported Shia militias with money, weapons and training to trap U.S. forces, as Tehran feared that the U.S. could turn against Iran next if it managed to stabilise Iraq.

### Forever war

Over the past 23 years, the U.S. had spent some \$1.7 trillion and lost 4,500 troops in Iraq. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis were also killed during the war.

In 2011, the then President Barack Obama had announced an end to U.S. combat operations in Iraq. But after the Islamic State captured huge swathes of territory in Iraq, including Mosul, the second largest city, U.S. troops returned to fight IS terrorists.

Since then the U.S. had retained some 2,500 troops, mostly in its bases in Erbil, in Iraqi Kurdistan. All these troops are now being withdrawn. Some marines will remain in the country to protect U.S. diplomatic missions.

President Trump says Iraq can now take care of its own security and hence the U.S. troops are no longer needed. But the ground situation is a lot more complex.

U.S. troops came under

increasing attack from Iran-backed Shia militias in recent years. The militias are powerful political and military entities today. Even though the Iraqi government has pushed them to disarm, it has faced severe resistance.

After the U.S. war on Iran began on February 28, the militias, loosely called Popular Mobilisation Units (Hashad al-Shabi), have stepped up their attacks on U.S. forces.

In the first two months of the war, Iran and the Shia militias launched more than 600 attacks on U.S. military and diplomatic facilities in Iraq. The U.S. found it increasingly difficult to keep a large group of troops in a region that's turning hostile, and Mr. Trump decided to stick to the Biden-era deadline of completing the withdrawal by September 30.

### Shifting balance

Even though Iran built deep influence in Iraq through Shia political parties and militias after the American invasion, the presence of U.S. troops and an autonomous Kurdistan closely aligned with Washington provided a counterweight, maintaining a balance between the two rival centres of power.

With the U.S. troops leaving, that balance could tilt further in Iran's favour.

When U.S. air strikes killed Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the commander of Hashad, along with Qassem Soleimani, in January 2020, many saw it as a major blow to Iraq's Shia militias. Six years later, as U.S. troops leave the last of their bases in Iraq, Hashad appears to be more deeply entrenched than ever. So is Iran.

# The India-EFTA partnership, one plus one equals three

**O**n October 1, 2025, the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) between India and the four European Free Trade Association (EFTA) states – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland – entered into force. One year on, the more useful question is not how many tariff lines have fallen, but what kind of partnership the agreement is making possible.

The tariff figures are substantial. EFTA states have offered concessions on 92.2% of their tariff lines, covering 99.6% of the value of India's exports to them. India, in turn, is granting concessions on 82.7% of its tariff lines, covering 95.3% of the value of EFTA's exports. Few market-opening exercises between India and a group of developed economies have been this ambitious.

## Lasting partnerships, an India focus

Yet, the defining feature of TEPA lies elsewhere. It was the first trade agreement that India signed with a dedicated chapter on investment and job creation. Under it, the EFTA states aim to raise investment in India by \$100 billion over 15 years and to facilitate one million direct jobs. An agreement based on that is designed to build lasting industrial and technological partnerships.

For a country of just under 4,00,000 people, Iceland's contribution to that partnership was never going to be about scale. It is about experience, particularly in three areas where that experience speaks directly to India's priorities.

The first is geothermal energy, specifically a part of it that receives far less attention than power generation: the direct use of low- to medium-temperature heat. In Iceland, geothermal energy heats nearly every home, dries fish, warms greenhouses and keeps entire communities running through Arctic winters without burning fossil fuels. That century of experience in direct use is what the Himalayan geothermal belt of northern India can draw on.

Consider the apple growers of Himachal Pradesh. Many have long been forced to sell their harvest immediately, at the lowest prices of the season, because they lacked the means to store their crops.

That is now changing. At Tapri, in Kinnaur district, a geothermal facility operated by Geotropy, an Indian-Icelandic venture, uses heat drawn from the ground to dry fruit, and this harvest season, it is running round the clock as growers line up to use it.

A geothermal cooling facility at the same site is due to be completed by the end of the year. Farmers there can now process their produce



**Benedikt Höskuldsson**

The Ambassador of Iceland to India

and time their sales rather than remain price-takers at harvest, drawing on the same direct-use techniques that Iceland has refined over generations. Or consider the high-altitude communities and installations along India's northern frontier, which depend on fuel hauled along supply lines that can close for months. Heat drawn directly from the ground beneath them offers something no convoy can: energy security that does not depend on the road remaining open.

The second area is carbon capture, utilisation and storage. A NITI Aayog study in 2022 estimated that India could capture some 750 million tonnes of carbon dioxide a year by 2050. The scientific foundations are being laid by the Department of Science and Technology, which has steered India's carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) research for years and, in December 2025, published the country's first dedicated research and development road map for CCUS in support of the 2070 net-zero goal.

The Union Budget followed in February with an outlay of ₹20,000 crore over five years to take these technologies towards scale in power, steel, cement, refining and chemicals, while public sector companies such as the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, NTPC Limited (formerly National Thermal Power Corporation) and Indian Oil Corporation Limited are taking the work into the field through feasibility studies, pilot projects and subsurface assessments.

This pre-commercial stage is exactly where Iceland's experience is most valuable, on both sides of the equation. On storage, CarbFix has shown that when carbon dioxide is dissolved in water and injected into basalt, more than 95% of it turns to stone within two years; India's Deccan Trap basalts share striking geological similarities with Iceland's volcanic rock.

## New frontiers

On utilisation, Iceland was home to the world's first industrial-scale plant to turn captured carbon dioxide into fuel: Carbon Recycling International's George Olah plant at Svartsengi, which began producing methanol in 2011-12. Its technology now operates on a far larger scale abroad, including in projects involving steel-sector emissions. In May, Carbon Iceland signed a memorandum of understanding with JSW Steel and Bharatya to explore a 3,00,000-tonne-a-year e-methanol project in Raigad, Maharashtra, converting steel-plant emissions into fuel using green hydrogen. The opportunity, therefore, lies less in exporting equipment than in sharing knowledge and

building partnerships through technology licensing, storage assessment, monitoring and verification, and the co-development of projects as India's pilots scale up.

The third area is the ocean. Iceland's economy was built on the sustainable management of North Atlantic fisheries, and with it came deep expertise in seafood quality, cold-chain logistics and value-added processing. Icelandic companies are already exploring how to bring further processing of North Atlantic catch to Indian shores, creating local jobs and transferring technology under the TEPA concessions.

Iceland has also shown that the greatest gains may lie in what is usually thrown away. Where most fishing nations use only 40% to 60% of each fish, Iceland now uses around 90% of every cod landed, turning skin, liver and bones into medical products, oils and feed. India does not need to catch a single additional fish to create new value, jobs and exports. It needs only to look differently at what its fleets already bring ashore.

All of this sits within a wider frame. Nearly six years of working on energy access at the United Nations, along with a seat at the table during the Paris Agreement negotiations, taught this writer that climate and energy policy are, at their core, exercises in patient and practical partnership between nations. That same spirit defines Iceland's and India's engagement in the Arctic. Iceland is a founding member of the Arctic Council; India has been an Observer since 2013 and has taken that role seriously, publishing its Arctic Policy in 2022 and operating the Himadri research station in Svalbard. As one of the eight Arctic States, Iceland offers India a direct and trusted bilateral channel into Arctic governance and research, complementing its multilateral engagement. For Iceland and India, energy, trade and Arctic stewardship are part of the same conversation.

## Some Icelandic arithmetic

TEPA is young, but it is already showing what an ambitious, rules-based partnership between Europe and India can deliver in investment, technology and jobs, as well as in energy, fisheries and shared stewardship of a changing Arctic. It is not a rival to the European Union (EU)-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) but a complement to it: a working model, already in force, of what the next chapter of Europe-India trade can look like. If readers will permit a small piece of Icelandic arithmetic, TEPA and the EU-India FTA are a case of one plus one equalling three. It is not competition but addition – and a rather good addition at that.

An ambitious India-Europe partnership can deliver across trade, technology, energy and Arctic stewardship