

US launches fresh strikes on Iran as explosions reported in south

Dubai, July 12 (GNS): Washington and Tehran signed their memorandum of understanding and the 135th day of the conflict, as fresh US strikes, explosions in southern Iran and renewed warnings from both sides signalled another escalation.

The United States carried out a fresh round of strikes against Iranian military targets, with the US Central Command (CENTCOM) saying the operation was aimed at reducing Tehran's ability to threaten commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. According to CENTCOM, US forces targeted Iranian missile systems, air defence positions and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) patrol boats. The command said American forces remain deployed in the Strait of Hormuz to ensure freedom of navigation for vessels law-



fully transiting the international waterway. Shortly after the strikes, Iranian state media reported explosions in several locations across Hormozgan province. Press TV and other Iranian outlets said blasts were heard in Bandar Abbas, Sirik and Jask. Persian-language reports claimed more than 15 explosions were

heard west of Bandar Abbas, while three explosions were reported in Jask. There was no immediate independent confirmation of the reported explosions or details on casualties and damage. Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned the latest US attacks, calling them a violation of international law and describing them as war

crimes. The ministry warned that any territory used to launch military operations against Iran could become a legitimate target, accusing Washington of further destabilising the region. According to the report, the planned operation was expected to exceed the scale of the strikes carried out on Sunday morning, indicating that Washington could intensify its military campaign. In the latest development, CENTCOM rejected reports circulating on social media claiming that three American soldiers had been killed in Kuwait during Iranian strikes. "The claim that three US soldiers were killed in Kuwait is false," the command said, adding that there were no reports of US military personnel being killed or injured anywhere in the region.

No 'Viksit Bharat' without 'Viksit Bihar': VP Radhakrishnan

Gaya, July 12 (GNS): Emphasising that there can be no 'Viksit Bharat' without a 'Viksit Bihar', Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan on Saturday inaugurated a two-day Orientation-cum-Training Programme for the members of the 18th Bihar Legislative Assembly. Speaking at the inauguration event at the Bihar Institute of Public Administration and Rural Development (BIPARD) in Gaya, the Vice President said that differences of opinion are natural in a democracy, but commitment to the Constitution and public welfare must remain paramount. "Ideas may differ on the floor of the Assembly, but the Constitution must remain our common compass," he said, adding that healthy debate strengthens democracy while construc-



tive cooperation advances the nation. Stressing the importance of Question Hour, Zero Hour, and the Business Advisory Committee, he urged members to ensure the smooth and productive conduct of legislative business, noting that these parliamentary devices provide individual legislators with an important opportunity to raise issues concerning their constituents beyond

party considerations. Bihar Governor Lt Gen (Retd.) Syed Ata Hasnain; Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary; Assembly Speaker Prem Kumar; Chairman of the Bihar Legislative Council, Awadhesh Narain Singh; and other dignitaries were present during the occasion, said an official statement. Appreciating the initiative of the Presiding Of-

ficers of the Bihar Legislative Assembly and the Bihar Legislative Council, along with the Parliamentary Research and Training Institute for Democracies (PRIDE) and the Lok Sabha Secretariat, the Vice President said such programmes strengthen democratic institutions by equipping legislators to discharge their constitutional responsibilities effectively.

India reassesses Afghan connectivity plans

New Delhi, July 12 (GNS): India is reassessing its connectivity strategy with Afghanistan by exploring multiple trade and transport corridors beyond Iran's Chabahar Port, as growing geopolitical uncertainties underscore the risks of relying on a single gateway for regional access, according to a report. According to a report by Strat News Global, while Chabahar Port remains a cornerstone of India's engagement with Afghanistan and Central Asia, recent regional developments have highlighted the need to diversify connectivity options and build a more resilient network of trade routes. For nearly two decades, Chabahar Port has been at the centre of India's West Asia policy. With Pakistan denying

India reliable overland transit access, New Delhi invested in the Iranian port and supported the construction of Afghanistan's Zaranj-Delaram Highway to establish a trade corridor linking India with Afghanistan and, eventually, Central Asia. The report noted that India has shown no signs of stepping back from its commitment to the project. Before the conditional US sanctions waiver for Chabahar expired on April 26, 2026, New Delhi prepaid its entire financial commitment of USD 120 million, reaffirming the port's strategic significance. However, the report said subsequent developments have exposed the vulnerabilities of depending heavily on a single transit route.

Election Commission of India: Parent details for new voters not a new SIR requirement

New Delhi, July 12 (GNS): The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Sunday refuted claims that the "mandatory provisions for new applicants seeking inclusion in electoral rolls to provide details of their parents' status from the previous Special Intensive Revision (SIR) is a new exercise". The poll body sources said that this requirement was started last year in Bihar. This requirement applies not only to existing voters missed in earlier SIR exercises but also to fresh applicants filling Form 6. The move, sources said, started last year in June during the Bihar SIR exercise. It was aimed at streamlining verification, mapping family linkages, and reducing the need for extensive documentation by linking new voters to legacy elec-



toral data. The provision, already implemented in Bihar during its pioneering SIR exercise, has now been extended through administrative instructions to other states and Union Territories undergoing the ongoing Special Intensive Revision. This continuation ensures consistency in the verification process across different phases of the Special Intensive Revision being carried out nationwide. The Election Commission maintains that such mea-

sures are essential for maintaining the accuracy and integrity of electoral rolls while making the inclusion process more efficient for genuine applicants. Applicants must declare whether their own name or their parents' (father, mother, grandfather, or grandmother) name featured in the previous SIR electoral rolls. The ECI officials emphasised that the step strengthens the integrity of electoral rolls by ensuring accurate family-based veri-

fication while facilitating genuine inclusions. The Special Intensive Revision, which began in phases from Bihar in 2025, involves door-to-door enumeration by Booth Level Officers using pre-filled forms. It aims to clean up electoral rolls by removing deceased, shifted, duplicate, or ineligible entries while protecting the rights of genuine voters. In the first phase alone, Bihar saw around 47 lakh names deleted, representing nearly six per cent of its electorate. The ECI sources maintain the process is transparent, constitutional, and backed by judicial precedents. The poll body often has urged all eligible citizens to participate actively in the enumeration drive, which continues in several states, to ensure no genuine voter is left out.

ONGC drills second geothermal well in Ladakh

New Delhi, July 12 (GNS): Public sector Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has completed drilling its second geothermal well in Ladakh's Puga Valley, in a significant step toward developing India's first pilot geothermal power plant. The upstream oil giant's research and development arm, ONGC Energy Centre, drilled the well to a depth of 1,000 metres at an altitude of more than 14,000 feet in about a month, improving on the timeline and cost of its first geothermal drilling campaign, according to an ONGC statement. The latest well builds on the success of ONGC's first geothermal well in Puga, which produced steam at temperatures above the boiling point

of water, demonstrating the area's geothermal resource potential, the statement said. ONGC said the second well would support the development of India's first 1-megawatt electric (MWe) pilot geothermal power plant and could pave the way for commercial exploitation of geothermal energy in the country. The project's next phase includes plans to set up a 1-megawatt electric (MWe) pilot geothermal power plant and the longer-term development of geothermal resources to provide reliable baseload electricity for Ladakh. The Puga geothermal field, located in eastern Ladakh, is considered India's most promising geothermal resource.

Rajnath Singh: AI won't replace soldiers in war

Visakhapatnam, July 12 (UNI): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday asserted that while emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence are transforming the nature of warfare, conventional military capabilities remain indispensable, stressing that future conflicts may involve AI but will ultimately be won through national resolve, trained soldiers and credible military strength. Addressing the gathering during the commissioning ceremony of INS Mahendragiri into the Indian Navy in Andhra's Visakhapatnam, Defence Minister Singh said, "While new technologies have certainly transformed the nature of warfare, they have not diminished the importance of



conventional warfare capabilities. Strong conventional capabilities remain just as essential today as ever for fulfilling the fundamental principles of warfare. Future wars may be fought with Artificial Intelligence, but they will still be won through national resolve, trained soldiers, and credible military power." Highlighting the need to balance technological ad-

vancement with conventional strength, the Defence Minister said, "New technology and conventional platforms are not adversaries but complements to one another; a conventional platform is incomplete without new technology, and a conventional platform is weakened without it. History bears witness that nations which neglected

their conventional strength, lured by the appeal of new technology, had to pay a heavy price." Emphasising India's long-term defence strategy, Defence Minister Singh said, "Therefore, India's approach is very clear: We must excel in both areas and maintain a balance between them." "We will invest in future technologies while continuously honing our conventional capabilities. INS Mahendragiri stands as a symbol of this very resolve and commitment," he added. Referring to India's recent military operations, the Defence Minister said the country's ability to effectively integrate conventional and modern capabilities had already been demonstrated.

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Debate on India's defence doctrine

Ashok K Mehta

CDS Gen Anil Chauhan has made the startling comment that costs don't matter, outcomes do. He was answering questions from Bloomberg in Singapore about the number of Indian jets downed in Op Sindoor. Some previous combat losses: World War II — Allies 91,105 aircraft; Axis Powers 70,900 aircraft. In 1965, IAF 59 aircraft, and Pakistan Air Force (PAF) 43 aircraft in 22 days.

At Balakot both sides incurred the loss of one aircraft each while India also lost a helicopter due to friendly fire, all within 48 hours. There are other examples of air assets lost. But all these engagements were contact wars, some spread over years. Op Sindoor was an 88-hour non-contact, Beyond Visual Range (BVR) conflict. For India, a developing economy and aspiring to be a developed nation by 2047, the cost of conflict and resultant homeland-instability impinge negatively on development, especially when the outcome is non-decisive and deterrence only transitory. Pakistan will not cease to wage war, skirmishes and proxy wars as it has for the last 80 years.

Delhi failed to terminate wars decisively because of not appreciating the strength of military power and the use of force. Hard power is built over time with costs and investments. The muscular counter-terrorism policy the BJP Government has adopted



for over a decade was built on rhetoric, spending less than 2 per cent of GDP on defence. The absence of credible deterrence, erratic use of force and the unresolved issue of Kashmir led to the Pahalgam carnage and other terrorist incidents in Kashmir. Had a more serious view been taken of comprehensive national power, Pakistan would not have dared to bait India periodically. Op Sindoor, its tactical successes and strategic flaws necessitate an immediate defence review encompassing the entire span of the current BJP rule.

Since the appointment of CDS and Department of Military Affairs and the centrality of National Security Adviser and the Defence Planning Committee he leads, strategic thinking ought to have led to the enunciation of defence and security doctrines which in turn could have facilitated the formation of Integrated Theatre Commands, still

waiting to happen. The domination of air power will rejuvenate the debate on the indivisibility of air assets and put a spoke in the wheel of the early fruition of Theatre Commands.

First salvos in this regard have already been fired by IAF veterans. No longer is the IAF a support arm as late CDS Gen Bipin Rawat had forcefully averred. After Op Sindoor, it emerged as the sword arm, persuading Army Chief Gen Upen-dra Dwivedi to skip the CII Military Partnership Summit, Delhi for blessings from the Rajguru of Chitrakoot temple who sought from Army Chief PoK as Guru Dakshina. While Air Chief Marshal AP Singh modestly stole the limelight at the summit following the stand-off campaign of attrition of Pakistan Air Force air and land assets, Gen Dwivedi kept alive the relevance of land forces in the territorial conquest of PoK and in capturing and holding ground.

Returning to reforms, the Government must immediately commit to higher defence spending, which is the manifest trend the world over following the Ukraine war entering its fourth year, the Gaza outrage in its third year, compound instabilities in West Asia and turbulence in the Indo-Pacific, especially the South China Sea. President Trump is telling NATO and Indo-Pacific allies to spend more on defence — 5 per cent for NATO and substantial but unspecified increases for Japan and South Korea. Earlier this month, Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced his Government's first Strategic Defence Review and an increase from 2 to 2.5 per cent of GDP by 2027 and ultimately, targeting 3 per cent by 2034. He said these are not aspirational but achievable targets. He announced an immediate increase in defence spending of GBP 15 bn, saying additional capabilities will deter conflict, naming Russia (and China)

as the main threat. As India is afraid to name China as a threat, it does not have a written national security policy. Imagine Prime Minister Modi making similar announcements in his Mann ki Baat or an interview with ANI like Starmer did on BBC. He outlined the key ingredients of defence preparedness — the type of equipment the UK would build for its strategic and conventional deterrence and its focus on NATO First. NATO and Europe have three nuclear-armed nations to deter Russia and China.

The other two original nuclear-armed powers all together constitute the P5 in the UN Security Council. India's defence forces, on the other hand, have been hollowed out over time due to inadequate funding and lethargic procurement procedures. While Aatm-nirbharta is an undeniable great virtue, Delhi's dependence on Russia, France, the US, Israel, the UK and Germany for niche technologies makes self-reliance somewhat suspect.

Immediate injection of resources, especially in R&D, is imperative if the new normal of enhanced thresholds of non-contact and hot war under the nuclear overhang is to be sustained. Business Standard's AK Bhattacharya, a long-term advocate of higher defence spending, recently suggested that there were two ways to do this: first, to break the limit on fiscal deficit; and the other to reduce capex to transfer funds to defence.

Debate on India's defence doctrine

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Since the appointment of CDS and Department of Military Affairs and the centrality of National Security Adviser and the Defence Planning Committee he leads, strategic thinking ought to have led to the enunciation of defence and security doctrines which in turn could have facilitated the formation of Integrated Theatre Commands, still waiting to happen. The domination of air power will rejuvenate the debate on the indivisibility of air assets and put a spoke in the wheel of the early fruition of Theatre Commands. First salvos in this regard have already been fired by IAF veterans. No longer is the IAF a support arm as late CDS Gen Bipin Rawat had forcefully averred. After Op Sindoor, it emerged as the sword arm, persuading Army Chief Gen Upen-dra Dwivedi to skip the CII Military Partnership Summit, Delhi for blessings from the Rajguru of Chitrakoot temple who sought from Army Chief PoK as Guru Dakshina. While Air Chief Marshal AP Singh modestly stole the limelight at the summit following the stand-off campaign of attrition of Pakistan Air Force air and land assets, Gen Dwivedi kept alive the relevance of land forces in the territorial conquest of PoK and in capturing and holding ground.

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As this will affect growth, he said, accepting a higher fiscal deficit was the better option. There is a third way too. Past Finance Commissions have tossed ideas but the Government has not shown political courage to make the right choices as those will hurt its welfare schemes and impose a fresh burden on the taxpayer. Periodic clashes with Pakistan have created uncertainties and instabilities that will deter FDI and discourage shifting supply chains to India. Delhi's import reliance on China is increasing phenomenally; in 2023–24 to USD 110 bn, which is almost twice India's defence budget. China remains the primary challenge, rival and competitor. Enhanced defence allocation will have meaning if defence acquisition processes are streamlined to ensure full utilisation of funds by the end of the fiscal. For too long, modernisation funds have had to be surrendered. Costs matter as much as outcomes. The future of warfare will increasingly depend on the seamless integration of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, cyber capabilities, space-based assets, autonomous systems, and electronic warfare with traditional military power. However, technology alone cannot compensate for deficiencies in strategic planning, force readiness, logistics, or political resolve. A balanced approach that strengthens both conventional capabilities and emerging technologies will remain essential for credible deterrence.

Equally important is accelerating defence reforms aimed at improving procurement timelines, enhancing jointness among the three services, and promoting indigenous research and development. Faster decision-making, greater private sector participation, and sustained investment in innovation can reduce dependence on imports while ensuring that the armed forces are equipped with modern and reliable systems suited to evolving security challenges. India must also continue strengthening its defence-industrial ecosystem through closer collaboration between government agencies, defence public sector undertakings, startups, MSMEs, academia, and global technology partners. Building a resilient domestic manufacturing base will not only enhance national security but also generate employment, boost exports, and contribute to long-term economic growth.

Ultimately, national security and economic development are closely intertwined. A strong military backed by a robust economy, sound strategic planning, and efficient resource allocation provides the foundation for sustained peace and stability. As the global security environment becomes more unpredictable, India's long-term objective should be to develop comprehensive national power that combines military preparedness, technological leadership, economic resilience, and diplomatic influence.

Trump can wait RBI Builds India First

By Shivaji Sarkar

In an assertive policy pivot aimed at shielding the Indian economy from both internal slowdown and external headwinds, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) repo and Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) cut decisions reflect an urgency to fortify domestic demand and build monetary buffers ahead of any external shocks.

The repo rate cut by 50 basis points to 5.40 percent and slashing the CRR by 100 basis points, releases a substantial Rs 2.5 lakh crore in systemic liquidity. This move goes far beyond textbook monetary easing—it's a calculated shift toward growth insulation, driven in part by global trade volatility, slowing capital flows, and protectionist rhetoric resurging from the West, especially from the United States. The RBI's shifting dependence on foreign portfolios to domestic investment.

The RBI's sweeping rate and CRR cuts are not just a response to slowing growth—they are a strategic counter to global turbulence. As trade dynamics harden and election rhetoric in the U.S. turns more inward-looking, India is sending a clear signal: We'll build our growth engines at home, and we won't wait for the world to stabilise.

Banks and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) are now better placed to grow loan books despite global capital uncertainty. The Rs 2.5 lakh crore liquidity injection, through CRR cut, is a strategic play to strengthen domestic credit capacity, in case foreign in-



vestment inflows taper due to U.S.-centric policy shifts. In a world potentially heading toward deglobalisation 2.0, the RBI is quietly laying the foundations for an India that is credit-rich, demand-driven, and less vulnerable to foreign tantrums.

This is crucial for raising industrial production. In April 2025, IIP slowed to 2.7 percent against 3 percent growth in March and 5.2 percent in April 2024. The growth was primarily driven by a 3.4 percent rise in the manufacturing sector. The core sector, which comprises eight key industries, grew by 0.5 percent in April 2025, according to the National Statistics Office.

While headline inflation has remained within the RBI's comfort band of around 4 percent, the lurking risk of imported inflation—rises to 31.1 percent in February 2025 from 1.31 percent in June 2024—stemming from global prices,

shipping costs, geopolitical instability, and currency value decline, continues to be a concern. The RBI appears to have weighed these risks, but is now betting on economic expansion as the bigger imperative, especially as private investment and consumer demand remain below pre-pandemic trajectories.

Financial markets immediately responded to the RBI's policy announcement with optimism. Sector such as real estate, banking, automobiles, and financial services rallied.

This is preceded by severe fall in the stock markets all through the May and before, causing severe losses. The value of currency in circulation was around Rs 16.5 lakh crore in November 2016. It has risen to Rs 38.35 lakh crore in May 30, 2025, up from Rs 34.70 lakh crore on September 6, 2024, rising 0.2 percent a week or 7.4 percent in a year.

The overall reserve money (RM) rose by 0.4 percent on the week, to Rs 49.62 lakh crore. The RM, the physical cash held by the public, including banknotes and coins as also the CRR and other banks' deposits with RBI play a crucial role in regulating the money supply and influencing economic activity. It's the starting point for the money creation process, where banks can create more money through lending.

A more aggressive Trump-driven trade stance, if it materialises, could raise the cost of imports and dent export competitiveness—just as India is trying to recover its industrial mojo. India is hurrying through deals for more imports from the US, including of shale oil adding to further costs.

The rate cut is also likely to spur affordable housing uptake, shielding the sector from any fallout in foreign investment or imported

material cost spikes. Stocks such as Godrej Properties, DLF, and Kolte-Patil Developers surged after the policy, buoyed by hopes of a demand revival and better liquidity for developers. Stocks like HDFC Bank and Bajaj Finserv jumped, reflecting optimism around stronger credit demand and a proactive central bank. The Nifty Financial Services index rose nearly 2 percent, reflecting investor belief that India's financial ecosystem will now be less dependent on foreign portfolio flows and more driven by internal credit momentum.

Imported inflation occurs when the cost of imported goods and services rises, leading to higher domestic prices as currency weakens. Gold and major components of India's imports, significantly contribute to this inflation. Higher import costs raise production expenses for companies causing overall price increases.

While consumer price inflation remains under control, the risk of imported inflation is rising. A Trump-style economic strategy could mean higher tariffs on Chinese goods, pushing up global commodity prices. For India, this could translate to costlier imports of electronics, machinery, and chemicals, feeding into core inflation. The RBI seems to be pre-emptively countering this by stimulating growth now, before such inflationary pressures creep in. In many ways, the RBI is borrowing a page from Trump's own manual: act boldly, defend your domestic economy, and expect volatility.

World Food Safety Day celebration at NIFTEM-K ends with a Call for Innovations in Food Safety and Grassroot Engagements

New Delhi, July 12 (GNS): National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management, Kundli (NIFTEM-K), an Institute of National Importance under the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI), concluded a meaningful two-day observance of World Food Safety Day 2025 with a series of impactful initiatives aimed at strengthening food safety awareness and promoting scientific engagements. Themed “Food Safety: Science in Action,” the events showcased NIFTEM-K’s commitment to ensuring a safer food ecosystem through grassroots outreach and expert dialogue.

On June 6, in collaboration with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), NIFTEM-K organized a comprehensive food safety awareness workshop for over 100 street food vendors and small business operators from Delhi NCR and Sonipat. Led by the Department of Interdisciplinary Science,

NIFTEM-K, the workshop educated participants on critical food hygiene practices, including the importance of personal hygiene and sanitation, protecting food from flies, rodents, etc, and adhering to safe food handling procedures. Vendors were also informed about the necessity of obtaining proper licenses and adherence to statutory requirements to ensure the legality and credibility of their food businesses. A highlight of the workshop was live demonstration of rapid adulteration testing kits developed by NIFTEM-K for milk and milk products, spices and tea. At the conclusion, participating vendors were awarded certificates for participation in the programme, reinforcing their role in upholding food safety standards and boosting consumer confidence.

The session was illuminated by the presence of Dr. Harinder Singh Oberoi, Director NIFTEM-K, and Head of the Department of Inter-



disciplinary Sciences, who personally addressed the participants with the concept of "Thoda Kam" and "Eat Right" for a healthier tomorrow. He emphasized on a very prominent role of food vendors in public health and highlighted their responsibility in delivering safe and clean food to the public. Dr. Oberoi noted that food safety begins at the grassroots and encouraged participants to adopt best practices in their daily operations. Dr. Oberoi also suggested that he will discuss with CEO, FSSAI to see if some of

the food street vendors from Sonipat district can be trained jointly by NIFTEM-K and FSSAI and are provided with the rapid detection kits, basic paraphernalia and modern carts, who can later become role models for other vendors. This chain reaction can help bringing in a drastic change in the way these food street vendors prepare and deliver food. Shri Ankeshwar Mishra, Joint Director (Training), FSSAI-HQ, also addressed the gathering and lauded NIFTEM-K’s continued efforts to promote food safety education at the

community level. Shri Mukul Gupta, National Resource Person (FoSTaC), facilitated interactive training sessions covering a broad spectrum of food safety topics, starting from basics of hand washing, use of portable water, SOPs for washing utensils, basic pest control measures to rationale behind refrigerated storage, etc.

Continuing the celebrations on June 7, NIFTEM-K hosted a thought-provoking webinar focused on the critical role of science in food safety. In his welcome address, Dr. Oberoi

asserted that science must extend beyond the laboratory and become an integral part of public health policy and everyday practice. He stressed the urgency of proactive food safety measures, cautioning that the next public health crisis might be a silent, food-borne epidemic. He also advocated for the inclusion of food safety principles in school curricula and proposed the development of stainless steel food carts, low-cost rapid testing kits, and enhanced research on foodborne pathogens and contaminants. He emphasised

on establishing a Centre for food safety and authenticity at NIFTEM-K with support from FSSAI in conducting cutting edge research to help FSSAI formulate robust food standards, especially for emerging contaminants. The webinar featured insights from several distinguished experts. Dr. Iddya Karunasagar, Advisor, NITTE University, Bengaluru, discussed the essential components of risk analysis—assessment, management, and communication—and emphasized that testing alone cannot ensure food safety, unless supported by good practices across the food chain. Dr. Rajan Sharma, Joint Director (Research), ICAR-NDRI, Karnal, presented rapid detection kits for milk and milk product safety developed at NDRI and also emphasised on the importance of food safety, especially in perishable commodities like milk and milk products. Professor Afrozul Haq, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Manipur International University,

explored the current scenario of food safety in India, focusing on allergens and their relation with food safety and optimal consumption of vitamins, reflecting on the adverse effects of hypervitaminosis on health.

Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Deputy Director, Tea Board spoke on the safety concerns in tea processing, highlighting how contaminants can enter during production stages and commended NIFTEM-K’s role in developing detection kits for pesticides and artificial colors in tea. The two-day program concluded with a unified call to action: to make food safety a continuous national priority embedded in policies, education, research, and public consciousness. NIFTEM-K reaffirmed its role as a national leader in driving food safety through innovation, awareness, and capacity building, committed to creating a safer and healthier food environment for all.

Goyal to Engage with Global CEOs and Industry Leaders in Switzerland to Boost Bilateral Trade and Investment

New Delhi, July 12 (GNS): Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, commenced his official visit to Switzerland as part of his ongoing visit to Switzerland and Sweden from 9–13 June 2025. This visit underscores India’s steadfast commitment to deepening strategic and economic partnerships with key European nations, advancing robust trade and investment ties, and supporting a shared vision for resilient global growth.

The visit marks a key milestone in enhancing India’s engagement with two of Europe’s most innovative economies. Minister Goyal’s meetings are designed to facilitate high-impact interactions with senior government officials, industry leaders, and business associations in both countries.

The visit commenced in Switzerland today, where the Minister will engage with global CEOs and prominent industry leaders to explore



opportunities for strengthening bilateral trade and investment. The itinerary includes focused sectoral meetings with prominent Swiss industry leaders in areas such as Pharma and Life Sciences, and Precision Engineering/Machine Tools/High-tech Manufacturing. The Minister will also connect with the ICAI Zurich Chapter and interact with Indian media. A significant highlight will be meeting with Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin fostering strong

trade and diplomatic ties.

A significant component of the high-level visit to Switzerland will include a series of one-on-one meetings with leading Swiss companies. Indian industry representatives will also participate in these crucial engagements, fostering direct dialogue and exploring specific collaboration opportunities. The day will also feature participation in the Swissmem Industry Day and a Business Round Table with the Swiss Mechanical and Electrical (MEM) Indus-

try, where deliberations will focus on the potential and opportunities arising from the India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA). In Sweden, the Minister will co-chair the 21st Session of the Indo-Swedish Joint Commission for Economic, Industrial and Scientific Cooperation (JCEISC) with H.E. Benjamin Dousa, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade.

During his visit the Minister is also scheduled to hold

bilateral meetings with Mr. Benjamin Dousa, Minister for Foreign Trade, and Mr. Håkan Jevrell, State Secretary to the Minister of Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade. These deliberations are aimed to reinforce the existing robust economic relationship and identify new opportunities for growth, aligning with India’s long-term economic objectives and global partnerships. Key engagements will involve an India - Sweden Business Leaders’ Round Table and one-on-one meetings with leading Swedish companies. These discussions will cover a wide range of industries where Sweden excels, including advanced manufacturing, innovation, green technologies, and sustainable solutions. Companies like Ericsson, Volvo Group, IKEA, Sandvik, Alfa Laval, and SAAB are among those with a significant presence or interest in enhancing ties with India.

World today looks up to India to overcome the global challenges: Dr Jitendra Singh

New Delhi, July 12 (GNS): Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said here today that the world today looks up to India to overcome the global challenges. Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the United Nations Ocean Conference with participation of over 150 countries of the world, including Heads of State, senior Ministers, eminent scientists and policymakers, here today, Dr Jitendra Singh said over the last two days, he and the other members of the Indian delegation have realized how much of expectation the other countries have from India.

Dr Jitendra Singh attributed this to the change of perception about India’s capabilities that has happened over the last 11 years with certain decisive measures taken by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and also the stability of the government offered to him over the last one decade.

Referring to the comple-



tion of the 11 years of the Modi government, Dr Jitendra Singh said that it is a pleasant coincidence that today as the Modi government completes its 11 years in office, here we are witnessing a huge surge and enthusiasm among the representatives of other member states and countries to be benefitted by India’s capabilities and capacities.

The Minister said, as far as the ocean related concerns and challenges are concerned, India has not only taken a lead in handling

these challenges, but the strength to India’s efforts came from the resolve of the political dispensation which was evident by the fact that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi referred to Deep Ocean Mission not once but twice in his independence day address consecutively for two years.

In the last 10 years, Dr Jitendra Singh said the difference now is that India is taken seriously, even in matters of global concerns like ocean challenges, climate patterns, and clean energy concerns.

Union Minister Dr L. Murugan inaugurates NeVA Digital Platform for Puducherry Legislative Assembly



New Delhi, July 12 (GNS): Union Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting Affairs, Dr L. Murugan inaugurated the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) for Puducherry Legislative Assembly on 09 June 2025. It is a major stride towards transparent, efficient, and environment-friendly governance. Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry Shri K. Kailashnathan, Chief Minister of Puducherry Shri N. Rangasamy, Speaker of Puducherry Legislative Assembly Shri R. Selvam were also present at the inauguration ceremony.

With this launch, Puducherry becomes the 19th legislature in the country to adopt the NeVA platform, aligning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of Digital India. The initiative, which enables paperless legislative functioning, is funded through 100% Central Assistance by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.

Addressing the gathering, Union Minister Dr L. Murugan said, “NeVA is a transformative initiative that ensures real-time access to legislative proceedings and strengthens our democracy. It reflects the principle of ‘One Nation, One



Application’, alongside landmark reforms such as ‘One Nation, One Ration Card’ and the proposed ‘One Nation, One Election’. The public has the right to know and witness how laws are made.”

The Minister also highlighted key achievements of the past decade under the leadership of PM Modi, including: India becoming the second-largest nation in digital transactions, Efficient delivery of welfare through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), Technological progress under Atmanirbhar Bharat, resulting in a 50% reduction in defence imports.

He underlined the infrastructure development and social capital as the two core pillars driving India’s growth and expressed confidence in India’s journey to becoming a Viksit Bharat by 2047. Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry hailed the launch of NeVA as a milestone, stating that it not only digitises legislative functioning but also enables live-streaming of proceedings, ensuring greater public access and transparency. He noted that the move would save 3–5 tonnes of paper annually supporting Digital India, Go Green, and Good Governance.

Youth Engagement Program and Dashboard for One Health under the National One Health Mission (NOHM) were launched

New Delhi, July 12 (GNS): The first State and Union Territory Engagement Workshop under NOHM concluded successfully on 9th June 2025, charting a collaborative path forward for strengthening India’s integrated One Health approach. Chaired by Prof. Ajay Sood, Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India, the workshop brought together a diverse array of stakeholders, including state government officials, representatives of all the stakeholder departments, and other agencies.

The workshop commenced with opening remarks from Prof. Ajay Sood, setting the vision for the workshop. He emphasised the pivotal role state governments play in advancing the mission’s objectives. Ms. Punya Salila Srivastava, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, commended the initiative and stressed the need to align and leverage relevant resources to



strengthen the state infrastructure. Dr. Rajiv Bahl, Secretary, Department of Health Research & Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research, underscored the critical importance of multi-sectoral engagement in tackling complex One Health challenges, the importance of syndromic surveillance and mock drills like the Vishanu Yuddh Abhyas that tests the preparedness of rapid response teams and intersectoral coordination in the face of disease outbreaks. Dr. Sindura Ganapathi, PSA fellow,

presented a brief overview of the mission’s objectives and governance mechanism. Representatives from the states of Gujarat and Kerala, nominated for the mission’s governance committees (on a rotation basis), showcased their respective states’ One Health activities, including governance, institutional mechanisms, surveillance progress and others.

During the inaugural session, PSA launched the Youth Engagement Program for One Health mission. This program is an initiative

to actively engage with the youth of the nation through existing national platforms and state machinery to leverage their involvement in the mission. Additionally, a dashboard on One Health initiatives by states, central ministry/departments and multilaterals was launched and is accessible through the Office of PSA website (<https://www.psa.gov.in/oneHealthDashboard>). This dashboard is in development and currently hosts the various initiatives by the respective agencies.

