

India's 1st semiconductor chip to be ready for production by 2025: Ashwini Vaishnaw

NEW DELHI, Feb 26 (IANS)

THE first 'Made in India' semiconductor chip would be ready for production this year, Union Minister for Railways and Electronics and IT, Ashwini Vaishnaw, has said.

India has made significant progress in semiconductor manufacturing, with five units under construction simultaneously. The first 'Made in India' chip is expected to roll out by 2025.

Addressing the 'Global Investors Summit 2025' in Bhopal via video conferencing, the minister congratulated technology company HLBS for the new plant as well as an upcoming state-of-the-art manufacturing and R&D facility in IT Park in the city. The newly-inaugurated



IT campus by HLBS spans 1 lakh square feet, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities to manufacture IT hardware and electronic products under one roof.

The plant will produce servers, desktops, motherboards, chassis, RAM, SSDs, drones, and robots, among other end-to-end electronic components. Vaishnaw

acknowledged the significant contributions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and state Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, saying that under the leadership of PM Modi, electronic manufacturing in Madhya Pradesh has gained significant momentum.

Two electronic manufacturing clusters have been approved by PM Modi, one in Bhopal and the other in Jabalpur.

Currently, 85 companies are actively engaged in the electronics manufacturing sector in the state. The Union Minister also highlighted the government's commitment to technological advancement by announcing the training of 20,000 engineers under the Future Skills Programme in Madhya Pradesh.

Trump plans to offer a 'gold card' visa with a path to US citizenship for USD 5 million

WASHINGTON, Feb 26 (AP)

PRESIDENT Donald Trump said Tuesday that he plans to offer a "gold card" visa with a path to citizenship for USD5 million, replacing a 35-year-old visa for investors.

"They'll be wealthy and they'll be successful, and they'll be spending a lot of money and paying a lot of taxes and employing a lot of people, and we think it's going to be extremely successful," Trump said in the Oval Office.

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said the "Trump Gold Card" would replace EB-5 visas



in two weeks. EB-5s were created by Congress in 1990 to generate foreign investment and are available to people who spend about USD1 million on a com-

pany that employs at least 10 people.

Lutnick said the gold card — actually a green card, or permanent legal residency — would raise the price of admission for investors and do away with fraud and "nonsense" that he said characterise the EB-5 program. Like other green cards, it would include a path to citizenship.

About 8,000 people obtained investor visas in the 12-month period ending Sept. 30, 2022, according to the Homeland Security Department's most recent Yearbook of Immigration Statistics. The Congressional Research Service reported in 2021

that EB-5 visas pose risks of fraud, including verification that funds were obtained legally.

Investors' visas are common around the world. Henley & Partners, an advisory firm, says more than 100 countries around the world offer "golden visas" to wealthy individuals, including the United States, United Kingdom, Spain, Greece, Malta, Australia, Canada and Italy.

Trump made no mention of the requirements for job creation. And, while the number of EB-5 visas is capped, Trump mused that the federal government could sell 10 million "gold cards" to reduce the deficit.

India planning to raise ethanol blending by 20 per cent: Hardeep Singh Puri

GUWAHATI, Feb 26 (IANS)

UNION Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri stated on Wednesday that India is considering raising its goal to blend ethanol with gasoline to more than 20 per cent.

He stated that 19.6 per cent blending has already been accomplished while speaking at the Advantage Assam 2.0 investment summit in Guwahati today.

"We'll be considering blending more than 20 per cent biofuel. An NITI Aayog group has already been established, and they are investigating," he stated.

Despite India's developmental hurdles, all fossil fuel production businesses will reach net zero by 2045, Union Minister Puri said. Meanwhile, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "The



Ministry of Petroleum also announced at the last Advantage Assam Summit that they will bring a gas grid from Barauni to Numaligarh, again 1600 km gas grid."

"Even though Assam accounts for 14 per cent of India's total gas

production, our domestic output may only meet 7-8 per cent of the country's needs due to the state's increasing industrialisation and City Gas's dedication.

You have therefore dispelled the notion that Assam gas is being used elsewhere in the nation by

completing the 1600 km pipeline and northeast gas grid in record time.

For Assam's development, we are instead importing gas from other parts of the nation and the global market," he added. Notably, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar said on Tuesday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government has acted quickly and decisively in last 10 years when it comes to the development of Assam and all Northeastern states.

This session was organised as strategic forum to advance Assam's role in India's Act East Policy, focusing on enhancing regional connectivity, boosting trade, and strengthening cross-border collaboration emphasised Assam's position as the gateway to India's Act East Policy.

UN chief to visit B'desh in March

Dhaka: UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres, who is scheduled to visit Dhaka on March 13-16, has assured that the UN will continue to mobilise the international community to support Bangladesh as a host to the forcibly displaced Rohingya, reports **Ahsan Tasnim**. He reiterated the UN's strong solidarity with Bangladesh and its support for the transition process under Yunus' leadership.

Guterres, in a his letter shared by the chief adviser office on Wednesday, said, "I will continue to exercise my good offices, including through my special envoy on the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, to work closely with regional actors, Asean and other stakeholders, towards a political solution to the crisis in Myanmar, including creating conditions conducive to safe and voluntary return of Rohingya to Rakhine."

Ukraine, U.S. agree on a preliminary minerals accord

Associated Press

KYIV

A framework economic deal with the U.S. is ready, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Wednesday, but U.S. security guarantees that Kyiv views as vital for its war with Russia remain to be decided and a full agreement could hinge on talks in Washington as early as Friday.

The deal is a preliminary step toward a comprehensive agreement that will be subject to ratification by Ukraine's parliament, Mr. Zelenskyy said during a press conference.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal also confirmed that they have reached a preliminary agreement on a broad economic deal that includes



Ukraine's PM Denys Shmyhal

U.S. access to Ukraine's rare earth minerals.

The agreement sets out the terms and conditions of an investment fund for the rebuilding of Ukraine, according to Mr. Shmyhal.

Ukraine needs to know first where the U.S. stands on its continued military support, Mr. Zelenskyy said.

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Russia, U.S. envoys to meet in Turkiye to discuss the operation of embassies

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov confirms the development during a visit to Qatar; staffing at embassies had been hit hard in recent years by mutual expulsions of large numbers of diplomats and other restrictions imposed by both countries

Associated Press

Diplomats from Russia and the United States will meet in Istanbul on Thursday to discuss the operation of their respective embassies in Moscow and Washington, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Wednesday.

The meeting follows Russia-U.S. talks in Saudi Arabia last week that marked an extraordinary shift in U.S. foreign policy under President Donald Trump and a clear departure from U.S.-led efforts to isolate Russia over its war in Ukraine.



Sudden shift: Activists protest against Donald Trump's policy on Ukraine in front of the U.S. embassy in Kyiv on Wednesday. AP

At the talks, Moscow and Washington agreed to start working toward ending the war and improving their diplomatic and economic ties. That includes restoring the staffing at embassies, which in recent years were hit hard by mutual expulsions of large

numbers of diplomats and other restrictions.

Prior to Mr. Trump's second administration, ties between Moscow and Washington had fallen to Cold War lows after Russia illegally annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and invaded Ukraine in 2022.

No Ukrainian officials were present at last week's talks. The Kremlin insisted that the meeting was about restoring relations and dialogue with the United States, something it said would pave the way for eventual peace talks.

Speaking to journalists during a visit to Qatar, Mr. Lavrov said that "diplo-

mats of high-level experts" will meet in Istanbul on Thursday. He said they will discuss "the systemic problems that have accumulated as a result of the unlawful activities of the previous (U.S.) administration to create artificial obstacles for the work of the Russian embassy, to which we, naturally, reciprocated and also created uncomfortable conditions for the work of the American embassy in Moscow."

Mr. Lavrov added that based on the outcome of the meeting, "it will be clear how quickly and effectively we can move forward."