

Microsoft commits \$17.5 bn investment in India: Nadella

NEW DELHI, Dec 9 (PTI)

MICROSOFT plans to invest USD 17.5 billion (around Rs 1.58 lakh crore) in India to help build infrastructure, skills, and sovereign capabilities needed for the country's AI future, CEO Satya Nadella said on social media platform X. "To support the country's ambitions, Microsoft is committing USD 17.5B—our largest investment ever in Asia—to help build the infrastructure, skills, and sovereign capabilities needed for India's AI-first future," Nadella said on X after meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Microsoft, in a statement, said the company plans to invest USD 17.5 billion in India over the next four years (2026-2029) to drive AI diffusion at a population scale.

"It comes on top of Microsoft's earlier commitment of USD 3 billion announced in January 2025," the statement said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, in New Delhi. (PTI)

Intel will support India Semiconductor Mission: CEO Tan

NEW DELHI, Dec 9 (PTI)

US COMPUTER chip major Intel CEO Lip-Bu Tan on Tuesday said that the company is committed to support the Government's India Semiconductor Mission, which aims to set up an active high-end electronic component ecosystem in the country. The statement from Tan followed his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Honored to meet Prime Minister @narendramodi in New Delhi this afternoon. We had a wide-ranging discussion on a variety of topics related to technology, computing and the tremendous potential for India. I applaud the Prime Minister for putting in place a comprehensive semiconductor design and manufacturing policy and Intel is committed to support the India Semiconductor Mission," Tan said in a post on X. Intel has been in India for almost four decades.

While the company has one of the biggest research and development centres in the country, it has yet to produce its chipset in India.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets CEO of Intel Lip-Bu Tan, in New Delhi. (PTI)

The company has signed an agreement with the Tata Group to manufacture and assemble semiconductors in India for the local market.

3D Glass Solutions' packaging unit by Heterogeneous Integration Packaging Solutions Pvt Ltd is the first project in India which involves investment from Intel Corporation.

Navy Chief Admiral Tripathi embarks on 4-day visit to Brazil

NEW DELHI, Dec 9 (PTI)

NAVY Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi on Tuesday began a four-day visit to Brazil to consolidate the bilateral maritime security cooperation.

Admiral Tripathi will hold discussions with Brazilian Defence Minister Jose Mucio, Chief of the Joint Staff of the Brazilian Armed Forces Admiral Renato Rodrigues de Aguiar Freire and Commander of the Brazilian Navy Admiral Marcos Sampaio Olsen. "These interactions will provide an opportunity to review ongoing bilateral maritime cooperation, enhance operational-level linkages and explore new avenues for collaboration between the two Navies," the Indian Navy said. It said the visit aims to consolidate the robust and growing maritime partnership between the Indian and the Brazilian Navy, which is an important pillar of broader India-Brazil strategic partnership.

"The discussions will focus on shared maritime priorities, naval interoperability, capacity building and collaboration within multilateral frameworks, including the broader South-South collaboration," the Navy said in a statement.

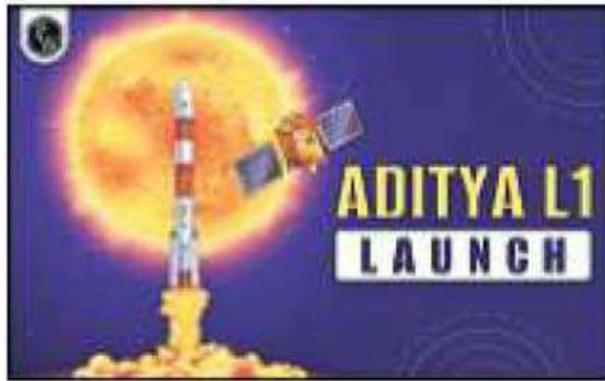
It said Admiral Tripathi's visit reaffirms the Indian Navy's commitment to enhancing cooperation with the Brazilian Navy in the areas of maritime security, professional exchanges and capacity building.

India's Aditya-L1 joins global effort in landmark solar storm study: ISRO

BENGALURU, Dec 9 (PTI)

INDIA'S first solar observatory Aditya-L1 played a key role in helping scientists decode why the strongest solar storm in more than two decades that struck Earth in May 2024 behaved so unusually, ISRO said on Tuesday.

Aditya-L1, which joined forces with six US satellites, including NASA's Wind, with its precise magnetic field measurements helped researchers to study the rare event simultaneously from multiple vantage points in space, it said. According to a statement from ISRO, the solar storm, now called "Gannon's storm", which disturbed Earth's environment severely, involved a series of giant explosions on the Sun, known as



coronal mass ejections (CMEs).

These CMEs are massive bubbles of hot gas and

magnetic energy thrown out from the Sun into Space. When these bubbles hit Earth, they can shake our planet's magnetic shield and cause serious trouble for satellites, communication systems, GPS, and even power grids, the country's space agency said.

In this regard, the space agency said that a team of Indian scientists has published a breakthrough study in the *Astrophysical Journal Letters* that possibly explains why the strongest solar storm which struck Earth in May 2024 in more than two decades behaved so unusually.

"During the May 2024 solar storm, scientists discovered something unusual--the Sun's magnetic fields, which are like twisted ropes inside a solar storm, were breaking and rejoining within the storm," ISRO said.

India records highest-ever exports in H1 FY26

■ “India’s export ecosystem has benefitted from structural reforms, improvement in logistics, expansion of port capacity, and targeted export facilitation measures,” Prasada said



NEW DELHI, Dec 9 (IANS)

INDIA'S export sector has delivered a powerful message of resilience and global competitiveness in FY 2025–26, even as global markets face persistent uncertainty as the country recorded its highest-ever quarterly exports in both Q1 and Q2 of the financial year, the Parliament was informed on Tuesday. Overall exports in the first half of FY 2025–26, covering April to September 2025, reached \$ 418.6 billion, rising from \$ 395.7 billion in the same period last year, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Ministry Jitin Prasada said in a written reply to Lok Sabha.

This reflects a growth of 5.8 per cent marking the strongest half-year export

performance ever for India. The Ministry said that India's export momentum remains stable despite a temporary dip in October 2025.

Exports in that month were marginally lower due to a very high base in October 2024, which had been the best October export performance on record. The Minister asserted that India's export strategy is built on credibility, resilience, and active global engagement.

He said that high-level visits and negotiations with partner countries continue to strengthen economic ties and produce long-term outcomes, even if short-term fluctuations occur.

“India's export ecosystem has benefitted from structural reforms, improvement in logistics, expansion

of port capacity, and targeted export facilitation measures,” Prasada said.

“Production-Linked Incentive schemes have helped boost manufacturing competitiveness, while services exports remain a strong pillar of the external sector,” he added. On trade agreements, the Government informed Parliament that five major Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) have been signed in the last five years. These include agreements with Mauritius, the UAE, Australia, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), and the India–UK trade pact, which will come into force after ratification. The Ministry added that such agreements involve continuous negotiations and reciprocal visits, which help build trust and deep economic cooperation.

'DRDO able to save over Rs 2,64,000 cr due to indigenous research in 5 years'

NEW DELHI, Dec 9 (PTI)

A PARLIAMENTARY panel has said the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has been able to save an amount of Rs 2,64,156 crore because of its own "indigenous research" over the last five years.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence in a report presented in Parliament on Tuesday also said that in the past and current year, "crucial milestones in developing next-generation hypersonic technologies and missiles have been achieved" by the DRDO.

The committee congratulated the DRDO for its "various feats" and said the agency will "continue its successful stride" in the fields of various complex and critical technologies to strengthen indigenous defence research and development capabilities of the country, according to the report.

"The Committee has also been apprised that DRDO has been able to save an amount of Rs 2,64,156 crore because of its own indigenous research during the last five years," it said.

The government in its response has told the panel about some of the achievement of the DRDO in recent times.

Trump's ceasefire plan in Gaza faces pitfalls

DOHA, Dec 9 (AP)

WITH the remains of one hostage still in Gaza, the first phase of the US-brokered ceasefire in the war between Israel and Hamas is nearly complete, after a two-month process plagued by delays and finger-pointing.

Now, the key players — including Israel, the Palestinian militant Hamas group, the United States and a diverse list of international parties — are to move to a far more complicated second phase that could reshape the Middle East.

US President Donald Trump's 20-point plan — which was approved by the UN Security Council — lays out an ambitious vision for ending Hamas' rule of Gaza.

But if the deal stalls, Gaza could be trapped in an unstable limbo for years to come.

Here is a closer look at the next stages of the ceasefire and the potential pitfalls.

STABILISATION FORCE Trump's plan calls for the formation of an international force — known as International Stabilisation Force — to maintain security and train Palestinian police to one day to take over. That force has not yet been formed, and a deployment date has not been announced.

Some countries — including Egypt, Turkey, Indonesia, Pakistan and Indonesia — have expressed willingness to participate. But no firm decisions have been made.

Trump has said he will head an international board to supervise a committee of Palestinian technocrats running Gaza's day-to-day affairs. The board will oversee reconstruction and an open-ended reform process by the Palestinian Authority, with the goal of one day allowing the internationally recognised authority to govern Gaza.

So far, Trump is the only board member officially named, though former British Prime Minister Tony Blair's name has been floated as a possibility.

RECONSTRUCTION: Trump's plan calls for an economic development plan to "rebuild and energise Gaza," which suffered widespread destruction during the war and where most of the territory's 2 million people are displaced and unemployed. Still, no such plan has been announced. Egypt is expected to host a conference this month for donor nations to pledge reconstruction aid.

DISARMAMENT: The ceasefire deal calls for Hamas to surrender all of its weapons under the supervision of international monitors. Militants who disarm will be granted amnesty and the option to leave Gaza.

However, Hamas, whose ideology is based on armed resistance against Israel, says it will not disarm until Israel ends its occupation of Palestinian territories.

A PALESTINIAN GOVERNMENT: The Palestinians are to form a "technocratic, apolitical" committee to run daily affairs in Gaza, under the supervision of the Board of Peace. The committee's members have not been announced and Israel's opposition to having any Palestinians connected to Hamas or the Palestinian Authority on it could make choosing them more difficult.

ISRAELI WITHDRAWALS: Under the ceasefire, Israel is to withdraw from all of Gaza, with the exception of a small buffer zone along the border. At the moment, Israel retains control of just over half of Gaza.

Further withdrawals will be based upon "standards, milestones and timeframes linked to demilitarisation" to be negotiated by Israel, the US, the international force and other "guarantors."

Cambodia vows fierce fight against Thailand

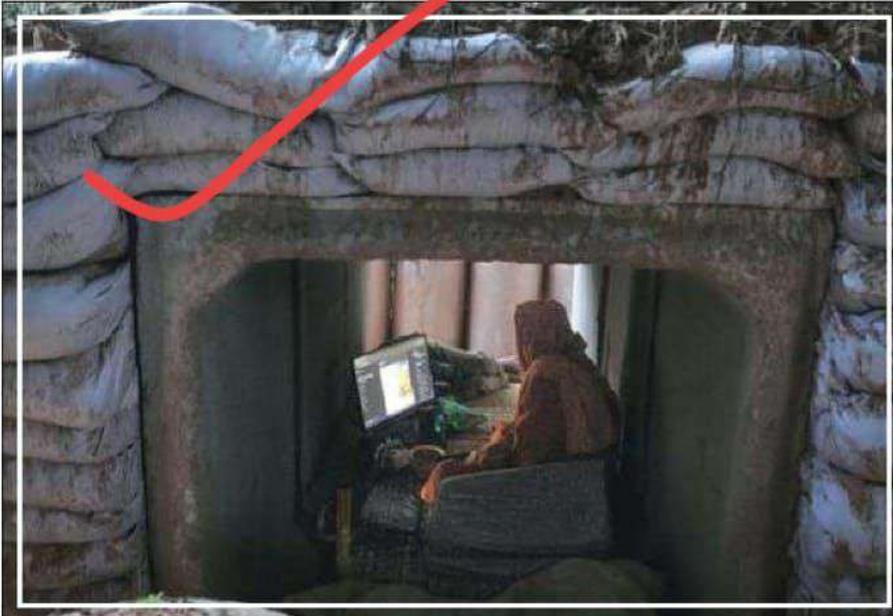
Each side blames the other for firing the first shots on Sunday night

SURIN(Thailand), Dec 9 (AP)

CAMBODIA'S powerful Senate President Hun Sen on Tuesday vowed that his country would carry out a fierce fight against Thailand as a second day of widespread renewed combat between the Southeast Asian neighbours drove tens of thousands of people to flee border areas.

Fighting broke out following a skirmish in which one Thai soldier was killed on Sunday, despite a ceasefire that ended five days of fighting in July over competing territorial claims along their border, which resulted in dozens of civilian and military dead on both sides, and the evacuation of over 1,00,000 civilians.

In a statement posted to Facebook and Telegram, Hun Sen claimed that his country had refrained from firing back on Monday, but overnight began to shoot back at Thai forces. He wrote that a strategy of concentrating on where Thailand was advancing would allow Cambodia to "to weaken and destroy enemy forces through counterattacks."



A Thai Buddhist monk uses his computer while taking shelter in Buriram province, Thailand on Tuesday after he fled clashes between Thai and Cambodian soldiers. (AP/PTI)

Thailand's army said, artillery at a village in Sa Kaeo province early on Tuesday morning, though the strike caused no casualties. Thailand says that Cambodian forces had fired

Cambodian forces also fired at its troops on Sunday and Monday, as each side blames the other for firing the first shots.

"Cambodia wants peace, but Cambodia is forced to fight back to defend its territory," Hun Sen said. Hun Sen was Cambodia's long-serving prime minister until 2023, when he was succeeded by his son Hun Manet, but is still widely seen as the country's de facto leader.

Cambodia's military announced Tuesday that the new fighting had killed seven civilians and wounded 20. A spokesperson for the Thai military announced Tuesday that one soldier had been killed and 29 wounded in the new fighting.

Speaking at a news conference, Thai Rear Adm. Surasant Kongsiri said the navy was strengthening its position in eastern Thailand near the border with Cambodia.

Thailand on Monday carried out airstrikes along the frontier, which it said were a defensive action targeting military installations. Surasant said such operation would continue "until attacks stop."

IMF approves \$1.2 bn fresh disbursement for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Dec 9 (PTI)

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a fresh disbursement of around USD 1.2 billion to Pakistan under a bilateral arrangement, highlighting the country “maintained stability” despite the devastating floods.

The IMF Executive Board granted approval under a dual-track bailout, the 37-month Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the climate-focused Resilience Sustainability Facility (RSF), on Monday in a meeting held in Washington, Dawn reported on Tuesday.

Cash-strapped Pakistan is currently in 24th IMF programme agreed last year to provide it USD 7 billion dollars over a period of 39 months. As per the latest approval, Pakistan is allowed to draw USD 1 billion under EFF and USD 200 million under RSF, the report said.