

No end to crisis: Trump warns of 'economic D-Day' against Iran



■ **By Farnoush Amiri**
NEW YORK, Aug 21 (AP)

NEARING the six-month mark of the Iran war and facing diminishing stockpiles of key weapons, the Trump administration is tout-

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi rejects economic threats by US, saying that such "failed policies" will stir more hostility among Iranians and "bring more failures"

ing a crushing financial campaign against Tehran, promising an "economic D-Day" against a country that has so far withstood nearly five decades of punishing American sanctions.

With sparse details, President Donald Trump announced this week that the US would be imposing an "unprecedented" level of economic warfare and isolation on Iran, aiming to force its leadership to cave to demands to end its nuclear programme
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PIRATES hijack 2 vessels with 22 Indians on board

Eritrea-flagged oil products tanker M.T. Sibhu 1, carrying 20 crew members, including 16 Indians, hijacked in the Gulf of Aden off Yemeni coast

Cameroon-flagged M/V LUTUF with 10 crew members, including six Indians hijacked off Somalia's Puntland coast

NEW DELHI, Aug 21 (PTI)

TWO commercial vessels carrying a total of 22 Indian nationals have been hijacked by armed pirates in separate incidents off Yemen and Somalia, a senior



Shipping Ministry official said Friday. The Indian crew members aboard both vessels are safe, according to the latest information available, the official said.

The Eritrea-flagged oil products tanker M.T. Sibhu 1, carrying 20 crew members, including 16 Indians, was hijacked in the Gulf of Aden on August 20, about 30



nautical miles off the Yemeni coast, the official said.

The crew also includes one Syrian, one Sudanese and one Iraqi national, while the nationality of another seafarer has yet to be confirmed. A second vessel, the Cameroon-flagged M/V LUTUF, was hijacked on August 17 off Somalia's Puntland coast,

according to the official. The vessel has 10 crew members, including six Indians. The Forward Seamen's Union of India (FSUI) in a post on X raised concerns over "dangers faced by Indian seafarers amid the Iran war."

It released footage of what it claimed to be a hijacking of "a vessel carrying 22 crew members, including 21 Indians, in the Strait of Hormuz on April 22."

The footage was posted on Friday and it was unclear if the FSUI was talking of a separate hijacking or the latest ones.

The Shipping Ministry official quoted above said, "As reported by Recruitment and Placement Service Licence (RPSL) agency - SKS Krishi Marine Services (Op) Private Limited, six armed pirates are presently onboard the vessel (M.T. Sibhu-1) and have taken control of the vessel."

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Nepal, India agree to boost security at sensitive locations along border

KATHMANDU, Aug 21 (IANS)

NEPAL and India have agreed to enhance security surveillance at sensitive locations along their border through the use of modern technologies, including CCTV cameras and other equipment, during a meeting of a high-level joint mechanism between the two countries.

The two countries face the risk of cross-border crime because of the porous border between them, although the open border has also strengthened people-to-people ties across the two countries.

Relations between Nepal and India are often characterized as those of "Roti and Beti" (bread and daughter), reflecting long-standing traditions of cross-border livelihoods and marriages.

During the two-day 14th meeting of the Nepal-India Joint Working Group (JWG) on Border Management, which concluded in Dehradun on Friday, discussions focused on strengthening effective coordination and real-time information exchange between relevant agencies of the two countries to curb cross-border crimes and illegal activities, Nepal's Home Ministry said in a statement.

Cross-border crimes and illegal activ-

ities, including drug trafficking, trafficking of psychotropic substances and prohibited and controlled medicines, wildlife and human trafficking, economic crimes involving counterfeit currency, and the illegal trade in arms and ammunition, were among the issues discussed during the meeting. "The Nepali side also raised emerging security challenges, including cybercrime and cross-border digital fraud," the ministry said.

India's Ministry of Home Affairs said in a statement that both sides reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral cooperation on border management and security and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation in these areas.

"Discussions covered addressing trans-border crime and criminal activities; the strengthening and effective utilization of border infrastructure, particularly Integrated Check Posts (ICPs), roads and railway networks; and the removal of encroachments and maintenance of boundary pillars," it said adding, "The two sides also exchanged views on strengthening institutional coordination and capacity building across various sectors, and agreed to sustain engagement in these areas."

SC reduces 3-yr mandatory legal practice to one year for entry level judicial exam

NEW DELHI, Aug 21 (PTI)

THE Supreme Court on Friday modified its May 2025 verdict by reducing to one year the earlier mandatory requirement of three-year legal practice for law graduates for taking entry level judicial service examinations.

However, the selected candidates will have to undergo training at the judicial academy and a further one year clerkship, a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices AG Masih and K Vinod Chandran said in a split decision of 2:1 while dismissing the review petition.

The bench said that candidates appearing in judicial exams notified between May 25, 2025 and March 31, 2027 are eligible regardless of prior experience.

It said such candidates, upon selection, will be appointed only



as trainee judicial officers for one year and they would have to undergo a further period of one year structured clerkship.

On May 20 last year, the top court had barred fresh law grad-

uates from appearing in the entry-level judicial services examination, fixing a minimum three-year law practice criterion.

The top court held that the sudden restoration of the three-

year practice rule without any transitional arrangement has created hardship for young lawyers and law graduates and hence, a limited intervention was warranted. It said for candidates in exams to be notified after April 1, 2027, the new arrangement will be applicable.

The top court pronounced the verdict on a batch of review petitions challenging its May 2025 judgement, which mandated three years of legal practice for candidates seeking entry into the judicial service through direct recruitment as Civil Judges (Junior Division).

CJI Kant, while pronouncing the majority verdict, said the bench did not see any reason to interfere with the fundamental reasoning in the earlier judgement that a candidate must have exposure to the legal profession

before joining the judiciary.

It, however, said the requirement of prior experience must have a reasonable nexus and no hardship should be caused to young advocates and clarified that the earlier decision does not require reconsideration on the aspect of requirement of prior experience. The top court had on July 28 reserved its decision on a batch of review petitions and writ petitions filed in the matter.

On March 13, the top court asked all the High Courts to extend the last date for submission of applications for civil judge (junior division) posts to April 30.

It had sought the opinion of all the High Courts, National Law Universities and other law schools on the three-year criterion for appearing in the entry-level judicial services examination.

Govt says 29 FDI proposals worth Rs 4,895.65 cr reported after easing 10 pc Chinese stake rule

NEW DELHI, Aug 21 (PTI)

AS MANY as 29 FDI proposals totalling about Rs 4,895.65 crore (over USD 500 million) have been reported so far following the Government's decision in May to permit overseas companies with up to 10 per cent Chinese shareholding to invest in India under the automatic route, an official statement said on Friday. Before May, these companies, even with a minor stake held by an individual or firm from a country sharing land border with India, were required to seek Government approval to invest in any sector in India.

Following the demand from the stakeholders, the Government amended the norms. As per the amendments, foreign companies



having a Chinese/Hong Kong shareholding of up to 10 per cent are eligible to invest in India in sectors where FDI is permitted under the automatic route, subject to sectoral conditions. However, these relaxed FDI rules do not apply to entities registered in China or Hong Kong or other countries sharing land borders with India. Countries that share land border with India are China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Afghanistan.

The Finance Ministry notified the changes to this effect under FEMA on May 1, 2026. "A total of 29 FDI investments have been reported under the revised framework up to 20 August, 2026, involving proposed FDI of Rs 4,895.65 crore," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said. It said these investments span a range of sectors, with significant investments in information technology, artificial intelligence, information and communication, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, data centres and transport services, among others. The 29 investments have been reported from investors/entities based in jurisdictions, including Mauritius, the United States, Korea, Japan, Singapore, Luxembourg and Cayman Islands.

Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft delivered to Navy

KOCHI, Aug 21 (PTI)

COCHIN Shipyard on Friday delivered the indigenously-designed and constructed Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft to the Indian Navy, officials said.

The vessel named 'Mangrol', the third of eight Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Crafts (ASW SWCs) constructed by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), a public sector ship builder, marks another milestone in the country's efforts towards self-reliance in defence manufacturing, a statement said.

The delivery protocol was signed by Dr Harikrishnan S, Director (Operations), CSL, 'Mangrol', at CSL.

According to CSL, the warship has been designed and constructed in accordance with the classification rules of Det Norske Veritas (DNV) and is equipped to undertake underwater surveillance, search and rescue operations and Low Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO).

"The vessel is specifically designed to conduct anti-submarine warfare operations in coastal waters and is also equipped with mine-laying capabilities. 'Mangrol' derives its name from the coastal township of Mangrol in Surat district."