

'Looking to advance India's vision for region free from terror'

PM Modi arrives in Uzbekistan

TASHKENT, Aug 29 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Uzbekistan on Saturday, where he will hold delegation-level talks with President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, aiming to further strengthen the strategic partnership

He visited Yangi Uzbekiston Park and laid a wreath at the Independence Monument after arrival. President Mirziyoyev accompanied Modi to the monument established on the 30th anniversary of the country's independence, symbolising the ideals of freedom and goodness.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being received by Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev upon his arrival, in Tashkent on Saturday. (PMO via PTI)

between the two countries.

President Mirziyoyev welcomed PM Modi on arrival at the airport in Tashkent. This is PM Modi's fourth visit to Uzbekistan. "Landed in Tashkent to a warm welcome by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. Grateful to him for the special gesture. This is my fourth visit to Uzbekistan, reflecting the depth and growing momentum of our bilateral relations," PM Modi posted on X after arrival.

In his departure statement, Modi said the trip will advance the shared pursuit of peace, stability and prosperity, values that lie at the heart of India's engagement with the world.

"India has been an active and constructive member of the SCO since 2017. I look forward to advancing India's vision for the region, anchored in Security, Connectivity and Opportunity, and to working
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India, Argentina deepen trade ties, explore lithium, pharma access

NEW DELHI, Aug 29 (IANS)

THE Fourth Meeting of the India–Argentina Joint Trade Committee held in Buenos Aires reviewed progress on the roadmap agreed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2025 visit and reaffirmed commitments to deepen strategic and economic ties, an official statement said on Saturday.

The discussions covered investment opportunities across mining, energy and infrastructure, and noted significant progress by India's KABIL in Argentina's lithium sector.

KABIL's mining activities in Catamarca, the first lithium mining initiative by an Indian company in Argentina, have progressed significantly with the completion of Phase II drilling.

Opportunities for further engagement in the

provinces of Salta and Jujuy are also being explored to deepen the strategic partnership, the statement added.

Significant progress was also made in facilitating market access for Indian pharmaceutical products. Argentina has committed to work towards upgrading India from Annex II to Annex I under its pharmaceutical regulatory framework and reducing barriers to entry.

The move will provide greater opportunities for Indian pharmaceutical companies and contribute to improving access to quality and affordable healthcare in Argentina.

Building on the 2019 Memorandum of Understanding between Argentina's ANMAT and India's CDSCO, both sides committed to cooperation through joint initiatives in Ayurveda and Yoga.

India, Kuwait agree to strengthen bilateral defence cooperation

NEW DELHI, Aug 29 (IANS)

THE inaugural meeting of the India-Kuwait Joint Defence Committee (JDC) was held in New Delhi on Friday, where the two Countries agreed to further strengthen Bilateral Defence co-operation across a wide range of areas, including training, military exercises, military medicine, staff talks, defence industry, and Research and Development.

"The first meeting of the JDC marked an important step towards operationalising the objectives outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Defence Cooperation between India and Kuwait, signed during the visit of the Prime Minister of India to Kuwait in December 2024," the Ministry of Defence stated.

The meeting was co-chaired by Joint Secretary Amitabh Prasad and Brigadier General Raed Alsakran of the five-member Kuwaiti delegation. The Indian delegation comprised representatives from the three Services, Department of Defence Production, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Armed Forces Medical Services and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

Ahead of the JDC meeting, Brigadier General Raed Alsakran laid a wreath at the National War Memorial, New Delhi, and paid homage to the fallen heroes. The Kuwaiti delegation visited Defence Public Sector Undertakings



Ministry of Defence Joint Secretary Amitabh Prasad, right, and Kuwait Delegation leader Brigadier General Raed Alsakran during the inaugural meeting of India-Kuwait Joint Defence Committee (JDC), in New Delhi. (PTI)

(DPSUs) Bhawan, New Delhi, on the first day of their visit, where discussions were held with representatives of the Indian Defence Industry on potential areas of mutual cooperation.

Manufacture in India, build for world: Nirmala in US

■ By Sagar Kulkarni
WASHINGTON, Aug 29 (PTI)

FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman invited global investors to set up manufacturing bases, and technology and innovation centres in India, urging them to leverage talent and opportunity to build for the world. Addressing a high-level Business Roundtable with leading investors and business leaders in Chicago on Friday, Sitharaman highlighted India's broad-based growth, reform momentum and expanding opportunities for long-term investment.

Sitharaman emphasised that India's investment proposition rests not on any single sector, but on the convergence of scale, growth, talent, infrastructure, technology and sustained reform over the past decade.

"The policy environment is increasingly focused on enabling businesses to invest, manufacture, innovate and expand," she said at the roundtable organised by India's Consulate General in Chicago in association with US-India Strategic Partnership Forum. The Finance Minister invited global partners to co-



Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman addresses a business roundtable with investors and business leaders in Chicago, Illinois, United States. (@FinMinIndia/X via PTI)

develop, co-produce and build for global markets.

She urged them not to consider India merely as a market to serve, but as a platform from which to build for the world -- whether as a manufacturing base, technology and innovation centre, con-

sumer market or destination for long-term infrastructure investment -- leveraging India's engineering talent, manufacturing scale and technology ecosystem.

The focus of the meeting was "Manufacture in India - for India and for the world", with oppor-

tunities across manufacturing, AI & digital, financial services, infrastructure, food processing, defence and advanced technologies. "As global companies reassess supply chains and capital allocation, India offers not only scale as a market, but

increasing depth as a long-term investment and operating platform," Sitharaman said. The Minister said India's Digital Public Infrastructure such as Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker, ONDC and India Stack, has created platforms at population scale.

"The next opportunity is to build higher-value businesses in AI, engineering, analytics, product development, semiconductors and electronics, with India's Global Capability Centres increasingly becoming global innovation hubs," she said.

Sitharaman said GIFT City was emerging as an international financial centre connecting global capital with Indian opportunities.

With 1,250 registered entities as of June 2026, it offers opportunities across banking, fund management, reinsurance, aircraft and ship leasing, sustainable finance and other cross-border services, Sitharaman said, inviting global institutions to explore GIFT City as a gateway to India's financial ecosystem.

She said with global supply chains being reconfigured, India offers a compelling combination of a large domestic market and globally competitive manufacturing capabilities. The focus is moving beyond Assembly towards deeper component manufacturing, engineering and advanced technologies, supported by targeted policy measures including production-linked incentives, the Minister said.

No dip in overall deficit even as many parts see good Aug rain

Erratic Distribution Leads To 2% Dip In Acreage Of Kharif Crops

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New Delhi: Better-than-expected rainfall in many parts of the country in August has failed to reduce India's cumulative monsoon rainfall deficit. While the country's cumulative rainfall deficit (since June 1) was 13% as of July 31, it touched nearly 14% a month later due to a huge shortfall in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and some northeastern states.

This deficit led to an acreage gap in the sowing of kharif (summer-sown) crops, with paddy, the major seasonal crop, reporting a decline of more than 3% compared with the corresponding period last year.

Maize that contributes the most as feedstock for ethanol production in the country reported an even bigger decline of more than 4% compared with the corresponding period in 2025. This may eventually create pressure for sugarcane to be used as feedstock for ethanol production.

The acreage of all kharif crops, taken together, was reportedly down nearly 2% as of Friday compared with the corresponding period last year.

Cumulative Rainfall Deficit (June 1-Aug 29)

14% Rainfall deficit in India as on Aug 29

STATE-WISE DEFICIT (20% AND MORE)

	Deficit (%)
Meghalaya	58
Manipur	43
Bihar	42
Andhra Pradesh	41
Arunachal Pradesh	41
Punjab	36
Goa	34
Assam	25
Karnataka	23
Rajasthan	22
Kerala	21
Mizoram	20



Legend

- Large Excess (60% or more)
- Excess (20% to 59%)
- Normal (-19% to 19%)
- Deficient (-59% to -20%)
- Large Deficient (-99% to -60%)
- No Rain (-100%)
- No Data

ar. The acreage deficit was nearly 3% at the end of July.

The acreage could not be increased due to erratic distribution of rainfall in both the key monsoon months of July and Aug.

Though many parts of the country defied El Niño-

linked predictions and got normal rainfall, 12 states have reported a rain deficit of more than 20% since June 1, with Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and three northeastern states — Meghalaya, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh — reporting a huge deficit of

more than 40% in cumulative (June 1-Aug 29) rainfall.

El Niño is a climatic condition which sees the warming of surface waters of the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. It is associated with weak monsoons and harsher summers in India.

Good rains in eastern India during the remaining two days of the month, as predicted by IMD, may slightly reduce the deficit for the region, but it won't help much overall, as the Met department Saturday predicted the continuation of "subdued rainfall activity" over peninsular India during the next week.

Peninsular India has, so far, reported a deficit of more than 23% in cumulative rainfall, leaving Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala largely dry for most of the southwest (summer) monsoon season. Predicting good rains in the east for the next two-three days, IMD said isolated "heavy to very heavy rainfall" is likely over Gangetic West Bengal on Sunday, Jharkhand on Monday and Odisha till Sept 1 due to the "influence of low-pressure area over northwest Bay of Bengal and adjoining West Bengal-north Odisha coasts".

'One Nation, One Time': IST must from March '27

New Delhi: From March next year, all entities in India will be required to use Indian Standard Time for legal, commercial, digital and administrative activities, with govt Saturday notifying the Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2026, reports **Dipak Dash**.

The move, described by govt as "One Nation, One Time," aims to eliminate dependence on foreign time sources such as GPS for critical applications and create a secure, unified national time framework. Officials said synchronised IST will strengthen digital transactions, reduce cybercrime risks and improve timekeeping across transport, telecom and other communication networks.

The rules will come into force 180 days after their publication in Gazette, making IST mandatory from March 2027. Violations of the rules will attract penalties under the Act.

Russian strike blows up Kyiv arms depot, kills 37

Explosions, Fire Damage Dozens Of Nearby Homes

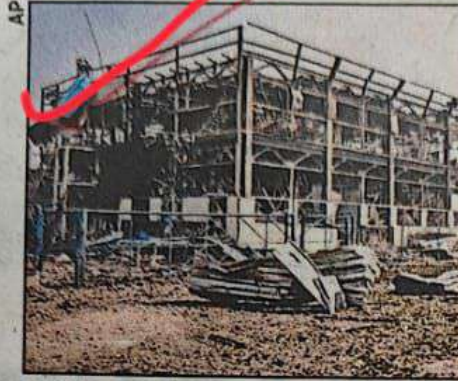
A Russian drone struck a warehouse west of Kyiv that may have been illegally storing munitions in a residential area, according to Ukrainian officials, sparking explosions and fires that damaged dozens of nearby homes and buildings and killing 37 people in one of the war's deadliest attacks this year.

The Friday night attack on the warehouse in Myla, a village in the Bucha district, came on the second of three days of nearly round-the-clock Russian strikes that have severely disrupted life in and around the Ukrainian capital.

Kyiv officials said an unmanned vehicle hit the building, though they didn't specify whether it was one of the jet-powered drones that Russia has increasingly been using to pierce Ukraine's defences.

The warehouse strike sparked a fire that swept through homes and damaged at least 50 residential buildings, said Tymur Tkachenko, head of the local regional military administration. Local media later cited him as saying 34 of the people killed were residents of a care home for the elderly and disabled. More than 370 people were evacuated.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky described it as a "terrible situation" and said it appeared to be the result



A view of the damage after a Russian attack struck a warehouse in Kyiv region on Saturday

of "terrible negligence on the part of those who stored explosives right next to people."

The warehouse strike was followed by a detonation, Zelensky said in a statement. He didn't specify what was kept at the site, but he pointed out that Ukrainian law forbids the storage of ammunition close to people's homes and said criminal proceedings have been opened. "Those who allowed this to happen must be held accountable for their decisions," he said.

Ukrainian PM Serhii Kretsnyi also didn't offer information on the warehouse, but referenced a July attack on the Kyiv suburb of Vyshneve that struck an ammunition depot, killing 22 people.

Russia said it hit a warehouse in Myla that was storing components and launch boosters for long-range drones. It also said it attacked the ports of Mykolaiv and Izmail, and a logistics centre and warehouse facilities storing parts for Ukraine's Flamingo cruise missiles in Kyiv. AP

Black Sea attacks: Turkey summons Ukraine envoy

Turkey summoned Ukraine's ambassador over attacks this week in the Black Sea against a Turkish vessel, and against a second ship that came to tow the first, the country's foreign ministry said Saturday.

The attacks happened on Wednesday and Thursday, the ministry told AFP. "During the meeting, Turkey warned about the absolute need to ensure the safety of people, of assets, of navigation and of the environment in the Black Sea," the ministry said in a statement.

It said the Turkish container ship *Lider Bordo Mavi* was hit on Wednesday while it was off the Russian coast on the Black Sea. The next day, the ship *Lider Kocatepe* sent to tow the cargo vessel was also targeted, the ministry said.

The ministry did not say whether there were any casualties in the attacks.

According to local Turkish media, the container ship was towed to the Turkish port of Samsun. Ankara has been calling for weeks on Ukraine and Russia to suspend their attacks on civilian vessels in the Black Sea. Turkish commercial ships are active in the Black Sea, sailing under various countries' flags, and several have been hit by drones suspected to be launched by Ukraine. AFP

teaching its children

Iran's President admits sanctions impacting economy

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian has admitted that US sanctions on his country are hurting its economy, despite just days ago insisting they would achieve nothing.

"Some say sanctions have no effect at all; to those people, I really don't know what to say," Pezeshkian told state TV in an interview late on Friday. "We are in a war situation, and we must accept these wartime conditions," he added.

On Monday, US treasury secretary Scott Bessent laid out plans for the "economic asphyxiation" of Iran, warning of dire consequences for countries that do not join the American campaign.

The new measures build on a sanctions regime by the US and allies that has been in place since 2018 when President Trump withdrew from an international deal struck with Tehran on its nuclear programme. Pezeshkian said Friday Iran's exports and imports had fallen by 25% to 35% in recent months as the US maintains a naval blockade of Iranian ports. He said price of petrol should be increased in Iran to account for the fall in trade. AFP

US set to take control of major portion of Venezuelan oil wealth

The US is set to take majority control over a huge amount of Venezuela's oil wealth in an unprecedented manoeuvre that officials said would create the world's second-largest private oil company by reserves and secure American petroleum supplies for decades to come.

President **Donald Trump** made the announcement about the arrangement in a Truth Social post on Friday night. It represents his latest move to establish US dominance over the Western Hemisphere, countering years of inroads by China, as part of his embrace of the 19th-century Monroe Doctrine.

Working with Venezuela's interim president, Delcy Rodríguez, a partnership with private business secured majority US control of more than 65 billion barrels of proven reserves in Venezuela, Trump said.

A US official said the country will control 55% of the

effective output from the joint venture, and will obtain the oil at cost. The plan represents an unparalleled modern-day intervention into the economy of a South American country Trump once called the 51st US state, harkening back to British control of Iran's oil fields and the division of Iraqi assets among US and European nations.



It marks the culmination of a campaign in which the US captured Venezuela's president, Nicolas Maduro, in Jan, seized Venezuelan oil tankers and struck several boats allegedly carrying drugs from Venezuela, killing over 200 people.

It's also an untested manoeuvre — one that could be vulnerable to legal challenges and political shifts in Washington. It's not clear that Trump's arrangement would be fully embraced by a future American president, or how it might endure any future political upheaval in Venezuela. BLOOMBERG