

US, Iran exchange strikes; UAE, Jordan targeted too

Trump Destroys Kharg Island, Digitally; Iran Dismisses Post

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: US President Donald Trump appears to have discovered a new battlefield in his increasingly frustrating war with Iran: the realm of artificial intelligence (AI), where he can destroy Iranian oil terminals with the stroke of a keyboard, military victories are instant, and inconvenient questions can be edited out.

On Sunday night, Trump posted an AI-generated video purporting to show Iran's strategic Kharg Island being obliterated, declaring that the vital oil hub was being "blown to smithereens". The video showed spectacular explosions and destruction, which defence analysts say never happened even though fighting resumed Sunday after a month-long lull.

There was no Pentagon confirmation as of Monday morning that such an attack on Kharg Island had taken place but that did not stop Trump from declaring a few hours later that "Iran" is a failed nation and the only thing going for it is "fake news from the USA", which refuses to recognise tremendous American victories. "Iran... IS DEAD! They have no Navy, they have no Air Force, they have no currency, they are not paying their soldiers or police, Inflation is at 300%, and their leadership is in total disarray and incapable of properly representing the country. The only thing they have is FAKE NEWS from the USA, a willingness to kill their protesters (now over 100,000 people dead. They must be tried for war crimes against humanity!), and a good line of "BULL****". Trump raged on his social media platform, inviting ridicule from critics.

Iranian officials, and much of the US political spectrum, treated the presidential outburst as yet another infantile tantrum. "The President of the United States is mentally unwell and has been for quite some time. He fantasised blowing up Iran's Kharg Island. Except it didn't happen. And why would Trump need to blow it up if, as Trump claims, the US has total control of the Strait (sic)?" asked California lawmaker Ted Lieu, even



Trump on Monday again called Iran a failed nation in an online post

Iran says seized cargo ship over Hormuz pollution

Iranian authorities have seized a bulk carrier after they said it dumped oil and sludge into the Strait of Hormuz, state media reported Monday. "Following the publication of images of the discharge of oil into the sea... expert and clean-up teams were dispatched to the site and seized the ship...." the deputy head of the ports and maritime department of the southern Hormozgan province, Esmail Makizadeh, told IRNA news agency. "The seized ship was a bulk carrier carrying sugar and had dumped a mixture of burnt oil, bilge water and industrial sludge directly into the sea." AFP

as Iran dismissed the US claim, saying operations on Kharg were normal.

Kharg handles roughly 90% of Iran's crude-oil exports, making it one of Tehran's most valuable economic and strategic assets. Destroying it would be a major military and economic event — not something normally expected to exist only as a computer-generated video on the president's social-media account.

The episode produced the extraordinary spectacle of an American president announcing a battlefield success while the Pentagon remained unwilling — or unable — to substantiate it. In Washington, the question became less whether Kharg had been "blown to smithereens" than whether the smithereens existed anywhere other than inside a graphics processor unit.

Actual US-Iran fighting resumed Sunday, with American forces striking Iranian rocket-launching equipment

on Larak Island and Iran retaliating with ballistic missiles against US facilities in Jordan; Jordan said eight missiles were intercepted. Tehran also claimed an attack on a US base in the UAE, a claim the UAE rejected, saying it had intercepted an Iranian drone over its territorial waters.

Tehran, meanwhile, has displayed a capacity for remaining operational, with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian attending the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Kyrgyzstan.

The contrast between Trump claims and Iranian behaviour is becoming one of the strangest features of the six-month conflict: Washington is increasingly talking in the language of total victory while Tehran continues to retaliate militarily, manage diplomacy, contest the Strait of Hormuz and seek economic relationships with China, Russia and other partners despite punishing sanctions.

Behind the scenes, the Pentagon has its own problems with reports of dissent among senior commanders over plans to sustain a large US military presence in West Asia. Several four-star commanders and senior admirals are said to have registered formal "non-concurs" over defence secretary Pete Hegseth's plans. The objections reportedly centre on the strain the prolonged Iran operation is placing on American forces and readiness. Hegseth has already presided over an extraordinary turnover of senior military leadership, including the removal of Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George. The army's senior ranks have been hollowed out by the purge, with some key positions remaining vacant. Reports that Hegseth himself could ultimately be vulnerable to Trump's famous personnel churn remain unconfirmed. But the possibility is now part of Washington's think tank tattle, adding an extraordinary layer of uncertainty to an already unsettled Pentagon.

For Trump, AI offers an irresistible solution to all the uncertainty. If reality does not supply enough explosions, victories and surrendering enemies, technology can.

U-Tian in Japan

Economy grew 7.8% in Q1 despite Iran crisis, El Nino

Estimates For Previous Years Revised Upwards

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Indian economy grew 7.8% during April-June quarter (Q1) of the current financial year as strong growth sustained in the manufacturing and services sector along with robust domestic demand, offsetting the anticipated adverse impact of the conflict in West Asia and El Nino conditions. Exports and investment also gained momentum during the quarter.

Official gross domestic product (GDP) data released by NSO on Monday showed that though growth moderated from the upwardly 8.6% recorded in the March quarter (7.8% estimated earlier), it



remained well above the 6.9% recorded during April-June 2025. "The credit for this strong performance goes to the people of India and their hard work. Reforms undertaken by the NDA govt, together with agile management of the economy, are bearing results. The NDA govt led by PM Narendra Modi remains committed to further expanding economic opportunities for all our citizens," finance mi-

nister Nirmala Sitharaman said in a social media post.

Govt also revised its growth estimates for the previous financial years. Growth in 2023-24 is now estimated to have been 7.3%, up from 7.2%, while a similar 10-basis-point (bps) upward revision has been made for 2024-25 and 2025-26 to 7.2% and 7.8%, respectively.

India's exemplary GDP growth of 7.8% during Q1 of FY 2026-27 is a herculean feat. The collective strength of our people ensured India delivered such growth despite oil price shocks and supply chain issues in the midst of global uncertainties. **Doomsayers were doomed and India bloomed... yet again!**

— PM Modi

IMD predicts 'below normal' rainfall in Sept

New Delhi: Monthly rainfall over the country as a whole is most likely to be 'below normal' in Sept, the last month of the monsoon season, said IMD Monday — an indication that the four-month rainy season is likely to end with overall deficient cumulative rainfall, as was predicted earlier due to the impact of El Nino, reports Vishwa Mohan.

IMD said Aug, which reported a deficit of more than 16% in monthly rainfall in the country despite good rains in certain parts, was the warmest Aug in India since 1901, recording a mean temperature of 28.010°C.

► Structural reforms, P 16

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Semicon 2.0: Govt bets on advanced chips, talent

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New Delhi: India plans to train one lakh semiconductor design engineers over five years under Semicon 2.0, as govt looks to build a deeper talent pool alongside its push into advanced chip technologies and manufacturing. The skilling push builds on the first phase of the programme, under which govt said around 85,000 engineers have already been trained in semiconductor design, well ahead of the original timeline.

The next phase of the semiconductor mission will also support R&D towards 7nm-3nm technologies, moving beyond the earlier focus on capabilities up to 28nm.

Electronics and IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said govt expects major global semiconductor equipment makers to establish a presence in India over the coming months, bringing parts of their supply chains with them. This could also create opportunities for domestic companies and MSMEs to supply precision components used in chipmaking equipment. Semicon 2.0 will also widen the design-linked incentive framework. Support, earlier focused on startups and MSMEs, will now be available to larger Indian companies as well as companies owned by Overseas Citizens of India.

At the manufacturing end, Central fiscal support for new silicon fabs has been reduced to 40% of eligible expenditure from 50% under the earlier scheme. Govt said the cut reflects greater confidence among investors about setting up semiconductor manufacturing in India.

Ahead of SCO, PM holds talks with Kyrgyz prez, PM of Armenia

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: PM Narendra Modi held bilateral meetings with Kyrgyz President Sadyr Zhaparov and Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan ahead of the SCO summit, which began with an informal dinner hosted by Zhaparov.

Along with other leaders, Modi also attended the opening ceremony of the World Nomad Games.

Modi is expected to interact informally with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the SCO, but a formal bilateral meeting between them will have to wait for the upcoming Brics summit for which Xi will visit India on Sept 12-13.

There was no bilateral meeting scheduled between Modi and Xi at the SCO with official sources saying both sides are already working to finali-

Official sources said both India and China are already working to finalise a formal meeting on the BRICS sidelines

se a formal meeting on the Brics sidelines.

In the meeting with Zhaparov, the leaders reviewed the progress made in bilateral relations and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening the strategic partnership between the two countries. "They agreed to further enhance economic and commercial cooperation, taking into account the complementarities between the two economies. They also discussed growing people-to-people ties, including through student exchanges and cultural collaborations," said an Indian readout.

In the meeting with Pashinyan, Prime Minister Modi discussed bilateral cooperation, including in defence, economic, pharma, mining, education and cultural fields.

The two prime ministers also discussed regional and global developments, including the situation in the West Asian region.

INS Nipun joins Navy fleet, increases deep-sea diving and rescue power



INS Nipun, Indian Navy's 2nd indigenously built Nistar-class Diving Support Vessel (DSV), before its commissioning ceremony, at Naval Dockyard in Mumbai, on Monday. (PTI)

MUMBAI, Aug 31 (PTI)

THE Indian Navy on Monday

commissioned INS Nipun, a deep-sea diving vessel to support complex operations, mark-

ing a significant enhancement in underwater support capabilities that only a few navies have, officials said.

This is the second such deep-sea diving vessel commissioned into the Indian Navy after INS Nistar last year. INS Nipun was commissioned in the presence of Navy chief Admiral Krishna Swaminathan in Mumbai.

Along with her sister ship INS Nistar, INS Nipun substantially enhances the Navy's specialist diving, underwater intervention, salvage and submarine rescue support capability, officials said.

Indigenously designed and constructed by Hindustan Shipyard Limited, Visakhapatnam, the vessel is 119.4 metres long with a capacity of 10,500 tonnes.

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India's GDP grows world-beating 7.8%

NEW DELHI, Aug 31 (IANS)

DESPITE global headwinds, India recorded real GDP growth at Rs 81.36 lakh crore in the first quarter of this fiscal (Q1 FY27), against Rs 75.46 lakh crore in Q1 FY 2025-26 - registering a robust growth rate of 7.8 per cent, Government data showed on Monday.

Nominal GDP (or GDP at current prices) in Q1 FY 2026-27 is estimated at Rs 88.27 lakh crore, against Rs 80 lakh crore in Q1 of FY 2025-26, showing a growth rate of 10.3 per cent, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said in a statement.

Notably, the real gross value added (GVA) in Q1 FY 2026-27 is estimated at Rs 73.82 lakh



crore, against Rs 68.21 lakh crore in Q1 FY 2025-26, showing a growth rate of 8.2 per cent.

On the other hand, nominal GVA in Q1 FY 2026-27 is estimated at Rs 80.53 lakh crore, against Rs 72.24 lakh crore in Q1 of FY 2025-26, showing a growth rate of 11.5 per cent, according to the data.

The estimates of Quarterly GDP as per base year 2022-23 majorly follow the guidelines

A herculean feat, says PM Modi

NEW DELHI, Aug 31 (IANS)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said India's exemplary GDP growth of 7.8 per cent during the first quarter (Q1) of the current financial year (FY 2026-27) is a "herculean feat".

In a post on X, PM Modi said: "The collective strength of our people ensured India delivered such growth despite oil price shocks and supply chain issues in the midst of global uncertainties".

"Doomsayers were doomed and India bloomed...yet again!" he posted.

and standards as mentioned in the Quarterly National Accounts Manual of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2017, said the Ministry.

Under this approach, output and intermediate

Consumption are separately deflated using the concerned Producer Price Indices (PPIs), and real GVA is obtained as the difference between real output and real intermediate consumption, said the data.

Xi, Putin discuss visa-free travel, global, regional issues at Bishkek

BISHKEK, Aug 31 (PTI)

CHINESE President Xi Jinping and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin met in Kyrgyzstan's capital Bishkek on Monday and discussed a visa-free regime between the two countries, besides exchanging views on international and regional issues of common concern.

The two leaders met on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit 2026 being held in Bishkek. Putin said Russia is

ready to work with China to make the visa-free regime between the two countries permanent if Beijing considers this possible and useful.

"We are ready to work together to make the visa-free regime permanent if the Chinese side considers this possible and useful," Putin told Xi, according to Russia's state-run TASS news agency.

He noted that visa-free travel had helped increase tourist flows between the countries by 43 per cent in the first half of the year.

On December 1, 2025, Putin signed a decree to enable Chinese citizens to enter Russia for up to 30 days without a visa until September 14, 2026, based on the principle of reciprocity.

Previously, China introduced a similar visa-free regime for Russians. Subsequently, both parties extended the right to enter visa free until the end of 2027.

Xi told Putin that under their strategic guidance and through the joint efforts of both sides, the foundation of China-Russia rela-

tions will become ever stronger, their progress ever steadier, and their future ever brighter.

He said that the international landscape is witnessing a notable increase in uncertain and unpredictable factors, against the backdrop of accelerating profound changes unseen in a century.

But the pursuit of people across the world of peace, development, cooperation and win-win outcomes remains unchanged, he told the Russian President, China's state-run Xinhua news agency reported.