

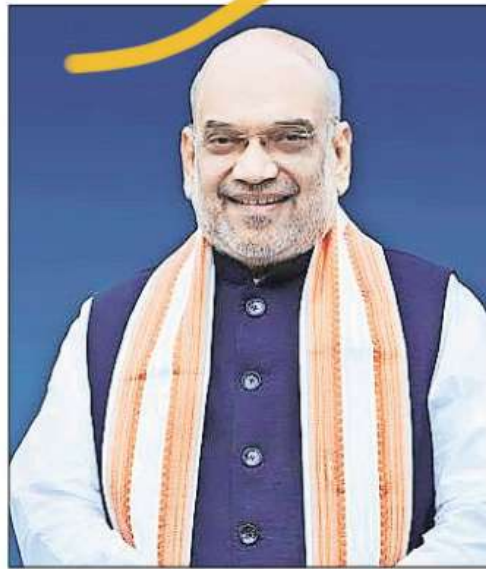
Shah to inaugurate ANTF chiefs' conference today

NEW DELHI, Sept 21 (PTI)

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah will inaugurate the third national conference of chiefs of Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) on Tuesday, which will focus on progress made on the Vision Document on Narcotics Control (2026-29) and efforts undertaken to combat the narcotics menace in the country, a Government statement said.

The two-day conference will be attended by the heads of ANTFs from 36 States and Union Territories, along with representatives from other concerned Government departments and stakeholders.

The meeting will also deliberate on the identification and adoption of strategies to strengthen the supply reduction, demand reduction and harm



reduction measures of the Central Government.

"Based on the theme of the 'United Resolve, Shared Responsibility', the conference will focus on progress of targets assigned to State/UTs ANTFs in recently released Vision Document on Narcotics Control (2026-29) and initiatives and

efforts undertaken by the concerned stakeholders in combating the menace of drug trafficking and substance abuse across the country," the statement said.

Shah will also release TV commercials to spread awareness against drugs and lay the foundation stones for new complexes of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Zones in Lucknow and Dehradun.

During the conference, eight technical sessions are scheduled, covering institutional mechanisms under the vision document, dismantling drug-trafficking networks and cartels, demand reduction and rehabilitation, enforcement effectiveness, precursor and synthetic drugs, illicit cultivation and alternative crops, and investigations involving the darknet and cryptocurrency.

China calls Xi-Trump meet 'historic milestone'

■ Xi Jinping will visit Washington from September 23 to 25

■ By K J M Varma
BEIJING, Sept 21 (PTI)

CHINESE President Xi Jinping will visit Washington from September 23 to 25 for summit talks with his US counterpart Donald Trump, marking their second meeting in four months, a development Beijing has described as a "milestone of historic significance".

Xi will visit the US for three days at the invitation of Trump, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun announced at a media briefing here on Monday.

During his talks with Trump, Xi will have in-depth exchanges on key issues concerning China-US relations, as well as world peace and development, Guo said.

"The reciprocal visits by the two



heads of state within a span of six months will mark a milestone of historic significance," he said.

The two leaders last met in Beijing in May during Trump's China visit, when they held talks aimed at improving ties between the world's two largest economies.

"China will work with the US to enrich the dimensions of the China-US constructive relationship of strategic stability, strengthen dialogue and cooperation and properly manage

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140 world leaders to meet at UN amid wars, global crises

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 21 (IANS)

THIS week 140 world leaders and representatives of another 53 countries will be meeting here this week under the shadow of intractable wars and conflicts for the annual high-level meeting.

When the meeting starts on Tuesday with the traditional first national address by Brazil's President Lula da Silva, followed by US President Donald Trump, the Gulf Conflict, the Ukraine War, the Gaza situation, and the Sudan civil war of genocidal proportions will hang heavy over the General Assembly chamber.

The perils of a runaway arti-

ficial intelligence will be added this year to the climate crisis, terrorism, and global hunger and poverty as top areas of concern. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, speaking to reporters, said about the utility of the high-level week, "I think we must take profit of this week to allow for a large number of meetings between those leaders that are relevant in the context of the crisis that we are facing".

"I would remind you that last year, there was a very important meeting of the United States with a number of Muslim countries that led to the peace plan for Gaza", he said.

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Shooters add 3 more medals

Suchika bags India's maiden MMA bronze

Himanshu, Rudranksh win silver, bronze; team gets silver

Loses controversial semis on weight rule

NAGOYA, Sept 21 (PTI)

YOUNGSTERS Himanshu Dhillon and Rudranksh Patil held their nerve in a gripping shoot-out to win the individual silver and bronze medals respectively in the men's 10m air rifle while the duo also combined with teenager Parth Mane to add a team silver at the Asian Games here on Monday.

The three medals took India's shooting tally to five -- four silver and a bronze -- but once again there was no getting past China's Paris Olympics double gold medallist Sheng Lihao, who lived up to his billing as the World No 1 with another commanding performance.

Sheng produced a Games and Asian record 254.2 to take gold, while Himanshu, who celebrated his 21st birthday on Monday, shot 252.4 for silver. Rudranksh (230.9), who had looked capa-



Himanshu Dhillon (C) Rudranksh Patil (L) and Parth Rakesh Mane pose for photographs after winning silver medal in the 10 meter rifle men team event in the Asian Games, in Nagoya, Japan. (PTI)

ble of challenging for the top spot after a strong start, finished third.

For India, it was nevertheless a significant finish in an event

where every decimal can separate a medal from disappointment. The individual medals came barely an hour after Himanshu, who is competing in

his maiden Asian Games, former world champion Rudranksh and 18-year-old Mane had combined for silver in the team event.

China, once again, set the benchmark. Its trio of Sheng, Changhong Zhang and Sihao Ma amassed 1899.0 points to improve its own world record of 1898.4 set in Cairo last year. South Korea took bronze with 1884.2, while India's 1890.1 secured silver.

But the individual final had a distinctly Indian storyline, with Himanshu and Rudranksh locked in a tense battle for the minor medals while Sheng steadily pulled away.

Rudranksh had initially looked the likelier Indian to challenge the Chinese star.

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NAGOYA, Sept 21 (PTI)

SUCHIKA Tariyal settled for a bronze medal in the women's traditional 60kg mixed martial arts event of the Asian Games here

on Monday as Singapore's Hui Hoon Teo was awarded the semi-final on the basis of her lesser weight after the two fighters drew a fiercely-contested bout.

This was India's maiden medal in the

discipline that made its debut at the 20th edition of the Games here. Tariyal, however, was shattered by the result and wept bitterly on the mat once the final decision was announced in Teo's favour. The bronze took India's overall medal tally to six at the continental showpiece. Shooters have bagged four silver medals



Suchika Tariyal

and one bronze so far.

Hailing from Kilo village in Haryana's Rohtak district, the 36-year-old Suchika is a 2024 world champion in jiu-jitsu, represented the country in the 2022 Commonwealth Games in judo and as a kurash fighter at the 2022 Asian Games.

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Macron backs Canada as EU associate member

TORONTO, Sept. 21 (AP)

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron backed a proposal for Canada to become the European Union's first associate member as he and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney moved to deepen strategic ties spanning space, defence, energy and business.

The leaders met on Sunday in Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, a French territory just off Newfoundland's coast where France and Canada are separated by only a few kilometres, a striking setting for Canada's accelerating turn toward Europe

as relations with the US deteriorate. "We are very much in favour of that agenda of closer ties with the European Union, as an associate member of the Union, as the President said, and as a full-fledged member of the European community," Macron said in French while standing alongside Carney.

"Only a few kilometres separate Canada and France at their closest point. Our values are even closer," Carney said in French.

Carney said the countries will task their space agencies and defense ministries to develop and share infrastructure, including launch systems and ground-



French President Emmanuel Macron with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney.

based reception facilities.

They also agreed to expand cooperation in energy, telecommunications, climate resilience and economic development.

Macron's endorsement comes days after European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen proposed making Canada the EU's first associate member.

Carney embraced the prospect and has argued that deeper ties with Europe would give Canada more alternatives and make it less vulnerable to economic coercion by any single country.

Trump's tariffs, demands for economic concessions and repeated talk of making Canada the 51st US state have accelerated that turn toward Europe.

Trump also recently posted a map on social media draping the US flag across all of North

America, including Canada and Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon.

Macron welcomed Carney on Sunday at the airport in Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, the French territory of about 5,800 people just off Newfoundland's coast.

Macron also said that Sunday's talks are part of broader efforts to help France secure oil and gas supplies as the Iran war disrupts global energy markets and raises fears of higher prices for fuel and other essentials.

"Canada is a country with significant resources of critical minerals and rare earths. It is also a major oil and natural gas producer," Macron said.

Russia targets Zaporizhzhia

KYIV, Sept 21 (AP)

RUSSIAN drones struck the southern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia on Monday, a day after Kyiv's forces fired more than 1,000 drones at Russia, officials said.

The relentless daily attacks underscore the lack of significant progress in diplomatic efforts to end the fighting more than four years after Russia invaded its neighbour.

There is no sign the war is abating as world leaders gather this week at the UN General Assembly.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he expects to meet with US President Donald Trump at the annual event in New York. Russian President Vladimir Putin is not due to attend.

Main Kremlin party keeps control of Russian Parlt

MOSCOW, Sept 21 (AP)

THE main Kremlin party retained its majority in Russia's Parliament, election officials said on Monday, after three days of carefully orchestrated balloting that excluded most Opposition candidates and helped President Vladimir Putin maintain his tight grip on power. Preliminary results indicated that United Russia would get 355 out of 450 seats in the State Duma, the Lower Chamber of Parliament, the Central Election Commission said, which would be a record high for the party if confirmed.

Results from over 95 per cent of the polling stations gave United Russia just under 58 per cent of the vote for the 225 seats apportioned by parties, according to commission chair Ella Pamfilova. Another 225 lawmakers were chosen in single-ballot races, and results showed United Russia candidates leading in 208 of those races.

Winning seats alongside United Russia were several other parties that almost always vote for Kremlin initiatives. A handful of seats will go to candidates who ran without a party affiliation in single-constituency races,

according to preliminary results.

It was the first parliamentary election since Putin launched the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and the first to include residents of four regions of that country that were seized and illegally annexed by Moscow later that year. At a polling station in the Russian-held part of the

**President Putin
maintains his tight
grip on power**

Donetsk region, voters dropped their ballots in a box under the gaze of an armed Russian soldier.

Voting also was held in Crimea, which was illegally annexed by Russia in 2014. Kyiv denounced the voting in those regions as illegal. The Government was "able to carry out the campaign and the voting the way it wanted, with the most optimal output," said Tatyana Stanovaya of the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Centre, in an online commentary. The Kremlin tightened its crackdown on Opposition ahead of the election, including bar-

ring Russia's only liberal, anti-war party from the ballot and allowing it to compete only in single-ballot races. Along with United Russia, several other parties that almost always vote for Kremlin initiatives also won seats in the State Duma, the Lower House of Parliament.

The Kremlin has sought the parliamentary election to showcase popular support for the war, and strove to avoid political risks by stamping out any dissent.

A massive state media campaign and tight control over the election in the absence of genuine opposition left little doubt that Kremlin will keep tight control of Russian politics as economic costs rise and Ukrainian drone attacks increase deep inside the country.

Voters cast two separate ballots, filling half of the Duma's 450 seats by selecting political parties listed on the ballot. The rest were contested in single-seat constituencies, with voters choosing individual candidates.

The liberal Yabloko party, the only registered political entity that dared to publicly criticise the war, was removed from the ballot last month by Russia's Supreme Court.

MoD inks Rs 586 cr deal for T-72, T-90 tanks upgradation



T-72

NEW DELHI, Sept 21 (IANS)

THE Ministry of Defence on Monday signed a contract to procure Auxiliary Power Units (APUs) for Soviet-designed T-72 and T-90 main battle tanks at a cost of Rs 586 crore, according to an official statement.

The APU is an alternative source for the generation of electric power for the fire control system, firing circuit, gun stabilisation system and other ancillaries of the tank. The induction of indigenously developed APUs will further strengthen the operational readiness, reliability and sustainability of the Indian Army's mechanised formations.

The contract with Accurate Industrial Controls Private Ltd was inked here on Monday in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh.

T-72 and T-90 tanks are the mainstay of India's mechanised forces. The APU can cater to the tank's fire control system while deployed in surveillance mode during a lull in battle, and during training, with a view to conserving the life of the main

engine of the tank.

The order placed with an indigenous company will also help India to achieve self-reliance in APU manufacturing technology for tanks in accordance with the Prime Minister's vision of Atma Nirbhar Bharat.

The project also has a huge potential to generate future domestic and export business, which can be many times more than the current procurement of APUs, as it is a continuous requirement, keeping in mind the present inventory of T-72, T-90, Arjun tanks, and BMPs held by the



T-90

Indian Armed Forces and expected new tank supplies in the coming years.

In the export market, the countries using Russian T-72 and T-90 tanks can also provide a demand for India-made APUs for tanks. Apart from the former Soviet bloc nations, other countries such as Iran, Iraq, and Egypt also have these main battle tanks in their armies.