House Republicans quash effort to impeach Defence Secy Hegseth

WASHINGTON, Nov 11 (AP)

THE House on Wednesday turned aside a resolution to impeach Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, halting an effort to remove the Pentagon chief for his conduct in office and his handling of the war in Iran.



Pete Hegseth

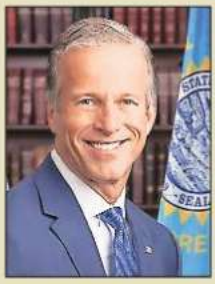
The vote came as Republicans grapple with the fallout from sweeping midterm losses that some in the party have blamed on the war in Iran and the resulting surge in gas prices. But after President Donald Trump signalled strong support for Hegseth, GOP lawmakers largely stood by the Secretary on Tuesday. They rejected the impeachment effort led by Kentucky Republican Thomas Massie and backed by Democrats.

The vote may only delay an impeachment push against Hegseth, with Democrats set to take control of the House and Senate in January.

Senate Republicans re-elect John Thune as leader

WASHINGTON, Nov 11 (AP)

SENATE Republicans re-elected South Dakota Sen. John Thune as their leader after a tense day of private discussions about steep losses in the midterm elections that cost them their majority. Thune was always expected to prevail, as he is popular with his GOP colleagues and was running unopposed in the secret-ballot election. But Senate Republicans vented their frustrations in three separate meetings after an election wipeout that cost them at least seven Senate seats.



John Thune

Some Republicans had tried to delay the leadership decision, but the conference voted 31-15 to

(Contd on page 5)

3 CRPF JAWANS INJURED IN HIT-AND-RUN ATTACK BY TERRORISTS IN J&K

SRINAGAR, Nov 11 (PTI)

TWO heavily armed terrorists emerged from a dense cluster of trees and opened fire at a Central Reserve Police Force post in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district on Wednesday, injuring three CRPF personnel, one of them critically, officials said.

The two men disappeared into the forested area after the attack that took place around 2.15 pm near Mir Bazar, about 75 km from Srinagar and just a kilometre from the strategic Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, they said.





Security heightened after terror attack on CRPF camp. (R) A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) official stands guard in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday. (PTI)

Initial reports suggested that the terrorists came on a motorcycle. However, ground verification during joint search operations by the Army and security agencies established that no two-wheeler was involved.

Recapping what happened, officials said two men approached the checkpost on foot from a forested area about 50 metres away. One opened fire while his associate provided cover. Both terrorists fled on foot towards Naupur through the same tree line, they said.

"The area has dense vegetation resembling a small forest, which the terrorists used as cover before and after the attack," an official said.

A Motorola phone and a SIM card have been recovered.

While official confirmation regarding the identity of the attackers is awaited, security agencies suspect the involvement of Mohammed Lateef Bhat, a local commander of the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) outfit who had previously escaped a security operation in Shopian in July.

The wounded troopers were rushed to a hospital in neighbouring Anantnag district, about 22 km from the site.

(Contd on page 5)

IAF's 'Sarang' team to perform aerial displays in Vadodara

VADODARA, Nov 11 (IANS)

THE Indian Air Force's (IAF) Sarang Helicopter Display Team will perform a series of aerial displays over Vadodara Airfield from November 12 to 15 as part of the platinum jubilee celebrations of 11 Squadron.

The four-day event will give residents, including school students and aviation enthusiasts, an opportunity to witness the precision flying and coordinated manoeuvres of the IAF's specialised helicopter aerobatic team. Sarang is a five-helicopter military display team that flies the indigenously designed and manufactured Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Dhruv.

It is among the few teams of its kind globally and is known for its close-formation flying, which requires a high degree of precision, coordination, discipline and skill from its pilots. The helicopters will demonstrate a range of aerial manoeuvres, highlighting the flying capabilities of the Dhruv as well as the proficiency of the IAF's aircrew.

The team's performances also showcase the progress made by India's indigenous aerospace industry in designing and manufacturing military aircraft.

Established to represent the IAF at major aviation events, Sarang has participated in several prestigious national and international air shows, drawing attention for its synchronised formations and aerobatic performances. The team flies helicopters painted in vibrant colours inspired by the peacock, from which it derives its name. The bird is also associated with grace and national pride.

The display in Vadodara is expected to hold particular significance for school students, who will have an opportunity to witness military aviation at close quarters.

The performances are intended to encourage interest in aviation, science and technology, while introducing young people to potential career opportunities in the Armed Forces.

For serving personnel and veterans of the Indian Air Force, the event will also mark an occasion to celebrate the service and achievements of the force, particularly as 11 Squadron completes 75 years. Through the performances, the IAF aims to bring military aviation closer to the public while highlighting its operational capabilities teamwork and the country's growing indigenous aerospace potential.

Russia, Ukraine agree to large exchange of prisoners of war

■ **By Bassam Hatoum**
ABU DHABI, Nov 11 (AP)



US envoy Jared Kushner speaks at a briefing during US-mediated talks between Russia and Ukraine, alongside US envoy Steve Witkoff (L) and Rustem Umerov, head of Ukraine's Foreign Intelligence Service (2nd R) in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates on Wednesday. (AP/PTI)

OFFICIALS at US-mediated talks between Russia and Ukraine said on Wednesday that the two sides have agreed a large exchange of prisoners of war.

"One of the positives is we agreed that we're going to have the biggest humanitarian release of prisoners, which we're going to finalise the numbers tomorrow," Jared Kushner, US President Donald Trump's son-in-law, said after the two days of talks in Abu Dhabi ended.

Vladimir Medinsky, the head of the Russian delegation, and Rustem Umerov, who led Kyiv's delegation in Abu Dhabi, confirmed the planned exchange.

Hopes were low for any major breakthrough in the first meeting in nine months between the delegations. Russia and Ukraine have from time to time swapped prisoners during their nearly five-year war.

US officials say they are determined to revive Washington's peace efforts that so far have failed to deliver significant results. Kushner says he and US envoy Steve Witkoff will travel to Moscow on Thursday to meet with President Vladimir Putin, then fly to Dublin to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

MoD inks pact for refit of INS Betwa

NEW DELHI, Nov 11 (PTI)



THE Defence Ministry on Wednesday sealed a Rs 498-crore contract with state-run Cochin Shipyard Ltd for "refit and re-powering" of Indian Navy's guided-missile frigate INS Betwa.

Under the contract, INS Betwa, a Brahmaputra-class frigate, will undergo a transformation of its propulsion system involving the replacement of its existing steam-based propulsion with a diesel engine-based propulsion system, according to the Ministry.

The refit will also include the upgrading of its combat capabilities through the installation of a modern weapon suite that is aimed at enhancing the ship's operational effectiveness.

"The Ministry of Defence has signed a contract worth Rs 498.58 crore with Cochin Shipyard Limited for the normal refit and re-powering of Indian Naval Ship, Betwa," an official statement said.

The Ministry said the project will further strengthen indigenous capabilities in the ship repair and maintenance ecosystem, particularly in undertaking complex propulsion system transformation and modernisation of naval platforms.

Cabinet approves Rs 62,370 cr subsidy for P&K fertilizers

NEW DELHI, Nov 11 (PTI)

THE Government on Wednesday announced a subsidy of Rs 62,370 crore on phosphatic and potassic (P&K) fertilizers for the 2026-27 rabi season, a 50 per cent increase over the kharif season that just ended, to ensure farmers get crop nutrients at affordable rates amid a sharp rise in the global market.

Chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Union Cabinet cleared the Department of Fertilizers' proposal to fix Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) rates for the period from October 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027.

Under the NBS scheme, the Government pays a fixed subsidy per kg of nutrient - nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potash (K) and sulphur (S) - on notified P&K fertilizers, including DAP, MOP, SSP and NPK/NPKS grades. Rates are announced twice a year.

For this rabi season, the subsidy has been set at Rs 94.21 per kg for nitrogen, Rs 66.11 per kg for phosphorus and Rs 10.42 per kg for Sulphur, while the rate for potash has been left unchanged at Rs 2.38 per kg.

Briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw said the tentative budgetary requirement for the rabi season is around Rs 62,370.02 crore, about Rs 24,417.73 crore more than that for rabi 2025-26.

Vaishnaw attributed the rise in fertiliser prices to the West Asia crisis and the Russia-Ukraine war. "The Modi government has provided a shield to farmers from geopolitical turmoil," he said. The retail price of DAP (di-ammonium phosphate) will remain unchanged at Rs 1,350 per 50-kg bag.

CABINET DECISIONS

Cabinet approves Rs 2,390 cr metro rail link for Noida

THE Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the extension of the Aqua Line Metro Rail Corridor from Noida Sector 51 to Greater Noida Sector 4 at an estimated cost of Rs 2,390 crore, with a length of 8.449 kilometres and five elevated stations. The project, approved by the Cabinet, represents a significant advancement in the city's infrastructure development, an official statement said.

The Prime Minister listed the advantages of the project, saying it would provide a major boost to connectivity and ease of living. "As Noida and Greater Noida grow, why should daily commutes become longer? Here is some good news for the people of Noida and Greater Noida! The Cabinet has approved an extension of the Aqua Line Metro.

"Key advantages: easier access to offices, schools, hospitals and commercial hubs. Less congestion. Shorter commutes. A major boost to connectivity and ease of living indeed," Modi said in a post on X.

The project would be completed over a period of four years, Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw told reporters at a Cabinet briefing.

Govt nod for devpt of Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum

THE Union Cabinet approved the development of the Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum through adaptive reuse of the North and South Block complex in Delhi, at an estimated total project cost of Rs 3,230 crore. It is envisaged as a landmark museum showcasing the continuity, diversity and richness of India's rich civilisational legacy through an integrated narrative of its tangible and intangible cultural heritage, according to officials.

The museum will be developed through the adaptive reuse of the historic North and South Block complex, "preserving their architectural character and heritage significance while transforming them into a public cultural institution", the Government said. Spread over a proposed built-up area of approximately 1,78,509 sq metres, the museum will integrate contemporary museum practices, immersive technologies and visitor-centric interpretation.

Govt extends Stand-Up India Scheme till March 31, 2031

NEW DELHI, Nov 11 (PTI)

THE Government on Wednesday approved the continuation of Stand-Up India Scheme for next 5 years to promote entrepreneurship among Women, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

The Union Cabinet has approved the extension of Stand-Up India Scheme up to March 31, 2031. The scheme aims to promote entrepreneurship among Women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and provide financial assistance to additional 2.5 lakh entrepreneurs in a span of five years, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said while briefing on the decisions taken by the Government at the Cabinet meeting.

Since its launch in April 2016, the scheme has facilitated loans to more than 2.75 lakh Women/SC/ST entrepreneurs.

The objective of the Stand-Up India Scheme was to provide loans ranging between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 crore from Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) to at least one Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) borrower and one woman borrower per bank branch to set up a greenfield enterprise in manufacturing, services or trading sector and also for activities allied to agriculture. The scheme provided loans of value between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 crore at the lowest applicable rate of the bank for that category (rating), not exceeding base rate MCLR+3%+ Tenor premium, with a repayment period of 7 years and a maximum moratorium of up to 18 months.

Cabinet extends Micro Credit Guarantee Scheme for 5 years

NEW DELHI, Nov 11 (PTI)

THE Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the continuation of the Credit Guarantee Fund for Micro Units (CGFMU) for five years up to March 2031, a move that will facilitate loans of Rs 12.6 lakh crore.

As of September 2025, more than 60.36 crore loans amounting to Rs 43.34 lakh crore have been sanctioned by lending institutions since the launch of the PM Mudra Scheme.

The CGFMU, launched in January 2016, has acted as a major catalyst in enabling the growth of PMMY loans in the country.