

Deal on paper, drones in the sky: Fresh Strait of Hormuz incident clouds US-Iran accord

Washington June 16
Fresh concerns over security in the Strait of Hormuz emerged on Wednesday after Iranian drones were reportedly launched towards commercial shipping in one of the world's most critical maritime corridors. According to reports cited by The Jerusalem Post, the drones were intercepted by the US military before they could threaten commercial traffic or American personnel operating in the region. The incident comes just days after the United States and Iran moved closer to formalising a new understanding on Tehran's nuclear programme. A source quoted by The Jerusalem Post said multiple drones were fired



towards commercial vessels navigating the Strait of Hormuz. The report, citing NBC News, said the drones were launched by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). A US official told the broadcaster that American forces are working closely with shipping companies to assist vessels passing

through the strategic waterway. US assessment flags Iran's leverage over key waterway, CNN reported on Wednesday that US intelligence agencies have concluded Iran now possesses the capability to shut down the Strait of Hormuz if it chooses to do so. According to sources familiar with the assess-

ment, Tehran's ability to disrupt traffic through the narrow maritime passage remains a major concern despite progress towards a framework agreement expected later this week. The assessment reportedly noted that Iran has developed greater leverage following attacks on Gulf energy infrastructure and previous strikes

targeting US military facilities in neighbouring countries. Trump hints at release of agreement text
Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump said he intends to make public the contents of the agreement reached with Iran and suggested the full document could be released within days. Speaking during a meeting with United Arab Emirates President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on the sidelines of the G7 summit in France, Trump said he was waiting for a formal setting before unveiling the document. "I'd like to get a formal setting first before we do that, but I have no problem with that. It's a great document," Trump said.

Firing inside gurdwara in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Sikh caretaker couple shot dead



Islamabad, June 17
A Sikh caretaker couple was shot dead in a major firing incident at a gurdwara in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan on Wednesday, June 17. According to local police officials, the

incident took place in the Babu Mohallah locality of Mardan, which is roughly 60 km northwest of Peshawar, PTI reported. Among those killed have been identified as Jagannath and his wife Asma Wanti. Mardan District

Police Officer Masood Ahmed said that assailants opened fire in the gurdwara in Babu Mohallah, resulting in the death of two people. As of now, efforts are underway to ascertain the motive behind the attack

Pakistan: 2 months on, Khyber residents continue to face hardships due to prolonged internet suspension



Islamabad, June 17
Residents of multiple areas in Lower South Waziristan of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are facing major difficulties due to complete suspension of mobile internet services over the past two months. The local residents, students as well as members of the business community have urged the Shehbaz Sharif-led government as well as P a k i s t a n

Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and other relevant institutions to take immediate measures to restore mobile internet services in the regions, Dawn reported. A local resident told the Pakistani media platform that mobile internet remains unavailable across several areas of Birmal and Wana tehsils. This has resulted in thousands of people not having access to essential communica-

tion and digital services. Among the affected areas in Birmal tehsil are Landi Doag, Ji Khel Staff, Shin Warsak, Azam Warsak, Kalotai and Nargasi. Moreover, people in Ghowa Kohwa, Zeri Noor, Dazha Ghundai and Kari Kot in tehsil Wana are also facing prolonged suspension of mobile internet services. Local residents have said that continued disruption has severely impacted their day-to-day life and communication. Due to the suspension of internet services, students said they are facing difficulties in accessing online learning materials, conducting academic research and communicating with their educational institutions. A large number

'More powerful than any nuke': US intel assessment warns of Iran's growing Strait of Hormuz leverage

Washington June 16
Even as Washington prepares to formalise a new agreement with Tehran, concerns remain within the US intelligence community over Iran's ability to influence movement through the Strait of Hormuz, according to a CNN report published on Wednesday. The assessment, cited by CNN and attributed to sources familiar with the matter, suggests Iran has acquired the capability to effectively halt activity in the strategic waterway if it chooses to do so. The finding has reportedly fuelled concerns that a diplomatic breakthrough may not fully eliminate risks to global shipping in the Gulf region. The report said US officials believe Iran's leverage over the strait could remain intact regardless of the framework agreement expected to be signed on Friday. According to CNN, some intel-



ligence officials view the development as one of the most significant strategic outcomes of the recent conflict. The report quoted a source familiar with the assessment as saying that Iran had gained a tool capable of exerting pressure far beyond its nuclear programme. "We have now handed Iran de facto control over the strait - a weapon more powerful than any nuke," CNN quoted one of

the sources acquainted with the US intelligence assessments as saying. The assessment also pointed to Iran's previous strikes on energy infrastructure and attacks targeting US military facilities in neighbouring countries, CNN reported. Washington has since engaged in extensive negotiations aimed at ensuring the full reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, the report said. Comments from US

Vice President JD Vance appeared to underscore the importance of the waterway in the broader negotiations. Speaking about the agreement expected to be signed in Switzerland on Friday, Vance said the deal would ensure that Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon and that the Strait of Hormuz remains open. "It says, one, Iran can't have a nuclear weapon, two, the Straits of Hormuz are open, and number 3, there are all of these benefits contemplated that the Iranians can get if they behave... If they don't [behave], they don't get anything," Vance said. However, uncertainty surrounding the final text of the agreement may continue to affect commercial shipping, according to industry officials and maritime experts quoted by CNN. The report said traffic through the strait could remain below normal levels.

Industry writes to govt, RBI on measures to strengthen Rupee, seeks GIFT City push

New Delhi, Jun 17 :
Industry body ASSOCHAM has submitted a detailed representation to the Government of India and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) with recommendations aimed at strengthening the Indian Rupee and positioning it as a preferred currency for international trade settlements. ASSOCHAM has highlighted two key measures to accelerate the internationalisation of the Indian currency, trans-

forming GIFT City into a global financial hub and completing the operational framework for Rupee-based international trade settlement. The industry body has recommended the creation of a dedicated policy and regulatory framework to attract global family offices to establish investment, treasury, and wealth management operations at GIFT City. According to ASSOCHAM, global family offices collectively

manage trillions of dollars in investible assets and can provide stable, long-term capital inflows. ASSOCHAM said attracting a meaningful share of these institutions to GIFT City could deepen India's financial markets, strengthen foreign exchange reserves, and contribute to the structural stability of the Rupee. The second recommendation focuses on developing a globally competitive Corporate Treasury Centre

framework at GIFT City to attract multinational corporations' treasury operations, including cash pooling, foreign exchange management, and trade finance activities, which are currently concentrated in financial centres such as Singapore, Dubai, London, and Hong Kong. Assocham President, Nirmal K. Minda, said that a strong Indian Rupee is not merely an economic objective; it is a statement of India's confidence in

itself as a global economic power. GIFT City is India's single most important instrument for attracting the long-term global capital that will structurally strengthen the Rupee. He highlighted that today, the treasury operations of global corporations and the investment structures of the world's great family offices are managed from Singapore, Dubai, and Hong Kong. There is no compelling reason - economic, regulatory,

Seethakka inaugurates first private IT company in Mulugu, calls for local employment

Mulugu (Telangana), June 17 :
Telangana Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, Danasari Anasuya Seethakka, on Wednesday inaugurated Shriya Infotech Private Limited, the first private-sector IT company in Mulugu Agency district, and stressed the need to create local employment opportunities for rural youth. Inaugurating the facility along with District

Collector Borkhade Hemant Sahadevrao, Seethakka said IT opportunities should extend beyond major cities to rural and Agency areas. She emphasised that development and employment must reach every region through decentralisation. The Minister noted that Shriya Infotech has been providing technical training, including app development, to local youth and has already helped around 15 youngsters secure IT jobs.

She called for the expansion of IT industries to districts such as Mulugu, Mancherial, Asifabad, Adilabad and Bhadradi Kothagudem. Assuring full government support to investors, Seethakka invited more IT firms to establish operations in Mulugu and lauded Shriya Infotech founder Ravikumar Rangari for creating technology-based employment opportunities in the district.

Stock markets extend winning streak for fourth consecutive session; Nifty near 24,100



New Delhi, June 17
Indian stock markets on Wednesday extended their winning streak for a fourth consecutive session with Nifty nears 24,100. At close, the Sensex was up 347.14 points or 0.45 per cent at 77,155.62, and the Nifty was up 96.55 points or 0.40 per cent at 24,085.70. The market capitalisation spiked by Rs 2.92 lakh crore to Rs 475.17 lakh crore from earlier Rs 472.24 lakh crore. Among the sectoral performance, Consumer Durables was top gainer

with 2.11% while Metals and PSU Bank added 1.01% and 1.75%. Further, IT and banks also gains. On the other hand, Realty and Auto were the top laggards. On Nifty, the top gainers were Trent, Bharat Electronics (BEL), Hindalco Industries, Eternal and Tata Steel while the losers were Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles, Cipla, Bajaj Finserv, ONGC and Axis Bank. Nearly 96 stocks rose to their 52-week highs while 31 stocks fell to 52-week lows. Those on highs

were Aeroflex Industries, Belrise, Data Patterns, IFCI, YES Bank, Netweb Technologies and Polycab while at lows were Bayer Crop Science, Vedanta Power and Parsvnath Developers. Indian Rupee settled at 94.53 per dollar, compared with the previous close of 94.56. Shares of defence stocks witnessed strong buying interest after the government announced that India's annual defence production has reached an all-time high of Rs 1.78 lakh crore in the Financial Year.

India's first exclusive monitor brand store: BenQ opens a category-defining experiential space at Mumbai's Lamington Road

Mumbai, Jun 17
BenQ, the world's leading monitor brand, opened India's first exclusive monitor brand store at Lamington Road, Mumbai, in partnership with Nexus Infosys, on Wednesday. The company segments its entire portfolio by user type rather than specifications and sells through more than 5,000 retail points across India, making it the dominant force in the country's monitor market. The new Lamington Road store showcases 8 purpose-built monitor categories, all under one roof, in a format that has never existed before in Indian retail for this category. The store arrives at a moment when the gap in India's large-format retail (LFR) is particu-



larly stark. The dominant electronics chains have built their floor space around televisions - monitors, if present at all, are allocated a shelf or two at best, with most of the range invisible to the shopper. This is not a display problem alone. It reflects a structural reality - organised IT

retail in India has never developed the kind of depth that the category requires. Every large electronics chain has dozens of TV models across every size and price point, but the monitor aisle, by contrast, offers a handful of units, rarely representing more than a fraction of what brands actually

make. For a high-consideration category where panel technology, colour accuracy, and ergonomic design vary significantly across use cases, this absence of a dedicated experiential environment has long been a barrier to informed purchase decisions. BenQ has felt this

gap acutely and is now moving to close it directly. Rather than wait for the LFR format to evolve, the company is establishing its own branded experiential infrastructure, beginning with this Lamington Road store and with an intent to expand the model to other markets. The Lamington Road location is deliberate: it is where India's IT-literate enthusiast community already congregates, making it the most relevant first address for a store built around product understanding rather than impulse purchase. BenQ is the only mainstream monitor brand globally that segments its portfolio not by screen size or refresh rate but by the type of user - designers, content.