

About 5,000 special guests invited for 79th Independence Day celebrations at Red Fort

Saurabh Trivedi

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead the 79th Independence Day celebrations on August 15 from the historic Red Fort in New Delhi.

Marking the occasion, Mr. Modi will unfurl the National Flag and deliver his address to the nation from the ramparts of the iconic monument.

“As India continues its journey towards achieving the government’s vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047, this year’s celebrations will be held under the theme Naya Bharat,” the Union Ministry of Defence said in a statement.

“The celebrations will serve as a platform to commemorate the continuing rise of a prosperous, secure and bold Naya Bharat



Mega event: About 2,500 cadets, including Army, Navy and Air Force personnel, will take part in the event. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

and provide renewed power to surge further ahead on the path to progress,” the Defence Ministry said.

The Air Force band, consisting of one Junior Commissioned Officer and 25 other ranks, will play the National Anthem when the Tricolour is hoisted

and the Rashtriya Salute presented. The band will be conducted by Junior Warrant Officer M. Deka. For the first time, 11 Agni-veer Vayu musicians will be part of the band playing the National Anthem.

Soon after the National Flag is hoisted by Mr. Modi,

flower petals will be showered by two Mi-17 helicopters of the Air Force, one trooping the National Flag, and the other trooping a flag depicting Operation Sindoor. The helicopters will be captained by Wing Commander Vinay Poonia and Wing Commander Aditya Jaiswal.

The Prime Minister will then address the nation. At the conclusion of his speech, cadets of the National Cadet Corps, and My Bharat volunteers will sing the National Anthem.

Main theme

The success of Operation Sindoor will be celebrated during the Independence Day Celebrations this year. The view cutter at Gyanpath will feature the Operation Sindoor logo. Floral decorations will also be based on it. Invitation

cards carry the Operation Sindoor logo, and the watermark of the Chenab Bridge depicting the rise of Naya Bharat.

Approximately 5,000 special guests from different walks of life have been invited to witness the celebrations at Red Fort.

About 2,500 boy and girl cadets from the Army, Navy and Air Force, and My Bharat volunteers will participate in the celebrations. They will be seated on Gyanpath, opposite the Red Fort ramparts, forming the Naya Bharat logo.

To promote patriotic fervour among citizens, and celebrate Operation Sindoor victory, bands of defence and paramilitary forces will perform at over 140 prominent locations across the country on the evening of the Independence Day celebrations.



THE I-DAY MESSAGE

During the full dress rehearsal for Independence Day celebrations at Red Fort complex on Wednesday. *Praveen Khanna*

India's first private constellation of EO satellites under PPP model to be set up

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) on Tuesday announced the selection of the Pixxel-Space India-led consortium to design, build, and operate India's first fully indigenous commercial earth observation (EO) satellite constellation under the public-private partnership (PPP) model.

The Bengaluru-based PixxelSpace India consortium comprises Piersight Space, Satsure Analytics India, and Dhruva Space. IN-SPACe said the Pixxel-Space India consortium was selected in a competitive bidding process which



New endeavour: The initiative is said to reduce India's reliance on foreign sources and ensure data sovereignty. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

involved two more consortia.

It is for the first time in the history of the Indian space sector that a private consortium would invest more than ₹1,200 crore over the next five years to launch a constellation of 12

state-of-the-art EO satellites.

The constellation will deliver Analysis Ready Data (ARD) and Value-Added Services (VAS) for applications in climate change monitoring, disaster management, agriculture, ma-

rine surveillance, national security, and urban planning, while also catering to the global demand for high-quality geospatial intelligence.

IN-SPACe said that by generating high-resolution, indigenous satellite data, the initiative will significantly reduce India's reliance on foreign sources and ensure data sovereignty.

"This initiative signals the coming of age of India's private space industry in the space sector. It demonstrates the capability of Indian companies to lead large-scale, technologically advanced, and commercially viable space missions," Pawan Goenka, chairman, IN-SPACe, said.

'Undocumented migrants leaving via eastern border tripled in 2025'

Vijaita Singh

NEW DELHI

The number of undocumented migrants – suspected to be from Bangladesh – apprehended by the Border Security Force (BSF) while attempting to voluntarily leave India through the eastern border this year was over three times higher than in 2024, government data show.

In 2024, as many as 1,049 undocumented people were apprehended while leaving the country while till July 15 this year, 3,536 undocumented people were caught by the BSF, a senior government official said.

The number of people who were stopped when they tried to enter the country from Bangladesh



Border Security Force personnel patrolling the India-Bangladesh border in Agartala. PTI

last year stood at 2,425, while till July 15 this year, the number was 1,372.

'Exiting voluntarily'

The official said after the political changes in Bangladesh on August 5, 2024, there has been a surge in the number of undocumented migrants exiting the country voluntarily.

The voluntary exits are different from the "pushback" drive against alleged

illegal migrants being pursued by police across the country on the directions of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) after the Pahalgam attack on April 22.

After the regime change in Bangladesh last year, the MHA asked police to detect and deport Bangladeshis who had illegally entered the country and were living on forged documents.

The drive assumed momentum after the Pahalgam terror attack and the MHA asked States to deport the undocumented migrants but in most cases "pushback" is happening, the latter not defined under law. According to various estimates, around 2,500 people, thought to be from Bangladesh, have been "pushed back" across the eastern border.

Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha member Samirul Islam said at least seven persons from West Bengal "illegally pushed into Bangladesh by the BSF" have been brought back because of the State government's efforts and after the families filed *habeas corpus* petitions in the Calcutta High Court. The BSF has denied the "pushback".

A senior BSF official said the force, deployed along the 4,096-km border with Bangladesh, has been on heightened vigil since August 2024, with instructions from the MHA "to not allow anyone into the country without valid documents". "Post August 2024, there has been a sharp increase in the number of such people leaving India," the official said.

2 soldiers killed along the Line of Control in Baramulla, says Army

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

The Army on Wednesday said two soldiers were killed while “performing operational duty” along the Line of Control (LoC) in north Kashmir’s Baramulla district in the past 24 hours.

A spokesperson of the Army’s Chinar Corps identified the deceased as Havildar Ankit Kumar and Sepoy Banoth Anil Kumar.

“The Chinar Corps honours the supreme sacrifices of bravehearts who laid down their lives while undertaking operational duty along the LoC in Uri, Baramulla,” the Army said, in two separate tweets on X. The Army said it saluted the immense valour and sacrifice and expressed “deepest condolence” with the bereaved families.

The Army did not provide details about the operation launched close to the LoC. However, official sources said the Army foiled a major infiltration bid along the LoC in Uri. The LoC in Jammu and

Army did not give details about the operation near LoC but sources say it foiled infiltration bid

Kashmir (J&K) remained relatively calm since India and Pakistan reached an agreement on May 10 to end four days of intense cross-border attacks and missile strikes, in the wake of the Pahalgam attack on April 22 that left 26 civilians dead.

Operation called off

Meanwhile, the anti-terror operation, launched on August 1 in Kulgam, was called off on Wednesday. One terrorist and two soldiers were killed in the 13-day operation in Akhal. “The Akhal operation has now reached the final stage and further details will be shared soon,” Inspector General of Police, Kashmir, V.K. Birdi said.

Security remains on high alert in J&K on the occasion of upcoming Independence Day.

Bihar SIR a battle between EC's power, citizens' right to vote: SC

Unlawful procedures in the hasty conduct of special intensive revision process are a 'casual way of doing away with citizens' right to vote', say petitioners; judge says EC has some 'elbow room' for special revision, but in exceptional circumstances

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The special intensive revision (SIR) of Bihar's electoral rolls is a battle between the Election Commission's "power" over elections and the ordinary citizen's right to be named in electoral rolls, and to be allowed to vote, the Supreme Court observed on Wednesday.

Justice Joymalya Bagchi, part of the Bench headed by Justice Surya Kant, hearing petitions against the SIR, observed that poll-bound Bihar was in the middle of a contest between Article 324, which empowers the Election Commission (EC) to control elections, and the constitutional right of adult suffrage enshrined in Article 326 of the Constitution.

The judge's observation was in response to arguments raised by senior ad-



Does this provision [Section 21(3) of the Representation of the People Act] give the Election Commission some residuary discretion to introduce additional elements?

—JUSTICE JOYMALYA BAGCHI



vocates A.M. Singhvi and Gopal Sankaranarayanan that the procedure of sending pre-filled enumeration forms to electors, only to later delete 65 lakh of them from the electoral roll without any prior enquiry or physical hearing was, to say the least, a "casual way of doing away with citizens' right to vote".

"An elector means someone who is already in the electoral roll. The enumeration form, indicative documents are just figments of the imagination

of the EC. There is no such procedure in the Representation of the People Act. The procedure for removal from the electoral roll is 'absolutely strict' as intended by the Parliament. Removal would only be subsequent to an enquiry, even for one elector. It is the concept of the 'little man' laid down in the Supreme Court by Justice Krishna Iyer... Who gave the EC power to do this, under which law and what authority?" Mr. Sankaranarayanan submitted.

Justice Bagchi referred to the "elbow room" provided to the EC under Section 21(3) of the Representation of the People (RP) Act, which says that the EC can conduct a "special revision" in "such manner as it may think fit". "Does this provision give the EC some residuary discretion to introduce additional elements [like enumeration forms, indicative documents]?" Justice Bagchi asked the petitioners.

However, Mr. Sankaranarayanan responded that Section 21(3) only contemplated a special revision of "any one constituency or a part of a constituency".

"Can the provision be used to change the electoral rolls of the entire country from a time of your own choice? Does it authorise EC to embark on an *en masse* revision of the electoral rolls across the country?" the senior advocate responded. Section 21

(3) was meant to be resorted to only in "exceptional circumstances", he said.

Summarising Section 21 (3), Justice Bagchi said that it authorised the EC to devise procedures for special revision of the electoral roll in case of exceptional circumstances like a natural disaster.

"Otherwise, the EC has to strictly follow Rules 4 to 24 of the Registration of Electors Rules," Justice Bagchi said.

Justice Bagchi and Mr. Singhvi debated on whether giving citizens an option to choose from as many as 11 'indicative' documents to prove their citizenship and find their way back to the electoral roll could be considered "voter-inclusive" rather than "voter-exclusionary", as argued by the petitioners.

The judge pointed out that earlier summary revisions provided a choice of only seven documents.

3-judge SC Bench to take up community dogs issue today

Aaratrika Bhaumik
Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday listed a case regarding community dogs before a three-judge Bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath on Thursday.

The move came against the backdrop of an order by a Division Bench headed by Justice J.B. Pardiwala on Monday directing Delhi-NCR authorities to round up or catch stray dogs from the national capital's streets and detain them in shelters within six to eight weeks, never to be let out in public spaces again.

On Wednesday, a lawyer briefed Chief Justice of In-

dia B.R. Gavai about a May 9, 2024 order to treat stray canines with compassion. The CJI agreed to list the case after this mentioning.

The counsel read out from the 2024 order by a Division Bench headed by Justice J.K. Maheshwari that “under all circumstances, there cannot be any indiscriminate killings of canines and the authorities have to take action in terms of the mandate and spirit of the prevalent legislation(s) in place”.

The order was based on a batch of petitions led by Animal Welfare Board of India versus People for Elimination of Stray Troubles on the question whether Central legisla-

tions, including the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 and the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2001, would prevail over municipal laws.

“There is no gainsaying the fact that exhibiting compassion to all living beings is the enshrined Constitutional value and mandate and casts obligation on the authorities,” the Bench of Justices Maheshwari and Sanjay Karol said.

Monday's order by a Bench of Justices Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan had triggered a furore among animal rights activists, personalities, and groups.

SEE ALSO
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Jaishankar to visit Moscow, Wang Yi to reach New Delhi

India to step up engagements with China and Russia; move comes amid uncertainty in trade ties with the U.S. after it imposed high tariffs; China likely to continue border talks during Wang's visit

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of growing uncertainty in trade ties with the United States, India is on track to intensify engagements with Russia and China in the coming days.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is scheduled to visit Russia on August 21 to hold discussions with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov, while officials here are preparing to host Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi before that, sources have confirmed.

"The Ministers will discuss key issues on our bilateral agenda, as well as key aspects of cooperation within international framework," said the Russian Foreign Ministry, announcing Mr. Jaishankar's visit to Moscow.

Mr. Jaishankar's visit is part of the preparatory consultation for the next



Key diplomats: S. Jaishankar with Sergey Lavrov at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Foreign Ministers meeting in China. AP

Russia-India annual summit for which President Vladimir Putin is expected to visit India later this year.

The meeting between Mr. Jaishankar and Mr. Lavrov comes days after National Security Adviser Ajit Doval visited Russia where he met his counterpart Sergey Shoigu and had a special audience with President Putin.

Soon thereafter, Mr. Putin and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation on

Friday that Mr. Modi described as "detailed".

India is yet to officially announce the visit of the Chinese Foreign Minister though sources indicated that it is being scheduled ahead of Mr. Jaishankar's visit to Moscow.

Sources said the visit is understandably aimed at continuing high-level discussions on the India-China border issue, and Mr. Wang will meet National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and others during his visit.

The India-China interaction will be keenly watched as it is being planned three months after Operation Sindoor when India fought a brief war with Pakistan.

Lt. General Rahul R. Singh, Deputy Chief of Army Staff, said in July that China provided "live inputs" to Pakistan during the conflict.

It is understood that Mr. Wang's interactions in Delhi will also be part of the preparatory meetings before Mr. Modi's expected visit to Tianjin, China, for the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. However, India will remain cautious while warming up ties with China because of its strong relationship with Pakistan, sources have hinted.

In the backdrop of U.S. President Donald Trump's imposition of high tariffs on India for purchase of Russian oil, India has held consultations with partners and stakeholders.

WITH POPULATION RISING SIXFOLD IN 25 YRS, DEMAND INCREASED BUT NO PROPER WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WAS PUT IN PLACE

6 mn in Kabul may be out of water by 2030, and govt coffers are running dry

ELIAN PELTIER

ISLAMABAD, AUGUST 13

ON A recent summer evening, two neighbors in Kabul blurted out insults at each other over access to a rapidly vanishing resource: water.

"You come with four canisters and you cut the line," Aman Karimi hissed at a woman as he snatched a hose from her hands and filled his own buckets. "It's my turn, and it's my right."

Kabul is running dry, withered by scarcer rainfalls and snow melts and drained by unregulated wells. It has become so

dry that its 6 million people could be without water by 2030 — and are now fighting about it. Its water reserves are emptying nearly twice as quickly as they are getting replenished. The Taliban administration, short of cash, has so far been unable to bring water from nearby dams and rivers to the choking city.

Now, Kabul risks becoming the first modern capital to be depleted of underground water reserves, the nonprofit Mercy Corps warned in a recent report.

"We are increasingly fighting because water is like gold for us," Karimi said, as he pushed a wheelbarrow filled with 40 gal-

lons of water that his family of five would use for cooking, washing and drinking. Karimi, a tailor, said they recently moved into a new home without running water.

Kabul, surrounded by snowy mountains and crossed by three rivers, had never been known as a dry city. But while its population has grown roughly sixfold over the past 25 years, no decent water management system has been put in place to bring water from other sources or to regulate underground extraction.

Water supply is a critical issue across Afghanistan. At least 700,000 Afghans are displaced every year because of climate



Kabul's residents are now digging more and more boreholes, puncturing a city drained by unregulated water extraction. *NYT*

change, primarily droughts, according to the UN. One-third of Afghanistan's 42 million people don't have access to clean water.

International donors financed multiple dam projects and initiatives to connect Kabul's homes to a reliable pipe system, budgeting hundreds of millions of dollars. Most never saw the light of the day or were abruptly stopped after 2021, when the US withdrew from Afghanistan, the Taliban took control and other nations refused to recognize the new government.

"Kabul has been struggling with water issues for two decades, but it never was a priority," said Najibullah Sadid, an

expert on water resources. "Now the wells are drying up and it's an emergency."

Kabul's residents have been digging more and more boreholes in courtyards and in basements, puncturing a city drained by unregulated water extraction.

Just one-fifth of Kabul's residents have access to piped water, according to a 2021 report from the USAID. But the plumbing is increasingly out of service, too. Even the national environmental agency relies on a tanker delivering more than 2,600 gallons a day, because its well has run dry and its pipes are out of service. Those who can't afford to buy water

from delivery companies rely on the dwindling wells of mosques or charity from affluent residents.

The government is scrambling to find funds. Across the country, four dams have been completed since 2021, including one 20 miles away from Kabul that, if connected through a pipeline, could bring water to thousands of households. Another pipeline project from nearby Panjshir Valley has yet to receive final approval from the country's leadership.

Both lack funding: foreign donors have turned off the tap and private investments are scarce.

NYT

European powers ready to reimpose Iran sanctions

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Britain, France and Germany have told the UN they are ready to reimpose sanctions on Iran over its nuclear programme if no diplomatic solution is found by the end of August, according to a joint letter released on Wednesday.

The letter says the three European powers are “committed to use all diplomatic tools at our disposal to ensure Iran does not develop a nuclear weapon”.

They have stepped up warnings to Iran about its suspension of cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Myanmar junta committing ‘systematic’ torture: report

Agence France-Presse
YANGON

UN investigators say they have recorded “systematic” torture in Myanmar’s military-run detention facilities including beatings, electric shocks and gang rape.

A report by the UN’s Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) released on Tuesday said it had identified “serious abuses during interrogations and in detention facilities”. It was based on the testimonies from nearly 600 eyewitnesses.

The report said there had been “systematic commission” of torture including “sexual slavery”, the “burning of sexual body parts with cigarettes or burned objects”, and fin-



Senior General Min Aung

gernails being pulled out with pliers. It also found evidence “indicating that children – ranging from two to 17 years of age – have been detained, often as proxies for their parents”.

IIMM chief Nicholas Koumjian said the organisation had seen “a continued increase in the frequency and brutality of

atrocities” but had made “headway in identifying the perpetrators”. “We are working towards the day when the perpetrators will have to answer for their actions in a court of law,” he added.

A junta spokesman could not be reached for comment on the allegations laid out in the report.

Myanmar has been consumed by civil war since the military deposed the civilian government in a 2021 coup, with troops fighting an array of guerrillas and ethnic armed groups. The International Criminal Court’s chief prosecutor has already requested an arrest warrant for junta chief Min Aung Hlaing, who ousted and jailed elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

U.S. briefly deploys two warships to disputed sea after Chinese collision

Associated Press
MANILA

The U.S. deployed two warships on Wednesday in a disputed South China Sea shoal, where two Chinese navy and coast guard ships collided two days ago while trying to drive away a smaller Philippine ship in a high-seas accident cap-

tured on video, alarming several Western and Asian countries.

Both China and the Philippines claim Scarborough Shoal and other outcroppings in the South China Sea.

Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also lay overlapping claims in the contested waters.

The *USS Higgins*, a guided missile destroyer, and *USS Cincinnati*, a littoral combat ship, were shadowed by a Chinese navy ship while sailing about 30 nautical miles (55 km) from the Scarborough Shoal.

The U.S. Navy has staged what it calls freedom of navigation and overflight in the South Chi-

na Sea for years to challenge China’s restrictions and demand for entry notifications in virtually the entire stretch of the disputed waters that it claims. That has angered China and its forces have had close runs-in with U.S. warships and aircraft on such patrols in international waters and airspace.

AFTER FITCH AND S&P

Moody's upgrades Pakistan's credit rating

SIDDHARTH UPASANI

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 13

MOODY'S RATINGS on Wednesday upgraded Pakistan's sovereign credit rating to Caa1 from Caa2, with the outlook being changed to stable from positive, on the back of its improving external position which nonetheless remains "fragile" and supported by multilateral agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

"We expect Pakistan to fully meet its external debt obligations for the next few years, contingent on steady progress on reform implementation and timely completion of IMF reviews... Nonetheless,

Tariffs not to impact India's growth: S&P

New Delhi: Trump tariffs will not have any impact on India's growth, as it is not a trade-oriented economy, S&P Global Ratings director Yee Farn Phua said. In May last year, S&P had upgraded outlook on India's sovereign rating of 'BBB-' to positive.

PTI

Pakistan's external position remains fragile. Its foreign exchange reserves remain well below what is required to meet its external debt obligations, underscoring the importance of steady progress with the IMF programme to con-

tinually unlock financing," the rating agency said in a statement.

The upgrade by Moody's comes after S&P Global Ratings on July 24 raised Pakistan's rating to B- from CCC+. Previously, Fitch Ratings in April pushed up its assessment of Pakistan to B- from CCC+. Both S&P and Fitch have a stable outlook on Pakistan. While Moody's says 'Caa' ratings are judged to be of "poor standing", Fitch describes 'B' ratings as "highly speculative". S&P, meanwhile, calls 'B' ratings 'speculative grade'.

The rating upgrade for Pakistan comes after it met its external debt payments in the fiscal year ended June while increasing its foreign exchange reserves, which stood at \$14.3 billion as of July 25, up from

\$9.4 billion in August 2024.

"Notably, Pakistan successfully completed the first review of the IMF programme on schedule, unlocking a \$1 billion disbursement from the IMF in May 2025. It also secured a \$1 billion commercial loan in June 2025, with a \$500 million policy-based guarantee by the Asian Development Bank,"

Moody's said. The rating agency also noted the 28-month arrangement Pakistan had struck with the IMF under its Resilience and Sustainability Facility for about \$1.4 billion and a 10-year country partnership framework with the World Bank "with an indicative financing envelope of \$20 billion".

FULL REPORT ON

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2021 MURDER OF WRESTLER

'Surrender': Apex court sets aside order granting bail to Olympian Sushil Kumar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 13

THE SUPREME Court on Wednesday set aside the Delhi HC order granting bail to Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar in connection with the 2021 murder of former junior national wrestling champion Sagar Dhankar in Delhi, and gave Kumar a week to surrender before the court concerned.

The order by a bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and P K Mishra came on an appeal filed by Sagar Dhankar's father Ashok Dhankad, challenging the March 4, 2025, HC order.

Setting aside the HC order, the top court said that the HC "erroneously" passed the "order releasing the accused on bail". "While considerations such as the period

of custody and testimonies of key prosecution witnesses having been recorded are relevant, the court erred by inter alia, not considering the grievous nature of the crime, the possibility of influencing the trial by the accused and the conduct of the accused during investigation," it said.

As per the prosecution, Kumar and associates allegedly abducted Dhankar and few others on the intervening night of May 4 and 5, 2021, and took them to the Chhatrasal Stadium, and allegedly attacked with wooden lathis and sticks, causing grievous injuries. The accused allegedly also fired gunshots. Sagar later succumbed to his injuries. His postmortem cited the cause of death as "cerebral damage as a result of blunt force/object impact. All injuries are ante-mortem in nature".



Sushil Kumar

In October 2022, the sessions court framed murder charges against Kumar and 17 others.

The top court noted that "it is a matter of record that after registration of the subject FIR, inter alia against the accused, he remained absconding and evaded arrest" and this led to non-bailable warrants being issued against him and associates.

"On May 18, 2021...the Delhi Police declared a cash reward for giving information about the ac-

cused," the SC said, adding that though this was brought to the notice of HC, they "did not form part of the consideration of the order releasing him on bail".

The SC said it "must also be cognizant of the seriousness of the allegations against the accused. As per the allegations in the FIR, the national capital was made into a criminal playground to settle scores, with no regard for the law of the land. The accused persons allegedly abducted certain individuals; violently attacked them with dangerous weapons; and caused grievous injuries. The injuries were of such nature that they resulted in the unfortunate death of the complainant's son".

The bench also pointed out that from the FIR, "it is also borne that a loaded firearm was recovered from the vehicle of these

persons. Other weapons stained in blood were also recovered from the spot of the crime. Moreover, it cannot be disputed that the recording of the alleged incident was found in the phones of one of the co-accused persons. While the veracity of the above evidence is a matter of trial, there can be no doubt that these allegations are shocking and serious in nature".

The top court also said that it "cannot lose sight of the influence an accused wields in society while considering the grant of bail". The SC said that "noticeably, out of 35 witnesses examined, 28 have turned hostile."

Setting aside the HC order, it said "it shall be open for the accused to apply afresh for bail, with a change in circumstances, before the appropriate court, to be decided on its own merits."