

One Indian seafarer missing in attack on Cyprus-flagged vessel

10 of the crew rescued; authorities are coordinating with Omani agencies and Indian Embassy in Muscat to assist the seafarers and keep kin informed; New Delhi condemns the strike on vessel; the U.S. blamed an Iranian body for the attack

M. Kalyanaraman
CHENNAI

The Indian government has condemned the attack on a Cyprus-flagged commercial vessel off the coast of Oman that left one of its 11 Indian crew members missing.

"We condemn the attack on the commercial vessel *GFS Galaxy* off the coast of Oman, earlier today. Of the 11 Indian nationals on board, 10 have been rescued so far, while one Indian national is reportedly missing," the External Affairs Ministry said in a statement.

The U.S. Central Command blamed Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), saying it had "blatantly attacked" the ship.

Evacuation and rescue

The container vessel, *MV GFS Galaxy*, with a cargo carrying capacity of about 88,000 tonnes, was sailing near Omani waters when it was hit by a projectile around 2 a.m. (UAE time).



Tense strait: A cargo ship anchored near the Strait of Hormuz off the eastern coast of UAE on Saturday. AFP

The impact reportedly caused a fire in the engine room, leaving the ship without propulsion or steering. The crew anchored the vessel before evacuating into lifeboats and liferafts.

Heramb Karmarkar, the ship's third engineer, remains missing, and search and rescue operations are continuing. His family has been informed, sources said. Three rescued crew members sustained burns and minor injuries and have been admitted to hospital in Oman. The remaining crew members are being accommodated there while formalities are

completed.

The ship had a crew of 24, comprising 11 Indians, four Ukrainians, four Filipinos, three Indonesians and two Sri Lankans. Twenty-three crew members were rescued about two hours after the evacuation by the Royal Navy of Oman under the coordination of the Oman Maritime Security Centre. The vessel's condition and the extent of the damage are yet to be ascertained. The incident occurred about nine nautical miles east of Dahit, Oman, within the Strait of Hormuz transit corridor.

Indian authorities are coordinating with Omani

agencies, the ship's management company and the Indian Embassy in Muscat to monitor the situation and assist the affected crew. The families of the Indian seafarers have been contacted and are being kept informed of developments and counselled.

The Ministry said the Indian Embassy in Oman was closely monitoring the situation and coordinating with Omani authorities in the ongoing search and rescue operation. "We thank the Omani authorities for their support," it said, adding that the continuing attacks on commercial shipping in the region were "deeply worrisome".

"We reiterate our call for immediate de-escalation of tensions, and the conclusion of ongoing negotiations for a diplomatic solution so that peace and stability can return to the region," the Ministry said.

"The targeting of commercial shipping and civilian infrastructure in the region must end, and free and unimpeded navigation and commerce through the

international waterways, in keeping with international law, must be restored at the earliest," it said.

Meanwhile, the IRGC Navy said the Strait of Hormuz was "closed until further notice" and that no vessel would be permitted to transit it until U.S. intervention in the region ended.

The attack came a day after talks between Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Omani officials on bilateral ties and the Strait of Hormuz. The two sides agreed to continue discussions, but the talks did not appear to produce a breakthrough.

Oman has publicly declared a route along its coast to transit the Strait of Hormuz, which has become increasingly popular among ships. But Iran has been warning that vessels should not take the route near the Omani coast, dubbing it "unauthorised and dangerous".

The attack on *GFS Galaxy* is the third attack on ships taking the Omani route in the last five days.

ISRO successfully carries out tests of Gaganyaan systems

One of the tests involved separation of the 'umbilical mechanism' that serves as a link between the crew module, where astronauts live, and the service module that provides propulsion, agency says

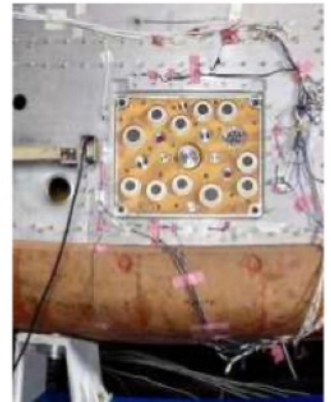
Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Indian Space Research Organisation on Sunday said it had successfully carried out three major tests of the Gaganyaan crew module systems.

The first test pertained to ensuring an upright position of the crew module after splashdown in the sea, considered one of the most important crew safety requirements. To do this, a stored cold-gas-based uprighting system was developed and tested.

"A system-level qualification test set-up consisting of all the elements of CMUS (crew module uprighting system) was realised," the ISRO said, adding it successfully conducted inflation tests "for the primary inflation module wherein stored gas in the high-pressure gas bottle was made to inflate the floatation by operating the control valves."

The second test involved examining the separation of the umbilical mechanism that serves as a link between the crew module, where astronauts live, and the service module, which provides power and propulsion.



Step-by-step: (Clockwise from left) The crew module uprighting system, the service module connect-disconnect system, and the apex cover that underwent testing. ISRO

er and propulsion. The mechanism consists of two parts, each located at the crew module side, called CSU-1, and the service module side, called CSU-2.

Clean separation

During the crew module's earth re-entry stage, the service module first separates from the crew mo-

dule after the CSU-1 disconnects. Subsequently, just before re-entry, the CSU-2 is also separated.

"Separation test of CSU-2 from simulated crew module was carried out. The test demonstrated the clean separation of CSU-2 as well as structural stability of the crew module panel and their interfaces,"

the space agency said. The third test validated the structural integrity of the crew module during the apex cover separation event. The apex cover protects the parachutes and associated subsystems during the mission. It is separated before parachutes are deployed to decelerate the crew module.

CJI stresses need for women-centric infrastructure in judicial buildings

The Hindu Bureau

GURUGRAM

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Sunday said judicial infrastructure was no longer a luxury but a “very big necessity”, and called for mandatory facilities for women advocates, including separate Bar rooms and adjoining childcare facilities, in all new court complexes.

Speaking at the inauguration of the new Tower of Justice, a seven-acre judicial complex for the Gurugram District and Sessions Court near Rajiv Chowk, the Chief Justice said providing an atmosphere that instils confidence in socially and financially backward litigants was the duty of all three organs of the Constitution.

“Just as a patient reaching a hospital is given first-aid, a consumer of justice



Chief Justice of India Surya Kant speaking at the inauguration of a judicial complex in Gurugram on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

coming to court must be given first-aid in the form of basic amenities – seating, drinking water, and wash-rooms,” Chief Justice Kant said. He noted that Gurugram’s transformation from an agricultural town to an industrial hub had led to a sharp rise in legal disputes of all kinds.

Flagging the lack of facilities for women lawyers,

the CJI cited a recent Supreme Court Bar Association survey, which found that many judicial complexes across States lacked basic amenities for women members of the Bar. “Women advocates are not being provided the facilities that should be given to them in many States. It is our all-out effort that wherever new judicial infras-

tructure is constructed, it should be mandatory to provide these facilities. It would not be right to call it a modern court complex without them,” he said.

He urged the Punjab and Haryana High Court to ensure a childcare room adjoining the women advocates’ room in the new Gurugram complex.

Chief Justice Kant recalled that he had performed the *bhoomi puja* for the complex in January 2017 in his capacity as the in-charge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court Building Committee, calling the day “historic” and “memorable”.

The new court complex has 55 modern courtrooms, compared with 45 in the old building. It houses a bank, a post office, a Bar library, a mediation centre and other citizen-centric amenities.

India, Canada conclude third round of talks on trade pact

India and Canada concluded the third round of negotiations for the proposed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement in Ottawa on Friday as the two sides look to wind up the talks this year. The issues that figured in the five-day talks include trade in goods, services, intellectual property, rules of origin, sanitary measures, and technical barriers to trade, among others. The negotiations are important as the two sides seek to increase bilateral trade to \$50 billion by 2030. In 2025-26, the two-way trade dipped 8.22% to \$7.95 billion (\$4.67 billion exports, \$3.28 billion imports) from \$8.66 billion in 2024-25 (\$4.22 billion exports, \$4.44 billion imports).

PTI

Taliban seek deeper farm ties with India

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

The Taliban administration of Afghanistan has expressed desire to enhance agricultural cooperation with India, covering areas such as agricultural trade, infrastructure development, and irrigation, the External Affairs Ministry said on Sunday.

In a statement, the Ministry said the discussions took place during the six-day visit of Ataullah Omari, the Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock of the Taliban administration. Among the issues discussed were cooperation in food processing through value addition, capacity building, and the promotion of bilat-



Union Agriculture Minister Shwraj Singh Chouhan with his Afghanistan counterpart Ataullah Omari in New Delhi. PTI

eral trade in agricultural and food products.

“The two sides reviewed ongoing cooperation and explored new avenues for collaboration in agriculture, irrigation, livestock, agricultural research, education, capacity building and agri-trade. Food security, seed systems and enhancement of

crop productivity featured prominently in the discussions. India reiterated its commitment to supporting Afghanistan’s agricultural sector through cooperation in climate-resilient and bio-fortified crop varieties,” the MEA said.

During the visit, Mr. Omari met Minister of Agriculture and Farmers

Welfare and Minister of Rural Development Shwraj Singh Chouhan and Minister of Food Processing Industries Chirag Paswan. Mr. Omari also met Minister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita.

The Afghan delegation, led by Mr. Omari, also held meetings with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

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Taliban seek deeper farm ties with India

Mr. Omari is the fourth Taliban Minister to visit New Delhi in the past year. Earlier, Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, Minister of Public Health Noor Jalal Jalali, and Commerce Minister Alhaj Nooruddin Azizi visited India.

India has not yet formally recognised the Taliban administration in Kabul, but has upgraded the 'technical team' in the Indian embassy in Kabul to the level of chargé d'affaires.

India has been sending food, medicines and other essential items to Afghanistan as the country continues to battle a shortage of essential commodities and life-saving medicines. Much of the assistance was routed through Iran's Chabahar port before the U.S.-Israel war against Iran disrupted the route.

Iran attacks West Asian nations after U.S. strikes

Tehran targets Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan, and Oman, says Strait of Hormuz is closed; U.S. says strikes will weaken Iran's ability to threaten shipping, insists traffic flowing through vital waterway

Associated Press

DUBAI

The U.S. attacked Iran early on Sunday over an Iranian strike on a container ship in the Strait of Hormuz that left one Indian sailor missing. Iran responded with attacks on several countries in West Asia, including Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan, and Oman.

The U.S. struck again later on Sunday. Iran's state-run IRNA news agency cited the Governor of Qeshm island near the strait as saying projectiles had been fired at military targets, with no casualties. It said explosions were heard in the coastal city of Bandar Abbas and Hajarabad city to the north.

The U.S. military's Central Command (CENTCOM)



The U.S. says it hit 140 targets, including missile and drone launch sites and communication equipment, in Iran. REUTERS

said it hit 140 targets, including missile and drone launch sites, ammunition dumps, communication equipment, and other sites. It said the attacks, heavier than in recent days, would weaken Iran's ability to threaten shipping. "We bombed the hell out of them last night," Pre-

sident Donald Trump said.

Iranian state media later reported U.S. strikes across the country, including military sites in a province near Tehran. Semi-official news agencies said that a Navy officer was killed.

Iran retaliated by attacking nations in the region hosting U.S. military fore-

Govt. slams ship attack off Oman; seafarer missing

CHENNAI

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es, while insisting it alone must control the strait.

The U.S. military and Mr. Trump asserted that the strait remained open on Sunday. Iran said the strait would be closed until calm is restored.

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Iran attacks West Asian nations after U.S. strikes

The fighting raised new questions about the interim deal Iran and the U.S. reached on June 17, beginning a 60-day period aimed at reaching a permanent end to the war. “The era of one-sided deals is OVER,” Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Speaker of Iran’s parliament and a key negotiator, wrote. “We told you: keep your word or pay the price. Reality is knocking.”

Tehran added that it would consider targeting “additional enemy bases in the region” if it faced more attacks. Missile alerts sounded in Bahrain which houses the U.S. Navy’s 5th Fleet. Kuwait’s military also said it was intercepting incoming fire. The Omani state news agency said drones struck sites in an area that sits on the Strait of Hormuz and issued a shelter-in-place warning for residents in the region. The attack came a day after Oman and Iran held talks on the strait.

Oman summoned the Iranian Ambassador to protest the strikes, the first such move since the war began, calling Iran’s acts “irresponsible.”

Three Iranian missiles struck areas across Jordan, causing minor damage but no injuries, Jordan’s state news agency reported. Sirens also sounded in the UAE, but the government said missiles did not cross into its territory.

Iran’s paramilitary Revolutionary Guard said multiple vessels “disregarded our warnings” and ignored instructions to follow what it called an approved route. One “was struck by a warning shot and brought to a stop”. Oman on Saturday said it and Iran agreed to continue discussing the Strait “at the technical and political levels.” Iran offered no statement about the Strait being open to all, something sought by the Trump administration.

Five crore Indians wait when the courts take a break

The Supreme Court of India and the major High Courts are on a summer holiday break, i.e., shut down with some vacation Benches functioning to hear urgent matters. However, shops, markets, eating places, government and private offices, hospitals and police stations do not cease to work even though their staff enjoy personal leave. On the other hand, somewhere in an Indian jail tonight, a man who has been convicted of nothing is finishing another year behind bars, his trial still ongoing and perhaps years away from ending. He is one of the roughly three in four prisoners in this country who are undertrials: unconvicted, presumed innocent, yet serving time anyway – often longer than the sentence they would have received had they pleaded guilty. And as you read this, the courts, the public institutions that hold the fate of the poor in their hands, are functioning at only a fraction of their strength.

A three-century backlog

From June 1 to July 12, the Supreme Court is on its summer break, sitting with three or four Benches a week instead of a full court and resuming in earnest on July 13. The doors are not bolted; urgent pleas are still heard. But for six weeks, the most powerful court in the world's most populous democracy idles.

Now hold that against the number it is meant to be fighting. As of the last day of 2025, more than 5.39 crore cases were pending in Indian courts: over 4.76 crore in the district courts, 63.6 lakh in the High Courts, and more than 92,000 in the Supreme Court itself, its heaviest load in over 30 years. A government study once calculated that, at the present pace, clearing the pile could take three centuries.

Three centuries. And the Court takes the summer and winter vacations off.

To be fair, the judges deserve it. The recess is when reserved judgments finally get written, when the brutal daily cause-list eases enough to think.



Vijay L. Kelkar

Vice-Chairman of
the Pune
International Centre



Pradeep S. Mehta

Secretary-General of
CUTS International
(Consumer Unity and
Trust Society)

When courts
rest together
for vacations,
crores of
litigants across
the country
wait longer
for justice

Last year the Chief Justice of India and his four senior-most colleagues worked clean through the first week of the break. Indian judges are among the most overworked in the world. This is not an accusation of laziness; no one who has seen a judge's docket could make one.

Because that is precisely the point. When the people doing the work are exhausted and the backlog is biblical, what conceivable logic shuts the whole shop at once? Not that judges rest – which they should – but that almost all of them rest together, so the institution goes quiet for six-plus weeks every year. And the habit is a colonial hand-me-down: the calendar was built for English judges who could not stand the Indian heat and retreated to cooler climes each summer, then enjoyed long Christmas holidays in the winter.

In 2024, the Court announced a fix: it renamed the “summer vacation” as “partial court working days”. That was it. The number of days it actually sits – about 190 days in a year – did not change. You cannot rebrand your way out of a backlog; a litigant whose case is stuck does not care what the recess is called, only whether his matter is heard and disposed of.

Justice needs court continuity

So what would actually help? The first answer is one the judiciary's own watchdogs have urged for years: do not abolish judicial rest; stagger it. A parliamentary standing committee in 2023 objected to “the entire court going on vacation en masse”, and proposed the obvious: rotate the leave, keep the Benches full, and never let the court run thin. A hospital does not empty its wards because its doctors are owed time off; it builds a roster. The Law Commission and the Justice Malimath Committee said the same, long ago. They were not enemies of the courts; they were trying to save them from themselves.

The standard objection is that all this is a sideshow: the real disease is vacancies, not vacations. It is true that courts are starved of judges, with up to a third of High Court seats

lying empty. But the objection boomerangs. If the Bench is already running at half strength, thinning it further for six weeks every summer is not a defence of the recess; it is the strongest case against it. And while filling those seats depends on the government and the collegium and will drag on for years, the calendar is the judiciary's to fix. One reform needs permission; the other needs only will.

Beyond courts, towards solutions

Staggering the leave, though, only treats the symptom. The deeper fix is to keep disputes out of the courtroom in the first place; it was never meant to be the first stop for every quarrel, but the last. India already has the tools. Lok Adalats settled more than 2.59 crore cases in a single national sitting last December, and over 23.5 crore in three years. The Mediation Act of 2023 now nudges parties to attempt settlement before going to court, and arbitration can take commercial disputes entirely out of judges' hands; yet these routes remain badly underused. But none of this happens on its own.

The country has a reservoir of experience it scarcely draws on: its retired judges, who spent their careers mastering this very machinery and step down, still in full command of it, at 62 or 65. Their expertise need not retire with them. Albeit many of them do function as heads of quasi-judicial bodies and tribunals. Freed from any daily docket, a dedicated corps of former judges could be invited to take up a single targeted charge: identify where cases pile up, set public targets for their disposal, and account for progress openly. Reform that belongs to everyone belongs to no one.

The judges will keep working through the heat, as they always do. The honest demand is not that they stop resting, but that the courts stop closing ranks and falling silent at the same moment, because justice, for five crore Indians, is not on vacation. It is overdue.

EU and 14 countries reaffirm ruling on South China Sea

Associated Press

MANILA

The United States, the United Kingdom and a dozen other Western and Asian countries reasserted on Sunday that China's expansive claims in the South China Sea are illegal based on a 2016 arbitration ruling.

A joint statement issued by the 14 nations said they rejected "destabilising" actions in the disputed waters that threaten regional stability. The 27-nation European Union released a separate statement, reaffirming the ruling as a "landmark decision in the peaceful settlement of disputes."

The other countries listed in Sunday's statement include Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The 2016 ruling invalidates China's claim in the region; verdict is null and void, says Beijing

The statements commemorated a July 12, 2016, arbitration ruling by a tribunal established in The Hague under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, saying the landmark decision is "final and legally binding."

China reiterated on Sunday that the ruling was "null and void and has no binding force" and Beijing "neither accepts nor recognises it".

China refused to join the arbitration initiated by the Philippines in 2013 after a tense stand-off in the contested waters a year earlier

that ended with Beijing effectively seizing a disputed shoal.

The tribunal largely decided in favour of the Philippines

Beijing rejected the 2016 ruling and continues to defend its claims to virtually the entire sea passage, a key global trade route.

"We reiterate our strong opposition to any destabilising or unilateral actions including by force or coercion that threaten peace and stability in the region," they said.

"China opposes and will never accept any claim or action based on those awards," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said, adding that Beijing "does not accept any means of third-party dispute settlement or any solution imposed on China."

Lindsey Graham, pivotal U.S. Republican Senator and a close Trump ally, dies at 71

Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON

U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham, an influential ally of President Donald Trump and advocate of hawkish U.S. foreign policy, has died unexpectedly aged 71, his office said on Sunday.

Graham was a staunch supporter of the Iran war, and urged both Mr. Trump and the [Joe] Biden administrations to back Kyiv's fight against Russia's invasion.

He bitterly opposed Mr. Trump a decade ago, but came around to support him.

The office of the Repu-



Lindsey Graham

blican Senator from South Carolina said in a statement on his X account that he "passed away from a brief and sudden illness" on Saturday evening.

Mr. Trump paid tribute to the late Senator, calling

him "one of the greatest people" in a post on his Truth Social site. "He was always working, and was a true American Patriot," the President said.

Graham made a failed bid for the presidency in 2016, warning at the time that Republicans should not back Mr. Trump because he was a "race-baiting, xenophobic, religious bigot."

Their relationship was again strained by the January 6, 2021, Capitol insurrection, with Graham saying his Republican colleagues should "count me out, enough is enough" – although he later voted

against convicting Mr. Trump in his impeachment trial.

Graham was also a strong supporter of Israel.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said: "Lindsey is a great friend of Israel and a cherished friend of mine."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he was deeply saddened by the death of Graham, whom he met in Kyiv on Friday. "He visited Ukraine ten times during the years of Russia's full-scale invasion and was here with our people when it was most needed," Mr. Zelenskyy said in a Facebook post.