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प्रणतः क्लेशनाशाय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः॥

आप सभी को

श्रीकृष्ण

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की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं

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BILATERAL VISIT TO UKRAINE

Not buying Russia oil will not stop war: Jaishankar

**Underlines need for dialogue, diplomacy,
says India ready to help in any manner**

Shubhajit Roy

New Delhi, September 3

DAYS AFTER Prime Minister Narendra Modi called on Russian President Vladimir Putin to move from “endless war” to “end of war”, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said in Kyiv on Thursday that stopping purchase of Russian oil will not “dissolve” the conflict, and underlined the need for “dialogue and diplomacy”. He said India was ready to “help in any manner” to end the Russia-Ukraine war.

Demonstrating a diplomatic balancing act, Jaishankar’s bilateral visit to Ukraine comes at a time when Modi is meeting Putin twice within weeks — on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) leaders’ summit in Bishkek on August 31, and at the BRICS summit in New Delhi on September 12-13.

Besides meeting his Ukrainian counterpart Andrii Sybiha, Jaishankar also called on Ukraine’s President Volodymyr



**External Affairs Minister
S Jaishankar with Ukrainian
President Volodymyr Zelenskyy
in Kyiv, Thursday. ANI**

Zelenskyy on Thursday. Sybiha welcomed Modi’s call to move “towards an end to the war”, and said Ukraine “stands ready for diplomacy”. In a post on X, Zelenskyy thanked India for its “commitment to ending this unjust war”.

Responding to a question at a media briefing after his meeting with Sybiha, Jaishankar

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Jaishankar in Ukraine

defended India's decision to buy Russian oil. "This conflict, which is today in its fifth year, will not dissolve because somebody is buying or not buying oil or alumina or minerals or metals... This conflict will be solved by dialogue, by diplomacy, by negotiations. And that is why it is something we would encourage," he said.

He said ensuring fuel supplies for India's 1.4 billion people is a challenge, adding that he respects Ukraine's position on Russian oil purchases, but expects the same respect for India's position.

"India has consistently maintained that this is not an era of war, and that solutions will not emerge from the battlefield. Just two days ago in Bishkek, Prime Minister Modi declared that endless war must now give way to the end of war. Every passing day of conflict only means more deaths and more destruction. Understandably, it is for the parties involved to find a way. But, if India can be of any help in any manner, we are ready, and this was the core of my discussion so far with Foreign Minister Sybiha," he said.

While Jaishankar had accompanied Modi to Ukraine in August 2024, this was his first bilateral visit to the country.

Jaishankar said there were some specific aspects of the conflict that came up in the discussions on Thursday. "Prominent among them was attacks on commercial shipping. Indian seafarers man ships of many flags and have been among the unfortunate casualties. The impact on shipping is also significantly affecting many nations of the Global South in a variety of ways, leading to fuel, fertiliser and food shortages," he said.

He was referring to the deaths of Indians, including

five seafarers, since July this year due to the exchange of fire between Russia and Ukraine.

In a post on X, Jaishankar said he apprised Zelenskyy of his discussions with Sybiha on "deepening our bilateral cooperation". "Our conversation centered on approaches to end the ongoing conflict," he said.

Zelenskyy, in his post on X, said: "We are grateful to India for its commitment to ending this unjust war -- Russia's war against Ukraine. This certainly must not be a time of war. Peace is needed. This is India's clear position. Today, while the Minister was here with us in Kyiv, Russia once again launched jet-powered 'shaheds', which were developed not without Iran's help. Thanks to our combat aviation, the delegation was safe, because it is Ukrainian fighter jets that shoot down most of these drones. We hope that other major world powers will also take a clear stance that this war must end and that a reliable peace must be achieved."

"Of course, we discussed the situation in the Black Sea, including the existing threats to civilian shipping. We concur that it is absolutely unacceptable to block food supplies to regions where this is a highly sensitive issue and where people depend on these maritime routes. Russia's actions aimed at blocking our ports, our food corridor, and our supplies are causing major disruption to global relations. We must all work together to guarantee security," Zelenskyy said.

"Honored to welcome my Indian colleague @DrSJai-shankar to Kyiv for the first-ever dedicated bilateral visit of an Indian External Affairs Minister to Ukraine. This historic moment takes place amid escalating Russian attacks against our cities, port infra-

structure and civil shipping. Our capital is constantly under attack and I appreciate my colleague's brave visit," Sybiha said in a post on X.

"During our negotiations, we discussed the need to restore freedom of navigation in the Black Sea and global food security. India is a global power and we welcome Prime Minister Modi's call to move from an endless war towards an end to the war. Ukraine stands ready for diplomacy," he said.

"We also discussed our bilateral cooperation. From infrastructure and pharmaceutical sector to technological innovation and digitalisation, we are ready to realise our full potential. We agreed to work on convening our next Intergovernmental Commission meeting to turn great perspectives into great mutually beneficial projects," Sybiha said.

Jaishankar invited Sybiha to India for the next meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission.

On bilateral cooperation, Jaishankar said: "This has a considerable history and it predates Ukraine's independence. Our trade spans a wide range of sectors — from pharmaceuticals, food and agriculture, and fertilisers to machinery, chemicals and consumer goods. Understandably, in the last four years, this trade has seen some disruption due to the war situation and logistical challenges. At the same time, there has been a visible resilience and, some new possibilities have emerged."

"Where the future prospects of our bilateral cooperation are concerned, we are very much aware that Ukraine has deep strengths and capabilities. India too is developing at a rapid pace. And some of these notable areas of progress are in digital capabilities, innovation and startups. The world of AI offers new openings in health, education, agriculture, even in governance," he said.

SEVEN FOREIGNERS WERE ARRESTED IN MARCH

NIA links Ukraine, US nationals to drone attack on plane in Myanmar

Credible information men were engaged in drone warfare training: Probe agency

Nirbhay Thakur

New Delhi, September 3

THE NATIONAL Investigation Agency (NIA) has told a Delhi court that the seven foreign nationals who were arrested this March for allegedly conspiring to carry out terrorist activities against India were involved in a drone attack on a civilian aircraft in neighbouring Myanmar.



US national Matthew Aaron Van Dyke is lodged in Tihar jail.

MATTHEWVANDYKE.COM

The foreigners — six Ukrainians and an American — are currently in Tihar Jail. On August 31, Special Judge Prashant Sharma allowed the NIA's application seeking permission to interrogate two of the men in prison.

“...The Central Government has received credible information indicating the involvement of certain Ukrainian and US Nationals in a drone attack on a civilian aircraft in Myanmar,” the NIA said in the application to the court dated August 19.

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NIA

“In this regard”, the application said, “14 Ukrainians had entered India on tourist visa on different dates and flew to Guwahati and thereafter, they travelled to Mizoram without requisite documents Restricted Area Permit (RAP) / Protected Area Permit (PAP) and entered into Myanmar illegally to conduct a pre-scheduled training on the drone warfare, drone operations, assembly and jamming technology for Myanmar-based Ethnic Armed Groups (EAGs) targeting the Myanmar Military Junta.”

Several Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) have been active in Myanmar for decades. Since the military, known as Tatmadaw, seized power in a coup on February 1, 2021, EAOs acting in a loose alliance with local militias and other resistance forces have been leading an armed struggle against the government of the junta.

Burma News International, a network of media organisations based in and around Myanmar that positions itself as the voice of the country’s ethnic minorities, reported on February 24 that a Myanmar National Airlines ATR 72-600 passenger aircraft preparing for take-off to Mandalay had been struck by an FPV suicide drone at Myitkyina

airport in Kachin state four days earlier. It was not immediately clear if the NIA application referred to this particular attack.

The seven foreign nationals “had earlier travelled similarly through Mizoram and conducted training on two separate occasions in addition to illegally imported huge consignments of drones and its relevant parts from Europe to Myanmar via India for use of EAGs”, the application said. “...These EAGs are also known to support certain proscribed Indian insurgent groups by supplying weapons, terrorist hardware and training them thus affecting national security and interest of India.”

According to NIA, which is being represented by Special Public Prosecutor Rahul Tyagi, Public Prosecutor Ankit Gautam, and advocates Jatin Khatri and Amit Rohilla, “multiple digital devices” seized from the accused have been sent for forensic examination and data extraction. Some reports have been made available, but the “very huge and voluminous data... needs time for thorough analysis for the purpose of investigation”, the NIA told the court.

“During scrutiny of the data extracted from seized devices, incriminating information and facts emerged in the form of images, videos, voice samples, etc., which are required to be confronted and corroborated with arrested accused persons to take the investigation to its logical conclusion,” the NIA said. In its application, the NIA said it

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Van Dyke was detained at Kolkata airport on March 13, and the Ukrainians — Kaminskyi, Petro Hurba, Taras Slyviak, Ivan Sukmanovskiy, Marian Stefaniv, and Maksim Honcharuk — were detained at airports in Lucknow and Delhi. They were produced before the Special NIA Judge in Patiala House court on March 14, and they have been in Tihar since April 6. The NIA is expected to interrogate Van Dyke and Kaminskyi with the help of a Ukrainian translator.

Appearing for the accused, advocates Rohit Dandriyal, Rohit Gour, and Nitin Saluja argued that the NIA’s application does not mention any fresh or specific ground for interrogating the accused, and that the application was an “afterthought”.

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NO TRANSHIPMENT SHOULD HAPPEN IN INDIA: GOYAL

‘India should avoid becoming a conduit for unethical trade’

Ravi Dutta Mishra
New Delhi, September 3

COMMERCE MINISTER
Piyush Goyal on Thursday said that India should not become a trade conduit for goods originating from another country and should aim for genuine value addition.

Goyal said that India’s “country of origin” certificates should carry weight.

“No transshipment should happen in India. We should not become a conduit for anything unethical. We should be trusted partners of the world. We don’t want to become like Vietnam, which brings goods from one country and exports to another country after marginal value addition,” Goyal said.

The statement comes on the heels of a US report accusing over 40 countries, including India, of acting as a “shadow transshipment network” designed to hide the true economic origin of goods produced in China.

The White House, as per the report, on August 14 categorised the “shadow network” into three tiers, with countries such as India, Mexico, Canada, and the European Union forming tier 1 where illegal transshipment risk is “embedded” within massive legitimate trade flows. While “closely integrated” countries with China such as Vietnam, Malaysia, and Thailand were categorised as tier 2, smaller economies such as Cambodia, Panama, and the UAE with “weak customs enforcement” were classified as tier 3.

The report claimed that tariff revenue is the most obvious loss from illegal transshipment and that when China-linked goods enter the US through



India should aim for genuine, not marginal, value addition, according to Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal. ANI

third countries, they widen the effective trade deficit, displace domestic production, reduce GDP growth, and lower associated federal tax receipts.

The US has imposed an additional 10% tariff on several countries, including India, from July 24.

Goyal will visit the US in late September to attend the G-20 Trade Ministerial in Milwaukee and hold bilateral talks with USTR Jamieson Greer.

Goyal also said that the details of the Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) with the US will be announced once Washington offers preferential terms compared to the country’s competitors.

He also said that India’s nine free trade agreements (FTAs), spanning economies representing about \$60 trillion of GDP, would provide preferential access to nearly two-thirds of global trade.

He said the other FTAs that India would conclude over the next few months and couple of years, including those with Canada, Mexico, Chile, Mercosur,

SACU (South Africa Customs Union), GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) and Israel, together with efforts to review ASEAN, Korea and Japan trade deals would give India access to 75% of global trade at a rate lower than its competitors.

India has implemented trade pacts with the UK, Mauritius, Oman, UAE, and Australia.

“(Trade pact with) New Zealand will go live soon and thereafter (FTA with) EU, the 27-nation bloc, will go live. And as soon as the US can give us the preferential rate, in comparison to our competition, we will finalise the BTA and announce the final details,” he said at a workshop on free trade agreements, organised by the commerce ministry.

In February, India and the US announced finalisation of the framework for the first phase of the pact, but changes in the tariff landscape in the US have led to further negotiations between the two countries on the pact.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Finland runs Europe's biggest civil defence exercise since Cold War

Country's border with Russia stretches more than 1,300 km

Emma Burrowswap
Kuopio, September 3

IN A civil defence shelter hewn into rock, behind doors designed to withstand a nuclear or biological attack, two Finnish conscripts wearing hazmat suits and breathing masks are measuring radiation levels as

they take part in an exercise to turn a cave into a place of safety for thousands of people.

Inside, in what is normally a sports hall, hundreds of people are sleeping overnight on trestle beds. More than 2,000 people including volunteers and students are taking part in the biggest civil defense exercise in Europe since the end of World War II.

Critical infrastructure in the central Finnish city of Kuopio, including power and water, has been disrupted by cyberattacks and there's the threat of missile strikes from Finland's neighbour, Russia.

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People stand at the entrance of a shelter designed to withstand chemical, nuclear and biological attacks. AP

ities and ordinary people to rehearse what they would do if they came under attack for real.

But while underground bunkers and shelters may offer some protection from missiles, they are

no defence against the campaign of sabotage and disruption that Western officials say Russia is carrying out across Europe.

That has involved setting fires, attacking water facilities and power stations, and sending drones for sabotage into European Union airspace. Finland's border with Russia stretches more than 1,300 km from the Baltic Sea up to the Arctic Circle.

In 2024, along with Sweden, Finland joined NATO, following Russian President Vladimir Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Until then, Finns were prepared to defend themselves against Russia largely alone.

Finland's defence, said retired Army Colonel Asko Muhonen, relies not only on the military but on the "mindset" of ordinary Finns who are ready to take responsibility for their country's security. Muhonen said that comes partly from the system of conscription which continued in Finland, even after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Not everyone is happy about doing national service but "it's our duty to serve and protect this country like people have before us. That's why we have our independence," said Jyry Pietikainen, who was taught to run the Kuopio shelter overnight. AP



Russian ship Professor Molchanov which, according to officials, was seized by Norway in the Arctic. FILE/REUTERS

Norway seizes Russian vessel to compensate Ukrainian energy firm

Reuters

Oslo, September 3

NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES have seized a Russian cruise ship in the Arctic on behalf of Ukrainian energy company Naftogaz, which is seeking to enforce a \$4.22 billion compensation award for assets that Moscow took when Russia annexed Crimea in 2014.

Officials said the vessel, Professor Molchanov, was seized late on Wednesday in Barentsburg, a coal mining settlement that Russia operates on the Norwegian Arctic archipelago of Svalbard under the terms of a 1920 treaty. Russia called the arrest of the ship an act of piracy and said it had summoned the Norwegian ambassador to deliver a strong protest. The Russian Foreign Ministry said it would work to secure the vessel's release.

"Amid the restrictive measures imposed by Norway against Russia on Svalbard - measures that violate international law - Russian organizations and citizens operating on

Trump: Europe must repay US for Ukraine aid

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump on Thursday said he would ask European nations to pay back the US for military aid and munitions previously sent to Ukraine and appeared to signal a halt in sales to allied nations. In a social media post, Trump also slammed reports of heavily depleted US munition stockpiles amid the separate war in Iran, while adding that the United States was stockpiling munitions. "We are taking them for ourselves, the USA, rather than selling them to others, but the sales to Allies will soon again, begin," Trump wrote. AP

the archipelago are effectively under blockade," it said. Norway said the matter was between Naftogaz and Russia and did not involve the Oslo government.

WMO warns of 'very' strong El Nino, to last until February 2027

Express News Service
Bengaluru, September 3

THE WORLD Meteorological Organization (WMO) on Thursday warned of an impending "very strong" El Nino that could last till February of next year and could alter temperature and rainfall patterns globally.

"El Nino is firmly established and is expected to strengthen. It has the potential to deliver a massive blow to communities and economies across the world. We are already seeing disruption and devastation from droughts and floods and we expect these impacts to increase as El Nino intensifies," said WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo at a press briefing on Thursday.

El Nino is a natural ocean-atmosphere phenomenon that is caused when the equatorial Pacific Ocean warms significantly and interferes with

weather patterns globally. It is known to trigger extreme weather — heatwaves, wet spells and extreme temperatures. The intensity of El Nino is determined by the sea surface temperature average over three months in the Nino 3.4 region along the equatorial Pacific Ocean. In recent months, this temperature index value surpassed 1.5 degrees Celsius above normal during May-July and escalated 2 degrees Celsius mark above normal in July.

Europe, this year, witnessed one of the hottest summers in recent decades and August, according to many global weather agencies, reported record temperatures in many parts of the globe. The UN agency's chief said: "Never before in the 50-year history of the WMO have we launched such a major mobilisation with National Meteorological and Hydrological Services

who are on the frontline of delivering forecasts and services to save lives and livelihoods."

The India Meteorological Department (IMD), earlier this month, confirmed that the monsoon rainfall in the later half of August came under the cloud of El Nino. But, with three-fourths of the season over, the monsoon has largely escaped the developing El Nino.

WMO further said the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) — the Indian Ocean counterpart of El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) — was likely to develop during September-November.

"A positive phase of the IOD is also expected to develop with a seasonal mean value of 0.9 degrees Celsius," WMO said.

This could counter El Nino and in late August, the IOD had, briefly, swung towards the positive phase but returned to neutral, the IMD said.

FIRST VISIT BY A BELGIAN PM IN TWO DECADES; MODI & DE WEVER DISCUSS UKRAINE, WEST ASIA

From defence to fintech, India & Belgium give ties a major boost

Shubhajit Roy

New Delhi, September 3

INDIA AND Belgium agreed to strengthen defence and Intelligence-sharing, establish an investment fast-track mechanism, double bilateral trade, boost partnership on semiconductors and enter a pact on renewable energy, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the visiting Prime Minister of Belgium, Bart De Wever, on Thursday.

After the bilateral meeting, PM Modi said, "I am confident that today's discussions mark the beginning of a new chapter in our bilateral relations."

"Defence and security cooperation is a key pillar of our relationship. Today, we agreed to enhance military exchanges and training cooperation between the two countries. The agreements between our governments and defence industries will open up new opportunities for defence co-development and co-production. We will also further strengthen Intelligence-sharing and cooperation between our agencies in combating crime," he said.

Belgian PM De Wever said, "The exchange of the letter of intent we have just witnessed gives that cooperation a new framework – from government to government contacts and military exchanges to research, innovation, co-development, and hopefully co-production. And alongside it, a series of additional defence-related MoUs are being concluded, bringing companies and institutions from both countries closer together. Security too is something we strengthen by working with partners we can trust."

Defence delegations from



PM Narendra Modi during a meeting with his Belgian counterpart Bart De Wever in Delhi, Thursday. PTI

the two sides met and agreed to strengthen cooperation in defence industries, which includes drones, anti-mine systems, rockets, tanks, munitions. Representatives from about 15 Belgian defence companies accompanied the Belgian Prime Minister and interacted with the Indian defence industry players as well.

PM Modi said, "For Belgian companies, we have established an Investment Fast-Track Mechanism in India. We have decided to make the India-Belgium Business Forum a regular mechanism. We will strengthen coordination among the financial, fintech and regulatory institutions of both countries. Through all these initiatives, we will realise our goal of doubling bilateral trade over the next five years."

Belgium is an important economic partner for India in Europe. Bilateral trade reached \$13.01 billion in 2025-26. Diamond trade, with Antwerp as a major global hub, remains a significant component of bilateral

commerce. Belgium is also an important source of investment in India. FDI inflows from Belgium amounted to approximately \$4.2 billion between April 2000 and December 2025.

This is PM De Wever's first visit to India since taking office in February 2025. This is also the first visit by a Belgian Prime Minister to India in two decades — marking a significant new phase in India-Belgium relations.

The Belgian PM said, "Prime Minister Modi and I had a very good discussion about trade and investment, and about broader changes taking place in the world of today and the economy of today. My country believes strongly in free and fair trade. For us, open markets are not just an abstract principle; they are part of our economic DNA and the basis of our prosperity. Trade within and between economies allows countries to specialize in what they do best. It spreads ideas and technology. It drives competition and innovation.

And when it is free and fair, it creates values on both sides."

On the geoeconomic climate, he said, "The world around us is changing. Recent years have shown us how quickly supply chains can be disrupted and weaponised. How geopolitical instability can affect our energy and our economies, and how excessive dependencies can become vulnerabilities. Our course rejects two false choices. Firstly, we do not choose protectionism, but neither do we accept naive dependencies. We've done so for far too long. And secondly, we certainly do not believe that the answer is to retreat economically behind our own walls and our own borders. Our answer is strategic openness."

On global issues, PM Modi said, "Today, we also had detailed discussions on regional and global developments. Both India and Belgium believe in the rule of law, dialogue and diplomacy. Whether it is Ukraine or West Asia, we

support all efforts aimed at an early end to conflicts and the restoration of peace."

The joint statement elaborated: "Regarding the war in Ukraine, both sides reaffirmed their support for efforts towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace through dialogue and diplomacy, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. On West Asia, they discussed recent developments of concern in the region and underscored the importance of dialogue and diplomatic engagement to address challenges in a peaceful manner. They also stressed the importance of ensuring the safety and security of maritime routes and of maintaining safe and unimpeded maritime shipping."

PM Modi also referenced the GDP numbers and India's economic strength. "Today, the world is going through a period of great upheaval. Conflicts continue to persist in many parts of the world. Whether it is food, fuel, or supply chains, every sector is being impacted by uncertainty. In this challenging environment, India's economy has maintained its momentum. We recorded 7.8% growth in the last quarter. Today, India's growth story is becoming a source of confidence and new opportunities for the world," he said.

PM De Wever hinted that PM Modi will be visiting Belgium in December: "It would be a happy ending of the year 2026 to see the signature (happening) in Belgium, and we have the honour of receiving Prime Minister Modi in my country... I look forward to welcoming you to Brussels in December, maybe Antwerp."

Finland runs Europe's biggest civil defence exercise since Cold War

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Kuopio, September 3

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NIA

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● HOPING TO HIT THE BULL'S EYE

Vidarsa's journey: From a college NCC trial to Asian Games shooting squad

Shashank Nair

New Delhi, September 3

ALL VIDARSA K Vinod wanted to do was hold a rifle. When an NCC trial was held at her college in 2018, the Kozhikode native turned up just so she'd have something to tell her friends, the novelty of picking a rifle up.

She ended up getting a shot instead, one that changed her life and has led to a place in the Indian shooting contingent heading to Aichi-Nagoya for the 2026 Asian Games. Vidarsa will compete in the women's 10m air rifle and the women's 50m three-position events.

Without any formal training, Vidarsa shot well enough that day to be picked for the NCC team. She soon moved to

the Kerala state team, but kept struggling. Shooting remains a prohibitively expensive sport for beginners, rifles run into the lakhs before jackets and ammunition even enter the picture, and when Covid hit, she considered leaving the sport rather than take a loan to buy her own equipment.

It didn't help that friends kept questioning her choice. "There were a lot of questions asked, some positive and some negative. There was also the issue of attendance in college, which was causing problems," Vidarsa said.

For a year, she practised yoga and exercised at home, but stayed off the range entirely. Once the pandemic's threat eased, she felt ready to give the sport another chance.

By then she had risen to the top of Kerala's rankings without ever owning a personal rifle, relying instead on NCC or borrowed weapons, and that gap made the idea of walking away feel harder to justify, not easier.

It was at a shooting range that she met her husband, who asked her, plainly, how she could call herself a professional shooter without owning her own rifle.

"I was speechless. I was improving my average and I became the Kerala No. 1 without any rifle or jacket at that time. I was delaying taking that plunge. So, that question actually made me think a lot. Then I discussed it with my parents and decided to get a new rifle. I took a loan for that," Vidarsa said.



Vidarsa will compete in the 10m air rifle and 50m 3-position. EXPRESS

Slow grind

Competition for a place in India's national shooting setup is intense, and getting more so. The number of shooters coming through state programmes has grown sharply in recent years, and a sport long dominated by the northern states has started finding its footing in the south too.

Kerala was never known for producing shooters, but Vidarsa goes into these Asian Games as one of its newer faces, carrying real responsibility for a squad that looks very different from the one that went to Hangzhou.

She is part of a newer generation trying to displace an established one, and a strong showing here matters.

India won 22 medals at

Hangzhou, a haul that surprised at the time and helped push the country toward its target of 100 medals. Matching or beating that this time will need top-level performances from exactly the newer faces Vidarsa represents.

To make the team, Vidarsa knew she needed specialised coaching.

That's where Manoj Kumar, a SAI high-performance coach, came in, working with her over short stints to rebuild her technique.

"Vidarsa was quick to learn and was accepting of the changes I wanted to make. For every athlete, the level of trust with their coach is different. But Vidarsa bought into the technical changes I wanted to make," Kumar said. The two

have worked together for several years now, and the partnership has only deepened.

When Vidarsa struggled with the weight of her rifle, Kumar suggested she try a lighter model he'd bought for his own daughter. She felt the difference immediately.

"My daughter has a similar build to Vidarsa, and both struggle to work with heavier rifles. So I imported a lightweight rifle for my daughter. But she was more interested in studying, so I gave the rifle to Vidarsa to test out. Initially she refused to take it, since the weapon was for my daughter. She was convinced when I asked her to just try it, and import one for herself later if she liked it. After a few days, I told her to keep it," Kumar said.