

Data suggest Indian oil buys fall after U.S. curbs

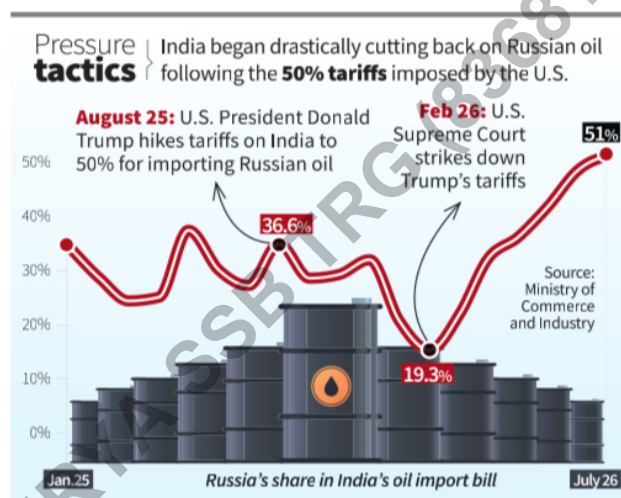
The government says energy sourcing is based on 'national interest', but India slashed imports from Venezuela, Iran, and Russia following U.S. pressure, and resumed sourcing after curbs eased

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Over the past decade, India has complied with U.S. pressure to reduce oil imports from countries it has sought to isolate, such as Venezuela, Iran, and Russia, even though they were important sources. Once the U.S. pressure eased, official data show that India immediately turned back to these sources of oil.

The External Affairs Ministry on Thursday issued a strong statement asserting India's strategic independence in sourcing energy against the backdrop of a U.S. Bill that proposes tariffs of up to 100% on India for importing Russian oil.

The Ministry spokesperson said on Friday that



“energy sourcing is based on national interest” and that India continues “to buy energy from diversified sources”. “As stated, we have already conveyed, at senior levels of the U.S. administration, the implications that the legislation could have on India’s ener-

gy security, for the international energy markets, and the overall bilateral partnership,” the spokesperson said.

Earlier, the Ministry said that in its communications with the U.S., the Indian side “made clear its determination to take all mea-

sures to protect its trade and economic interests”.

Data show that protecting “trade and economic” interests has, in the past, coincided closely with the U.S. sanctions and tariff programme. Russia’s share in India’s oil imports was around 30%-40% between July 2024 and July 2025 but fell to 19.3% by February 2026 when the U.S. hiked tariffs to 50%. After the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the tariffs in February, India’s oil imports from Russia increased, touching 51% this July. The share of Venezuelan crude fell from 6.7% in 2017-18 to zero by 2021-22, and that of Iranian oil plummeted from one-tenth to nil by 2020-21.

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While Venezuela has never been a dominant source of oil for India, its share in India's oil imports stood at a relatively high 6.7% in 2017-18,. This share fell slightly to 6.4% in 2018-19.

This is where things changed. In January 2019, U.S. President Donald Trump once again widened sanctions on Venezuela to include its oil sector.

While Venezuela's share in India's oil imports fell to 5.9% in 2019-20, it crashed to 1.1% by 2020-21, and further to zero by 2021-22. It remained at zero in 2022-23 as well.

Under the Biden administration, India resumed small amounts of imports from Venezuela, but its share remained below 1%. However, Mr. Trump partially lifted sanctions on Venezuelan oil companies in March 2026 after he orchestrated a leadership change in the South American nation. Between April and July 2026, the share of Venezuelan oil in India's imports swung back up to 4.8%.

Isolating Iran

In November 2018, Mr. Trump reimposed wide-ranging sanctions on Iran in a bid to quell its supposed nuclear weapon ambitions. Iran's share of oil imports fell to 1% after the sanctions and then to zero by 2020-21. India imported no oil from Iran for the six years spanning 2020-26.

Then, in March 2026, Mr. Trump once again allowed Iran to sell limited quantities of oil in the global market. In the four months of April-July 2026, Iran's share in India's oil import bill has already risen to 1.1%.

India's energy relationship with Russia has been more resilient, but it too has bowed before U.S. pressure. Russia's share in India's oil imports rose consistently to largely hover between 30-40% during the period July 2024 to July 2025.

However, in August 2025, Mr. Trump hiked tariffs on India from 25% to 50% as a penalty for its import of Russian oil. Following this, India gradually began cutting back on Russian oil imports.

Russia's share in India's oil import bill fell to 19.3% by February 2026, from nearly double that when the tariffs were hiked. Then, in February 2026 itself, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Mr. Trump's tariff regime, thereby also removing the penal tariffs.

Immediately after, India began ramping up its oil imports from Russia, with the latest data showing Russia's share hitting more than 51% in July 2026. This also coincided with the start of the U.S. attack on Iran, the closure of the vital Strait of Hormuz, and global oil prices shooting up.

HAL hands over two LCA trainer plane to Air Force

Hemanth C.S.

BENGALURU

A handover ceremony of various military and civil rotary wing aviation along with pilot training platforms developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) was held in Bengaluru on Friday. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Union Minister for Civil Aviation K. Ramamohan Naidu were present.

HAL handed over two Light Combat Aircraft trainers to the Indian Air Force (IAF), completing the twin seater deliveries under the Final Operational Clearance contract. HAL said that the twin seaters are intended to facilitate the graduation of trainee pilots from the twin-seat platform to fighter aircraft.

Four Dhruv Next Generation helicopters were also handed over to Pawan



Rajnath Singh, K. Ramamohan Naidu, Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, and others during the handing-over ceremony in Bengaluru. PTI

Hans Ltd., marking the induction of the civil-certified Dhruv NG into the civil aviation segment. The Dhruv NG is a 5.5-tonne, light twin-engine, multi-role helicopter developed by the HAL to address demanding operating conditions in India and has been upgraded for the requirements of the global civil aviation market.

The Hindustan Turbo Trainer-40 (HTT-40), a basic trainer aircraft intended to meet the primary train-

ing requirements of the Indian defence services, was also handed over to the IAF. The HTT-40 aircraft is designed to support multiple stages of basic pilot training, including aerobatics, instrument flying, and navigation.

Mr. Singh called for realistic project timelines to address delays in ongoing projects. He added that there was no need to view public and private sectors as competitors but to look at them as collaborators.

New 3-judge HC Bench to hear Maratha reservation Act petitions from Oct. 9

Chinmay Gaikwad

MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court said on Friday that it will begin hearing on October 9 petitions for and against the Maharashtra State Reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) Act, 2024, which gives 10% reservation to Marathas in education and services in the State. A Bench of Justices Makarand Karnik, N.J. Jamadar and Sandeep Marne will hear the petitions.

The matter came to this Bench after hearings before two Benches earlier stopped. A Bench comprising Chief Justice Devendra Upadhyay, Justice Girish Kulkarni and Justice Firdosh Pooniwalla had initially heard the petitions but Justice Upadhyay was



Maratha Kranti Morcha members burning tyres on Pune-Solapur highway while staging a 'Rasta Roko' protest. FILE PHOTO

moved to the Delhi High Court. A Bench led by Justice Ravindra Ghuge then heard the matter from May 2025 to August 2025. With Justice Ghuge subsequently elevated as Chief Justice of the Calcutta HC, the hearings at the second Bench ground to a halt as well.

The SEBC Act, passed by the legislature on February 20, 2024, was notified by the State government led by Chief Minister Devendra

Fadnavis six days later. The enactment followed a report by the Maharashtra State Commission for Backward Classes led by Justice Sunil B. Shukre that cited circumstances and situations warranting grant of reservation to the Maratha community beyond the 50% limit on reservation. It gave Marathas 16% reservation in State government jobs and education.

An advocate had moved

the Bombay High Court against the Act but the court upheld it in June 2019. It, however, said the 16% quota could not be justified and reduced it to 12% in education and 13% in jobs under the government. This was then challenged in the Supreme Court.

In May 2021, the Supreme Court struck down the SEBC Act, 2018, holding that no circumstances justified reservation for Marathas beyond the 50% ceiling set by the 1992 *Indra Sawhney* judgment. The court also questioned the data submitted to show backwardness of Marathas. The government filed a petition for review but the court rejected it in April 2023. It then filed a curative petition, which remains before the Supreme Court.

Bail for U.S. national as NIA misses chargesheet deadline

Ishita Mishra

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday granted default bail to U.S. national Matthew Aaron Van Dyke, who was arrested in March in connection with an alleged cross-border conspiracy involving ethnic armed groups in Myanmar. The court noted that the National Investigation Agency (NIA) did not file a chargesheet covering the alleged terror offences within the mandatory 180-day period.

Special Judge Prashant Sharma of the Rouse Avenue Courts allowed Mr. Dyke's bail application after noting that the chargesheet filed by the NIA on September 8, the last day of the statutory deadline, invoked only "piecemeal" charges of Sections 21 and



The NIA invoked just 'piecemeal' charges against Matthew Aaron Van Dyke instead of UAPA, under which he was initially booked, said the court. FILE PHOTO

23 of the Immigration and Foreigners Act, which can be settled at the level of the Foreigners Regional Registration Office, rather than the more serious Section 18 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) under which Mr. Dyke was originally booked.

Section 21 addresses

punishment for entering India without valid entry documents while Section 23 covers general contraventions, including overstaying a visa and violating visa conditions.

The court said the investigating agency cannot use an incomplete chargesheet to sidestep the default bail provision under Section 187(3) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita.

Conditions imposed

Granting him release, the court also directed Mr. Dyke to furnish a personal bond and surety bond of ₹1 lakh each, subject to conditions including that he remain within Delhi and not leave without the court's permission.

It also asked him to refrain from influencing witnesses or tampering with

evidence, keep the Investigating Officer informed of his address, maintain an active phone number and remain available for further questioning whenever required.

Relief for 6 Ukrainians

The order also noted that the same reasoning extends to the six co-accused in the case, all Ukrainian nationals, who remain in judicial custody, and directed that copies of the order be sent to them so they may pursue their own default bail applications.

Mr. Dyke was arrested by the NIA on March 13 at the Kolkata airport. The six Ukrainian nationals were arrested at airports in Delhi and Lucknow.

According to the probe agency, the seven accused entered India on tourist vi-

sas and travelled to the north-eastern region without obtaining the mandatory permits. The NIA also alleged that they subsequently crossed illegally from Mizoram into Myanmar, where they were involved in training ethnic armed organisations.

The Central agency had initially invoked provisions of the UAPA, including those relating to conspiracy, as part of its investigation into the alleged cross-border network.

During earlier hearings, the agency told the court that the accused had made significant disclosures while in custody about the alleged conspiracy. It also claimed that the seven accused were involved in assembling equipment and had targeted a passenger aircraft in Myanmar.

India, Nepal discuss post-flood recovery, reset in bilateral ties

Suhasini Haidar

NEW DELHI

Nepal's reconstruction plans post-floods and the "reset" of India-Nepal ties with the newly elected government were at the top of the agenda as External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met Nepal's Finance Minister Swarnim Wagle here on Friday, as both sides prepare for a visit by Nepal Prime Minister Balen Shah to New Delhi later this year.

Mr. Jaishankar said he offered his deep condolences to Mr. Wagle over the recent flash floods. "Discussed ways to strengthen our overall cooperation, especially in economic, energy and connectivity domains," he added in a social media post where he tagged the government's "Neighbourhood First" slogan.

Mr. Wagle's visit to New Delhi follows a visit by Nepal Foreign Minister Shishir Khanal in June, as part of a call by ruling Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) chairman Rabi Lamichhane for a "reset" in ties between New Delhi and Kathmandu, troubled over the past few years on both boundary disputes and economic issues.

Multilateral support

Mr. Wagle met Mr. Jaishankar a day after meeting Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday, during which India committed to continuing support for Nepal's recovery efforts after the floods. According to officials, the entire reconstruction required after the floods on August 26, which have left more than 1,400 dead and more than 6,000 missing,



S. Jaishankar greets Nepal Finance Minister Swarnim Wagle in New Delhi. ANI

will top \$5 billion.

Nepal will be making an appeal for multilateral support at the UN General Assembly next week in New York, as Mr. Shah is expected to make his first international speech. Mr. Wagle is in Delhi on his first visit abroad since he took office and will travel soon to Doha for a meeting of the Board of the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and to the IMF and World Bank meetings in Bangkok.

In a readout, the Finance Ministry said Mr. Wagle had thanked India for its assistance after the floods on the Trishuli river that overflowed in areas on both sides of the Nepal-China border and destroyed a major Chinese border crossing at Rasuwa. They also discussed the strengthening of bilateral economic ties and "initiatives to enhance connectivity for deepening of trade, investments and people-to-people exchanges". Nepal wants to explore connectivity in road and rail, but officials have said they are keen to resolve the long-pending issue of overflight for flights to Nepali airports.

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India and Nepal discuss flood recovery, reset ties

In particular, India's denial of permission for bi-directional flights to the Gautam Buddha International Airport at Bhairahawa near Lumbini and Pokhara International Airport has caused Nepal major financial losses in debt repayments.

According to the officials, the Shah government has been positive about its engagement with New Delhi since it came to power in March this year, despite some misgivings that led to the cancellation of Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's visit to Kathmandu in May. However, since then, the two sides have picked up ties, spurred by a visit in June by Mr. Lamichhane who met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi.

INS Kolkata was on routine patrol, Pak vessel conduct wrong: MEA

Shubhajit Roy
New Delhi, September 18

THREE DAYS after a frontline warship of the Indian Navy and a Pakistani Navy vessel were involved in a collision in international waters in the North Arabian Sea, Delhi on Friday officially identified the ship as *INS Kolkata* and said that the *Pakistani Naval Ship Hunain* conducted itself in an "unacceptable and unprofessional manner at sea" that resulted in the collision.

Ministry of External Affairs' official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal on Friday said: "Let me reiterate the facts of the matter. *INS Kolkata* was on a routine deployment in the western Arabian Sea when *Pakistani Naval Ship Hunain* conducted itself in an unacceptable and unprofessional manner at sea that resulted in a collision."

"The dangerous overtaking manoeuvre by *PNS Hunain* was in gross violation of Article

10 of the Agreement between India and Pakistan on Advance Notice on Military Exercises, Manoeuvres and Troops Movements of April 1991, which specifies that naval units at sea are not to be within 3 nautical miles of each other. In addition, the Pakistani ship also infringed the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea," he said.

"The Pakistan side has once again been advised about the need for all military units to observe due care and respect the provisions of the relevant agreements between the two sides in order to prevent any repeat of such incidents," he said.

The MEA spokesperson said the incident did not cause any major damage to *INS Kolkata* and she remains at sea.

On Wednesday, India summoned Pakistan's Charge d'Affaires and lodged a strong protest over the incident. Later, Islamabad countered with its own protest.



Indian Navy destroyer *INS Kolkata* was involved in a collision with *PNS Hunain* in the North Arabian Sea on September 15

Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the Charge d'Affaires of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad in response to the incident, it said in a statement. It said the *Pakistani Navy* was undertaking its biennial exercise *SEA-SPARK-26* when the *Indian* vessel carried out "aggressive maneuvers in dangerously close proximity of Pakistani naval ship, resulting in contact between the two vessels".

Islamabad called the incident a "highly provocative and unacceptable action by a vessel of the Indian Navy in Pakistan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)".

Responding to this, the MEA spokesperson said on Friday: "We have seen Pakistan's response to the protest we had lodged. It is the usual prevarication that we expected. We reject the allegations and insinuations contained therein."

The September 15 incident is said to have taken place about 120 nautical miles from the Gulf of Oman. For several months now, the Indian Navy destroyers and frigates have been deployed on missions in the North Arabian Sea.

Sources said *PNS Hunain* — an offshore patrol vessel often listed as a Yarmook-class corvette because of its combat suite — closed in on the frontline Indian Navy warship at high speed, "manoeuvring in an unprofessional and unsafe manner, causing a minor collision".

Article 10 of the agreement between India and Pakistan on Advance Notice on Military Exercises, Manoeuvres and Troops Movements of April 1991 states: "The Naval ships and submarines belonging to the other country are not to close less than three Nautical Miles (NMs) from each other so as to avoid any accident while operating in international waters."

Delhi and Dhaka look at Nov dates for Rahman's India visit

Shubhajit Roy

New Delhi, September 18

MOVING TO put their relations back on track, Delhi and Dhaka have begun talks on a bilateral visit to India by Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, exploring a window in the latter half of November, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

This development comes days after the New Delhi summit of BRICS leaders — Rahman did not attend though India, as the host nation, extended an invitation to Bangladesh since it is the current chair of the BIMSTEC grouping.

Earlier, Delhi had invited Rahman for a bilateral visit in August. But that did not materialise. There was outrage in Bangladesh over the remarks of Sheikh Hasina, the country's ousted Prime Minister who has been living in India, during an interaction with the media via an audio link on August 5 which marked two years of the fall of her government.

Sources said the two sides are now looking at dates in November for a bilateral visit.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, Delhi had extended an invitation to Rahman for a stand-alone bilateral visit after he entered office in February following the elections in Bangladesh.

Indian High Commissioner



Bangladesh Prime Minister
Tarique Rahman

Dinesh Trivedi is learnt to have initiated the conversation in Dhaka and Delhi, and the two sides are looking at possible dates that also suit Prime Minister Narendra Modi's schedule.

A change of guard is also taking place at the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi. High Commissioner M Riaz Hamidullah is expected to head to Geneva as Bangladesh's Permanent Representative to the UN. Foreign Secretary Asad Alam Siam is expected to replace him as the new High Commissioner of Bangladesh. The formal paperwork is said to be underway because the official agreement has to be approved by the Indian government.

Sources said the two sides are trying to overcome the diplomatic challenge following the postponement of Rahman's

visit in August.

Ties between the two countries, severely strained following the 2024 ouster of Hasina, had been looking up after Rahman took charge of Bangladesh in February. But Hasina's public interaction in New Delhi this August angered Dhaka which has been seeking her extradition to Bangladesh where she faces a death sentence.

At the heart of scheduling Rahman's visit is Dhaka's precondition that a "propitious environment needs to be created" for it — a reference to the presence of Hasina in India and her public statements.

Bangladesh wants a clear response on the steps being taken on the issue of Hasina's extradition. Delhi has not yet responded, and a battle of nerves is being played out amid hectic negotiations to find a "middle ground".

While stating that the extradition request is "being examined", the Indian side has been emphasising on a forward-looking relationship built on "mutuality of interests and reciprocity". Delhi has signalled that it aims to address broader bilateral and security concerns alongside Dhaka's requests.

Sources said the two sides are "aware" of the significance of the Rahman visit, and have much to benefit from a strong and robust relationship.

21 killed in bomb blast at mosque near Pakistan police offices

Associated Press

PESHAWAR

A vehicle bomb exploded on Friday at a mosque near police offices in northwestern Pakistan as gunmen tried to storm the compound in an attack that killed at least 21 people and wounded 80 others, police and rescue officials said. Among those killed and wounded were police officers attending prayers at the mosque.

The bombing occurred in Kohat, a district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. An attacker apparently rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the mosque, said Zulfikar Hameed, the provincial police chief.

At least seven gunmen also attempted to enter the police compound and exchanged fire with officers. Six of the gunmen were

killed, according to police, who said one suicide bomber attacked the nearby office of an intelligence agency.

The police compound housed counter-terrorism police, who had carried out operations against militants across the province in recent years.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the attack and expressed sorrow over the casualties. He directed authorities to accelerate rescue operations.

Photos showed the outer wall of the police offices had collapsed and the mosque was badly damaged. Smoke rose over the site after the blast, which witnesses and residents said was heard far away, followed by gunfire.

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People gather at a mosque damaged in a suicide attack in Kohat district of Pakistan on Friday. REUTERS

Bombing at mosque in Pak. kills at least 21

Inside the mosque, piles of bricks and concrete buried the floor, wires dangled from cracked walls and daylight poured through jagged holes in the roof, while a ceiling fan hung above the wreckage.

Residents said the exchange of fire continued hours after the coordinated attack.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but suspicion was likely to fall on the Pakistani Taliban, formally known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP.

Russia begins three days of voting in first wartime parliamentary poll

The ruling United Russia party, backed by President Vladimir Putin, is expected to retain overwhelming control of the 450-seat Duma; any meaningful political competition has been removed from ballot with the support of nation's top court

Associated Press
MOSCOW

Russians on Friday began three days of voting in the country's first wartime parliamentary election, which features virtually no opposition and is all but certain to secure the Kremlin's political dominance.

Authorities spread the election over the weekend, ending on Sunday, in a bid to boost turnout among the 111 million eligible voters, and they even allowed electronic balloting.

The Kremlin wants the parliamentary election – the first since the start of the full-scale invasion of



Predetermined choice: An elderly man votes in parliamentary election at a polling station in St Petersburg in Russia on Friday. AFP

Ukraine in 2022 – to underline public support for the war and give a veneer of legitimacy to its action. It has sought to avoid any political risks by stamping

out even the slightest sign of dissent.

“Your choice and resolve will once again demonstrate that millions of people stand behind our

fighters, that we are a united people, bound by shared values, historical memory, and love for the Motherland,” President Vladimir Putin told the nation before the vote.

Russian state news agencies reported that Mr. Putin voted online on Friday and released a video of him in front of a computer screen. The main Kremlin party, United Russia, is all but assured to retain its overwhelming control of the lower house, the State Duma. Several smaller parties of the “systemic opposition” that vote in sync with the government on all key issues also are expected to retain their presence.

Voters cast two separate ballots, filling half of the Duma's 450 seats by selecting political parties listed on the ballot. The rest are contested in single-seat constituencies, with voters choosing individual candidates.

The liberal Yabloko party, the only registered political entity that dared to criticise the war, was removed from the ballot last month by Russia's Supreme Court, and only has a few dozen candidates in the single-constituency races. Additionally, some anti-war politicians have been imprisoned or forced to flee abroad ahead of the campaign.

China's ship 'rammed' vessel in South China Sea, says Philippines

Agence France-Presse

MANILA

The Philippines said a China Coast Guard ship "rammed" one of its fisheries department boats on Friday in contested waters in the South China Sea.

China's coast guard subsequently blamed the actions of the Philippine vessel, which it said "bears full responsibility for the incident".

The incident took place near a shoal in the contested Spratly Islands chain, a fish-rich flashpoint that has been the site of violent confrontations with China Coast Guard vessels in recent years.

Beijing claims most of



Damaged railings on the port side of BRP *Datu Magat Salamat* after a collision. AFP

the South China Sea despite an international ruling that its assertion has no legal basis.

The Chinese vessel "rammed BRP *Datu Magat Salamat*... as it carried out its maritime patrol to deliver fuel subsidy to our fishermen", Philippine Coast Guard spokesperson said.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards say they hit oil tanker in Hormuz

Agence France-Presse

TEHRAN

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Friday they struck an oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz, according to state news agency IRNA, as a British maritime agency also reported an attack.

Iran has maintained its stranglehold on the strategic strait as Washington continues pressing its counter-blockade of Iranian ports during the West Asia war.

The Islamic republic wants to charge ships for passage, attacking vessels it accuses of attempting to circumvent its preferred route.

"The Togo-flagged oil tanker *Trend* had been targeted and detained after a fire broke out on board" late on Thursday, the statement said, calling it an attempted "illegal passage".

'Unknown projectile'

Early on Friday, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said a ship was hit by an "unknown projectile", causing a fire that was extinguished. The monitoring agency had also reported a "security incident" in Hormuz late on Thursday, without giving details.

It was unclear if the IRGC and UKMTO reports referred to the same incident.

Year after Ladakh stir, Wangchuk to lead Leh march on Sept 23

Naveed Iqbal

Srinagar, September 18

CLIMATE ACTIVIST Sonam Wangchuk will lead a 20-km march in Leh next week to mark the first anniversary of statehood protest.

On September 24 last year, four civilians died after protests turned violent in Leh city. Following the protests, Wangchuk, who was on a hunger strike during the incident, was booked under the National Security Act and lodged in Jodhpur prison for six months.

The march was earlier planned from Kargil and was set to culminate at Leh on September 24. However, weather considerations have prompted it to be truncated to a 20-km “symbolic” march. Announcing the plans for the padyatra on social media, Wangchuk said, “I had earlier spoken to you about the padyatra in support of the efforts for conservation of Ladakh’s culture, environment and democracy. However, as it is getting colder (in Ladakh) and the warming up of the political climate, we will hold a symbolic 20 km march in Leh on the 23rd.”

He underscored that September 24 will be marked as “shaheed diwas” in memory of civilians killed last year while seeking protection for Ladakh’s environment and democracy. Ahead of the statehood protest anniversary, the Ladakh administration on Sunday announced compensation for the families of the four persons who died in the protest in Leh on September 24 last year —



Sonam Wangchuk will lead the 20-km march to mark the first anniversary of statehood protest in which four civilians were killed in police firing

fulfilling one of the demands of the two representative bodies of the UT.

The administration has also announced compensation for the people injured during the protests for statehood for Ladakh. Of the Rs 1.52 crore sanctioned for compensation, Rs 15 lakh each has been announced for the families of the four persons who died during the protests. It has announced Rs 3 lakh each for people with major injuries, and Rs 1 lakh each for protesters with minor injuries.

As many as 44 were injured during the protest for statehood and the Sixth Schedule for Ladakh, in Leh last September. The protests erupted after student and youth organisations had called for a shutdown in Ladakh after two elderly persons fainted while on a hunger strike during a fast that Wangchuk announced. A judicial inquiry was conducted, although its findings have yet to be made public.