



Beyond anti-submarine warfare, INS Mangrol can conduct underwater surveillance, low-intensity maritime operations, and mine warfare tasks. EXPRESS

Navy commissions its third Mahe-class anti-submarine ship

Saurabh Trivedi

NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy on Monday commissioned *INS Mangrol* (P82), the third Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC), at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai, strengthening its capabilities to detect and counter underwater threats.

Vice-Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, presided over the commissioning ceremony. Senior defence officials, representatives from the Ministry of Defence, Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), and industry partners attended the function.

INS Mangrol – designed and constructed by CSL in Kochi – has over 80% indigenous content. The ship also embodies the growing contribution of domestic defence industries and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to In-



INS Mangrol, the Navy's new anti-submarine watercraft. AFP

dia's naval capabilities. Designed for operations in coastal and shallow waters, the vessel is equipped to undertake anti-submarine warfare, underwater surveillance and low-intensity maritime operations.

INS Mangrol takes its name from the coastal town and fishing harbour of Mangrol in Gujarat's Junagadh district. It also carries forward the legacy of the earlier *INS Mangrol* (M85), a minesweeper that served the Navy until April 2004.

'Democratic protest must take place, but don't drag SC into it'

Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Monday said that peaceful, democratic, and political protests need to take place, but the "Supreme Court should not be dragged into it" nor become a site for agitations.

"Democratic activities must take place peacefully, but the Supreme Court's functioning should go on smoothly... We are not concerned about any political party... The court should not be dragged into anything. Protests should happen peacefully. There

should not be any impediment or obstruction to the movement of lawyers, court staff, litigants... I am requesting," Chief Justice Kant, heading a three-judge Bench comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana, said in open court.

Heavy security

The CJI's remarks come even as Opposition leaders were expected to march to the Supreme Court as part of the anti-Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) protests on Monday. The court premises witnessed heavy security presence.

On Monday, the CJI was reacting to an oral mentioning made by the Supreme Court Bar Association, represented by its president and senior advocate Pradeep Rai, against the illegal detentions of lawyers, and the suspension of the Internet.

"We are doing our professional duties. They (the authorities) should not interfere. I have made a



Justice Surya Kant

statement that political parties should not bring the court into all this. They should be responsible political parties," Mr. Rai submitted.

Another petition represented by senior advocate A.N.S. Nadkarni, appearing for a lawyer, also sought the same protection.

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, in a separate oral mentioning, said he was still waiting for the Bench to admonish the police to maintain restraint, "at least once".

The CJI reiterated that the Bench would not allow the Supreme Court to become a site for protests.

"I don't want to say anything now, but I am only requesting. Every member of the Bar has the right to be part of the protest, wherever the identified locations are there," Chief Justice Kant said.

The senior counsel is also seeking a hearing on October 13. None of the Section 163 Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) prohibitory orders were publicly available, he said.

The court agreed to hear all three petitions on October 13.

Rahul, other INDIA leaders move SC for full disclosure of records on SIR

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, along with other leaders of Opposition parties, moved the Supreme Court on Monday seeking a full and complete disclosure of “files, agendas, minutes, notings and objections” recorded by Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi on the special intensive revision (SIR) process, which has so far led to the deletion of about 13 crore voters from electoral rolls across India.

Mr. Gandhi sought a judicial examination of the Election Commission of India (ECI) records to verify whether Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar acted arbitrarily and unilaterally during the ongoing SIR. The Congress leader said the petition highlights serious concerns regarding the integrity of the electoral process itself under the SIR.

He argued that the aftermath of the SIR has witnessed the infringement of the constitutional right of eligible citizens to be regis-



Collective action: Congress leaders K.C. Venugopal and Mallikarjun Kharge at the Supreme Court to file a petition against SIR. PTI

tered as voters and to exercise their right to vote.

He sought an interim direction from the Supreme Court to suspend the SIR pending consideration and adjudication of the issues raised in the petition in order to protect the rights of eligible electors and preserve the integrity of the electoral process.

“The right to vote belongs to every eligible citizen irrespective of political affiliation, and its protection is a constitutional imperative that transcends party politics,” the petition, represented by senior advocate A.M. Singhvi and filed through advocate Prasanna S., said.

The petition repro-

duced an excerpt of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant’s response to Mr. Gandhi and co-petitioner and Congress party president Mallikarjun Kharge to their letter seeking a meeting on Monday. While the CJI had declined the meeting, the top judge had pointed out that pending petitions on identical issues were coming up for hearing on Tuesday.

“If so advised, you may submit your petition on Monday (October 12), either physically at the Supreme Court of India, between 10:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m... You have my assurance that any such petition shall be heard at the earliest possible opportu-

ity, in accordance with law,” the CJI’s letter had promised. Mr. Gandhi said the petition was filed banking on the Chief Justice’s promise for an early hearing.

Mr. Gandhi and other Opposition leaders marched to the Supreme Court on Monday even though their petition was technically filed at 4.37 p.m. They entered the Supreme Court Registry, verified their supporting documents with the Registry officials and left. The petitioners including Saugata Roy, Akhilesh Yadav, Tejashwi Prasad Yadav, Sanjay Raut, M.A. Baby, D. Raja, Mahua Majhi, Supriya Sule and E.T. Mohammed Basheer – leaders from various political parties in the Opposition bloc – asked the court to direct the ECI to provide ECINET and ERONET access logs and the complete file recording of the June 24, 2025 decision to commence SIR.

The petition asked the court to constitute an independent panel to conduct an independent audit of the deletions and modifications made during the SIR.

INDIA bloc leads march through Delhi, takes SIR movement to SC

Opposition alliance comes together amid heavy police deployment but little interruption; Congress says 2.5 lakh people took part in the four-hour-long 'March for Democracy'; petition filed over alleged electoral irregularities and large-scale deletions

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

A massive crowd on Monday walked down arterial roads in the national capital, tailing a procession of buses carrying leaders of the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) from Constitution Club to the Supreme Court, where Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and other top leaders of the bloc filed a petition over the alleged large-scale voter deletions and irregularities in the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The Congress, on its social media handles, said 2.5 lakh people participated in the protest. The "March for Democracy",



Mass momentum: INDIA bloc members and supporters during the Supreme Court march in New Delhi on Monday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

which began at 1.30 p.m. at the Constitution Club, went on for more than four hours, mostly unhindered by police barricades and intervention, and also allowing for an occasional

break for the protesters from waving flags and sloganeering at ice cream and juice carts.

The march had several such light moments, including when Congress

president Mallikarjun Kharge donned a Batman mask. There was heavy deployment of police, who stood on the sidelines watching. Several top Congress leaders, including Sa-

Jantar Mantar no more designated protest site

NEW DELHI

The Delhi police on Monday denotified Jantar Mantar as a designated venue for protests, replacing one of the longest-established sites of public dissent in the capital with three grounds farther from the seat of power. The move drew criticism as activists said the distant locations will make it harder to draw attention to issues. » [Page 10](#)

chin Pilot, were seen marching along with protesters.

CONTINUED ON

» [PAGE 10](#)

MORE REPORTS ON

» [PAGES 10 & 11](#)

NSA Ajit Doval speaks to Iran counterpart amid attacks on ships in the Strait of Hormuz

Suhasini Haidar

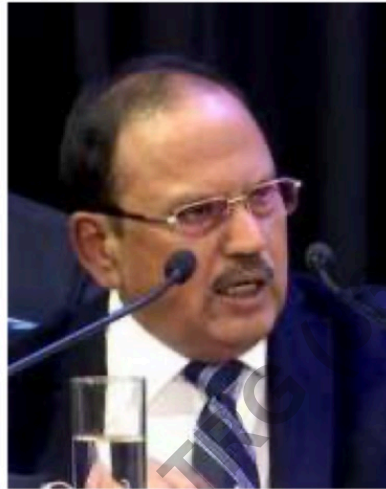
NEW DELHI

National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval spoke to his Iranian counterpart, Mohsin Rezaei, on Monday evening, the Iranian government said, a day after two merchant ships with Indian crew members were attacked in the Strait of Hormuz.

The External Affairs Ministry on Sunday condemned the targeting of the two ships, the Nicaragua-flagged MT *Petro Dolphin* and the Marshall Islands-flagged MT *Valthera*, a tanker, that were together carrying 23 sailors.

Two of the Indian sailors on board the *Petro Dolphin*, struck by a drone, are still missing, while 10 others, one Bangladeshi national and nine Indians, were rescued. The second ship was hit by a projectile and caught fire, but officials said all 11 Indian sailors on board were safe.

The readout issued by



Ajit Doval

Iran did not give specifics of the conversation between the NSAs, nor did it refer to the incidents in the Strait of Hormuz, where Iran has enforced a blockade for several months.

In a post, the Iranian Embassy in India said that Mr. Doval and Dr. Rezaei, the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran, “exchanged views on the latest regional and international developments and issues of mutual interest to the two countries.”

The Ministry did not res-

pond to queries about whether the attacks on the ships were discussed. In its statement just past midnight on Sunday, the Ministry had condemned the strikes.

“India reiterates the need for immediate de-escalation and a resolution to the ongoing conflict through dialogue and diplomacy,” the statement said.

“Attacks on commercial vessels, seafarers and civilian infrastructure must cease. Freedom of navigation and the safe, unimpeded flow of maritime commerce through international waterways, in accordance with international law, must be upheld,” it added.

The Ministry said that the safety and security of Indian seafarers “remain a priority” and that “recurring attacks on commercial shipping are deeply concerning and risk further aggravating an already volatile situation”.

China looming, Arunachal hydel project under fresh protest shadow

Security beefed up, stringent law invoked to arrest protesters, as tribal community fears for loss of livelihood, way of life

Jay Mazoomdar
New Delhi, October 12

NEARLY A month after columns of security personnel moved into the Ugeg-Komkar area of the Siang valley in Arunachal Pradesh, to facilitate surveys and drilling for the pre-feasibility report of the proposed 11,200-MW Siang Upper Multipurpose Project, protests against it are refusing to die down.

Last week, four protesters were detained under the Arunachal Pradesh Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 2014, triggering a fresh round of demonstrations. People hit the streets in Geku, Upper Siang, demanding the release of the four, with the Youth Wing of the Siang Indigenous Farmers' Forum (SIFF) urging that government consultations on the project be boycotted.

For the indigenous Adi community that is anxious about displacement and livelihoods, as well as the loss of land that they link back to their ancestors, the deployment of heavy security and the arrests have only stoked fears.

In late September, Chief Minister Pema Khandu's visit saw an attack on a local MLA's residence by protesters, who also torched a police vehicle. Fresh clashes erupted on October 4, amid allegations of arson by protesters and excessive force by security personnel.

In a sign that the Centre was watching, on October 8, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju, who belongs to Arunachal, called for dialogue with senior members of the Adi community. "If we sit down and talk, technically, everything will be clear. We have to talk. We have to move forward," he said. However, the impasse has a long history.

The ferocious Siang barrels

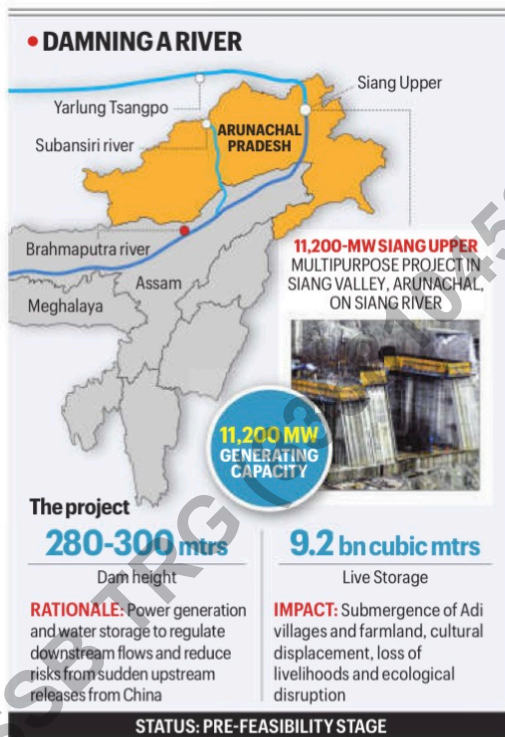
through the Himalayas until it approaches the Assam plains, where it becomes the braided Brahmaputra. Its political journey, however, is marked by diversions.

In August 2010, when the Congress was in power in Arunachal, the Itanagar residence of then chairman of the Siang Peoples' Forum and firebrand anti-dam activist Ojing Tasing was raided by police. Following this, Tasing met the then UPA government's Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh in New Delhi, demanding that hydropower projects in the Siang basin be scrapped.

Soon after, the UPA government held a public consultation in Guwahati and Ramesh wrote to then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, acknowledging that his arguments about the projects' strategic significance had not convinced everyone. "There were some NGOs from Arunachal Pradesh who... said we should not make Arunachal Pradesh a pawn in the race between India and China," he wrote.

Resistance to big dams elsewhere in Arunachal also found a voice in the opposite camp, in Tarun Vijay, former editor of the RSS mouthpiece *Panchajanya* and then a BJP MP. In May 2012, Vijay told the Rajya Sabha: "Government ministers tell me: 'Tarun ji, do not concern yourself with this; perhaps people from China are instigating them.' Is that a responsible thing to say? If people from China are indeed instigating an agitation... the Government has an even greater responsibility to send a Union minister to speak to those people."

Campaigning in Pasighat in February 2014, before he became the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi also acknowledged the local opposition to large



dams and spoke of harnessing hydropower through smaller projects while protecting the environment.

The tables turn

In a memorandum submitted this July, Arunachal Congress president Bosiram Siram argued that concerns over China's upstream activities should not override free and informed consent of local tribal communities. In September, Indian Youth Congress national general secretary Tarh Johny described the approach of the BJP government as "dictatorship", calling for transparency and meaningful consultation with the affected people.

Now leading the charge for the Siang Upper project is Chief Minister Khandu. On September 21, he said he had instructed the Chief Secretary to act against

government employees opposing the project.

The biggest U-turn is by Tasing, now among Khandu's most vocal lieutenants and Arunachal Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister. The activist now says: "If we don't construct our dam, what will be the impact on us if China uses its dam as a water bomb on India?"

Attempts to approach him over his changed position were unsuccessful.

The argument

Underlining the political reversals is a strategic argument that remains consistent: India must develop its downstream water resources as China expands its hydel capacity on the Yarlung Tsangpo, as the Siang is known in upstream Tibet.

Initially, the China factor was not dominant when India pro-

posed to harness the Siang and Subansiri rivers back in 1982. As Chinese plans on Yarlung Tsangpo emerged, New Delhi and Beijing agreed on a mechanism in 2002 for China to provide flood-season hydrological data.

In 2003, India launched a nationwide initiative to develop 50,000 MW of hydropower, with around 27,000 MW envisaged from Arunachal Pradesh, setting off a flurry of agreements with developers in Itanagar.

In 2011, the government told Parliament about a Chinese run-of-the-river project upstream of Siang and stressed the need for Arunachal Pradesh and Assam to harness the Brahmaputra's waters. In 2013, India raised concerns over additional Chinese projects on the Yarlung Tsangpo and asserted its interests as a downstream user.

In 2017, with BJP governments at the Centre and in Arunachal, NITI Aayog proposed replacing the Siang Upper Stage-I and Stage-II projects with a single large storage project. The proposal has since evolved into the 11,200-MW project now at the centre of the protests.

China's plans have also advanced. Beijing approved its 60,000-MW lower Yarlung Tsangpo hydropower project in December 2024. Comprising five cascade hydropower stations, the project seeks to harness the river's steep descent near the Indian border—a drop of nearly 2,000 metres over a 50-km stretch. This has sharpened concerns in India about downstream flows and sudden releases of water, reinforcing the case for storage on the Siang.

But not everybody is convinced. "There is no realistic prospect of establishing the so-called 'first user right' in international jurisprudence. Instead, India should demand project information and possibly assert our right to joint impact assessment to ascertain the risks posed by the dams," says Himanshu Thakkar, coordinator of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People.

Rupee rallies by 1%, logs biggest daily gain in six months after RBI steps

ENS Economic Bureau
Mumbai, October 12

THE RUPEE appreciated 95 paise, logging its steepest single-day gain in more than six months, to close at 95.78 against the US dollar on Monday after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) introduced several measures aimed at supporting the domestic currency.

"The Indian rupee emerged as the strongest performer among its Asian peers, supported by the RBI's targeted measures to curb speculation and contain volatility in the forex market," said Dilip Parmar, Senior Research Analyst, HDFC Securities. A pullback in crude oil prices, driven by expectations of improving supply conditions, further aided sentiment.

However, weaker domestic equities and continued foreign fund outflows weighed on the currency, limiting its gains after the initial rise.

According to Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst, Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, the RBI's measures are expected to ease pressure on the spot market and curb speculative dollar buying, supporting the rupee in the near term. However, a sustained recovery will depend on foreign institutional investor (FII) flows, crude oil prices and broader dollar movements.

On October 10, with the rupee inching closer to the 97-per-dollar mark and crude oil prices surging above \$100 per barrel, the RBI tightened its grip on the rupee derivatives market. It introduced a package of regulatory measures aimed at strengthening market discipline, curbing excessive speculative activity and improving transparency in foreign exchange transactions.

The central bank announced restrictions on rebooking cancelled foreign exchange derivative contracts, lowered the threshold for transactions permitted without establishing underlying exposure, strengthened documentation requirements and introduced a new Foreign Exchange Risk Reserve. The changes could significantly alter how banks, corporations, financial institutions and currency traders manage their foreign exchange positions. Forex reserves fell by \$12.95 billion to \$734.60 billion in the week ended October 2. The rupee had remained under pressure despite inflows of more than \$143 billion under the FCNR scheme.

Meanwhile, the BSE Sensex declined 0.76%, or 547 points, to 71,924.68 on Monday. The NSE Nifty fell 0.70%, or 157 points, to 22,363.35.

FULL REPORT ON

WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Banks seek relief, clarity from RBI on FX measures

Mumbai: Banks have urged the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to ease one of the key measures the regulator announced over the weekend to support the rupee and scrap the threshold above which the rule comes into effect, four people familiar with the discussions said.

Lenders have approached the central bank through a forex industry body, seeking the removal of a mandate that banks make a 20% cash deposit with the RBI for FX derivatives used to hedge current-account exposures, the people said. The people declined to be named.

The RBI's measures, announced on Saturday, are aimed at curbing corporate demand for forward dollars that have piled pressure on the rupee, which has been falling due to steep oil prices and capital outflows.

Banks have proposed the RBI replace the 20% deposit mandate with a flat charge on companies hedging current-account exposures through forward dollar purchases, or other derivatives. **REUTERS**

IMF raises India's FY27 growth forecast to 7%

Siddharth Upasani

New Delhi, October 12

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund (IMF) has raised its GDP growth forecast for India to 7% for 2026-27, up from 6.4% in July, on the back of “stronger-than-expected momentum, supported by resilient domestic demand and robust services activity”. The sharp increase in the forecast for the current fiscal comes days after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) did the same. The Indian central bank now expects India's GDP to expand by 7.1% this year.

“India stands out with upward revisions, reflecting sustained momentum and growing evidence of stronger growth potential supported by favourable demographic dynamics, a large and expanding domestic market, and continued structural reforms,” the IMF said in an update to its flagship World Economic Outlook report.

GDP growth in 2027-28 is also seen at 7%, up from the July estimate of 6.7%. The IMF's forecasts assume that the average price of crude oil — across Brent, Dubai Fateh, and West Texas In-

termediate — will be \$95.74 per barrel in 2026, up 41% from 2025. In 2027, the oil price is assumed to decline around 9% to \$87.39. The sharply higher growth forecast for India is in contrast to the global economy. In 2026, the IMF now sees the world's output growing by 3.1%, only slightly higher than 3% in July. Meanwhile, global growth in 2027 is seen unchanged at 3.4%.

According to the multilateral agency, the negative supply shock from the war in West Asia is making its way through the world economy. And while the private sector has seemingly adjusted well to the conflict and trade-related shocks, the “possibility of larger economic costs” is becoming “more palpable”. This is because the conflict is dragging on and buffers are becoming narrower.

Countries that are now projected to grow at a significantly higher rate in 2026 than in July include Germany (1.3% versus 0.7%) and UK (1.3% versus 1%). In fact, advanced economies as a whole are seen growing 2.1% in 2026, up from 1.7% before.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Pakistan detains hundreds from Imran Khan's party

Agence France-Presse

PESHAWAR

Pakistani authorities have detained hundreds of members of Imran Khan's party, police officials told AFP on Monday, as a protest movement in support of the jailed former Prime Minister appeared to falter.

The detentions followed the central government's imposition of emergency rule on Sunday in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the provincial stronghold of Mr. Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, after major protests demanding his release.

Two police officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said 278 PTI members had been detained in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since the emergency declaration.

The central government disbanded the PTI-led provincial government under the emergency measures that it says were imposed due to deteriorating security in the border province, which is also battling militant attacks.

In the provincial capital Peshawar, police were deployed in large numbers on the first full day of emergency rule. Makeshift



Police detain a PTI supporter during an anti-government protest demanding the release of Imran Khan in Peshawar on Monday. AFP

barriers formed from shipping containers and razor wire to block traffic to Peshawar's administrative zone remained in place. More than a dozen police personnel were deployed at each of the container checkpoints, equipped with protective shields, batons and tear gas shells.

Schools were also closed on Monday and digital monitor Netblocks reported "major disruption to the internet connectivity" in parts of the province the previous night.

PTI figures have called for fresh demonstrations in the wake of the emergency announcement, but sporadic protests on Monday drew far smaller crowds than the "long march" days earlier.

PTI said on Sunday the province's Chief Minister Sohail Afridi had been arrested hours after the extraordinary constitutional measures were announced by Pakistan's presidency.

The party has vehemently opposed the constitutional measures, describing them as undemocratic and a grab for power by the federal government.

Mr. Khan has been behind bars since August 2023, facing scores of charges ranging from corruption to inciting violence, following widespread anti-establishment riots in May that year.

He and his legal team reject the allegations, branding them politically motivated.