

## QUAD Message to China

# No country should dominate others

TOKYO, July 29 (PTI)

**IN** A loud and clear message to China, the QUAD on Monday reaffirmed its steadfast commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific, vowing to work towards a region where no country dominates others and each state is free from coercion in all its forms.

At a meeting here, the Foreign Ministers of the QUAD countries called for upholding the free and open rules-

### China accuses QUAD of stirring up conflicts

BEIJING, July 29 (PTI)

**CHINA** on Monday accused the QUAD nations, including the US and India, of "artificially creating tension" and  
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based international order and respecting the principle of freedom, human rights, democratic values, sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations.

Without directly naming China, the four Foreign Ministers expressed serious concern over the situation in the East and South China Seas and reiterated the QUAD's strong opposition to any "unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force"  
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(L to R) Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken pose for a group photo at the Japan's Prime Minister office in Tokyo.  
*(EPA-EFE/PTI)*

# SC commences special Lok Adalat

■ Allows media cameras inside courtrooms

NEW DELHI, July 29 (PTI)

**IN**A first, the first seven benches of the Supreme Court commenced a special Lok Adalat at 2 pm on Monday for an amicable resolution of disputes, with media cameras being allowed inside courtrooms.

The week-long special Lok Adalat, celebrating 75 years of the Supreme Court, began with the aim to "facilitate amicable



Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud during a special Lok Adalat, celebrating 75 years of the Supreme Court, in New Delhi on Monday. (PTI)

settlements of suitable pending cases", in matters that have "elements of settlement".

Earlier in the day, Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud said the first seven benches of the apex court will hear cases in the special Lok Adalat at 2 pm.

The top court will hold the special Lok Adalat till August 3, in an effort to reduce the pendency of cases.

"From today till Friday, we will have the Supreme Court Lok Adalat and the first seven

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# 'Indian Navy's three new Scorpene subs to have Made in India hearts'

NEW DELHI, July 29 (ANI)

AMID ongoing procedure to buy three more Scorpene class submarines for the Indian Navy, Naval Group--the French partner for the project, said that the heart or the combat management system of these new submarines would be made in India by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and supported by architecture from France.

Indian Navy is negotiating a deal with Mazagaon Dockyards which will partner with the French Naval Group to build three more Scorpene submarines for the Indian Navy after it gets its first six boats by the end of this year. As per the requirements, the additional three submarines will have to have up to 60 per cent indigenous content.

"Based on the present plan, the heart of the submarine, which is the combat system will be an indigenous one from Bharat Electronics Limited based on French architecture. This will be a very important step towards indigenous content," Naval Group's Executive Vice President Vincent Martinot-Lagarde, told ANI in an email interview.

He said that Mazagaon Dockyards Limited, Naval Group is confident that 60% Indigenous content will be



"Based on present plan, the heart of the submarine, which is the combat system, will be an indigenous one from Bharat Electronics Limited based on French architecture," said French partner Naval Group's Executive Vice President Vincent Martinot-Lagarde

achieved for the overall project - "even if the implementation will be done progressively keeping in mind the delivery targets and quality requirements."

The French official who was in India to meet the Indian Navy brass said "It will be a unique project, which will allow the Navy to have the latest technologies on the modern version of the Scorpene design, with better combat capabilities, unmatched endurance and

stealth. We understand MDL is proposing the same in 6 years for the first boat, which is challenging yet fitting of their vast experience."

He said that the Naval Group is providing some part of the supplies that will be indigenised with our industrial partners through subcontracting.

"Many critical systems will be indigenised. We will rely on existing partners. We will also extend our ecosystem and discuss potential activities with L&T, Merlin Hawk, Equans Axima India, VEM, Radiant, and more," Lagarde said. He said the remaining part of the supplies will be under MDL's direct procurement for which the shipyard is discussing with its own suppliers including both Indian and foreigners for subsequent indigenous content.

The Naval Group official said that the major part of this programme will flow back to the Indian economy and create several thousands of skilled jobs.

"All in all, the aim will also be to ready the industry in India to tackle after sales of these new boats within India in future. This would mean, all of us, MDL, BEL, Naval Group and others will have to prepare the resources for the future during the contract of the building phase," he said.

# Nicolas Maduro declared winner in Venezuela poll

CARACAS, July 29 (AP)

NICOLAS Maduro was declared the winner in Venezuela's Presidential election on Sunday, even as his opponents were preparing to dispute the results, setting up a high-stakes showdown that will determine whether the South American nation transitions away from one party rule.

Shortly after midnight, the National Electoral Council said Maduro secured 51% of the vote, overcoming the main Opposition candidate, Edmundo González, who garnered 44%.

But the electoral authority, which is controlled by Maduro



loyalists, didn't immediately release the tallies from each of the 30,000 polling booths nationwide, hampering the opposition's ability to challenge the results after claiming it had data for only 30% of the ballot boxes. Foreign leaders held off recognising the results as the electoral council promised to release official tallies in the "coming hours."

# Nod to navigation system for armoured fighting vehicles, interceptor boats

NEW DELHI, July 29 (PTI)

**THE** Defence Ministry on Monday approved procurement of navigation system for armoured fighting vehicles of the Indian Army and 22 interceptor boats for the Coast Guard.

The acquisition proposals were cleared by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) that was chaired by Defence



Minister Rajnath Singh.

The cost of the procurement of the navigation system and the interceptor boats is not immediately known.

The DAC deliberated on a



number of other capital acquisition proposals, the Defence Ministry said without elaborating.

"Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) was accorded to the pro-

urement of Advanced Land Navigation System (ALNS) for Armoured Fighting Vehicles (AFVs) of the Indian Army. The system is spoof-proof with high levels of encryption," it said.

It said the ALNS Mk-II is compatible with Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System, NAVigation using Indian Constellation in addition to Global Positioning System  
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# India's digital economy poised to constitute 1/5th of GDP by 2026: RBI

MUMBAI, July 29 (PTI)

**INDIA'S** digital economy is poised to constitute a fifth of GDP by 2026 from one-tenth at present, according to a Reserve Bank report released on Monday.

In the foreword of 'Report on Currency and Finance (RCF) for the year 2023-24', Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das emphasised that digitalisation in finance is paving the way for next-generation banking and improving access to financial services at affordable cost. India is at the forefront of the digital revolution, the

report said.

The country has embraced not just financial technology (FinTech) by speeding up digital payments but has also celebrated India Stack comprising biometric identification, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), mobile connectivity, digital lockers and consent-based data sharing. The digital revolution is galvanising banking infrastructure and public finance management systems covering both direct benefit transfers and tax col-

lection, the report said.

Vibrant e-markets are springing up and expanding their reach.

"It is estimated that the digital economy currently accounts for a tenth of India's GDP; going by growth rates observed over the past decade, it is poised to constitute a fifth of GDP by 2026," the report said.

Several enabling forces have come together to energise this revolution. Although Internet penetration in India was at 55 per cent in 2023,

the Internet user base has grown by 199 million in the recent three years.

India's cost per gigabyte (GB) of data consumed is the lowest globally at an average of Rs 13.32 (USD 0.16) per GB. India also has one of the highest mobile data consumption in the world, with an average per-user per-month consumption of 24.1 GB in 2023.

In the foreword of the report, the RBI Governor also said the flagship UPI has revolutionised the retail payment experience for end-users, making transactions faster and more convenient.

