

4 killed, 80 injured in Ladakh 'statehood' protests

Administration imposed restrictions in Leh after protesters pelted stones at police, torched some vehicles, vandalised and torched the BJP office and tried to torch the Secretariat of the Leh Hill Development Council



People protest over the statehood demand and the inclusion of Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule in Leh on Wednesday. (PTI)

LEH, Sept 24 (PTI)

THE statehood for Ladakh movement descended into violence, arson and street clashes here on Wednesday, leaving four people dead and at least 80 injured, including 40 police personnel,

officials said.

As the sun set on what is arguably the worst day of violence since 1989 in the cold desert region, climate activist Sonam

Wangchuk called off his fortnight-long hunger strike to press for statehood and extension of the Sixth Schedule to Ladakh, while authorities clamped cur-

few in the Leh district.

Groups of youths, indulging in arson and vandalism, targeted the headquarters of the BJP and the Hill Council and set ablaze vehicles. Police and paramilitary forces, deployed in strength across the town, lobbed teargas shells to bring the situation under control, the officials said.

With at least six of those injured in a critical condition, there are fears the death toll could go up.

The Centre alleged that the mob violence was guided by the "provocative statements" of activist Wangchuk, and certain "politically motivated" individuals were not happy with the progress made in the ongoing talks between the representatives of the Government and Ladakhi groups.

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Frustration among youth triggered clashes: Wangchuk

LEH, Sept 24 (PTI)

CLIMATE activist Sonam Wangchuk expressed sadness over the incidents of violence in Leh and blamed the frustration building in the youth for the incidents that unfolded.

Wangchuk was leading a hunger strike in Leh over the demand for Sixth Schedule and statehood, had called off the hunger strike earlier in the day after a large number of youths took to the streets on Wednesday.

'Sudarshan Chakra will be mother of all air defence systems'

NEW DELHI, Sept 24 (PTI)

INDIA'S proposed air defence system Sudarshan Chakra will be the "mother of all air defence systems combined together" and will include counter-drone, counter-UAV and counter-hypersonic systems among others, a top military official said on Tuesday.

In his address at a conference 'Counter UAVs & Air Defence Systems: Future of Modern Warfare' here, Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (CISC) Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit also said that the adversary has learnt from Operation Sindoor and so "we will have to be two steps ahead" of them in military thinking and planning.

The event saw participation of senior military officers, repre-



Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit

sentatives of various firms in the defence industry and domain experts.

Air Marshal Dixit gave references to the recent Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict, the Russia-

Ukraine war and how relatively much cheaper drones have played a critical role in inflicting huge damage to expensive military assets of the other side.

They have created an "inno-

vation adaption cycle" and Indian industry, think-tanks, academia job should be to think "two steps ahead" to stay ahead of the adversary, as it is "like a game of chess", he said.

Like 'Make in India', you have to start 'Think in India' and ideate, he urged the defence industry.

On Operation Sindoor, Air Marshal Dixit said certain drones which "we caught were sophisticated, using...AI, visual means, and even if we jam their GPS, they were able to reach somewhere close". "They are also working and becoming better, so we have to go one step ahead," he said.

Air Marshal Dixit, however, asserted that it seems "our counter-drone and GPS-jamming systems worked well, as damage caused by these drones have been almost nil".

Androth to be commissioned by Navy on Oct 6

NEW DELHI, Sept 24 (PTI)

INDIAN Navy's second state-of-the-art anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft 'Androth', equipped with advanced weapon and sensor suites, and modern communication systems, is set to be commissioned by the Indian Navy at Visakhapatnam on October 6, officials said on Tuesday.

Built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd., Kolkata, with over "80 per cent indigenous components", the warship is a testament to the Government of India's vision of 'Aatmanirbharta' and a shining symbol of country's growing maritime self-reliance.

Constructed under the guidance of the Directorate of Ship Production and the oversight of the Warship Overseeing Team in Kolkata, 'Androth' was handed over to the Indian Navy on September 13.

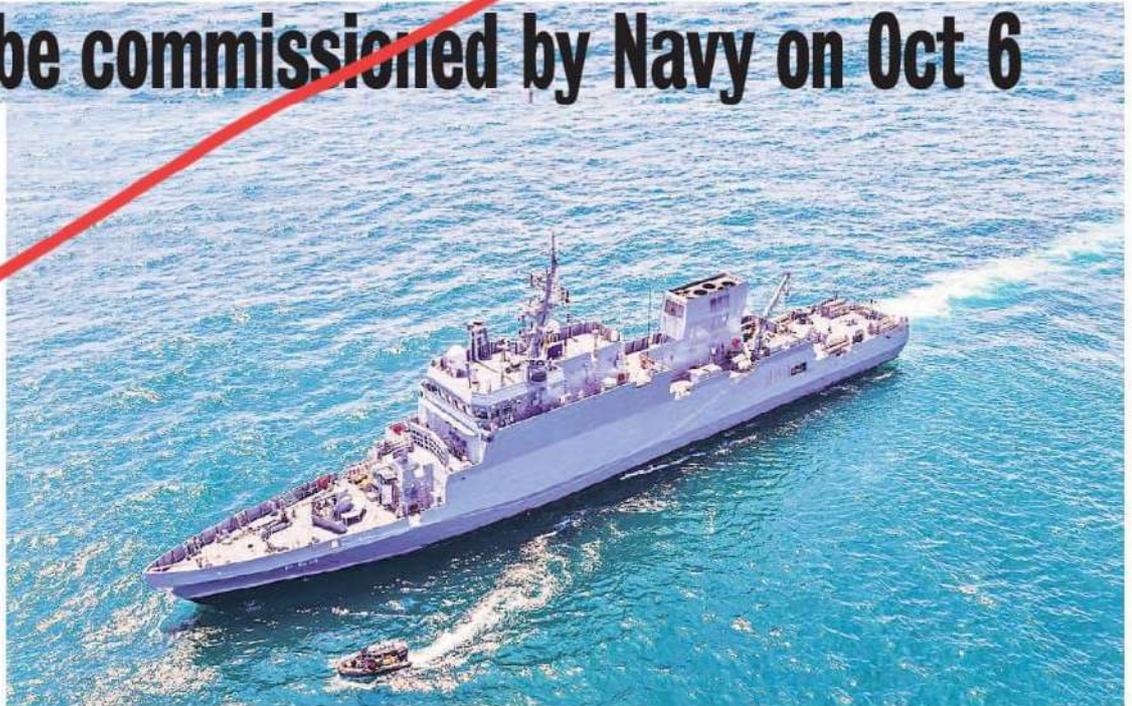
The commissioning ceremony

at Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam on October 6, will be presided over by Vice Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, a Navy spokesperson said.

The event marks the formal induction of the second of the sixteen ASW-SWC ships into the Indian Navy, he said here on Tuesday.

The name 'Androth' holds strate-

gic and symbolic significance, derived from Androth Island in the Lakshadweep archipelago, underscoring India's commitment to safeguarding its vast maritime territories, the Navy said.



'India, US trade talks on at different levels'

NEW DELHI, Sept 24 (PTI)

INDIA, US talks are happening at different levels covering both trade and non-trade issues, an official said. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal is in the US for trade talks. He is accompanied by senior officials of the Ministry, including special secretary and India's chief negotiator Rajesh Agrawal.

"Talks are happening at different levels," the official said, adding the Minister led team is expected to return from the US later this week.

Goyal has held discussions with his US counterpart. This visit comes in the backdrop of

recently concluded day-long discussions in New Delhi between US Chief Negotiator Brendan Lynch and Agrawal on the proposed bilateral trade agreement.

On September 16, the Commerce Ministry stated that the day-long discussions with the visiting US team on a bilateral trade deal were positive, and both sides agreed to push for an early and mutually beneficial conclusion of the agreement.

The visit of the high-ranking US trade officials came for the



first time after the imposition of a 25 per cent tariff and an additional 25 per cent penalty on Indian goods entering the American

market for buying Russian crude oil.

In February this year, leaders of the two countries directed officials to negotiate a proposed Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA). It was planned to conclude the first tranche of the pact by the fall (October-November) of 2025. So far, five rounds of negotiations have been held.

The pact is aimed at more than doubling the bilateral trade to USD 500 billion by 2030 from the current USD 191 billion.

Goyal visited Washington earlier in May for the trade talks. He held deliberations with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick in Washington.

The US remained India's largest trading partner for the fourth consecutive year in 2024-25, with bilateral trade valued at USD 131.84 billion (USD 86.5 billion exports). The US accounts for about 18 per cent of India's total goods exports, 6.22 per cent in imports, and 10.73 per cent in the country's total merchandise trade.

On the sidelines of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly

Global South must cut dependence on single markets: Jaishankar

NEW YORK, Sept 24 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has urged Global South countries to reduce dependence on any single supplier or market by building resilient supply chains, alongside promoting fair economic practices, and boosting South-South trade and technology collaborations.

Addressing a high-level meeting of Like-Minded Global South Countries on the sidelines of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly here on Tuesday, Jaishankar said, "We meet in increasingly uncertain

The concept of multilateralism is under attack and international organisations are being rendered ineffective or starved of resources, said Jaishankar



times, when the state of the world is a cause for mounting concern for member States."

The Global South, he said, in particular, is confronted with a

set of challenges, from pandemic shocks and wars in Ukraine and Gaza to extreme climate events, volatile trade, uncertainty in
(Contd on page 3)

Tariff imposed on 'close partner' India for purchasing Russian oil: Rubio

NEW YORK, Sept 24 (PTI)

INDIA is a very close partner of the US, but President Donald Trump has imposed additional tariffs on New Delhi for its purchases of



Russian oil as part of actions taken against President Vladimir Putin for the Ukraine war, Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said.

India mostly with us, says Zelenskyy

WASHINGTON, Sept 24 (PTI)

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that India is "mostly with us" and expressed hope that New Delhi will change its attitude to the Russian energy sector with US President Donald Trump's intervention.



Zelenskyy was answering a question during an interview with *Fox News* about China and India contributing to Russia's war.

**Backbone
of IAF's
combat fleet**

**Air Chief
Marshal A P
Singh will fly
the last sortie
of the
Squadron
with the call
sign
'Badal 3'**

MiG-21 fighter jets to retire tomorrow

CHANDIGARH, Sept 24 (PTI)

THE legendary Russian-origin MiG-21 fighter jets, which have been the backbone of Indian Air Force's combat fleet for over six decades, are finally set to retire from the IAF at a decommissioning event in Chandigarh, where the iconic aircraft was first inducted over six decades ago.

The official culmination of MiG-21 operations is set for September 26 with a ceremonial flypast and decommissioning event, marking the closure of a historic chapter in India's air power.

The last of the MiG-21 jets, belonging to number 23 Squadron nicknamed "Panthers", will be given a farewell at the decommissioning ceremony at the Chandigarh Air Force station.



Indian Air Force MiG-21 aircraft during rehearsals ahead of the 'MiG-21 Operational Flying Culmination Ceremony' at Chandigarh Air Force Station on Wednesday.

(PTI)

On Friday, Air Chief Marshal A P Singh, will fly the last sortie of the Squadron with the call sign 'Badal 3'. Dilbagh Singh, who became the IAF chief in 1981, had led the first MiG-21 Squadron here in 1963.

In a recent post on X about the retiring MiG-21s, the IAF said, "Six decades of service, countless tales of courage, a warhorse that carried pride of a nation into the skies".

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi, Air Chief Marshal A P Singh and Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, will be among those present on the occasion here on Friday. Further, as per the tentative programme, six former IAF chiefs A Y Tipnis, (Contd on page 3)