

Equipped with torpedoes, anti-submarine rockets, **'MAHE' DELIVERED TO NAVY**

NEW DELHI, Oct 24 (PTI)



Navy personnel and others during the induction of 'Mahe'. (PTI)

ANTI-SUBMARINE warfare shallow water craft (ASW SWC) 'Mahe', equipped with torpedoes, multi-functional anti-submarine rockets and advanced radars and sonars, has been delivered to the Indian Navy, officials said on Friday.

The first of the eight ASW SWCs being built by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi, is named after the historic port town in the Union Territory of Puducherry, and symbolises India's rich maritime heritage.

It was delivered to the Navy on October 23, a spokesperson of the Navy said.

The vessel is "equipped for underwater surveillance, Low Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO), anti-submarine warfare (ASW) operations in coastal waters, and it has advanced mine-laying capability," he said.

It has been indigenously-designed and constructed by CSL, reflecting India's growing self-reliance in naval shipbuilding.

ICG launches two advanced vessels - 'Ajit' and 'Aparajit'

NEW DELHI, Oct 24 (PTI)

INDIAN Coast Guard's advanced Fast Patrol Vessels (FPVs) -- 'Ajit' and 'Aparajit' -- capable of multi-mission roles, including fisheries protection, coastal patrol, anti-smuggling, anti-piracy and search and rescue operations, were launched on Friday.

The two vessels are the seventh and eighth in a series of eight indigenously built FPVs constructed by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) for the ICG, the defence ministry said.

Two advanced FPVs -- ICG Ship Ajit and ICG Ship Aparajit -- were launched at GSL, it said, adding their launch marks an important step forward in enhancing the nation's coastal surveillance and response capabilities.

Designed and built entirely by GSL, the fast patrol vessels reflect the growing strength of India's indigenous shipbuilding capabilities. "Measuring 52 m in length and displacing 320 tonnes, these vessels are equipped with controllable pitch propellers, the first of their kind in this class in India, offering superior manoeuvrability and propulsion efficiency," the statement said.

They are capable of multi-mission roles, including fisheries protection, coastal patrol, anti-smuggling, anti-piracy and search and rescue operations, particularly around India's island territories and Exclusive Economic Zone, it said.

The event was attended by Commander, ICG Region (West), Inspector General Bhasham Sharma, along with senior officers from the ICG and Goa Shipyard Limited.

After IWT fallout, Afghanistan to build dams on Kunar River

Move adds fuel to Pakistan's fears

KABUL, Oct 24 (IANS)

MONTHS after India put the Indus Water Treaty in abeyance in response to Pakistan-sponsored terror attack in Pahalgam on April 22, now Afghanistan has announced its plans to build dams on the Kunar River 'as soon as possible', which is likely to create a troubling unease in Islamabad.

Taking it to X, Muhajer Farahi, Taliban's Deputy Information Minister, said, "His Eminence Amir al-Mu'mineen, (referring to Taliban Supreme Leader Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada), may God protect him, has instructed Ministry of Water and Energy to begin construction of dams on the Kunar River as soon as possible and to sign contracts with domestic companies and not wait for foreign compa-

nies." This comes days after a ceasefire was brokered between the two countries following days of hostilities.

The Chitral River, also known in Afghanistan as the Kunar River, is a 480-kilometre-long river in northern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan.

It originates from the Chiantar glacier, located at the border of Gilgit Baltistan and Chitral in Pakistan.

At Arandu, it enters Afghanistan, where it is called the Kunar River. It later merges with the Kabul River in Nangahar Province of Afghanistan. The river system is fed by melting glaciers and snow of the Hindu Kush mountains. Notably, the relations between Kabul and Islamabad have been undergoing a turbulent phase as the situation on the Durand Line has witnessed several clashes in the past few weeks.

Rajnath reviews Army's 'Thar Shakti' exercise at Laungewala border post

Jaisalmer, Oct 24 (PTI)

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday reviewed the Indian Army's 'Thar Shakti' exercise near the Indo-Pak border in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer district and lauded the Armed Forces for their courage, professionalism and operational preparedness in desert warfare.

Singh, who is on a two-day visit to Jaisalmer, observed the exercise at the Laungewala border post, where hundreds of soldiers showcased advanced combat skills and integrated warfare capabilities in desert terrain.

The drill featured modern platforms, including robotic mules, drones, robot dogs, Aor N1200 vehicles, tanks and helicopters, reflecting India's growing focus on technology-driven warfare. He interacted with troops and senior officers during the exercise. "Paid tributes to soldiers who sacrificed their lives during the 1971 War, at Laungewala War Memorial in Rajasthan," he said on X.

Earlier in the day, the Defence Minister visited the historic Tanot Mata temple near the border, where he was accompanied by Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi and Battle Axe Division Commander Major General Ashish Khurana.

At the temple, Singh was received by BSF DIG Jatinder Singh Birji, Commandant Neeraj Sharma and Assistant Commandant Vikash Narayan Singh.

He offered prayers, performed



'Jalabishek' at the adjoining Mahadev temple and tied a sacred cloth to a khejri tree near the Manasa Mata shrine, a traditional ritual symbolising wish fulfilment.

Singh also viewed the unexploded bombs dropped by Pakistani forces during the 1965 India-Pakistan war, which remain preserved in the temple complex as a testament to faith and divine protection.

"Feeling blessed after visiting Tanot Rai Mata Mandir in Jaisalmer. The energy of this Temple is immense," the Defence Minister said.

'Never underestimate adversaries'

OPERATION Sindoor has given rise to a new strategic thinking that India responds to any terrorist activity on its own terms, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh

said on Friday even as he called on the military to never underestimate the adversaries and remain alert to deal with any eventualities.

In an address to top Army commanders in Jaisalmer, Singh urged them to focus on information warfare, development of modern defence infrastructure, and modernisation of the force to effectively deal with future challenges.

The Defence Minister and the Chief of Staff carried out a comprehensive review of the security situation along the frontiers with China and Pakistan as well as the force's operational preparedness.

Singh also visited forward areas of Tanot and Laungewala along the border with Pakistan and witnessed a mega exercise that showcased Army's induction of new-age technologies.

He described Operation



(Center) Military's robotic mules, (Right) military aircraft during the 'Thar Shakti' Capability Demonstration at the historic battlefield of Laungewala, in Rajasthan. (L) The demonstration was witnessed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. (PTI)

Sindoor as an embodiment of India's military progress and national character, and a demonstration of the soldiers that their strength lies not only in weapons, but also in their ethical discipline and strategic clarity. Operation Sindoor will go down in history as not just a military operation, but also a symbol of the nation's courage and restraint," he said.

"The action taken by our forces against terrorists was in keeping with both policy precision and human dignity. The operation isn't over. Our mission for peace will continue as long as even a single terrorist mindset remains alive," he said.

In response to the Pabalgam terror attack, India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, carrying out air strikes on terrorist infrastructure in territo-

ries controlled by Pakistan. The strikes triggered four days of intense clashes that ended with an understanding on stopping the military actions on May 10.

The Army commanders held detailed deliberations on several critical issues including grey zone warfare and roadmap for jointness, self-reliance in defence and innovation.

In his comments, the Defence Minister underlined that Operation Sindoor has given rise to a new strategic thinking that India responds to any terrorist activity on its own terms.

"This is New India's defence doctrine, which embodies both resolve and courage," he said, while expressing gratitude to the soldiers for standing guard 24x7 to protect the nation's integrity. He exhorted them to never



underestimate the adversaries and remain alert and ready always, according to an official statement.

Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan, Chief of the Army Staff Gen Upendra Dwivedi, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, Vice Chief of the Army Staff Lt Gen Pushpendra Singh and all Army commanders were in attendance at the conference.

The Defence Minister urged the commanders to continue focusing on defence diplomacy, self-reliance, information warfare, defence infrastructure, and force modernisation to ensure a future-ready Army.

He hailed the professionalism, courage, and resilience of the Indian armed forces and reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment to provide state-of-the-art tech-

nology, infrastructure, and support to maintain the highest levels of operational preparedness.

Singh also praised the Army's role in ensuring peace and development in Jammu and Kashmir following the abrogation of Article 370.

"The abrogation of Article 370 was historic. Today, the streets there are filled with hope, and not unrest."

"People are confident about their future. Most importantly, the decision-making system is now in the hands of the local people. The Indian Army has played a crucial role in this endeavour," he said.

On the situation along the northern border, Singh stated that the ongoing talks and de-escalation steps with China have demonstrated India's balanced and firm foreign policy.

HAL's first HTT-40 trainer aircraft takes to the skies

NEW DELHI, Oct 24 (IANS)

THE first Hindustan Turbo Trainer-40 (HTT-40) Series Production aircraft, TH 4001, which will train the next generation Air Warriors, took to the skies at the HAL facility in Bengaluru on Friday, the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) said.

Taking it to X, the HAL said, "HTT-40 Basic Trainer Aircraft is a fully aerobatic, tandem-seat, turboprop aircraft built to provide basic flight training, aerobatics, instrument flying, and night flying."

The Hindustan Turbo Trainer (HTT)-40 is an ab-initio trainer aircraft designed to meet primary training requirements.

This fully aerobatic, tandem-seat turbo trainer will feature an air-conditioned cockpit, modern avionics, hot refuelling, quick pilot changeover, and zero-zero ejection seats. Built around a proven turboprop engine, this aircraft is designed



First Hindustan Turbo Trainer-40 (HTT-40) Series Production aircraft, TH 4001, which will train the next generation Air warriors at the HAL facility in Bengaluru. (PTI)

to exhibit good low-speed handling qualities, enhancing training effectiveness. This aircraft will be certified to the FAR-23 Standard.

The trainer aircraft has a maximum speed of 450 kilometres per

hour and a maximum service ceiling of six kilometres.

The HTT-40 first flew on May 31, 2016 and obtained system-level certification on June 6, 2022. Earlier, the IAF signed a contract with HAL

for the supply of 70 aircraft, the induction of which was earlier supposed to commence on September 15, 2025 and continue till March 15, 2030.

The HTT-40 will enhance the quality of training of ab-initio pilots of the Indian Armed Forces.

The procurement will also include a Full Mission Simulator for the aircraft, which will supplement the aerial training, allowing pilots to practise different profiles on ground, prior to the sorties, an official added.

HTT-40 is yet another step towards achieving greater self-reliance in the defence and aviation sphere in line with the Government's vision of 'AatmaNirbhar Bharat'.

Rajnath Singh had said, "We can no longer remain limited just to the LCA Tejas or HTT-40. Now is the time that we establish our identity in the field of next-generation aircraft, unmanned systems and civil aviation as well."

Zelensky urges US to broaden Russian oil curbs

London: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday urged the US to expand sanctions on Russian oil from two companies to the whole sector, and appealed for long-range missiles to hit back at Russia.



Zelensky was in London for talks with two dozen European leaders who have pledged military help to shield his country from future Russian aggression if a ceasefire stops the more than three-year war.

The meeting hosted by British PM Keir Starmer aimed to step up pressure

on Russian President Vladimir Putin. The talks also addressed ways of helping protect Ukraine's power grid from Russia's almost daily strikes as winter approaches, enhancing Ukrainian air defences.

Zelensky said US's decision this week to impose oil sanctions was "a big step," and said "we have to apply pressure not only to Rosneft and Lukoil, but to all Russian oil companies."

Putin aide Kirill Dmitriev said Friday he was in the US on an invitation "from the US side" for talks "planned a while ago". AP

Labour should

Venezuela needs India's voice as it's a great democracy: Machado

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Maria Corina Machado, winner of the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize, who has waged a more-than-two-decade-long campaign for the restoration of democracy in Venezuela, has hailed India as a "great democracy" and an "example" for other countries. In an interview to Times Now from an undisclosed location (she has been in hiding for 15 months), Machado said India could be a "great ally" with whom Venezuela can strengthen ties on multiple fronts once a peaceful transition to democracy is achieved. Machado also said she hoped to speak to PM Modi and "host him in a free Venezuela very soon."

About India's place in the world, Machado said, "India has been an example for many countries, for many generations, of being the largest democracy in the region and in the world. This is huge. And you also have a responsibility to take good care of it because so many people, countries around the world look up to you. Democracies can always be strengthened and should never be taken for granted."

"I admire India with all my heart," Machado said. "My daughter was there just a couple of months ago, but I've never been to India. She loves your country. I have many friends, Venezuelan friends that live there. And of course, I follow Indian politics." Machado said she was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent



“Being peaceful is not weakness and Mahatma Gandhi showed the whole humanity what that meant

MARIA CORINA MACHADO
Nobel Peace Prize Winner

struggle for freedom. "Being peaceful is not weakness and Gandhi showed the whole humanity what that meant."

"We need India's voice as a great democracy, to speak out for the rights of the Venezuelan people and popular sovereignty. I also want to imagine once Venezuela moves ahead and we dismantle all the criminal socialist structures, that have brought so much pain and devastation, there will be great opportunities for Indian companies to invest not only in energy, but also in infrastructure and telecom."

Machado spoke at length about the 2024 Presidential elections, a verdict she alleged was stolen by the Venezuelan govt under Nicholas Maduro despite overwhelming documentary evidence of the oppo-

sition's victory.

Machado recalled, "On July 28, 2024, we won a presidential election by a landslide. I had been previously elected as the primary winner to be the opposition candidate. I won with 93% of the votes, but the regime banned me from running as a candidate. So, a very courageous and honest man, a career diplomat, accepted this huge responsibility and honour. We won with 70% of the vote and we were able to prove it. We gathered 85% of the original tally sheets. We digitised them. Once we won, we offered Maduro the possibility of a negotiated transition in which we offered guarantees. But he refused and unleashed the worst repression wave we've seen in our history. Thousands of innocent Venezuelans have disappeared. Children and women were abused, tortured, even killed."

Machado also described US President Trump as a "main ally" in the fight for democracy in Venezuela. "The whole world knows the kind of criminals these individuals (Maduro and his colleagues) are, but now with firm action on behalf of the US, and the Trump administration, and this coalition that has been building with countries in Latin America, in the Caribbean, in Europe, I hope in Asia as well, Maduro has started to understand that his time is over, and that his best option is to accept the terms of a negotiated transition with guarantees that we have offered."

Upset over ad campaign, Trump cancels trade talks with Canada

Ontario-Funded Ad Cites Reagan's '87 Warning That 'Tariffs Start Trade Wars'

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

AFP/File photo



Carney met Trump twice this year to broker relief from the tariffs, which Trump hiked to as high as 35%. Those overtures yielded little progress

Washington: In an angry late-night social media post that caught even his closest aides off guard, US President Donald Trump announced the immediate termination of all trade negotiations with Canada, citing an advertising campaign by Ontario province that he branded a "fraudulent" attack on his tariff policies. The move, triggered by a Canadian ad featuring audio from Republican icon Ronald Reagan criticising protectionism, threatens to unravel testy economic ties between the US and its northern neighbour just months ahead of a critical review of the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

Trump is also heading out to Asia over the weekend for a three-leg trip that will take him to Malaysia, Japan, and South Korea in an effort to advance US interests. Canadian PM Mark Carney is also likely to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in South Korea, with reports saying that he will advance Canadian interests in the region amid tensions with Washington DC.

Trump's salvo ahead of his Asia trip came late on Thursday when he posted: "TARIFFS ARE VERY IM-

'Friend gave \$130m to pay military salaries'

President Donald Trump said on Thursday that a wealthy private donor has given the US gov't \$130 million to cover any shortfall in military salaries caused by the ongoing gov't shutdown. Speaking at a White House event, Trump said the donor — whom he called a friend, but declined to identify — called the White House personally to make the offer. REUTERS

PORTANT TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY, AND ECONOMY, OF THE U.S.A. Based on their egregious behavior, ALL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS WITH CANADA ARE HEREBY TERMINATED."

The post came hours after Ontario premier Doug Ford promoted a \$53 million TV and online ad campaign using a 1987 radio address by Reagan, in which the former president warned that tariffs "start trade wars" and lead to higher consumer prices and

job losses in America. Trump accused the ad of deceptively editing Reagan's words, ignoring a portion where the late former president acknowledged the president's authority to impose targeted tariffs for national security. He also accused Canada of trying to influence a US Supreme Court hearing on tariffs in Nov. Not since the US and Canada locked horns in a bitter cricket match in New York in 1845 — the first ever international game mar-

ked by betting scandals and umpiring infractions — has there been so much invective between the two sides.

The Canadian ad, launched on Oct 16 and funded by Ontario's gov't, aimed to rally US public opinion against Trump's escalating tariffs on Canadian exports like steel, aluminium, autos, lumber, and energy — key sectors that account for over 75% of Canada's \$600 billion annual trade with the US. "Using every tool we have, we'll never stop making the case against American tariffs on Canada," Ford, a feisty leader of Ontario who has gotten ahead of Ottawa in confronting Washington, said.

Canadian PM Carney, who assumed office in March after a snap election, has not yet issued a formal statement, though his office confirmed late Thursday that he was "unaware" of the advertisement's content prior to Trump's outburst. Carney met with Trump twice this year — in July and again on Oct 7 — to broker relief from the tariffs, which Trump hiked to as high as 35%. Those overtures yielded little progress, and Carney warned this week that he would seek to "double" Canada's non-US exports amid the standoff.

Trump admin to USCIS proposes lower EB-5