

CJI declines Aravalli panel extension plea

- SC directed HPC to submit its final report by Nov 30
- 'The committee has basically asked for an adjournment till my retirement', said CJI

NEW DELHI, Sept 7 (IANS)

THE Supreme Court on Monday took a strong exception to the High-Powered Committee (HPC) seeking time till February next year to complete its exercise on the definition and protection of the Aravalli Hills and Ranges, and directed it to submit its final report by November 30.

A Bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana made it clear that no further extension would be granted to the committee, whose ear-



lier deadline expired on August 31. During the hearing, CJI Surya Kant remarked that the committee's request for time till February 28, 2027, effectively sought a date after his retirement.

"The committee has basically asked for an adjournment till my retirement," CJI Kant observed.

The apex court said that if the committee was unable to complete the exercise within the extended timeframe, it could consider reconstituting the panel. The CJI Kant-led Bench directed the committee to complete its work by November 30 and, if necessary, "work day and night" to meet the deadline.

It also stressed that the committee must undertake an effective consultation process before finalising its findings and directed it to hear all relevant stakeholders, including tribal communities in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

The Supreme Court further permitted the HPC to place issue-specific interim reports before it wherever necessary, enabling the top court to consider urgent issues concerning the Aravalli Hills without waiting for the completion of the entire exercise.

During the hearing, Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati informed the CJI Kant-led Bench that an interim report had already been prepared. "The committee should come with a final report, not merely an interim report," the apex court said.

ASG Bhati submitted that the
(Contd on page 5)

Tata Boeing Aerospace delivers 400 'Made in India' Apache Fuselages

NEW DELHI, Sept 7 (ANI)

TATA Boeing Aerospace Limited (TBAL), a joint venture between Boeing and Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL), has rolled out its 400th fuselage for the AH-64E Apache attack helicopter from its 52,000-square-metre facility in Hyderabad.

The fuselages are manufactured in India and integrated into final aircraft supplied worldwide, including to the US Army and the six Apaches delivered to the Indian Army in 2025.

The Indian Air Force operates a fleet of 22 AH-64E Apache helicopters. Established in 2016, TBAL employs more than 750 engineers and technicians who use advanced robotics, automation and aerospace manufac-



AH-64E Apache helicopter

turing technologies to produce fuselage aerostructures for the Apache helicopter.

The manufacturing capability highlights the integration of India's aerospace ecosystem into global defence supply chains.

Last week, the memorandum of understanding (MoU)

between Tata Advanced Systems Limited and the Javelin Joint Venture, a partnership between Raytheon and Lockheed Martin, covers the co-production of the Javelin All Up Round (AUR) missile within the country, according to a joint press release issued by the entities.

Iran may announce new 'exclusion zone' near Hormuz

CAIRO, Sept 7 (AP)

THE new head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council on Sunday said Tehran plans to announce an "exclusion zone" outside the Strait of Hormuz aimed at vessels it believes are attempting to transit the waterway.

Mohsen Rezaei's comments to Iran's state broadcaster came with few details, a day after the US struck three Iranian oil tankers in response to Tehran launching ballistic missiles at US warships.

Experts called the launches a dangerous escalation after Iran's previous attacks at sea targeted commercial shipping.

The new zone should be announced in the coming days and weeks and "will begin from the line of the US naval blockade, extend toward the Strait of



Hormuz, and from this side continue into the Persian Gulf," Rezaei said. "Any ship that enters this area with the intention of passing through the Strait of Hormuz and is identified will be placed on our sanctions list."

It is not clear where Iran defines the location of the weekslong US blockade, which is aimed at Iranian ports and keeping Tehran from shipping out its oil. The US military has said over 20 warships are supporting the blockade, which as of Sunday had redirected 92 commercial ships and disabled three.

North Korea commissions 2nd naval destroyer

SEOUL, Sept. 7 (AP)

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un commissioned his second naval destroyer and called for building a more



reliable nuclear deterrent, state media reported Monday, as the US, South Korea and Japan began a trilateral military exercise he views as a security threat.

The development comes as North Korea is dialling up pressure on the US after rebuffing President Donald Trump's decision to scale back a major military drill with South Korea in a conciliatory step toward Kim. Observers say North Korea wants to wrest bigger US concessions.

The destroyer Kang Kon was commissioned into North Korea's navy in the eastern port city of Wonsan on Sunday at a ceremony attended by Kim and his teenage daughter whom South Korea's spy service calls his likely heir.

Indian, Chinese Armies hold talks over peace along LAC

NEW DELHI, Sept 7 (PTI)

THE Indian and Chinese Armies reviewed the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Arunachal Pradesh sector, days after the two sides held Special Representative talks in Beijing on the festering boundary question.

The focus of the corps commander-level talks at the Wachadamai border meeting point in Arunachal Pradesh's Kibithoo region was to maintain peace and tranquillity along the frontier, people familiar with the matter said. The Indian delegation was headed by Lt General Girish Kalia, the commander of the Army's Dimapur-based 3 Corps.

There is no official word yet on the talks. The meeting also came amid reports of aggressive mili-



tary posturing by Chinese troops along the LAC in the Upper Subansiri region of Arunachal Pradesh. In the Special Representative (SR) talks on August 25, India conveyed to China the importance of maintaining peace and tranquillity along the frontier for overall bilateral ties.

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval held the SR talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi which focused on delimitation of the frontier and sus-

taining work on trans-boundary cooperation.

In his remarks at the meeting, Doval said that normalcy in the ties has been a direct result of both sides maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

The Indian side highlighted the importance of maintaining peace and tranquillity in the India-China border areas for the continued development and progress of the bilateral relationship, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had said on the SR talks.

Both Doval and Wang are the designated SRs for the boundary talks mechanism, which was established in 2003 to comprehensively address the dispute over the India-China border spanning 3,488 km.

MoD clears acquisition proposals worth Rs 1.10 lakh cr

NEW DELHI, Sept 7 (PTI)

THE Defence Ministry on Monday approved acquisition of military hardware for the three services including radars, advanced light helicopters and mechanical mine layers at an estimated cost of Rs 1.10 lakh crore to boost the military's overall combat prowess.

The procurement proposals were cleared by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

"The DAC accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) that is in-principle administrative approval to various acquisition proposals of the defence forces at an estimated cost of about Rs 1,10,000 crore," the Ministry said.

"For the Indian Army, approval was granted for the procurement of Chemical Biological Radiological and

Nuclear (CBRN) recce vehicles, high mobility vehicles (HMTs), self-propelled mechanical mine layers (MML), advanced light helicopters (ALHs), trawl tanks and salvaged bridge system," it said.

The CBRN recce vehicles will be capable of detecting, identifying, monitoring and marking of areas contaminated with CBRN agents.

The HMTs are expected to enhance operational capabilities, logistic support and mobility in challenging terrains.

"The ALHs will execute complex missions across all terrains and operational situations for the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force. The trawl tanks and bridge system will be utilised to provide composite crossings to fighting formations during operations in varied terrains," the ministry said. For the Indian Navy, AoN was accorded for the procurement of Arudhra radars,

design and development and subsequent procurement of Marine Gas Turbines (MGT).

Arudhra radars will replace the existing Air Route surveillance radars at various Naval Air Stations, and MGT, a warship propulsion system, is expected to reduce dependency on foreign vendors.

For the Indian Air Force, approval was granted to various proposals to enhance the war-fighting capability of fighters, transports and helicopters. Approval was accorded for procuring Ground-Based Multi-Purpose Jammer (GBMPJ) and installing Defence Forces Secure Access Card system, according to the ministry. The GBMPJ will provide effective jamming against radars of adversaries, it said in a statement. Of the total AoNs accorded, approximately 98 per cent of procurements will be made from the Indian industry, it added.

Su-30 fighters to be modified to integrate with RVV BD air-to-air missiles

■ By Ajit Dubey
NEW DELHI, Sept 7 (ANI)

IN A major capability boost for the Indian Air Force, the Defence Ministry is taking up a proposal to modify the Su-30 MKI aircraft to integrate them with the Russian-origin RVV BD air-to-air missile that can take out enemy targets at 300 kilometres at high speed in the air.

The proposal is being taken up for consideration by the Defence Ministry just a few days before the arrival of Russian President Vladimir Putin for the BRICS meeting, and many important defence deals are likely to be discussed between the two sides.

The proposal to modify the Su-30 MKI aircraft to be integrated with RVV BD missiles is expected to be taken up for clearance at the meeting of the



Defence Acquisition Council scheduled to be held today, defence sources told ANI.

The Russian side has many versions of the RVV BD missiles that can hit targets like Airborne Early Warning and Control aircraft and other spy planes in the air at hypersonic speeds of around 6 Mach.

The Defence Ministry, led by Rajnath Singh, has been working to upgrade the air-to-air

weaponry of the Indian Air Force with a focus on both indigenous as well as foreign routes.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation has been focusing on and fast-tracking work on the variants of existing and future variants of the Astra air-to-air missiles, which would be able to hit targets up to 300 plus kms.

India has also placed huge orders for acquiring the Meteor

air-to-air missiles from France.

The Su-30 MKI, which is being modified or upgraded to be equipped with the RVV BD missiles are the mainstay of the Indian Air Force, as there are over 260 of them in service.

India is also working on two separate projects for modernising the fleet, after which they would be at an advanced level and would be able to see and strike at longer distances than before.

The planes played a major role in Operation Sindoor, where they destroyed multiple Pakistani air bases with their long-range air-to-ground payloads, including the BrahMos air-launched missiles and the Rampage.

DAC is also taking up a project to overhaul the Su-30 MKI aircraft at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited along with the AL-31 engines.

B'desh and India plan to resume train ops by Oct

Ahsan Tasnim

Dhaka: Bangladesh and India plan to resume cross-border train operations through the Maitree, Mitali and Bandhan Express trains by Oct and the annual meeting of railway authorities of the two countries beginning Tuesday will work in that direction, officials have said.

Since the fall of Sheikh Hasina's govt on Aug 5, 2024, and the resulting political change, normalcy has gradually returned to Bangladesh. However, passenger train services between Bangladesh and India have not resumed—the suspension of the Maitree, Bandhan and Mitali Express services was officially announced on July 19, 2024.

The two-day meeting between the railway authorities of the two neighbours will be-

gin in Dhaka on Tuesday, Bangladesh railway sources said. "We don't only share borders, we share dreams. I am repeating the same thing—people-to-people relationships are important, and we are absolutely confident that at the right time (the PM's visit will take place). The Prime Minister of Bangladesh has a standing invitation, and he knows it," Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh Dinesh Trivedi said on Monday.

In addition to restarting the three trains, Bangladesh will propose launching a new train service from Rajshahi to Kolkata. Bangladesh is interested in operating Maitree Express between Dhaka and Kolkata via the Padma Bridge, which was opened during the Sheikh Hasina era. Until now, the train has operated via the Jamuna Bridge.

6-wk high: Crude import price hits \$100-a-barrel mark

Likely To Rise Further Amid West Asia Crisis

Atul.Mathur@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: India's average crude import price crossed the \$100 per barrel mark for the first time in six weeks last Friday and is likely to rise further as international crude prices surge amid intensified hostilities in West Asia and supply disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz.

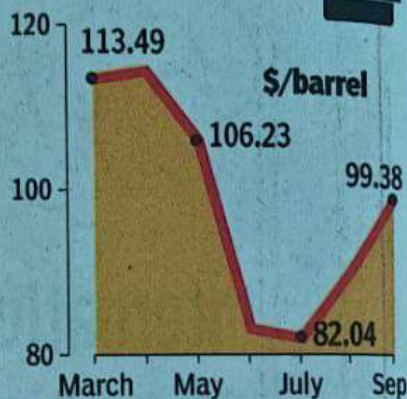
Indian basket of crude oil — derived average of the sweet-grade global benchmark Dated Brent and the sour-grade benchmarks of Oman and Dubai — increased to \$101.07 per barrel Friday, the highest since July 23, Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell data showed.

Along with crude, international free-on-board (FOB) prices of petrol and diesel have also surged. While the international FOB price of diesel has averaged \$156.88 a barrel this month, up from \$149.35 in Aug, the corresponding price for petrol has averaged \$122.12 this month, compared to \$110.87 in Aug. Premium on diesel over crude has narrowed to 55% from 70% in the last 10 days. The crude basket has so far averaged \$99.38 per barrel in Sept, up from \$90.19 in Aug. It was above \$100 per barrel during the peak of the conflict in March, April and May.

An oil company executive said this could lead to higher

SUPPLY STRAIN

Monthly average price of crude since West Asia war began



Source: Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell

under-recoveries for oil marketing companies (OMCs) if prices remain elevated for a longer duration and retail pump prices remain unchanged.

Oil retailers were making an under-recovery of more than Rs 1,000 crore a day during the peak of the conflict in May, when the Indian basket of crude oil averaged more than \$110 per barrel.

Ratings agency ICRA said renewed hostilities between Iran and the US pose a challenge for the limited crude oil supplies coming through the Strait of Hormuz. "As Iran threatens to establish a new restricted maritime zone extending beyond the Strait of Hormuz, additional energy flows beyond the latter could be at risk. Owing to these developments, crude oil prices have increased in the past few days, and the Indian crude basket has crossed the \$100/barrel mark," said Prashant Vasisht, senior vice-president and co-group head, corporate ratings, ICRA.

US turns diplomatic screws on Iran for atomic non-compliance

The US is increasing diplomatic pressure on Iran by proposing that Tehran be referred to the United Nations Security Council over its stonewalling of nuclear inspectors, who have been unable to verify the location of the country's stockpile of near-weapons-grade uranium.

The manoeuvre is expected to unfold at the International Atomic Energy Agency's board of governors meeting in Vienna, which began Monday. Iran has blocked the UN watchdog from reviewing Iran's uranium inventory for 15 months, since the start of Israeli air strikes in June 2025.

The US resolution demands that Iran "urgently remedy its non-compliance" and allow checks to ensure "the non-diversion of nuclear material," according to a copy of the two-page document seen by Bloomberg News. The IAEA has grown increasingly frustrated over Iran's obstruction of its inspectors' work.

"There's no engagement,

there is no information, and we are being told that they are not going to cooperate until there is some agreement in the wider political negotiation," IAEA director general Rafael Mariano Grossi said at a press briefing Monday.

The last time Washington referred Iran's atomic file to the UN, Israel started strikes against the nation's nuclear facilities within 24 hours, triggering a 12-day war. The start of the current conflict on Feb. 28 came a day after the IAEA reported the observation of renewed activity near bombed sites. US President Trump has repeatedly said the ongoing military campaign is aimed at preventing Iran developing a nuclear weapon.

Iran, meanwhile, threatened Monday to retaliate against any new US attacks on its assets, warning that the energy production chain in the region was "sprawling, accessible and exposed" and that US oil and gas companies there shared that exposure. AGENCIES