India rejects Pakistan's allegations about collision of Indian-Pak ships

NEW DELHI, Sept 18 (PTI)

INDIA on Friday strongly rejected Islamabad's allegations relating to a collision between a Pakistani vessel and an Indian Navy warship in Arabian Sea.

New Delhi on Wednesday summoned Pakistani Charge d'Affaires and lodged a strong protest over the "unacceptable conduct" by the Pakistan Navy vessel that led to the collision.

The incident happened on Tuesday night after the Pakistani vessel closed in on the frontline Indian Navy warship that was on a routine surveillance mission in the North Arabian Sea, according to the Indian side.

The Pakistani Foreign Ministry had alleged that the incident happened following a "highly provocative and unacceptable action" by the Indian vessel in the Pakistan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

"We have seen Pakistan's response to the protest we had lodged. It is the usual prevarication that we expected. We reject the allegations and insinuations contained therein," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at his regular media briefing. The Indian ship INS Kolkata was on a routine deployment in the Western Arabian sea when Pakistani naval ship Hunain conducted itself in an "unacceptable and unprofessional manner" at sea that resulted in the collision, he said.

"The dangerous overtaking manoeuvre by PNS Hunain was in gross violation of Article 10 of the Agreement between India and Pakistan on Advance Notice on Military Exercises, Manoeuvres and Troops Movements of April 1991, which specifies that naval units at sea are not to be within three Nautical Miles of each other. In addition, the Pakistani ship also infringed International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea," Jaiswal said.

Red Sea tensions, attempted attack on Mecca threaten regional stability: MEA

NEW DELHI, Sept 18 (IANS)

REITERATING its serious concern over the deteriorating security situation in the Red Sea region and the attempted attack on Saudi Arabia's holy city of Mecca, India on Friday said that the developments threaten regional stability as well as freedom of navigation through the Bab el-Mandeb strait.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal described the attacks as "unacceptable" and called for an early return to peace and stability in the region. "We are deeply concerned about the escalation in security situation in Red Sea area. We condemn attacks on Saudi sovereign territory, including on civilians and economic assets. You would have also seen a statement that we issued following the attempted attack on the holy city of Mecca. Such attacks vitiate the regional security situation. They impact or undermine regional peace and security and also threaten freedom of navigation through the Bab el-Mandeb," said Jaiswal.

FSSAI initiates 3 adjudication cases against Nestle

Cases are over alleged regulatory non-compliance involving its infant nutrition products

NEW DELHI, Sept 18 (IANS)

THE Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on Friday said that it has initiated three separate adjudication cases against Nestlé India over alleged regulatory non-compliance involving its infant nutrition products, including NAN Excella Pro Stage 1 and Lactogen Pro 1.

According to a notice shared by the food regulator on Instagram, FSSAI examined the products and promotional material listed on e-commerce platforms and flagged certain claims associated with the infant nutrition products.

In the case of NAN Excella Pro Stage 1, the regulator raised concerns over claims related to "5 HMOS" and "Whey Protein". For Lactogen Pro 1, FSSAI flagged a claim describing whey protein as being easy to digest.

The food regulator said it had sought clarifications from Nestlé India regarding the claims. Following its examination, FSSAI said the products were found to be in contravention of Regulation 4(2) of the Food Safety and Standards (Foods for Infant Nutrition) Regulations, 2020. The regulation places restrictions on promotional claims and material intended to increase the saleability of infant foods. FSSAI also referred to Section 3 of the Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1992, which prohibits the advertisement and promotion of such products.

Separately, FSSAI said a sample of a Follow-up Formula manufactured by Nestlé India was found to be sub-standard for its biotin content during laboratory analysis.

The sample was subsequently sent to a Referral Laboratory for re-analysis. The second analysis also found the product to be non-conforming with the prescribed biotin requirement under the Foods for Infant Nutrition Regulations, 2020.

FSSAI said three separate adjudication cases have been filed against Nestlé India in connection with the regulatory issues involving the products.

The regulator's notice does not indicate that any final penalty has been imposed on Nestlé India. The cases concern the alleged promotional violations and the laboratory finding related to the biotin content.

PM Modi, UAE President discuss West Asia, strategic partnership

NEW DELHI, Sept 18 (PTI)

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Friday received a telephone call from UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the two leaders exchanged views on developments in West Asia and ways to deepen the strategic partnership between the two countries.

The Prime Minister and the UAE President reaffirmed their commitment to continued cooperation and coordination in efforts to promote regional peace, security and stability, a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office said.

The two Leaders also discussed new ways to further deepen India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, in the areas of Energy, Defence, Technology, Investment and Health.

"Grateful to my brother, the President of UAE, HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, for his call and birthday wishes. We discussed measures to further deepen our Bilateral Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and exchanged views on efforts to promote Regional peace, security and stability," Modi said in a post on X.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi received a telephone call from His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates. The UAE President conveyed warm greetings on the Prime Minister's birthday," the statement said.

HAL hands over Tejas trainers, HTT-40 to IAF

- Dhruv next-generation helicopters were handed over to Pawan Hans

BENGALURU, Sept 18 (PTI)

STATE-run Defence major HAL on Friday handed over LCA Tejas Final Operational Clearance twin-seater trainers and HTT-40 basic trainer aircraft to the IAF and Dhruv next-generation helicopters to Pawan Hans here.

The platforms were displayed and a pooja was also performed in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Minister of Civil Aviation K Rammohan Naidu at the handing-over ceremony of HAL's platforms. Singh also sat inside the Dhruv NG, which was displayed at the venue. It is a HAL-designed and manufactured 5.5-tonne, light twin-engine, multi-role helicopter, officials said.

The handover marks an important milestone in the Country's self-reliance journey, as the event highlighted the role being played by HAL and its industry partners in strengthening the domestic aerospace ecosystem.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh perform rituals during the handing-over ceremony of LCA Tejas trainers at HAL in Bengaluru. Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu is also seen. (PTI)

HAL has handed over two LCA FOC Trainer aircraft to the Indian Air Force and four Dhruv NG helicopters marking the induction of the civil-certified Dhruv NG into the Civil Aviation segment.

The HTT-40 Basic Trainer aircraft, which was named Ankur has also been handed over to the IAF, marking the start of deliveries under the 70-aircraft. The platforms together represent HAL's capabilities across Military Aviation, Civil Rotary-Wing Aviation, and Pilot Training. LCA FOC trainer is a lightweight, all-weather, multi-role 4.5-generation aircraft.

Moody's raises India GDP growth to 7 pc for FY27

NEW DELHI, Sept 18 (IANS)

GLOBAL ratings agency Moody's on Friday raised India's GDP growth forecast to 7 per cent for FY27, from its earlier 6 per cent projection for the current fiscal, as the country continues to show resilience amid global headwinds. Moody's said that it continues to expect India to grow faster than all other G20 economies.

However, elevated energy prices and El Nino-related food price pressures remain which poses risks for inflation, said the ratings major.

Despite global headwinds, India recorded real GDP growth at Rs 81.36 lakh crore in first quarter of this fiscal (Q1 FY27), against Rs 75.46 lakh crore in Q1 FY 2025-26 -- registering a robust growth rate of 7.8 per cent. Public capital expenditure, digitalisation, services exports and improving financial-sector balance sheets were cited by experts as important supports.

India could sustain over 7 per cent growth over medium term if policy reforms can crowd in private investment and raise manufacturing competitiveness, said economists

Nominal GDP (or GDP at current prices) in Q1 FY 2026-27 is estimated at Rs 88.27 lakh crore, against Rs 80 lakh crore in Q1 of FY 2025-26, showing a growth rate of 10.3 per cent, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said in a statement.

Notably, the real gross value added (GVA) in Q1 FY 2026-27 is estimated at Rs 73.82 lakh crore, against Rs 68.21 lakh crore in Q1 FY 2025-26, showing a growth rate of 8.2 per cent.

On the other hand, nominal GVA in Q1 FY 2026-27 is estimated at Rs 80.53 lakh crore, against Rs 72.24 lakh crore in Q1 of FY 2025-26, showing a growth rate of 11.5 per cent, according to the data.

Amid persistent global uncertainty, domestic economic activity has remained resilient, as reflected in high-frequency indicators for Q1.

Early corporate results for Q1 also indicate healthy performance in the manufacturing sector, said Malhotra, adding that India remains the fastest-growing economy amid persistent global uncertainties.

India could sustain over 7 pc growth over the medium term if policy reforms can crowd in private investment and raise manufacturing competitiveness, said economists.