

## India vision for Indo-Pacific is based on fostering partnerships: Rajnath

**NEW DELHI:** India's vision for Indo-Pacific is based on fostering partnerships through sustainable development, economic growth and mutual security, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Friday.

Addressing the Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue 2024, Singh reiterated the stand for a rule-based international order and respect for international law.

"India has consistently advocated for a peaceful resolution to disputes and has sought to promote co-operation among nations in the Indo-Pacific, with a strong emphasis on the centrality of ASEAN in fostering regional dialogue, stability & collective growth," he said.

He further underscored India's commitment to ensuring the safety and security of the vital international maritime routes. "The engagement with regional partners, including joint exercises and information-sharing initiatives, is aimed at strengthening the collective maritime security framework," the Defence Minister added.

"While India's endeavour for maritime cooperation continues, its interests are not in conflict with any



other country. At the same time, interests of any other nation should not come in conflict with other nations. This is the spirit in which we must work together," he said.

Singh pointed out that the rapidly evolving global maritime landscape is shaped by shifting power dynamics, resource competition & emerging security threats. He added that the emergence of the Indo-Pacific theatre reflects a visible balancing of global power.

"The Indo-Pacific region has emerged as the world's most dynamic geopolitical zone and is the centre of gravity of the economic & strategic interests. It also carries a degree of pre-ex-

isting international tension, rivalry and conflict.

While some challenges are of local nature, many challenges have global ramifications. With respect to marine resources, we are witnessing a significant increase in geopolitical competition. As populations continue to grow, the demand for marine resources has surged, leading to heightened tensions and competition among nations," he said. Rajnath also expressed concern over certain attempts to monopolise and weaponise critical resources for strategic reasons, terming these tendencies as not conducive for the global good.

Singh also underscored

peaceful coexistence and comity among nations, and drew upon the ancient Indian philosophy of human-kind's symbiotic existence in harmony with nature as a way ahead in the exploration and management of marine resources.

In his address, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi emphasised the relevance of the oceanic spaces, specifically the Indo-Pacific, for India's economic growth and security. Stressing that India's maritime policy of SAGAR envisioned collective prosperity and security for all in the region, he advocated collaboration and cooperation as the principal means to achieve this end-state.

## Nazarandaaz toh nahi karenge: Kumari Selja on Congress' Haryana CM pick

**NEW DELHI:** Amid the reports of a rift in the Haryana Congress, the Sirsa Lok Sabha MP Kumari Selja has asserted her position as a potential candidate for the chief minister's post in Haryana, should the Congress emerge victorious in the upcoming assembly elections.

In an interview with news agency ANI, Selja said that while the final decision rests with the party high command, her seniority, and contributions cannot be overlooked.

"See, that only high command will have to answer, they will only decide. There are a few people who would be in the consideration zone, and I think Selja would be there. Seniority mein, kaam mein, in sab cheezon mein nam aur politics aur ye political decisions ye toh high command dekhega (the high command would look at the seniority, work done, and everything else. These political decisions would be



taken by high command," Selja said during the interview when asked whether she is in the race for Haryana CM post.

"Toh aise mein Selja ko high command nazaraandaaz toh nahi karega (So the party high command can't ignore Selja)," she added.

Responding to Selja's comment on Haryana CM pick, Congress MP Deep-

ender Hooda said, "This is the process in Congress party. Nothing is wrong with this. High command decides that."

During her interview, Selja also dismissed rumours of her joining the Bharatiya Janata Party, which had surfaced during the election campaign when some

that the Congress was not giving her due respect. "Selja will not go anywhere, why would Selja go? In Delhi a lot of rumours get circulated, Delhi is different like that but the people in my region know me well," she said.

Selja also expressed confidence in the Congress party's performance in the Haryana assembly elections, saying, "Congress is in a good position. A lot of hard work went in, Rahul Gandhi himself worked hard. Priyanka Gandhi also came here, the Congress president also came here. What started with the Yatra of Rahul Gandhi made a lot of difference in the state."

Haryana will go to the polls on October 5 to elect its 90-member state legislative assembly, with counting set to take place on October 8. In the 2019 elections, the BJP emerged as the single largest party, securing 40 seats, while Congress won 30 seats.

### Maldives President Mohd Muizzu to visit India from Oct 6-10

**NEW DELHI:** Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu will be on a State visit to India from October 6-10, in the first bilateral visit of President Muizzu to India.

He had earlier visited India in June 2024 to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Modi and the Council of Ministers.

During his visit to India, President Muizzu will meet President Droupadi Murmu and hold discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on bilateral, regional, and international issues of mutual interest, a statement said.

President Muizzu will also visit Mumbai and Bengaluru where he would be attending business events.

## 2 more shooters held for Naraina car showroom shooting

**NEW DELHI:** Police have arrested two more shooters allegedly involved in the brazen firing at the Car Street showroom in southwest Delhi's Naraina on Sept 27. The shooters, identified as Aakash alias Bholi (19) and Sumit alias Kala (29), were caught at the Miraz junction in Maharashtra after a multi-state manhunt.

Three men had fired around 15 rounds inside the showroom, attempting to extort Rs 5 crore from its owner.

Gangster Himanshu Bhu, operating from abroad, claimed responsibility for the act.

"A Special Cell team, led by ACP Sanjay Dutt and

inspector Sandeep Dabas, analysed CCTV footage and technical data, and gathered manual inputs to identify and trace the shooters," said additional CP (Special Cell) Pramod Kushwaha. One of the shooters, Armaan Khan (27), was arrested earlier and his associate, Deepak (26), was nabbed for allegedly providing logistics and planning the attack.

Aakash and Sumit were constantly on the move since the incident, changing hideouts regularly and travelling through several states, including Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. However, through technical analysis and intelligence

gathering, police managed to identify the train they were travelling in, laid a trap and arrested them near Sangli in Maharashtra.

While Aakash is from Rohtak in Haryana and has studied up to Class X, Sumit is from Charkhi Dadri in Haryana and is a Class XII pass. Sumit's father is a truck driver and he himself ran a finance office in Gurgaon. Both accused have criminal antecedents.

Deepak, a former international junior-level kickboxing champion, was arrested by Crime Branch in Rohtak. Khan was arrested after being shot in the leg by Special Cell. Both the accused are reported to be the henchmen of Bhu.

### IT manager held for sexual assault of neighbour

**NEW DELHI:** A manager of an IT company was arrested in northeast Delhi's Dilshad Colony for the alleged sexual assault of a woman in Ghaziabad. The accused, a BBA graduate, had apparently lured the woman to his house under false pretences and raped her.

The complainant alleged that her neighbour, Paras Gupta, intoxicated her and raped her several times. He also took her photographs before fleeing, leaving the woman in a distraught state. A case was registered against him, and a reward of Rs 50,000 was declared for his arrest.

DCP (crime) Satish Kumar said a team under Inspector Akshay had been formed, and an investigation was initiated. "The suspect frequently changed his location and mobile phones to evade arrest," Kumar said. The probe led the police to Dilshad Colony, where the suspect was hiding.

## Rahul Gandhi speaks to relative of family shot dead inside Amethi home

**NEW DELHI:** Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Friday spoke to the father of a teacher brutally murdered along with his wife and two daughters in Uttar Pradesh. Amethi MP Kishori Lal Sharma, facilitated the call and said that he has been in contact with the grieving family since the tragic incident.

"I shared the information about this incident with Rahul Gandhi.

He instructed me to stand with this family, so I have been in touch with them ever since. Rahul Gandhi spoke to the deceased's father, and Sonia Gandhi also offered condolences," Kishori Lal Sharma said.

Sunil Kumar, a 35-year-old teacher, along with his wife, Poonam Bharti, and their two young daughters, aged five and two, was shot dead in their home just before the Navratri festival. The assailants reportedly entered the residence with-



out any signs of forced entry.

According to police reports, Poonam Bharti had filed an FIR against a potential suspect, Chandan Verma, at the Raebareli Police Station on August 18. Superintendent Anup Singh noted that the case does not appear to be linked to robbery, raising suspicions about a possible

motive connected to the previous complaint under the SC/ST Act.

Following the horrific incident, a panel of doctors conducted post-mortem examinations, revealing that Sunil Kumar had one bullet wound, while Poonam had two. The two young daughters suffered fatal injuries from gunfire as well. Anshuman Singh, CMO of Amethi, confirmed that the post-mortem findings have been submitted to the police.

Sharma had called for a swift investigation, questioning the state government's claims of maintaining law and order. "This is a gruesome crime. I have spoken to the DM and urged for a comprehensive investigation.

## HAL has to fulfill its promise to overcome shortage of fighter aircrafts: IAF chief

**NEW DELHI:** Stressing on self-reliance in the defence sector, Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal AP Singh on Friday said that if victory is to be achieved in future wars, the number of indigenous fighter aircrafts and weapons will have to be increased and for this Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has to fulfill its promise of making 24 aircrafts every year.

Referring to the increasing importance of the strength of the Air Force in view of the changing circumstances and the current wars, he said that if HAL is not able to meet this challenge then private sector of the country will have to come forward for it.

The Chief of Air Staff boldly said that the number of squadrons of fighter aircraft in the Air Force cannot be increased overnight and added that the Air Force will have to fight with the aircraft and weapons it currently has.

The Air Force Chief, in response to questions at the annual press conference here on Friday, ahead of the 92nd Foundation Day of the Air Force on October 8, admitted that the Air Force has less number of squadrons of fighter aircraft but it cannot be increased overnight.

He said, "Nothing can be done in this situation because it is not a short term or a matter that can be bought overnight. Along with procurement, training is equally important and it takes time. It takes time not only to select the aircraft but also to induct it into the Air



Force".

The Air Force Chief said that even if the Air Force buys two or three squadrons at once, training for those aircraft also takes time, which is necessary.

It may be mentioned that the number of squadrons of fighter aircraft in the Air Force is 31, much less than the approved number of 42. The Air Force has been facing shortage of aircrafts for the last decade.

The CAS said, "The project of light combat aircraft Tejas is getting delayed.

HAL has promised to manufacture 24 aircrafts every year and if this is accomplished then the position of the Air Force in terms of aircraft will improve. It is a matter of concern if this promise of HAL is not fulfilled. HAL will have some limitations and real problems".

"It is also a patriotic organization and for some reason the work might not be getting done. Anyway we cannot depend on one agency, the private sector will have to come forward to meet the need of indigenous aircraft," the Air Force chief said.

Clarifying the position of the Air Force, he said that the IAF will have to fight only with the aircrafts and weapons it has.

"In such a situation the importance of training increases and we are laying great emphasis on it. The Air Force is conducting intensive training in war-like situations and constant attention is being given to it," the CAS said.

Stressing on the self-reliance in the defence sector, he said that the country's manufacturing agencies will have to increase production to meet the needs of the armed forces and enable them to win the war.

He said that in case of war and conflict, if you are dependent on external weapons, vested interests can disrupt your supply chain.

The Air Force Chief said, "If you have to fight a war, your weapons should be indigenous. You cannot trust the supply chain of the weapons you purchase. We should have weapons made in our country".

Referring to the timeline for manufacturing of various aircrafts and other weapons being made in the country, especially all variants of Tejas, he expressed hope that by the year 2047, all the aircrafts and weapons of the Air Force will be indigenous.

With regard to the situation on the Eastern Ladakh side, the IAF chief said, "The infrastructure development on the other side including construction of air fields is at a rapid space.

## Almost 30% candidates from Cong, BJP in Haryana polls are dynasts: Study

**NEW DELHI:** Overall just over 29% of the candidates facing off in the Haryana elections from the two main parties, BJP and Congress, are 'dynasts' with a family legacy in politics, according to a new analysis by non-profit Prajatantra. Haryana goes to polls on October 5.

According to the report, while over 21% of BJP candidates have a family legacy in politics, this percentage stands at around 37% in case of Congress.

The analysis focuses on the data collected for 178 candidates from the two major national political parties in the fray - the BJP and Congress.

The report is part of a longitudinal study that plans to cover states to identify the role played by factors like family legacy, wealth and criminal cases with regards to candidates to understand gate-keeping practices that act as a barrier for people from non-privileged backgrounds to enter politics.

Data drawn from affidavits on financial assets

shows among all candidates, 95% are crorepatists, with assets exceeding Rs 1 crore. The largest concentration of candidates falls within the Rs 1-5 crore and Rs 5-10 crore asset brackets, each category accounting for nearly 22% of the total candidates. Almost 8% candidates have assets worth over Rs 50 crore and 2.8% have assets of more than Rs 100 crore. There are 1.1% with assets of over Rs 300 crore. Citing this data the report emphasises that wealth remains a significant gate-keeping factor in Haryana's political landscape.

The study shows that the most prominent pathway to non-dynastic entry in case of BJP in Haryana is party organisation (22%) where individuals rise through the party's internal ranks followed by local politics (18%) and 'Association with the Sangh' at (10%). In the case of Congress the top methods of entry are local politics (11%) followed by party organisational politics (9%), and student politics (8%).

In terms of generational continuity the report shows that a significant 67% of the total candidates from within the category who are classified as 'dynasts' belong to second-generation political families. Third-generation dynasts make up 15% of the candidates. First-generation dynasts, entering politics for the first time with the backing of their brothers or sisters, account for about 2% of the dynastic candidates. Nearly 2% of the dynastic candidates come from fourth-generation political families.

"This strong representation of multi-generational political families, particularly within the national political parties, underscores how political power remains concentrated within a few prominent families, further limiting opportunities for non-dynastic candidates to break into electoral politics," Shweta Sharma, co-founder and research director at Prajatantra highlights citing the report.

## High-level welcome to Zakir Naik by Pakistan condemnable, but not surprising: India

**NEW DELHI:** With radical Islamic preacher and Indian fugitive Zakir Naik receiving a red-carpet welcome in Pakistan and even meeting with the Pakistani leadership, India on Friday termed it disapproving and condemnable but said that it is not surprising.

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, addressing the weekly briefing, said: "We are not surprised that a fugitive from Indian justice has received a high-level welcome in Pakistan. It is disappointing and condemnable, but not surprising."

He added that they don't know what passport Naik used to travel to Pakistan, where he is delivering a series of lectures on Islam in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi.



India in August.

Coincidentally, the Malaysian PM was visiting Islamabad yesterday and held talks with the Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif.

Naik, who fled India in 2016, faces charges in India of spreading hatred, money laundering and terrorism.

In 2016, after the July 1 terror attack in a popular Dhaka café in which 20 people were killed, Bangladesh had banned Naik's Peace TV for its inflammatory content, as two of the café attackers used to follow Naik on social media.

At the time, most of Naik's 14 million followers on Facebook were from Bangladesh.

Giving information about his upcoming Pakistani tour, Naik on September 20, 2024, had in an update posted on his official Facebook page said he is visiting Pakistan "on the invitation of the Government of Pakistan".

His tour began on October 5 in Karachi and is set to conclude in Islamabad on October 20.

His son, Fariq Naik, also an Islamic scholar, has joined him on the tour, delivering lectures in all three cities.

Naik stays in Malaysia, and In-

dia continues to pursue his extradition from there.

Last month, Naik took to social media to exhort Indian Muslims to reject the Waqf Bill, to which Union Minister Kiren Rijiju warned him on social media against interfering in the Waqf Amendment Bill Debate.

He was granted permanent residency in Malaysia by the previous government led by Mahathir Mohamed.

He met Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif on October 2 during which the Pakistani PM told Naik that his lectures are "highly insightful and impactful".

In August, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim reportedly said that Malaysia will consider India's request to extradite Zakir Naik if evidence of the controversial televangelist's extremism is provided.