The Earth News

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LG proposes...

especially the people of the Valley, have expressed faith in the democracy of India," Sinha said.

Addressing a public rally in Jammu's Ramban on September 4, Rahul Gandhi launched a scathing attack on L-G Manoj Sinha, calling him a 'raja'. "Aaj Jammu-Kashmir mein raja baitha hua hai. Uska naam L-G hai par hai voh raja. (Today, a king sits in Jammu and Kashmir. His name is L-G, but he is a king," Gandhi had said.

"The Assembly elections are being held in three phases in J&K and it is because of the largely people-participative Lok Sabha elections that various political parties are vigorously carrying out their poll campaigns.

"The participation of people in these poll campaigns, election rallies, meetings and roadshows indicates that the people have decided to express themselves through the ballot and that the bullet has lost its relevance in Kashmir," Sinha said.

Sinha also said whichever party formed the next government in J&K would have his full support. The remark comes after the opposition raised concerns over the Centre extending the scope of the Lieutenant Governor's administrative powers.

"In the Union Territories, the Lieutenant Governor has such powers. Whichever government comes, it will have my full support," he said.

Manoj Sinha also said that the Assembly elections would be completely free and fair.

"Even at 11 in the night, people are going out to eat. Campaigning is also going on till midnight," he said.

Sinha, who has been the J&K Lieutenant Governor since 2020, said the Congress and opposition should know that Article 370 was no longer part of the Constitution. He said even the Supreme Court has upheld the Centre's decision to scrap Jammu and Kashmir's special status.

75% disengagement...

violence at the border and then say the rest of the relationship is insulated from it," he said.

The external affairs minister indicated that the relationship can improve if there is a resolution to the row.

"We hope that if there is a solution to the disengagement and there is a return to peace and tranquility, then we can look at other possibilities," he said.

The Indian and Chinese militaries have been locked in a standoff since May 2020 and a full resolution of the border row has not yet been achieved though the two sides have disengaged from a number of friction points following a series of talks.

The ties between the two countries nosedived significantly following the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades.

India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas.

Describing India-China relations as "complex", Jaishankar said the ties were kind of normalised in the late 1980s and the basis for it was that there would be peace at the border.

"The basis obviously for a good relationship, I would say even for a normal relationship, was that there would be peace and tranquility in the border. After things started to take a better turn in 1988, we had a series of agreements which stabilised the border," he said.

"What happened in 2020 was in violation of multiple agreements for some reasons which is still entirely not clear to us; we can speculate on it."

"The Chinese actually moved a very large number of troops to the Line of Actual Control at the border and naturally in response we moved our troops up. It was very difficult for us because we were in the middle of a Covid lockdown at that time," he said.

Jaishankar described the development as very dangerous.

"Now we could see straight-away that this was a very dangerous development because the presence of a large number of troops in these extreme heights and extreme cold in near proximity could lead to a mishap. And that's exactly what happened in June 2022," he said, referring to Galwan Valley clashes.

The external affairs minister said the issue for India was that why China disturbed the peace and tranquility and why they moved those troops and how to deal with this very close up situation.

"We have now been negotiating close to four years and the first step of that is what we called disengagement which is their troops go back to their normal operating bases and our troops go back to their normal operating bases and where required we have an arrangement about patrolling because both of us patrol regularly in that border as I said it is not a legally delineated border."

The ties between the two sides were affected in various domains including trade.

"Trade has got affected; exchanges have got affected. So it (the relationship) is not normal to put it very politely," he said.

The external affairs minister said though the border situation is the immediate priority, there are larger issues in India-China relations as well.

"That is the immediate issue. But I think there are larger issues in respect of India-China. We have long struggled with trade issues," he said.

The ballooning trade deficit in China's favour has been a major irritant in the ties before the border row erupted in April 2020.

Jaishankar also provided a historical perspective to the India China relationship and explained why it is a very complex one.

India, China...

a focus on an early resolution of the lingering border standoff.

Doval conveyed to Wang that peace and tranquillity in border areas and respect for the Line of Actual Control (LAC) are essential for normalcy in bilateral ties, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The Doval-Wang meeting took place in the Russian city on the sidelines of a conclave of national security advisors of the BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) nations.

"The meeting gave the two sides an opportunity to review the recent efforts towards finding an early resolution of the remaining issues along the Line of Actual Control, which will create conditions to stabilise and rebuild bilateral relations," the MEA said.

"Both sides agreed to work with urgency and redouble their efforts to realize complete disengagement in the remaining areas," it said in a statement.

"The NSA conveyed that peace and tranquillity in border areas and respect for LAC are essential for normalcy in bilateral relations," the MEA said.

"Both sides must fully abide by relevant bilateral agreements, protocols, and understandings reached in the past by the two governments," it said.

The MEA said the two sides agreed that the India-China bilateral relationship is significant not just for the two countries but also for the region and the world.

"The two sides also exchanged views on the global and regional situation," it said.

Yechury no...

headquarters here between 11 am and 3 pm on Saturday for public viewing and paying homage. Subsequently, the body will be taken to AIIMS, where it will be donated for medical research, according to his wishes.

"It is with profound grief that we announce the passing away of CPI(M) general secretary, our beloved Comrade Sitaram Yechury, at 3.03 pm today, 12th September, at the AIIMS, New Delhi. He was suffering from a respiratory tract infection which developed complications," the party said in a post on X.

Yechury is survived by his wife Seema Chishti, an editor with news portal The Wire and three children -- two sons and a daughter. One of his sons Ashish Yechury passed away due to Covid in 2021. He was earlier married to Indrani Mazumdar.

Condolences from across the political spectrum poured in, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi remembering the comrade as a "leading light of the Left" and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi calling him "a protector of the idea of India".

Called 'Sita' by his friends, Yechury, the fifth general secretary of the CPI-M who took over the reins of the party in 2015 from party hardliner Prakash Karat when Left fortunes were on the decline, was also hailed as an effective parliamentarian, a pillar of the party and an "unrepentant Marxist" with a pragmatic streak.

A soft spoken and popular leader who had friends across the political spectrum, Yechury was also a Rajya Sabha MP for 12 years from 2005.

"Saddened by the passing away of Shri Sitaram Yechury ji. He was a leading light of the Left and was known for his ability to connect across the political spectrum," Modi said in a post on X.

Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi said Yechury was fierce in his determination to protect India's diversity and was a powerful champion of secularism, and noted that they had worked closely together during 2004-08 to begin with. "The friendship that had been established then continued till his very end," Gandhi said in a statement.

The CPI(M), in a statement, described Yechury's death as a big blow for the Left, democratic and secular forces.

"The untimely demise of Sitaram Yechury at this crucial juncture in our national politics is a big blow for the CPI(M) and a grievous loss for the Left, democratic and secular forces."

BJP leaders and Union ministers also paid tributes to Yechury, one of the Left's most recognised faces, and said his contributions to public life would always be remembered.

Several chief ministers condoled Yechury's death, with West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC leader Mamata Banerjee saying it was a loss to national politics.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan described Yechury as an unparalleled leader of the Communist movement, and said his death was an irreparable loss for the nation, especially during its time of crisis. Yechury, through his clear political stands, while in leadership positions, was not only a guide for the party, but also for the Left front and Indian politics, the CPI-M veteran said.

Yechury's family has donated his body to AIIMS for teaching and research purposes, the hospital said in a statement.

A polyglot and prolific writer, Yechury was known for his skills at alliance building and was also one of the main building forces of the INDIA bloc, the opposition's alliance against the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the recent Lok Sabha elections.

"In the recent period, Sitaram Yechury devoted a lot of his time and energy towards forging a broad unity of the secular opposition parties, which took the shape of the INDIA bloc. In both the period of the United Front government and later the UPA government, Sitaram was one of the key interlocutors for the CPI(M), which was supporting these coalitions," the CPI(M) said in its statement.

"Given his amiable temperament, he had a wide circle of friends across the political spectrum and in all walks of life. He was respected by all for his political integrity and commitment."

In one of his last video messages, Yechury had paid tributes to former West Bengal chief minister and CPI-M veteran Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee. In a video message recorded from the hospital on August 22, he had said it was his loss that he was not able to physically attend this memorial meeting and pay homage to him.

"It's most unfortunate that I had to connect from AIIMS to convey my feelings, emotions & revolutionary Lal Salaam to Buddho da," he had said.

Yechury thrived on the challenges of coalition politics and in this way, he was more akin to his mentor, the late party leader Harkishan Singh Surjeet.

While Surjeet was a key player in the coalition era during the National Front government of VP Singh - formed in 1989 - and the United Front government of 1996-97, both supported from outside by the CPI-M, Yechury was the go to man during the UPA rule when Manmohan Singh was the prime minister, especially during its first five-year term from 2004.

Yechury, who was born in Chennai and studied at Delhi's St Stephen's College and Jawaharlal Nehru University, was a trusted ally of Sonia Gandhi, who was the United Progressive Alliance chairperson.

He was the first non-Congress leader Gandhi called after she met then president APJ Abdul Kalam in 2004 when she turned down the post of prime minister and rallied behind Singh.

Earlier, Yechury worked with Congress leader P Chidambaram to draft the common minimum programme for the United Front government in 1996-97.

It was an equation that survived the shock withdrawal of support by the Left to the UPA in 2008 over the Indo-US nuclear deal.

Yechury later said the Left should not have withdrawn support on the nuclear deal but should have pulled out on issues like price rise as the people could not be mobilised on the nuke issue in the 2009 general elections.

His rise in the party was swift. In 1985, he was elected to the Central Committee of the CPI-M and to the Politburo in 1992 at the age of 40 and then party chief in 2015. He was one of the youngest members of the Politburo.

Born in a Telugu-speaking family in Chennai on August 12, 1952, Yechury's father Sarveswara Somayajula Yechury was an engineer in the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation. His mother Kalpakam Yechury was a government officer.

242 for...

AC; 14 from 73-Suchetgarh (SC) AC; 14 from 74-R.S. Pura – Jammu South AC; 12 from 75-Bahu AC; 10 from 76-Jammu East AC; 8 from 77-Nagrota AC; 13 from 78-Jammu West AC; 17 from 79-Jammu North AC; 6 from 80-Marh (SC) AC; 5 from 81-Akhnoor (SC) AC; while 10 candidates have filed nomination from 82-Chhamb AC.

Similarly, in Kashmir Division, for the six ACs in Kupwara district, a total of 12 candidates have filed nomination from 1-Karnah AC; 13 from 2-Trehgam AC; 9 from 3-Kupwara AC; 13 from 4-Lolab AC; 11 from 5-Handwara AC; while 22 candidates have filed nomination from 6-Langate AC.

For the seven ACs in Baramulla district, 23 candidates have filed nomination from 7-Sopore AC; 14 from 8-Rafiabad AC; 7 from 9-Uri AC; 26 from 10-Baramulla AC; 14 from 11-Gulmarg AC; 13 from 12-Wagoora- Kreeri AC; while 14 candidates have filed nomination from 13-Pattan AC.

In Bandipora district, 22 candidates have filed nomination from 14-Sonawari AC; 23 from 15-Bandipora AC; while 5 candidates have filed nomination from 16-Gurez (ST) AC.

The notification for the 3rd Phase was issued on 5 September, 2024 and the last date for filing the nominations was today, i.e. 12 September, 2024 till 3:00 pm.

The nomination papers will be scrutinized by the respective Returning Officers on 13 September, 2024, while the candidates can withdraw their nomination paper by or before 17 September, 2024 upto 3:00 pm in the office of Returning Officer. Thereafter, validly nominated candidates will be in the electoral fray.

The polling day for these 40 Assembly constituencies in 3rd Phase is scheduled for October 01, 2024, and the voting will be conducted from 07:00 AM to 06:00 PM.

Will support...

The firebrand politician, who is facing charges of terror funding, said if he is being branded as a separatist for talking about resolution of the Kashmir issue, then the entire north Kashmir region was secessionist as they have voted for him.

"I want to make it clear that we are neither enemies of India, nor agents of Pakistan. We are agents of our conscience. (PM) Modi snatched everything from us on August 5, 2019 -- illegally and unconstitutionally," he said.

He said Article 370 will not be restored by making statements inside the comfort of homes.

"How will 370 come back? You will have to protest at Lal Chowk and be ready to be hit by batons. But they (National Conference and PDP) cannot do it. When Amit Shah said no one can give back the statehood to Jammu and Kashmir except the BJP government, they did not even dare to say we will fight for it. It does not mean one has to be violent. Gandhiji did it through non-violence," he added.

He expressed pity over PDP president Mehbooba Mufti's statement against him, saying she was deposed from the chair of the chief minister through a tweet by BJP leader Ram Madhav.

"Had Mehbooba resigned to protest the BJP plans to revoke Article 370, I would have said that she is a lioness. But she did not even know when Ram Madhav tweeted that the (PDP-BJP) government is no more," he said.

He also claimed that NC leader Farooq Abdullah was aware in advance that the Centre is going to revoke Article 370.

Rashid hit out at those who tried to project that he won the Lok Sabha elections due to sympathy vote.

"The vote for me was not emotional outpouring. It was against Modi's Naya Kashmir. It was a vote for work that I had done in Langate (assembly segment) on human rights and development," he said.

Rashid claimed that in the run-up to the Lok Sabha polls, he was pressured to support "the BJP proxy in north Kashmir" but he refused and paid the price for it.

"I don't want to add bitterness to the discourse... I was denied basic facilities available to (jail) inmates because I refused to support the BJP proxy, the candidate (Sajad Lone) who came third. I was put in the ward of mental patients for one and half months," he claimed.

Rashid also took potshots at NC leader and former chief minister Omar Abdullah.

"Had you (Omar) talked about people's issues, you would not have needed to lower your cap in Ganderbal and contest from two seats," he said.

The Baramulla MP also predicted that both Peoples Conference president Sajad Lone and Omar Abdullah will lose the assembly elections from both seats that they are contesting.

While Lone is contesting from Handwara and Kupwara segments, Abdullah is a candidate from Ganderbal and Budgam seats.

Asked why is his detention any different from the incarceration of other mainstream politicians post abrogation of Article 370, Rashid said "comparing my five years in Tihar to (their) detention at SKICC is an injustice to my sacrifice".

Earlier, addressing a gathering in Delni area of north Kashmir's Baramulla, Rashid said seeing the reception he has got, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other political leaders would have understood that Kashmir issue cannot be buried by imprisoning people inside Tihar jail.

"Today, Modi, Shah, (Rahul) Gandhi and other leaders would have understood whom the people of J-K stand with. They would have come to know today that Kashmir issue cannot be buried by imprisoning Rashid, Hurriyat leaders, Kashmiri youth, and Kashmiri leadership in Tihar," he said.

He added Kashmiris do not desire to pelt stones, "but that does not mean we will surrender before your power".

"I want to tell Modi that I have high regards for you, you want to become vishwaguru, you are meddling in Russia-Ukraine conflict, Israel-Palestine. You call us terrorists but talk to Taliban in Doha. You will have to talk to Kashmiris.

"We are not begging. If you can talk to Nagas, then why not us? Today, you have an opportunity, talk to us and resolve the Kashmir issue. If you do not, then this people's tsunami will drown you," he warned.

Rashid said he won by more votes than PM Modi did in Varanasi.

He asked his candidates to work for the people and keep in touch with them.

All my candidates will have to become Engineer Rashid, he added.

On Omar's emotional appeal to the people of Ganderbal to vote for him, Rashid said when he saw that he felt "as if my both sons had died".

Rupesh, Shahzad...

Amit Sharma, an IAS officer of 2012 batch belonging to Jammu, has been transferred out from Ladakh and has been posted to Mizoram.

Sanjit Rodrigues, an IAS officer of 2013 batch has been transferred out from Goa and has been posted to Ladakh; Bhupesh Chaudhary, an IAS officer of 2014 batch has been transferred out from Delhi and has been posted to Ladakh; Shashanka Ala, an IAS officer of 2014 batch has been transferred out from Delhi and has been posted to Ladakh;

Similarly, Gaurav Sharma, an IPS officer of 2009 batch has been transferred out from Delhi and has been posted to Ladakh, while Fulzele Piyush Nirakar, an IPS officer of 2015 batch has been transferred out from DNH&DD and has been posted to Ladakh.

Meanwhile, the Appointment Committee of the Cabinet has also approved the Department of Personnel & Training's proposal to extend the inter-cadre deputations of IAS officers Abhishek Sharma (CG:2018) and Syeed Fakhrudin Hamid (AM: 2017) from the Chhattisgarh and Assam-Meghalya cadres to the AGMUT cadre (UT of J&K) for an additional year beyond July 8, 2024 and July 7, 2024 respectively.

Will restore...

statehood back, we will immediately restore the legislative council. You will not only have an MLA but also a member of legislative council," Abdullah said dunring an election rally in Bhaderwah.

The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Council, the Upper House, was abolished in October 2019 as part of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act. The Act also reorganised the state into the Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Abdullah was campaigning for National Conference candidates Khalid Najeeb Suharwardy and Mehboob Iqbal, contesting from Doda and Bhaderwah, respectively.

Criticising the BJP, he said, "We are here to stop communal forces from coming to power. We have to seek answers from the BJP for all the wrongs that have been done to Jammu and Kashmir."

Abdullah also responded to allegations by the Awami Ittehad Party over his "secessionists and Islamist" claims about Engineer Rashid.

The former chief minister said, "I have never said anything like that. They have a misunderstanding. He (Rashid) was in jail and news couldn't reach him. He is a victim of misconception."

On Rashid claiming to "fight" Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Naya Kashmir" narrative, he said, "We have been fighting the BJP for the last 10 years. They spoke about a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir. Where has that slogan gone now? If I don't hear those same slogans from them, it will be evident they have struck a deal with the BJP."

Abdullah also urged the voters to send a strong message to New Delhi.

"You are getting your right to choose a representative after 10 years. Elections are a chance for people to raise their voices. There has been no democracy in Jammu and Kashmir for six years," he said.

Seeking votes for National Conference candidates, Abdullah said, "If you are satisfied with the 10 years of central rule, then support the BJP. I have no problem with that. But if you are dissatisfied, send a strong message to Delhi. Tell them that they have deceived you."

He also alleged there had been no development on the ground in Jammu and Kashmir since the 2019 abrogation of Article 370.

"What has the BJP done other than bringing death and destruction?" he asked.

Abdullah also promised 200 units of free electricity if voted to power.

"But please, don't divide your votes. If you believe you will benefit from our rule, vote for our candidate," he said.

Article 370...

their only agenda has been to satiate their nefarious interests.

Lauding the people in assembling such huge numbers, Thakur said this reflects that Nagrota Constituency is going to emerge as the number one constituency for the BJP getting a huge mandate on October 8.

Thakur said while the NC, Congress and the PDP were furthering their nefarious agenda of pushing J&K to a dark tunnel of violence and instability, the BJP has been working towards its development. Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing the coming up of IITs, IIMs, IICs, Medical and Nursing Colleges apart from holistic development on all the fronts.

Speaking on the occasion, Ram Madhav said that the BJP freed the people of Jammu and Kashmir from the shackles of Article 370 that retarded its growth, progress and development for nearly seven decades.

Exuding confidence that the BJP will register a massive victory in the elections, Madhav said that while the Prime Minister made 10 ministers from Jammu after the 2014 elections in J&K, this point of time all the ministers will be from Jammu.

Madhav expressed the hope that sagacious voters of Jammu and Kashmir will reject the politics being pursued by the National Conference, PDP, Lone and now Er Rashid's party, as they represent the regressive mindset of 1947 that caused huge dent to J&K ethos and retarded development. On the contrary, PM Modi's vision for Naya Jammu Kashmir is inclusive and opportunities for all as per Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas Sabka Prayas.

Member Parliament Jugal Kishore Sharma exhorted the people to ensure massive support to the BJP to enable Prime Minister Narendra Modi realize his vision about prosperous and progressive Jammu and Kashmir.

Devender Rana described these elections as historic, saying Jammu region will be deciding the next government for Jammu and Kashmir, which will be inclusive with peace, harmony, development, progress and empowerment of youth, farmers, poor and marginalized top on its agenda.

Rana said "we are Dogras and the essence of our heritage, deeply intertwined with our rich history, vibrant culture, and cherished traditions, serves as the bedrock of our identity and Jammu's honour and Dogra pride will never be compromised".

He expressed his gratitude to the people of Nagrota Constituency and the BJP leadership for reposing faith in him to represent this segment again in the Legislative Assembly.

Meanwhile, BJP National Spokesperson, Sudhanshu Trivedi, on Thursday said that the upcoming Assembly elections in J&K are historic as this will be first election after J&K became secular and added that this election is between nationalist forces and anti-national forces.

"People in these Assembly elections have to choose between those promising peace and development (BJP) and those promising death and destruction (NC-Cong)," Sudhanshu said during a press conference, here today at BJP media center.

BJP National Spokesperson, Prem Shukla, J&K BJP Chief Spokesperson, Sunil Sethi, Election Media Center Incharge and BJP Spokesperson, Arun Gupta and BJP Spokesperson, Abhijeet Jasrotia were also present in the press conference.

"After 42nd amendment in the Indian Constitution, government here in J&K adopted the 6 year term for Assembly but did not add the word secular in its constitution," Sudhanshu during a press conference, here today at BJP media center.

At that time, J&K had its own Constitution but after abrogation of Article 370, there is one Constitution, he said.

"This is first election after J&K became secular, first election under one flag and also first election with no stone pelting, no ISIS and Pak flags and no hartals," he said, while adding, "This is also the first election in J&K after OBCs got reservation".

This election will also be the first election when the Assembly term would be of 5 years, he said.

NC and Cong want to revive terrorism and separatism, he said and questioned, "Cong must tell who would be released from jails, is it Yasin Malik, Asiya Andrabi or Shabir Shah?".

Sudhanshu Trivedi also slammed Rahul Gandhi for meeting and talking to those who don't consider PoJK as part of India but part of Pakistan.

"Rahul recently met some people in USA who do not consider PoJK as part of India but consider it as part of Pakistan," he said and added, "Indian Parliament had passed a resolution saying that PoJK is an integral part of India and Rahul by meeting such people has insulted the Indian Parliament".

Sudhanshu said, as Leader of Opposition, Rahu has insulted the Parliament and also his ancestors who also were part of the Parliament which passed the resolution saying that PoJK is an integral part of India.

India, China discuss...

meeting with a Chinese delegation led by Song Zhiyong.

The meeting focused on exchange of views regarding "further strengthening civil aviation cooperation between the two countries, especially promoting early resumption of scheduled passenger flights between us," the minister said in the post.

However, the post was deleted a few hours later.

Earlier, before the post was deleted, Naidu told reporters that the Chinese side mentioned about resumption of direct flights but no decision has been taken. A decision will be taken after discussions with the external affairs ministry and other stakeholders, he added.

Currently, there are no direct flights between India and China. The services stopped at the time of coronavirus pandemic.

IndiGo and Air India had flight services to China.

Air travel...

the second Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation in the national capital, attended by nearly 300 representatives from 29 countries, Modi also suggested the idea of an international Buddhist circuit by way of Air connectivity that will benefit countries and people.

The prime minister emphasised efforts to create a network of opportunities in the Asia Pacific region that will drive economic growth, encourage innovation, and strengthen peace and prosperity.

"To shape the aviation future is our shared commitment," Modi said and highlighted the importance of innovation and sustainable growth.

The growing middle class and demand created by them is a driving force for the aviation sector, he said.

Indian airlines are expanding their fleet and network and initiatives are being taken to make the country a global aviation hub.

According to him, the country's aviation sector has seen unprecedented growth in the last 10 years, and the sector has become "inclusive" compared to the past when it was only exclusive to some people.

Under the UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme, 14 million people have travelled, with many of them seeing the inside of an aircraft for the first time, he said.

The scheme has allowed the lower middle class to travel by air, he said and added that the aim is to make "air travel safe, affordable and accessible to all".

India is a strong pillar of the aviation ecosystem and one of the top civil aviation markets. India will become one of the countries with the most air connectivity, and efforts are also on to make it a global aviation hub, the prime minister said.

If the entire Asia is connected with the Buddhist circuit, it will be a win-win model for countries and people, Modi said and also suggested having a comprehensive approach with respect to air routes taken by professionals in the Asia Pacific region, which is also a business hub.

Apart from investments in infrastructure, he said there is a need for skilled manpower, and upgraded technology for the development of the aviation sector.

The sector creates highly skilled jobs, Modi said and stressed the women-led development of the aviation segment.

In India, 15 per cent of the pilots are women, while the global average is 5 per cent, he noted.

Amid rising travel demand, initiatives are also being taken to promote advanced air mobility.

"The day is not far when travel by air taxi will be a reality," he said.

The prime minister also proclaimed the Delhi Declaration at the conclusion of the two-day conference.

The two-day conference, which started on Wednesday, brings together transport and aviation ministers, regulatory bodies, and industry experts from across the Asia Pacific region. Around 300 representatives from 29 countries attended the conference.

Doval meets...

proposed a bilateral meeting with Modi on October 22 on the sidelines of the BRICS summit to analyse bilateral engagement and to discuss "future-oriented" actions.

"We are waiting for our good friend Modi and best regards to him," the Russian media quoted Putin as saying in the meeting with Doval.

On Wednesday, the NSA held wide-ranging talks with his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu and discussed important issues of "mutual interests".

It is understood that Modi's talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv on August 23 figured in the talks between the two NSAs.

"Both sides reviewed progress in bilateral cooperation and discussed important issues of mutual interest," the Indian embassy in Russia said on the talks between Doval and Shoigu.

Doval's visit to Russia comes two-and-a-half weeks after Modi paid a high-profile trip to Ukrainian capital Kyiv.

In his talks with Zelenskyy, Modi said both Ukraine and Russia should sit together without wasting time to end the ongoing war and that India was ready to play an "active role" to restore peace in the region.

The prime minister said India was on the side of peace since the beginning of the conflict and he would even like to contribute personally for a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

Modi's nearly nine-hour visit to Ukraine, the first by an Indian prime minister since its independence in 1991, came six weeks after he held summit talks with Putin in Moscow.

In the last few days, there have been calls for India's potential role in pushing peace talks between Russia and Ukraine as New Delhi has good relations with both the nations.

On Saturday, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni following her talks with Zelenskyy said India and China can play a role in finding a solution to the dragging conflict.

Putin, speaking at a panel discussion at the Eastern Economic Forum in Russian city of Vladivostok last Thursday named India, Brazil and China as possible intermediaries that could play a role in resolving the conflict

"First of all, it is the Chinese People's Republic, Brazil and India -- I am in contact with my partners and I have no doubt that the leaders of these countries -- and we have relations of trust and confidence with one another -- will be really interested and provide a helping hand," he said.

India has been maintaining that the conflict in Ukraine must be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy.