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TATHASTU
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SC cites Preamble to reject plea against Banu Mushtaq opening Dasara in Mysuru

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday reminded a petitioner, who did not want “Muslim” Booker Prize winner Banu Mushtaq to inaugurate the historical Mysuru Dasara festivities, about the Preamble which enshrines secularism, liberty of thought and faith, as well as equality and fraternity as ideals cardinal to national unity.

Dismissing the petition, a Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta asked the petitioner, Bengaluru resident H.S. Gaurav, whether he had read the Preamble to the Indian Constitution. “What is the Preamble of the Constitution?” Justice Nath asked Mr. Gaurav, represented by senior advocate P.B. Suresh.

Mr. Suresh said the in-

Secularism, a basic feature

Supreme Court, while dismissing the plea, highlighted that liberty of thought and faith, equality and fraternity are ideals cardinal to national unity

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The petitioner argued that the inaugural pooja was a religious practice reserved for Hindus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The court emphasised that the event was conducted by the State of Karnataka, which is secular and ‘maintains no religion of its own’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The court reiterated that the State’s neutral attitude to all religions did not prevent it from intervening to ‘eliminate practices which impede the right to equality’ 	

auguration of Dasara festivities at Chamundeshwari temple on September 22 had two aspects – the “ribbon-cutting”, which was a secular activity, and then the inaugural pooja before the temple deity, an essentially Hindu religious and spiritual activity. The latter would involve lighting of lamps before the sanctum sanctorum of Goddess Chamundeshwari, along with the offering of flowers

and other traditional items to the deity.

“Inviting her was a purely political act by the State,” the senior counsel argued. The petition contended that having a Hindu dignitary perform the pooja was part of the essential religious practice protected under Article 25 of the Constitution.

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Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. “To uphold and protect the Sovereignty, Unity and Integrity of India” is a provision made in the [2015]

- (a) Preamble of the Constitution
- (b) Directive Principles of State Policy
- (c) Fundamental Rights
- (d) Fundamental Duties

Q. Which one of the following objectives is not embodied in the Preamble to the Constitution of India? [2017]

- (a) Liberty of thought
- (b) Economic liberty
- (c) Liberty of expression
- (d) Liberty of belief

INBRIEF



Kavitha's resignation pending in State's Legislative Council

Telangana Legislative Council Chairman Gutta Sukender Reddy has said that the resignation letter of MLC K. Kavitha is still with him. Mr. Reddy said he spoke to Ms. Kavitha over the phone and asked her to reconsider the decision as it was taken in an emotional state. There is no development after that, and the council Chairman is yet to take any action on the resignation. The Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) suspended Ms. Kavitha, also the daughter of party president and former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, on September 2, citing “anti-party activities” and “damaging the party”.

Villagers in Maharashtra's Chandrapur seek action as wildlife attacks claim 5 more lives

Snehal Mutha

MUMBAI

Villagers in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district, home to the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, are demanding action from the Forest Department after five persons lost their lives in separate tiger and leopard attacks this month alone.

According to officials from the Chandrapur Forest Circle, four of the victims were killed by tigers, bringing the total death toll due to tiger attacks this year to 30. The Chandrapur forest is now home to 347 tigers, marking an increase from 191 in 2020.

The most recent attack occurred on Thursday when Vidya Masram, 40, of Chimur village was killed by a tiger while work-



Villagers in Chandrapur district airing their grievances to Forest Department officials over the recent deaths. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ing on her farm. "We have identified the tiger and alerted the residents of neighbouring villages. Primary Response Teams have been deployed," said an official from the Brahmapuri Division of the Chandrapur Forest Circle.

In another incident on the same day, seven-year-old Prasheel Mankar was attacked by a leopard around 7.30 p.m. in Gad-

bori village, 34 km away.

The boy's uncle, Nandkishore Mankar, a 32-year-old daily wage worker, said the attack took place while he was walking home with Prasheel and his sister after attending a function in the village. Forest Department officials found the body on the outskirts of the village on Friday.

The incidents have instilled fear among the vil-

lagers, prompting them to stage protests and demand measures such as installation of solar fencing, solar sensor lights, and cleaning up of the hill in their village to prevent wildlife attacks.

Written assurances

After receiving written assurances, the villagers sent the body for autopsy nine hours after it was found, officials said.

"We are trying to tackle villagers' anxiety," said Dr. Prabhu Nath Shukla, an IFS officer holding additional charge of the forest circle.

Meanwhile, sarpanch of Gadbori village Sheela Upvarkar accused the Forest Department of "negligence", citing similar demands made four years ago when a tiger attacked an elderly woman.

Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Consider the following pairs : [2014]

1. Dampa Tiger Reserve : Mizoram
2. Gumti Wildlife Sanctuary : Sikkim
3. Saramati Peak : Nagaland

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

The Saudi-Pakistan pact is a dodgy insurance policy

The signing of the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA) in Riyadh, on September 17, 2025, by the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Pakistani Premier Shahbaz Sharif, with Field Marshal Asim Munir in attendance, is a victory of future hope over past experience. Sunni majority Saudi Arabia and Pakistan share several commonalities. But they also have significant differences, restricting their past defence cooperation. Moreover, they have mutually dissenting threat perceptions.

All this prompts questions about whether the recent agreement would be effective and sustainable, and its granular impact on South West Asia.

The highs and the lows

The bilateral defence links date back to 1951, and their golden period was during 1979-89 when a nearly 20,000-strong Pakistani military contingent was deployed in Saudi Arabia to protect the Holy Harams and Al-Saud in addition to acting as the bulwark against Iran and Yemen. However, mutual differences soon clouded the equation.

At the perceptual level, while the Saudi leadership treated the Pakistani contingent as paid Praetorian Guards, Pakistani top brass, used to commanding back home, bristled at being ordered around. Saudi insistence against the exclusion of Shia troops among the Pakistan contingent was often a deal breaker. By 1990, the entire contingent was sent back. During the subsequent threats faced by the Kingdom – from the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 to the Yemeni civil war in 2015 – Pakistan declined Saudi call for deployment, much to the Saudi chagrin. Pakistan avowedly limited their military involvement to defending the kingdom's two Holy Harams against foreign invasion.

The Pentagon has traditionally underpinned the Saudi-Pakistan defence alliance, albeit in an over-the-horizon manner. In the current case, too, the chronology suggests United States involvement. On June 7, Mr. Staruf and Field Marshal Munir met the Saudi Crown Prince in Riyadh to announce the bilateral "strategic cooperation". On June 22, with the Israel-Iran air war raging, U.S. President Trump hosted a "private lunch" at the White House for Field Marshal Munir, without any previous acquaintance. Circumstantial evidence suggests that the Saudi Crown Prince used his proximity to Mr. Trump to arrange a brainstorming of Pakistan's role in defending Saudi Arabia and other pro-Western regional countries.

Subsequent brouhaha between the Trump administration and General Headquarters Rawalpindi was presumably under the conviction that Pakistan had the smart keys to the western geostrategic piquancy in West Asia, ranging from a backdoor to Iran to anchoring Gulf Cooperation



Mahesh Sachdev
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Council (GCC) security through "boots on the ground." The SMDA was a Hobson's choice for the Saudi Crown Prince. He is known to have demanded that the U.S. fulfil three prerequisites for Saudi recognition of Israel: a binding bilateral Defence Agreement, access to nuclear technology and state-of-the-art American weapon systems. The U.S., in turn, wanted Saudi Arabia to recognise Israel first to enable the passage of the proposed pact through the Congress. However, this delicate choreography was upended by the Hamas blitz on Israel, on October 7, 2023, and the subsequent Israeli invasion of Gaza. The death and destruction in Gaza has caused massive opprobrium and vitiated the political ambience in the Arab Islamic Ummah, forcing the Kingdom, which hosts Islam's two holiest shrines, to postpone the move indefinitely. Thus, the SMDA became a distant consolation prize for Riyadh.

The September 9 Israeli air attack on Hamas's office in Doha added an air of urgency to the SMDA process: it was the first Israeli military attack on a GCC member, viz., Qatar, which hosts the largest U.S. military base in West Asia and has a defence agreement with the U.S. While Washington conceded to having been pre-informed by Israel, it did not defend the country, obligated, and lamely offered assurance that such attacks would not be repeated. The episode dented the credibility of the U.S.'s security assurances to the GCC States, including Saudi Arabia.

The calculations

Historically, Riyadh has avoided stationing any Arab military contingents on its soil to avoid a political pollination of its masses. It has also chosen not to have troops from Türkiye, the former colonial master. The deployment of non-Muslim U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization troops in the Kingdom to defend Islam's holy shrines during the 1990-91 Kuwait war caused a serious religious rift in the powerful Saudi clergy. Thus, past reservations notwithstanding, Riyadh has narrowed down to the SMDA with Pakistan.

Four points need to be mentioned. First, the Kingdom has got along reasonably well without foreign forces on its soil since 1991, having survived al-Qaeda terrorism, the second Iraqi war and the Yemeni civil war. Riyadh has ordered nearly \$100 billion worth of advanced American weapons during Mr. Trump's visit earlier this year, further bolstering its defences. Second, Pakistan is now a declared nuclear weapons state, and the SMDA could come in handy in case Iran becomes one. Third, Pakistan's strategic tie-up with China, its "all-weather friend", may be an obstacle in the way of an unmitigated military camaraderie. Last but not least, while a transfer of Pakistani nuclear weapons to Saudi Arabia under the SMDA is possible, it would be highly improbable, given Israeli red lines. It would be

recalled that during the June 2025 war, Pakistani generals reportedly promised to extend a nuclear umbrella to Iran against Israel, only to swiftly recant. However, given A.Q. Khan's precedent, a surreptitious transfer of technology for developing nuclear weapons and delivery systems cannot be ruled out. For these reasons, the SMDA is likely to presage smaller Pakistani footprints in Saudi Arabia than the past involvements.

Islamabad's calculations from the SMDA are likely to be quite asymmetrical to Riyadh's. It has no intention to fight Iran, Yemen or Israel at Saudi behest any more than Saudi would take an active adversarial military role against India or Afghanistan in a South Asian conflict. It would rather exploit the Saudi insecurity to its multiple advantages, keenly monetising the IOUs ('I owe you') from Riyadh and Washington to get defence hardware, train on Saudi equipment and personal aggrandisement of its top brass. They would also hope that this trilateral axis would underwrite its intrinsic strategic disadvantage against India. Pakistan would also expect large dollops of Saudi funds and oil supplies to salvage its moribund economy.

Thus, on balance, unless the worst-case scenario pans out – when all bets are off – the SMDA is essentially for the optics and to ensure that Islamabad stays away from Tehran.

What it means for India

Where does the SMDA leave India? Here, India has few cards. India is the world's third-largest oil importer and the only large economy with rising oil consumption. It is traditionally Saudi Arabia's second-largest trading partner and crude buyer. Its diaspora, the Kingdom's largest, is preferred for competence and non-interference. Energetic diplomacy since 2014 has enabled India to bond well with Saudi Arabia, creating bilateral defence and intelligence-sharing ecosystems. Saudi Arabia plans to invest \$100 billion in India, although actual delivery is far short. Significantly, while announcing the SMDA, Reuters quoted an unnamed senior Saudi official as acknowledging the need to balance relations with Pakistan and India, "also a nuclear power". He added, "Our relationship with India is more robust than it has ever been. We will continue to grow this relationship and seek to contribute to regional peace in whichever way we can." An official Indian spokesman has also hinted that Riyadh took New Delhi into confidence over the SMDA negotiations. This not only shows that Riyadh needs all the friends it can get on board but also that India's strategic geo-economic heft seems enough for the moment to "balance" tactical manoeuvring by Pakistan. The SMDA, nevertheless, enjoins India to be vigilant and create greater synergies across the Arabian Sea.

The views expressed are personal

The pact, seemingly with the blessings of the United States, is essentially for optical effect

A climate-health vision with lessons from India

On July 29-31, 2025, Brazil hosted the 2025 Global Conference on Climate and Health, with delegates from 90 countries shaping the Belém Health Action Plan. Set to be launched at COP30 to be held in November 2025, this plan will define the global agenda on climate and health. India was not officially represented – a significant missed opportunity to emerge as a global exemplar, given its developmental approach offers lessons for implementing the Belém Plan.

Insights from India's welfare programmes

For countries in the Global South seeking synergistic policies that advance multiple developmental goals, India's intersectoral welfare programmes offer valuable insights. Consider the Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN), India's flagship nutrition scheme covering over 11 crore children across nearly 11 lakh schools. Its accomplishment lies in also connecting the dots between health, education, agriculture and food procurement systems. By promoting millets and traditional grains, it addresses malnutrition and also builds climate-resilient food systems.

Similarly, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has tackled sanitation, public health, human dignity and environmental sustainability, while MNREGA's environmental works have improved rural livelihoods while restoring degraded ecosystems. And with Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), the switch to clean cooking fuel has reduced household air pollution, a major cause of respiratory illness, while cutting carbon emissions.

None of these initiatives was designed explicitly as "climate policies", yet they have had significant health and climate co-benefits. These policies demonstrate a critical insight: non-health interventions can generate substantial health co-benefits while addressing climate challenges. Each intervention has also proved that intentional, intersectoral action can multiply impact. India's experience has takeaways for operationalising an integrated climate-health



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vision. First, strong political leadership makes a difference. PMUY and Swachh Bharat gained benefits from direct Prime Ministerial involvement, ensuring cooperation across Ministries. When political leaders frame climate action as a health emergency rather than just an environmental issue, it commands attention across government departments and receives wider public support.

Second, community engagement is a vital ingredient. Swachh Bharat leveraged cultural symbolism, invoking Mahatma Gandhi's vision of cleanliness. PM POSHAN built grass-root support through parent-teacher associations and school committees. Similarly, climate-action needs cultural anchoring, linking environmental protection to societal values of health and prosperity.

Third, past policies succeeded by building on existing institutions rather than creating parallel structures. Climate action must be embedded in existing social and institutional frameworks. Accredited Social Health Activists, self-help group members, municipal bodies and panchayat representatives can become powerful advocates, especially when they internalise the interlinks between environmental changes and community well-being.

Some challenges

However, experience also reveals fundamental constraints. The prudent choice is clear. India can continue fighting climate change and health challenges separately, with limited success and mounting costs. Or, it can leverage the institutional wisdom embedded in its welfare policies and deepen its international engagement to create a new model of governance that treats these challenges as interconnected problems requiring coordinated solutions. The stakes are high, the costs of inaction devastating, and the potential for transformative impact immense. India and the world cannot afford anything less than a bold, intersectoral, whole-of-society approach.

outcomes, not just outputs. India's experience points toward a framework for institutionalised, health-anchored climate governance, built on three pillars.

The first is strategic prioritisation by political leaders through framing climate policies in terms of immediate health rather than abstract future risks. Just as PMUY succeeded by positioning clean cooking as women's empowerment, climate action needs a similar high-level framing that connects environmental policies to health outcomes that people experience directly.

The second is procedural integration across government departments by embedding health impact assessments into all climate-relevant policies. Just as environmental clearances are now standard for major projects, health considerations should be mandatory for policies affecting energy, transport, agriculture and urban planning.

Third, participatory implementation that leverages health as a mobilising force. Communities understand the health benefits of cleaner air, safer water and nutritious food more intuitively than carbon accounting. Local health workers can become climate advocates when they see direct connections between environmental changes and health outcomes in their practice.

A clear choice

The prudent choice is clear. India can continue fighting climate change and health challenges separately, with limited success and mounting costs. Or, it can leverage the institutional wisdom embedded in its welfare policies and deepen its international engagement to create a new model of governance that treats these challenges as interconnected problems requiring coordinated solutions. The stakes are high, the costs of inaction devastating, and the potential for transformative impact immense. India and the world cannot afford anything less than a bold, intersectoral, whole-of-society approach.

The views expressed are personal

India's non-health interventions are a model that can generate substantial health co-benefits and also address climate challenges

Q. How do District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) help in the reduction of rural poverty in India? [2012]

1. DRDAs act as Panchayati Raj Institutions in certain specified backward regions of the country.
2. DRDAs undertake area-specific scientific study of the causes of poverty and malnutrition and prepare detailed remedial measures.
3. DRDAs secure inter-sectoral and inter-departmental coordination and cooperation for effective implementation of anti-poverty programmes.
4. DRDAs watch over and ensure effective utilization of the funds intended for anti-poverty programmes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only (b) 3 and 4 only
(c) 4 only (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

As India and Canada reset ties, NSAs hold talks on security cooperation

MEA describes meeting held in Delhi as opportunity to take forward discussion by Modi and Carney in June; Ajit Doval and his Canadian counterpart Nathalie Drouin focus on counter-terrorism and extradition of Khalistani activists wanted in India

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Indian and Canadian National Security Advisers (NSAs) and security teams held talks on enhancing bilateral cooperation in Delhi on Thursday, two years after bilateral ties were ripped apart by Ottawa's allegation that Indian government officials were linked to the killing of Khalistani activist Harjeet Singh Nijjar.

"This is part of the regular bilateral security consultations that happen between the two countries," said Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal. "It was also an opportunity and occasion for them to follow up on the discussions that happened between Prime Minister [Narendra Modi] and [Canadian] Prime Minister [Mark] Carney in Kananaskis on the sidelines of G-7 in Alberta [in June this year]," he added.



Warming ties: Narendra Modi greets Mark Carney during the G-7 Summit in Kananaskis, Canada, on June 17. REUTERS

Sources told *The Hindu* that the day-long talks between NSA Ajit Doval and Nathalie Drouin, the Canadian National Security and Intelligence Adviser, did not focus on the Nijjar case, which is now in trial court. Instead, they discussed moving ahead on sharing information and counter-terror cooperation, as well as India's requests for the extradition of a number of Khalistani activists wanted in cases registered in India.

The Canadian delega-

tion included Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs David Morrison, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Commissioner Mike Duheme, and senior diplomats from Global Affairs Canada.

Significantly, many officials on both sides of the table had been part of the stormy meetings held in 2023, when Canada had claimed it had "credible evidence" that Indian government agents were connected to the assassination of Nijjar who was shot

dead outside a Toronto-area gurdwara in June 2023.

In particular, a meeting in Singapore between Mr. Doval and his previous counterpart had ended with both sides trading charges, and subsequently expelling each other's diplomats for espionage.

The repairing of ties began only earlier this year, after Mr. Carney invited Mr. Modi to the G-7 summit, and both sides decided to restore their High Commissioners and restart the trade talks suspended by Canada two years ago.

Khalistani threats

The talks in Delhi came a day after a Khalistani group laid "siege" to the Indian Consulate in Vancouver, to protest what it called "espionage and surveillance by Indian diplomats" and also targeted the newly arrived Indian High Commissioner to Canada, Dinesh Patnaik, on posters. Mr. Patnaik and Cana-

da's High Commissioner to India Christopher Cooter took charge of their missions last week, and are expected to present their credentials in Ottawa and Delhi later this month.

Asked whether India had taken up the latest threats with the visiting Canadian delegation, Mr. Jaiswal said that the security of diplomatic missions is the responsibility of the host government.

"As and when there is a concern, we do take it up with our [counterparts] in Canada to ensure that there is adequate security of our diplomatic premises," Mr. Jaiswal said.

On Friday, Mr. Morrison also held talks with MEA Secretary (East) P. Kumar on resuming all dialogue mechanisms suspended since 2023, including on trade, defence and other issues and address the problems for visas due to the downsizing of diplomatic staff strength.



After Operation Sindoor, terror groups shift base

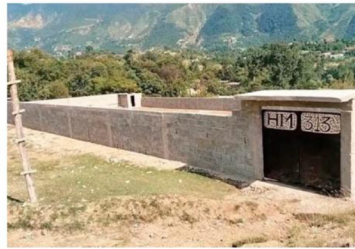
Jaish-e-Mohammed and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen have started moving their infrastructure from PoK to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province; this is being facilitated by Pak. state structures, say Indian officials

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

In the aftermath of Operation Sindoor, which destroyed at least nine major terrorist hubs in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), a senior Indian intelligence official has confirmed the deliberate relocation of Pakistan-sponsored terror groups to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

A dossier prepared with inputs from various Central intelligence agencies said that the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM) have primarily begun shifting their infrastructure out of PoK, which is now viewed as highly vulnerable to Indian precision strikes.

The official, who was closely monitoring threat assessment post-Operation Sindoor, said that relocation to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa offered these organisations greater operational depth due to its rugged terrain, proximity to the Afghan frontier, and pre-existing jihadi safe havens dating back to the Afghan war. *The Hindu* got access



Hizbul Mujahideen is building a facility named 'HM 313' in Bandaal area, say intelligence officials. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

to photographs of under-construction camps in Mansehra city in Hazara division. One of the photos show the roof of a big assembly hall being constructed.

Involvement of state

The official, who is with the intelligence agency that helped in identification of targets in Pakistan and PoK for Operation Sindoor, said this movement was being carried out with the direct facilitation of Pakistan's state structures. Evidence includes overt JeM gatherings under police protection and tacit support from political-religious fronts such as the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), sources confirmed.

According to the intelligence agencies, on September 14, roughly seven hours before the start of the India-Pakistan cricket match, a so-called "Deobandi religious gathering" that was in fact a JeM-JUI mobilisation drive was held in Mansehra district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. It was addressed by Mufti Masood Ilyas Kashmiri, alias Abu Mohammad, JeM's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Kashmir chief and a high-value target linked to Masood Azhar and central to the terror

group's post-Operation Sindoor restructuring.

A senior official provided a 30-minute-long video of Masood Ilyas discussing Osama bin Laden and Masood Azhar, and the relationship between the Pakistan Army and the JeM. The video also shows JeM cadres armed with M4 rifles.

The dossier accessed by *The Hindu* mentions about the construction of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen's new training facility named "HM 313" in the Bandaal area under the supervision of former Pakistani commander Khalid Khan. The land was discreetly purchased in August 2024, and the construction resumed post-Operation Sindoor.

Further, it mentions the JeM's plan to hold a major event on September 25 at Marakaz Shaheed Maksudabad in Peshawar to commemorate Yusuf Azhar (Masood Azhar's brother who was killed in Operation Sindoor). Pamphlets circulated under the JeM's alias Al-Murabitun confirm the mobilisation, which is expected to serve both as a memorial rally and a mass recruitment campaign.

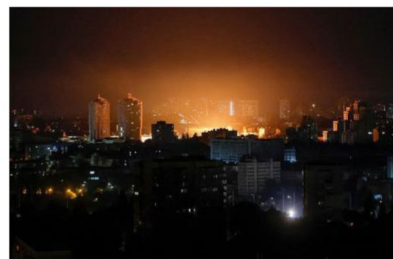
EU proposes new Russia sanctions, Indian entities likely to be part of list

These new sanctions will squeeze Russia's access to technologies, including AI and geospatial data, as well as critical resources that feed weapons production; the move comes two days after EU announced plans to upgrade ties with India

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

The European Commission announced on Friday that it was proposing a sanctions package, the 19th since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, to member states for approval. The bloc's top diplomat, Kaja Kallas, suggested that Indian entities would be impacted. The move comes two days after the EU announced that it was upgrading its relationship with India as a strategic priority.

"These new sanctions will also squeeze Russia's access to technologies, including AI and geospatial data, as well as critical resources that feed weapons



Relentless attack: An explosion of a drone lights up the sky over Kyiv during a Russian drone strike on Friday. REUTERS

production. This includes those received from foreign suppliers, including China and India," Kaja Kallas, the EU's top diplomat said on Friday in a televised statement. Indian entities have been subject to Russia-related EU sanc-

tions in previous rounds.

U.S. President Donald Trump has increased pressure on Europe to stop energy trade with Russia. Last week, Trump administration officials had attempted to persuade the EU to apply tariffs on India

and China for their trade with Russia. The EU however has focused on the more traditional sanctions approach and thus far not announced Russia-related tariffs on India or China.

The Commission, on Friday, proposed a total ban on imports of Russian LNG by January 2027, according to EU president Ursula Von der Leyen.

Last Saturday, Mr Trump had said the U.S. would also increase sanctions on Russia if the EU imposes tariffs on China and NATO countries stop buying Russian oil. While EU countries have significantly scaled back their imports of Russian oil in recent years they still import other commodities (for instance iron and steel, fertil-

izer, nickel) from Russia.

The new package will also sanction another 118 vessels part of Russia's "shadow fleet", i.e., thought to carry out trade, breaking existing sanctions of the EU. It will also include transactions bans on banks in Russia and third parties and sanctions on certain crypto platforms.

"...When speaking directly with partners that speak to Russians, they say that among the first Russian request is sanction relief. So we know that our sanctions are an effective tool of economic pressure and we will keep using them till Russia comes to the negotiation table with Ukraine for just and lasting peace," Ms. Von der Leyen said.

