



2
UP CM YOGI ADITYANATH TAKES
SIGNIFICANT STEP TOWARDS
DIGITAL REVOLUTION



12
TRUMP SAYS WILL
SPEAK TO PUTIN TO END
UKRAINE 'BLOODBATH'



16
KL'S CENTURY DRIVES
DC TO COMPETITIVE
199/3 AGAINST GT

OP SINDOOR HITS PAK BAILOUT

IMF SLAPS 11 NEW CONDITIONS ON PAK

Risks to bailout amid tensions with India may derail funding goals, IMF warns Pak

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has imposed as many as 11 new conditionalities on Pakistan for the release of the next tranche of its bailout programme for the debt-ridden economy, according to media reports on Sunday.

The IMF warned that tensions with India could heighten risks to the scheme's fiscal, external, and reform goals.

The new conditions imposed on Pakistan include the parliamentary approval of a new Rs 17.6 trillion budget, an increase in the debt servicing sur-



The new conditions imposed on Pakistan include the Parliamentary approval of a new Rs 17.6 trillion budget, an increase in the debt servicing surcharge on electricity bills and lifting restrictions on import of more than three-year-old used cars.

■ P3

Military gets emergency power to purchase arms, ammunition

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Amid the ongoing Operation Sindoor against Pakistan, the defence forces are set to get a big boost of around Rs 40,000 crore to buy arms and ammunition. The approval for the acquisitions under emergency powers was granted recently by the Defence Acquisition Council in its meeting attended by top defence ministry and military brass, defence officials said.

Under the emergency powers, the forces are focusing on buying equipment like surveillance drones, kamikaze drones, long range loitering munitions and ammunition for artillery, air defence and missiles and rockets of different types. The forces rained a lot of heavy duty missiles including the BrahMos and Scalp cruise missiles at targets in Pakistan. The forces will have to receive the equipment for which the deals are getting signed un-



The defence forces are set to get a big boost of around Rs 40,000 crore to buy arms and ammunition. The approval for the acquisitions under emergency powers was granted by the Defence Acquisition Council in its meeting attended by top defence ministry and military brass, defence.

der emergency powers within a stipulated time period. This is the fifth tranche of emergency procurement powers given to the defence forces in the last five years. The procurements would be done by the forces involv-

ing the financial advisors from the defence finance wing, the sources said. The Defence Ministry is also working on the long term projects for the forces and senior officials are meeting industry

leadership in this regard. The Defence Ministry officials have already held meetings with senior leadership from the public sector units and private industry including Solar Defence and Aerospace.

The emergency procurement powers have helped the defence forces in a big way by allowing them to procure required spares and ammunition to tackle security challenges. The Rampage missile which was used to attack targets in Pakistan was also acquired under emergency procurement powers by the Indian Air Force and Indian Navy. The forces later placed a larger order for these missiles and are now going to be produced within the country. The Indian Army and Indian Air Force acquired their Heron Mark 2 drones which were used to keep a watch on live operations during Operation Sindoor were also acquired under the emergency powers only. The

■ P3

7 spies held from Punjab, Haryana post Op Sindoor

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

In a major counter-espionage breakthrough following India's airstrike under Operation Sindoor, seven Pakistani spies have been arrested within just 11 days from different districts of Punjab and Haryana. All suspects are aged between 20 and 35 and were found to be part of an espionage network exploiting vulnerable youth through honeytraps, money transfers, and promises of fame or financial stability. Almost all of them had either visited Pakistan or maintained direct links with Pakistani Embassy officials, including a diplomat identified as Danish.

The first arrest took place on May 8 in Malerkotla, with subsequent detentions in Panipat, Hisar, Nuh, Kaithal, and Jalandhar. Intelligence agencies say the crackdown was triggered by heightened surveillance in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor, particu-

■ P3

8 children among 17 killed in blaze near Charminar



AGENCIES
HYDERABAD

At least 17 people, including eight children, were killed in a massive fire that engulfed a building near the iconic Charminar here on Sunday. The fire broke out at a building in Gulzar House here, police said. "All 17 who were shifted to hospitals were brought dead," a se-

nior police official. A lone, narrow staircase was the only escape route for the inmates of the building, but they could not rush out.

The building housed jewellery shops on the ground floor and people were residing in a flat above, police said, adding smoke spread and people suffocated.

Telangana State Disaster

■ P3

No expiry date to ceasefire understanding with Pak: Army

AJAY JANDYAL
NEW DELHI

The Indian Army on Sunday clarified that the understanding reached with Pakistan to cease hostilities has no expiry date, countering media reports that the arrangement was ending this evening.

"There is no expiry date to the continuation of the break in hostilities, as decided in the DGMOs' interaction of May 12," the Army said in a brief statement, referring to the recent conversation between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of both countries.

It also dismissed reports suggesting that a fresh round of DGMO-level talks was scheduled for the day, calling such claims inaccurate.

Army releases new footage of Op Sindoor

NEW DELHI: The Indian Army's Western Command posted a video of Operation Sindoor on its social media handle X on Sunday. It captioned the clip "Planned, trained & executed," adding, "Justice served."

In the video shared by the Army's Western Command on X, Indian Army personnel are seen in military attire and

armed. An army personnel can be heard saying that Operation Sindoor was a lesson for Pakistan, one it had not learned for decades.

"Yeh shuruat Pahalgam aantki hamle se hui, gussa nahi lava tha. Dimaag me bas ek hi baat, abki bar aisa sabak sikha-ne ki inki peedhiya yaad rakhegi. (It all began with

■ P3

The May 12 understanding reaffirmed the commitment reached during a hotline conversation between the DGMOs on May 10, initially intended for a two-day pause in hostilities. That ceasefire came

after four intense days of cross-border military confrontation, which included the use of drones, long-range weapons, and targeted strikes.

Under Operation Sindoor, India launched precision strikes on

terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on May 7 in response to the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam. Pakistan retaliated with failed attempts to target Indian military bases on May 8, 9, and 10—met with strong countermeasures by Indian forces, reportedly inflicting significant damage on key Pakistani military assets.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri had announced on May 10 that both sides had agreed to halt all military actions on land, air, and sea with immediate effect.

Subsequently, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar informed the Senate that DGMO-level talks were also held on May 14, further extending the ceasefire until May 18. However, the Indian military has

■ P3

EAM begins six-day tour of Netherlands, Denmark, Germany

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is set to visit Netherlands, Denmark and Germany from May 19-24, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement on Sunday. It further noted that during his three-nation visit, the External Affairs Minister will meet with the leadership of the three countries and hold discussions on the entire range of bilateral relations.

Discussions will also take place on global and regional matters of mutual interest. EAM Jaishankar's visit to Germany comes as Friedrich Merz took over the office as the new Federal Chancellor of Germany earlier in May this year.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi had extended his warm congratulations to Friedrich Merz and expressed his eagerness to work closely with Chancellor Merz for further strengthening the India-Germany Strategic Partnership. Sharing a post on X, PM Modi wrote, "Heartiest congratulations to @FriedrichMerz

■ P3

ISRO's 101st launch mission fails due to fault

AGENCIES
SRIHARIKOTA

ISRO on Sunday failed to put its earth observation satellite in orbit after its trusted PSLV rocket developed a fault minutes after launch from the spaceport here. In ISRO's 101st mission from the spaceport here, the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C61) had a textbook lift off at 5:59 am, only to experience an anomaly in the 12th minute of the flight. "Today we targeted the 101st launch from Sriharikota, the PSLV-C61 EOS-09 mission. The PSLV is a four-



stage vehicle and up to the second stage, the performance was normal. The third stage motor started

■ P3

Congress appoints key people ahead of Bihar polls

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) has announced key appointments ahead of the Bihar Assembly elections and for its Odisha. AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal stated that the Congress President has approved the proposal to appoint Kumar Gaurav as the Chairman of the War Room for the upcoming Bihar elections. In a separate announce-

■ P3

Vikram Misri to brief Parliament panel on Pakistan conflict

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri will brief a parliamentary committee on Monday on the India-Pakistan military conflict that happened in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack. The meeting comes against the backdrop of the Indian armed forces carrying out Operation Sindoor to avenge the Pahalgam attack and the subsequent military actions between the two countries. India and Pakistan reached an understanding on halting all mili-

tary actions on May 10. Misri will brief the panel, chaired by Congress member Shashi Tharoor, on the "current foreign policy developments regarding India and Pakistan" on Monday and Tuesday.

The committee on water resources, chaired by BJP's Rajiv Pratap Rudy, is scheduled to be briefed by officers of various government departments on issues such as flood scenarios, protection of river banks, soil erosion, relief measures during monsoon, including rivers flowing across the border.

Diplomatic outreach: Cong attacks Centre over 'politics'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress General Secretary in charge of Communications Jairam Ramesh on Sunday accused the Central government of playing "cheap politics" and indulging in "politicisation" by not including all the names recommended by the Opposition for the all-party parliamentary delegation which is set to visit key partner countries to highlight India's ongoing fight against cross-border terrorism and Operation Sindoor. Jairam Ramesh alleged that despite formally submitting four names on request, the



government ignored most of them, undermining parliamentary conventions and trust between the Opposition and the ruling party. Speaking to ANI, Jairam

Ramesh said, "On May 16, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju reached out on behalf of the Central government to Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and requested four names from the party to join the multi-party parliamentary group." "Responding promptly, Rahul Gandhi submitted a list comprising senior leaders Anand Sharma, Gaurav Gogoi, Nasir Hussain, and Raja Barar, before noon the same day," he said.

Ramesh said the government picked only one name from the list—Anand

■ P3

UP CM YOGI ADITYANATH TAKES SIGNIFICANT STEP TOWARDS DIGITAL REVOLUTION

The Stamp and Registration Department is leading the effort to digitally archive documents.

TDG NETWORK
LUCKNOW


Under the leadership of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the state is preparing to take another significant step towards a digital revolution by accelerating the process of digitising old revenue records and documents as per a release. The Stamp and Registration Department has accelerated the process of digitising old revenue records and documents to preserve them permanently. As part of this initiative, efforts are underway to digitally archive all revenue records from before 1990, and an agency will soon be selected to carry out this task.

The department is carrying out the scanning and digitisation of old records in a phased manner. According to the progress report presented by the department to the Chief Minister, as of April 2025, 95 per cent of the digitisation of deeds from 2002 to 2017 has been completed.

Meanwhile, the tendering

KEY POINTS

- Focus is on records before 1990, with an agency to be selected soon for the task.
- Scanning is being done in phases to preserve documents permanently.
- As of April 2025, 95% of deeds from 2002–2017 have been digitised.
- Tendering for digitising records from 1990–2001 is ongoing via UPDESCO.
- Next phase will cover documents predating 1990.
- Digital access will make retrieval of old revenue documents faster and easier.
- Hard copies will be moved to a central archive, freeing up space in sub-registrar offices.
- The initiative enhances digital governance and benefits the public directly.
- CM Yogi also launched Maa Vindhyavasini University's logo and website on May 16.
- The new university aims to boost higher education in the Vindhya region.



process for the digitisation of deeds from 1990 to 2001 is underway through UPDESCO. Now, in the third phase, work is set to begin

on the plan to digitally preserve records from before 1990.

This digitisation process will make access to revenue-

related documents much easier. After scanning, the hard copies of the records will be shifted to a central record room, relieving sub-

SP comment on Deputy CM: BJP workers burn Akhilesh Yadav's effigy in Amethi

TDG NETWORK
AMETHI

Angry over the alleged objectionable comment made by Samajwadi Party's (SP) media cell on Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, BJP workers in Amethi burnt the effigy of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav and raised slogans on Sunday.

District president Sudhanshu Shukla said it was indecent and inappropriate to post about the mother of the state's deputy chief minister, due to which there is tremendous anger among the entire Brahmin community. "Today, the effigy of Akhilesh Yadav was burnt at Rajarshi Tiraha in the city due to this," Shukla added.

An FIR was registered in Lucknow on Saturday following the comment against Pathak.

President of BJP's Lucknow Mahanagar (city) unit Anand Dwivedi, based on whose complaint the FIR was filed, alleged that



Akhilesh Yadav

the X post contained "extremely objectionable things against the deceased mother of the deputy chief minister,

which shows Samajwadi Party's anti-women mentality."

The case was registered under Sections 352 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of public peace), 353 (public mischief by spreading false information) or rumours), 356 (defamation) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and under the IT Act. Reacting to the post, Pathak questioned Samajwadi Party's conduct in an X post. "Akhilesh ji, is this the language of your party? This is the official handle of your party! Is this the choice of words for someone's late parents?" Pathak also shared a screenshot of the controversial post, which was later deleted.

Kharge extends greetings on 51 years of India's first nuclear test

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday extended congratulatory greetings on the 51st anniversary of India's first nuclear test code-named "Smiling Buddha" near Pokhran in Rajasthan. He credited the leadership of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi for the success of the operation despite many adversities. "51 years ago, India conducted its first Nuclear Test, code named "Smiling Buddha" and became the 6th nation in the world to carry out such tests. Our scientists and researchers achieved this extraordinary feat through their ingenuity and dedication. We are deeply grateful to them,"

Kharge posted on X.

"Indira Gandhi demonstrated exemplary and dynamic leadership, displaying remarkable courage even in the face of adversity, a legacy that endures," the Congress leader said.

On May 18, 1974, India became the sixth country to carry out its first nuclear test, shocking the entire world. A nuclear device was detonated in Rajasthan, near Pokhran, and the operation was code-named Smiling Buddha. The work for the nuclear test was approved by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1972, after which a team of scientists and other experts began working on the same at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC).

B'desh can't survive if it goes against India: BJP leader

TDG NETWORK
NORTH 24 PARGANAS

As India imposes port restrictions on import of several categories of goods from Bangladesh, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Dilip Ghosh on Sunday asserted that the neighbouring country in the east couldn't survive if it ventures out against India.

"When we can tighten screws on Pakistan, then what is Bangladesh? It is surrounded by India from all four sides. For Bangladesh, everything is in our hands, from air to water, business to commerce. They should understand that it cannot survive if they go against India."

Maharashtra: Joint Parliamentary Committee holds consultations on 'One Nation, One Election'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The Joint Committee on the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2024, and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, conducted extensive consultations with key stakeholders in Maharashtra regarding the feasibility and implications of One Nation One election (ONOE), according to an official statement.

The Committee held in-depth discussions with officials from the Maharashtra State Government, senior state bureaucrats, and representatives of national and regional political parties. The deliberations focused on the potential administrative and economic impact of holding simultaneous elections. Senior state officials assured the Committee that a thorough study would be undertaken to assess the broader outcomes, particularly in sectors such as edu-



cation, the statement said.

During the visit, the Committee also met with representatives of political parties in Maharashtra, including Prithviraj Chavan, former Chief Minister of the state. Party representatives shared their views on constitutional, logistical, and related challenges associated with simultaneous elections.

The statement added that in a separate session, the Committee interacted with officials from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to understand the implications of unsynchronised elections on monetary policy. RBI officials informed the Com-

mittee that a comprehensive study would be conducted to evaluate the effects of simultaneous elections on policy formulation and economic uncertainty caused by frequent electoral cycles.

The Committee also engaged with representatives from major financial institutions, including the State Bank of India, Central Bank of India, Bank of India, Union Bank of India, Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), General Insurance Corporation (GIC), and NABARD. The discussions centred on the potential impact of simultaneous elections on the country's banking sector and credit culture.

68 held in crackdown against traitors: Assam CM

TDG NETWORK
GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma lauded the state police for their efforts in the ongoing crackdown against individuals allegedly promoting anti-national sentiments.

In a post on X, Chief Minister Sarma said crackdown has resulted in the arrest of additional individuals, bringing the total number of arrests to 68.

The latest arrests include Abdul Hussain and Rosid Ahmed by Srikhola Police and Azad Imran Hussain by Barpeta Police, said Chief Minister while adding that "nobody will be spared".

The Indian Armed Forces under Operation Sindoor launched strikes at nine terror hideouts in deep areas of Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) in the



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma

morning hours of May 7. Meanwhile, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday took stock of the progress of construction of the cricket stadium and swimming pool at Amingaon here.

Chief Minister Sarma stated that, in addition to the Sarusajai Sports Complex and the Barsapara Cricket Stadium, a new cricket stadium with a seating capacity of 20,000 is being developed at Amingaon.

He noted that the construction is expected to be

completed by early 2026. The Amingaon stadium, he added, is being developed to host One Day Internationals, T20 matches, and other sporting events comparable to those held at Sarusajai and Barsapara.

He also mentioned that essential infrastructure such as alternative access routes, adequate parking facilities, and other amenities would be developed in phases. Additionally, the venue would be used for various international shows and events for the general public.

'NDA will win over 200 seats under Nitish Kumar's leadership': Shahnawaz Hussain

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Syed Shahnawaz Hussain on Sunday said that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) remains strong in Bihar under the leadership of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and is poised to win over 200 seats in the upcoming elections.

His remarks came after former Union Minister RCP Singh merged his political party, Aap Sabki Awaz, with Prashant Kishor-led Jan Suraj Party. Speaking to ANI, Hus-



Shahnawaz Hussain

sain said, "NDA is strong in Bihar under the leadership of Nitish Kumar. It will not make any difference if anyone joins hands with anyone."

He further said, "We will fight under the leadership of Nitish Kumar and win more than 200 seats in Bi-

har. We are going to form the government with a two-third majority." Meanwhile, welcoming Singh into the party, Jan Suraj founder Prashant Kishor described the former bureaucrat-turned-politician as "an elder brother" and a seasoned leader with deep understanding of Bihar's political and social fabric. Speaking to ANI, "Jan Suraj Party founder Kishor said, "RCP Singh is like my elder brother and one of the best persons who understands the society and politics of Bihar..." Kishor said RCP Singh as a seasoned leader

with deep understanding of both political organisation and societal structures in Bihar. "Very few people have such extensive experience in both governance and grassroots politics," he said.

Addressing the press conference Kishor said, "Bihar is at a crossroads and needs a new political force committed to the principles of clean governance and inclusive development. "Bihar deserves an alternative that talks about education, jobs, and long-term planning—not just caste and contracts."

MoS Defence Sanjay Seth to lead Indian delegation at 17th LIMA exhibition

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Minister of State (MoS) for Defence Sanjay Seth will lead the Indian delegation at the 17th edition of the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA 2025), scheduled to be held in Langkawi, Malaysia, from May 20 to 24, 2025, according to an official release.

An Indian Pavilion is set up in LIMA 2025, which

will be inaugurated by the Minister of State for Defence.

Many DPSUs, including Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, Bharat Dynamics Limited, BEML, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited & Gliders India Limited and private defence companies will be participating in the exhibition & showcasing the Indian defence industry's prowess. This year, Indian assets, including Dornier

aircraft and an Indian Naval Ship, will also participate in LIMA 2025.

On the sidelines of the exhibition, the Minister of State for Defence will also call on Malaysian Minister of Defence Dato' Seri Mohamed Khaled bin Nordin. The visit will further consolidate the bilateral defence cooperation and the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

India and Malaysia have a robust and multifaceted



Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth

relationship which has expanded into several strate-

gic areas, including defence & security. Both countries

are committed to working under the vision of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership established during the visit of the Prime Minister of Malaysia in 2024.

LIMA, established in 1991 and held biennially, is regarded as one of the largest and most significant maritime & aerospace exhibitions in the Asia-Pacific region.

The exhibition, one of its kind, is a platform for

defence, commercial and industrial uses. The biennial exhibition for the maritime and aerospace sectors, serving the Asia Pacific region and stands out as a unique trade showcase.

Earlier on May 14, the Minister of State for Defence spoke on his visit to Russia and stated that the Indian diaspora of Russia and Indians are excited to see the Prime Minister and Russia's President Putin together.

Seth further stated that both India and Russia share a strong friendship that is almost telepathic.

"Russia and India have had a relationship for hundreds of years... The Indian diaspora of Russia and Indians here are equally excited to see PM Narendra Modi and President Putin together. Both share telepathy and a strong friendship. I had the fortune of meeting President Putin..." Seth said.

PROBE ON TO FIND OUT JYOTI MALHOTRA'S LAVISH TRAVELS, SECRET LINKS

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

Haryana Police have launched a full-scale investigation into the financial dealings and international travel history of popular YouTuber Jyoti Malhotra, who has been arrested on charges of spying for Pakistan.

The arrest, officials say, has brought into focus the emerging threat posed by social media influencers allegedly being used by Pakistani intelligence operatives (PIOs) to further their agenda under the guise of digital content creation.

A resident of Hisar, Malhotra was apprehended following inputs from central intelligence agencies that linked her with Pakistani handlers. According to Hisar Superintendent of Police Shashank Kumar Sawan, she had visited Pakistan multiple times and also travelled to China. He said that a series of trips that raised red flags within the security establishment.

Her activities drew further suspicion after she travelled to China in June 2024, just weeks after a 12-day trip to Pakistan. Security agencies tracked her visits to jewellery stores

and her use of luxury vehicles, prompting a deeper probe into her finances and affiliations. Forensic teams are currently examining her digital devices for evidence.

Police also highlighted her attendance at an Iftar party hosted by the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi on March 23, where she met a Pakistani officer named Danish and his wife. She later posted photos of the event on social media, praising the arrangements, which officials believe was a subtle form of influence operation.

“Modern warfare is no longer restricted to the battlefield. There are reports that the PIOs are now attempting to exploit influencers on social media to subtly push their narratives,” said Sawan.

As per the police officials Malhotra’s travel records and spending patterns have come under close scrutiny, as they appear disproportionate to her publicly declared income. Her YouTube channel TravelwithJo has over 3.82 lakh subscribers, while her Instagram and Facebook platforms also boast significant followings.



A participant competes at the state-level bullock cart race organised on the occasion of Kollapuradamma Jatra Mahotsava, in Chikmagalur, Karnataka.

ISRO’s 101st launch mission fails...

CONTINUED FROM P1

perfectly but during the functioning of the third stage we are seeing a failure observation and the mission could not be accomplished,” Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman V Narayanan said. He said there was a fall in the chamber pressure of the motor case and the mission

could not be accomplished. We are studying the entire performance, we shall come back at the earliest,” Narayanan said post the unsuccessful launch.

This was the third failure of the PSLV, ISRO’s trusted workhorse rocket that launched the Chandrayaan-1 and Mars Orbiter Mission. The PSLV has had 63 launches so far. The previous fail-

ures were in 1993, the inaugural flight of the PSLV, and in 2017 when it did not succeed in putting in orbit a navigation satellite.

In January, ISRO’s navigation satellite NVS-02 encountered a failure after being put in orbit by a Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV). The satellite, meant to be placed in a geostationary orbit, is operating

from an elliptical orbit at present.

On Sunday, post lift-off, the PSLV C61 flight was tracked from the Mission Control Centre and other units of ISRO located in various parts of the country.

According to the data shared by ISRO, the PS1 (first stage) separation was scheduled for 111.64 seconds after lift-off, but it was achieved at 110 seconds.

IMF slaps 11 new conditions...

CONTINUED FROM P1

charge on electricity bills and lifting restrictions on import of more than three-year-old used cars. A Staff Level report, which the IMF released on Saturday, said that “rising tensions between India and Pakistan, if sustained or deteriorate further, could heighten risks to the fiscal, external and reform goals of the programme”.

The report further stated that tensions between Pakistan and India have risen significantly over the past two weeks, but so far, the market reaction has been

modest, with the stock market retaining most of its recent gains and spreads widening moderately. The IMF report has shown the defence budget for the next fiscal year at Rs 2.414 trillion, which is higher by Rs 252 billion or 12%. Compared to the IMF’s projection, the government has indicated allocating over Rs 2.5 trillion or an 18% higher budget, after confrontation with India early this month.

India carried out precision strikes under ‘Operation Sindoor’ on terror infrastructure early on May 7 in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror at-

tack that killed 26 people. Following the Indian action, Pakistan attempted to attack Indian military bases on May 8, 9 and 10. India and Pakistan reached an understanding on May 10 to end the conflict after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes. The media report said that the IMF slapped 11 more conditions on Pakistan, taking the total conditions to 50. It has imposed the new condition of securing “parliamentary approval of the fiscal year 2026 budget in line with the IMF staff agreement to meet programme targets by end-June 2025”.

Military gets emergency power ...

CONTINUED FROM P1

public sector units like the Bharat Electronics Limited is expected to bag an order for 10 more low level radars for drone detection during operations. This would be in addition to the locator order for six radars, the official said. A lot of Indian companies engaged in drone manufacturing are also expected to bag orders from all three services.

The new emergency powers will have a 15% outer limit of the budget and contracts are to be finalised within 40 days, and for deliveries assured within a year only. Powers to be exercised by the vice chiefs of the respective three forces. Also, additional conditions that all EP purchases only with concurrence of Financial advisors and special permission needed for any imports/global buys.

8 children among 17 killed...

CONTINUED FROM P1

Response and Fire Services Director General Y Nagi Reddy, who inspected the spot, told reporters that the fire accident was reported between 6 am and 6.15 am. There was a call to the fire department at 6.16 am and the fire engine was turned out at 6.17 AM, he said.

There were shops on the ground floor while the first and second floors were residential, he said. “Prima-facie cause of the fire is short circuit in the mains in the shopping area,” Reddy said. A total of 21 people were in the building when the fire erupted, and of them 17 were shifted to hospitals by the fire department in an

unconscious state.

There was only one escape route, the staircase, which was very narrow and the inmates could not run to safety, he said. Telangana Fire Department in a statement said the fire broke out on the Ground floor (G+2 building) and spread to the floors above. In a post on X, Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed anguish over the loss of lives due to the fire tragedy. He announced Rs 2 lakh for the kin of those who died and Rs 50,000 to the injured. “Deeply anguished by the loss of lives due to a fire tragedy in Hyderabad, Telangana. Condolences to those who have lost their loved ones. May the injured

recover soon. An ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh from PMNRF would be given to the next of kin of each deceased. The injured would be given Rs. 50,000: PM,” the post said. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy expressed shock over the incident and directed senior officials to take all necessary measures to rescue those trapped in the building. Earlier, a fire department official said they received a call at around 6.16 am and rushed to the spot. Several people were found unconscious and shifted to various hospitals. Addressing reporters after visiting the spot, Transport and Hyderabad District in-charge Minister Ponnampalabakar said a short circuit caused the fire.

7 spies held from Punjab, Haryana...

CONTINUED FROM P1

lary focusing on individuals with known ties or frequent communications with Pakistani contacts. Intercepted phone calls and digital chats played a central role in identifying the suspects.

Nauman Ilahi (Panipat): Arrested on May 13, Nauman was allegedly spying for ISI handler Iqbal alias Kana. He reportedly relayed details of army movements and train routes. Eight passports were recovered from him, and he had travelled to Pakistan four times. Investigators say he entered the network after Iqbal’s associate Kaleem was arrested. With family ties in Pakistan and no marital commitments, Nauman’s mobility made him a conve-

nient recruit.

Ghazala (Malerkotla): A recent widow living with her father, Ghazala came in contact with a Pakistani Embassy official named Danish during a visa application visit in February 2025. She soon began sharing visuals of army trucks, bases, and other sensitive locations. A Rs 30,000 transaction to her account is under investigation. She revisited the embassy in April with her friend Banu Nasrina, both reportedly lured during the visa facilitation process.

Armaan (Kaithal): Armaan provided Indian SIM cards to Pakistani handlers and had visited the Defense Expo 2025. He was in touch with Danish since 2023 and made two visits to Pakistan.

Security forces destroy 42 unexploded shells near LoC in Poonch

AJAY JANDYAL
CHANDIGARH

In a major safety operation following recent cross-border hostilities, security forces on Sunday destroyed 42 unexploded shells in forward villages along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kash-

mir, officials said.

The Indian Army, in close coordination with local police, conducted a controlled and precise operation to neutralise the unexploded ordnance in the border areas of Jhullas, Salotri, Dharati, and Salani, according to a defence spokesperson.

“These shells, remnants of the recent cross-border shelling, posed a significant threat to civilian life and safety,” the spokesperson stated, adding that bomb disposal teams ensured the complete and safe destruction of all explosive remnants, following strict safety protocols.

Justice served: Army releases video of Op Sindoor

CONTINUED FROM P1

the Pahalgam terror attack, the rage was like lava.

There was only one thought: this time, we will teach such a lesson that their generations will remember.”

The footage then displays visuals of blasts and non-stop firing, with a voiceover stating, “9 May raat ko takriban 9 baje, jis bhi dushman ki post ne yudh viraam ka ulanghan kiya un sabhi poston ko

bharatiya sena ne mitti me mila diya. Dushman apni post chhod bhagta nazar aaya. Op sindoor keval ek kaarwahi nahi, Pakistan ke liye woh sabak tha jo usne dashakon se nahi sikha.

EAM begins six-day tour of Netherlands, Denmark, Germany

CONTINUED FROM P1

on assuming office as the Federal Chancellor of Germany. I look forward to working together to further cement the India-Germany Strategic Partnership.”

In the wake of the dastardly Pahalgam terror attack, the three countries were a part of the several countries from across the world who had expressed solidarity to India. The Danish Prime Minister, Mette Frederiksen, offered support to India and condemned all acts of terrorism. She also extended condolences to the victims of the attack and their families.

“Terrible news from Pa-

halgam. Denmark stands with India and strongly condemns all acts of terrorism. Our condolences to the victims of the attack and their families and loved ones,” Denmark PM’s office wrote on X. Former German Chancellor Olaf Scholz had condemned the terrorist attack against tourists in Pahalgam. He had offered condolences to the people of India and wished speedy recovery for all the people injured in the attack.

President of Netherlands, Dick Schoof had said, “The Netherlands stands shoulder to shoulder with India in the fight against terrorism, now and in the future.”

India shares warm and friendly ties with the three countries. The ties of India and Denmark are based on historical links, common democratic traditions and shared desire for regional, as well as international peace and stability. The current development of renewed India-Denmark relations has been guided by the “Green Strategic Partnership”, MEA noted in a statement.

The diplomatic ties between India and the Netherlands are over 75 years old. As per the MEA, the two countries enjoy strong political, economic & commercial relations.

No expiry date to ceasefire understanding with Pak: Army

CONTINUED FROM P1

refrained from commenting on Dar’s claims. The Indian Army

reiterated its commitment to confidence-building measures, stating it would gradually reduce alert

levels in accordance with the May 10 agreement, in a move seen as a step towards de-escalation.

Diplomatic outreach: Cong attacks Centre over ‘politics’

CONTINUED FROM P1

Sharma--and arbitrarily replaced the others with names not suggested by Congress.

“We gave the names they asked for, yet only one was included. This shows that the government’s intention was already a mischievous one and this game was being played so that the formality of asking us ends,” he alleged. Ramesh claimed that the whole exercise appeared to be a formality to claim that talks were held, but in reality, it was mere damage control.

“I believe this was politicisation, which should not have been done. They

should have sincerely done this. There should be trust between the Opposition and the ruling party. There is a parliamentary system, there is a tradition that when you want to choose MPs of a party, you have to speak to the concerned leaders of the party,” he said. “Why did Kiren Rijiju come and ask for names from Rahul Gandhi and Kharge ji. Well, this narrative has been lost. This is just damage control. The way they have behaved with Congress is cheap politics, mischief. When you asked us for names, why did you not include them? We sat and deliberated for two hours, then gave

the names,” said Ramesh. Adding further, he said, “The names suggested by the Congress were good MPs, influential. They were not just seasoned lawmakers but also influential voices in Parliament with significant contributions. When you request names from the Opposition, there is a parliamentary convention to respect that.”

“Everyone can see that Operation Sindoor is being politicised. US President Donald Trump’s repeated claims--made at least seven times--that the conflict was de-escalated due to US mediation. Yet, PM Modi has not responded. The EAM is silent.” Ramesh said.

Ramesh also condemned recent statements made by two ministers from Madhya Pradesh, which he described as “deeply insulting” to armed forces personnel and to Colonel Sofiya Qureshi, who led troops during Operation Sindoor. He reiterated that the Congress party has always prioritised national interest over politics, and called for the government to do the same.

“The Centre has done as per their wish, included only one name from the list given by us, the four other names were chosen by them. They aren’t representatives of the party. Let the MPs go, even those from

the Congress, we will not stop them, we will not boycott this delegation. We do not politicise it. We should end the discussion here. There are other important issues too,” he added. “The real issue is terrorism. The mastermind of terrorism is Pakistan. The way Pakistan’s deep state is behind terrorism is the issue. Kashmir is not the issue, it will be discussed only in the Parliament,” said Ramesh.

The all-party delegations will project India’s national consensus and resolute approach to combating terrorism in all forms and manifestations. They would carry forth to the world the country’s

strong message of zero tolerance against terrorism. According to Congress, the party had submitted four names to the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs by May 16, but the final list released late on May 17 included only one of the suggested names.

The list includes MPs from multiple parties, divided into seven groups of 8-9 members. A leader has been assigned for each group, who will lead the delegation at a global level. Union Minister Kiren Rijiju, while posting the list on Saturday, also highlighted how the Members of Parliament have shown a united stance of “One mission.

Congress appoints key people...

CONTINUED FROM P1

ment, the AICC confirmed the appointment of Satyaajeet Gomango as Chairman and Santosh Pradhan as Co-Chairman of the Social Media Department for the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee, effective immediately. Earlier on May 7, the AICC has appointed Lalatendu Satpathy as the Chairman of the Social Media Department for the state unit. These appointments are part of the Congress party’s ongoing efforts to strengthen its organisational framework across states ahead of upcoming electoral challenges.

Additionally, the AICC released a list of 12 new Secretaries: Tuleshwar Naik, Sasmita Panda, Shilpisi Harichandan, Debasmita Sharma, Lakshmidhar Singh, Dilip Duria, Rupak Turuk, Simanchal Giri Ulaka, Manisha Tripathy, Sakka Sujit, Mohan Hembrum, and Anima Minz. Meanwhile, a high-stakes battle is expected in Bihar, where the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which includes Janata Dal (United) led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), will face the Mahagathbandhan.

CHHATTISGARH CM INAUGURATES FORMAL BANK BRANCH IN NAXAL-HIT JAGARGUNDA

Chhattisgarh CM Vishnu Deo Sai on Sunday virtually inaugurated a branch of Indian Overseas Bank in Jagargunda. It will benefit nearly 14,000 people from 12 nearby villages.

AJIT MAINDOLA
NEW DELHI/RAIPUR

After decades of being affected by Left-Wing Extremism, the people of Jagargunda in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district will now have access to formal banking services.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai today virtually inaugurated a branch of Indian Overseas Bank in Jagargunda, benefit nearly 14,000 people from 12 nearby villages. The opening of a new branch marks a major step forward in financial inclusion in one of the state's most sensitive regions.

"The opening of a bank branch in Jagargunda is a victory of democracy and development over extremism. The double-engine government is committed to revitalizing Bastar and is ensuring that the wave of change reaches every village," CM Sai said while addressing the gathering from his official residence.

He added that, in line with

FINANCIAL INCLUSION

■ Targeted Beneficiaries: The branch will benefit nearly 14,000 people across 12 nearby villages.

■ Significance: Marks a major step towards financial inclusion in a historically Naxal-affected region.

■ CM's Address: CM emphasized the victory of democracy and development over extremism, with a focus on revitalizing Bastar.

■ PM Modi's Promise: The state is working to ensure banking facilities in all gram panchayats.

■ Recent Initiatives: Atal Panchayat Digital Seva Kendras launched in 1,460 gram panchayats for digital banking access.

■ Security & Development: CM highlighted the positive impact of security operations and government efforts on development in Bastar.

■ Finance Minister's Reflection: OP Choudhary shared personal memories of the region's transformation, recalling earlier Naxal influence and the reopening of a former Naxal-targeted bank.



Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai

the guarantees made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the state is rapidly working to ensure banking facilities in all gram panchayats.

Recently, on April 24 (Na-

tional Panchayat Day), the state launched Atal Panchayat Digital Seva Kendras in 1,460 gram panchayats, through which rural citizens are now availing digital banking services.

Highlighting the combined impact of security, development, and public trust, the Chief Minister emphasized that continuous operations by security forces and the firm resolve of both central

and state governments are helping Bastar's villages emerge from the grip of Naxalism and join the mainstream of development.

Chhattisgarh Finance Minister OP Choudhary reflected emotionally on the transformation. He recalled that when he served as District Collector in Dantewada in 2001, this region was deeply Naxal-affected, and officials had to think twice before entering interior areas. At that time, the same building had a rural bank branch that was targeted by Naxals in attempted loot. Today, that very building has been reopened as a formal bank branch.

Choudhary also got his account opened in the bank along with local residents, showcasing the people's participation in the development journey. From this branch, villagers will now directly receive funds from government schemes such as tendu leaf bonuses and the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi.

Mumbai: NIA arrests two ISIS-linked absconders in Pune sleeper module case

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested two absconding members of a sleeper module of banned terror organisation ISIS in a 2023 case related to fabrication and testing of IEDs in Maharashtra's Pune, according to a statement on Saturday.

The two men, identified as Abdullah Faiyaz Shaikh alias Diaperwala and Talha Khan, were intercepted by the Bureau of Immigration at the Mumbai International Airport T2 when they tried to return to India from Jakarta, Indonesia, where they had been hiding.

The NIA team then took them into custody and arrested them. The next hearing in the case is on May 27,

2025.

According to the statement, both accused had been on the run for over two years and were declared proclaimed offenders. The NIA Special Court in Mumbai issued non-bailable



warrants against them, and cash rewards of Rs 3 lakh each were also announced for information leading to their arrest.

The case relates to a criminal conspiracy by these men, along with eight other ISIS Pune sleeper module

members already arrested and in judicial custody. They had conspired to commit terrorist acts to disturb India's peace and communal harmony by waging a war against the Government of India in furtherance of the ISIS agenda to establish Islamic rule in the country through violence and terror.

These two men, already chargesheeted along with the other arrested accused, had been engaged in assembling IEDs from a house rented by Abdullah Faiyaz Shaikh in Kondhwa, Pune.

During the 2022-2023 period, they had also organised and participated in a bomb making and training workshop, besides carrying out a controlled explosion to test an IED fabricated by them, at these premises.

TDG NETWORK
SOLAPUR

A fire broke out on Sunday at a factory located in the MIDC area in Maharashtra's Solapur.

Fire tenders were immediately rushed to the spot, and attempts to douse the fire are underway. Meanwhile, in another incident in Hyderabad, a fire erupted in a building at the Gulzar House near Charminar earlier today.

A total of 11 fire engines were dispatched to the spot to contain the blaze.

Firefighting efforts are ongoing, and an investigation into the cause of the fire is currently underway.

In India, fire safety in big buildings is governed by various laws and regulations to ensure the safety of occupants. The National Build-

ing Code of India (NBC),

2016, outlines the basic requirements for fire safety, including guidelines for fire prevention, detection, and protection systems. It mandates fire-resistant construction materials, proper exits, and the installation of fire alarms and sprinkler systems. The code also specifies the need for fire exits, emergency lighting, and evacuation plans for high-rise buildings.

Additionally, the Factories Act, 1948 and the Workplace Safety Act impose safety standards for industrial buildings, ensuring that fire safety protocols are followed. The Indian Electricity Rules, 1956, also stipulate safety standards for electrical wiring, reducing the risk of electrical fires in large buildings.

At least three people died after a car lost control and plunged into a well in Balamvaripalli village in Andhra Pradesh's Annamayya district, police said on Sunday.

The deceased were identified as Lokesh, Chalapathi, and Shivanna; all three hailed from Tandupalli near Chintamani in Karnataka.

As per the police, there were five passengers in the car; two managed to escape safely, while three died inside the vehicle.

The incident happened when the five were travelling near Kuravapalli on



Traders in Gwalior decide to boycott trade with Turkey, Azerbaijan

TDG NETWORK
GWALIOR

As India takes a firm stand against countries that extended support to Pakistan during the recent conflict between the two countries, the traders in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior have decided to boycott any form of trade relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Bhupendra Jain, president of the Confederation of

All India Traders (CAIT) in Madhya Pradesh, said they have decided to end trade with Turkey and Azerbaijan for "helping Pakistan". He added that the CAIT has decided to conclude import-export business with Turkey while also opposing tourism to the middle eastern country.

"We have decided to teach a lesson to Turkey and Azerbaijan, the countries that helped Pakistan.

We helped Turkey in the earthquake through Operation Dost. Today, it helped our enemy and fired shells, drones and missiles at us," Jain told ANI.

"Trade with Azerbaijan and Turkey has been stopped. Three decisions have been taken in CAIT. First, we will not import or export anything. Second, we are opposing tourism in Turkey. Third, national-level filmmaker, director,

Shinde-led Shiv Sena holds Tiranga rally in Mumbai to honour Indian armed forces

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena leaders from the Eknath Shinde-led faction, along with citizens, took out a spirited Tiranga rally in Mumbai on Sunday to express unwavering support to the Indian armed forces following the success of Operation Sindoor.

The rally, witnessed the participation of party workers, ministers, and residents of the city, and was marked by chants of patriotism and waving of the national flag. Maharashtra Minister Yogesh Ramdas Kadam, who was present at the event, underlined the significance of collective support for India's defence forces.

"Today, Shiv Sena has organised this Tiranga rally, but not just Shiv Sena leaders, but common people are also with us to support our brave armed forces," Kadam told reporters.

On Thursday, Maharashtra Minister and state BJP president Chandrashekhar



Bawankule led the 'Tiranga Yatra' organised in Nagpur, following the success of Operation Sindoor.

Chandrashekhar Bawankule, while briefing the media informed that over 1500 'Tiranga Rallies' will be organised in Maharashtra from May 16 to 20. He highlighted that apart from the 'Tiranga' rally, 'Sindoor' rallies will also be organised and members from all the NDA parties will participate in it.

"Over 1500 Tiranga rallies are being organised in Maharashtra between today and May 20. Yesterday, CM Devendra Fadnavis conducted a Tiranga rally

in Mumbai. People from all NDA parties are taking part in these rallies. There will also be 'Sindoor' rallies. The public is with our Armed Forces and the nation", Chandrashekhar Bawankule told reporters.

BJP's 'Tiranga Yatra', which began on Tuesday, will continue till May 23. On Wednesday, the BJP organised the 'Tiranga Yatra' in states such as Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Odisha.

Earlier, the BJP workers organised a 'Tiranga Yatra' in Srinagar on Thursday in honour of the Indian Armed Forces following the success of Operation Sindoor.

Armed men attack security guards in Mumbai over land dispute, 21 arrested

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Mumbai Police have arrested 21 individuals in connection with a shocking incident that unfolded late on Saturday when armed assailants launched a violent attack on security guards deployed at the premises of Monee Magnum Company in the Agripada area of Mumbai, allegedly over a land encroachment dispute, police officials said.

According to the FIR filed by complainant Ganesh Jagannath Salunkhe, the attackers, reportedly acting under the direction of Pascal Postal, owner of Franco India Pvt. Ltd., forcibly welded the company's gate shut using iron rods in an attempt to seize control of vacant land owned by the company. This act obstructed the entry and exit of both the complainant and the property owners.

The attackers, reportedly acting under the direction of Pascal Postal, owner of Franco India Pvt. Ltd., forcibly welded the company's gate shut using iron rods in an attempt to seize control of vacant land owned by the company.

The situation escalated when a group of armed individuals, including security personnel and others, gathered and attacked Salunkhe and his team in a pre-planned assault. The attackers allegedly used stones, bricks, chilli spray, and chilli water, inflicting serious injuries.

The attack got more violent when a licensed firearm holder allegedly fired gunshots in the direction of Salunkhe and his female colleagues in an apparent attempt to kill them. Mumbai Police have arrested 21 individuals in connection with the incident.

They have registered a case under multiple sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023, including Sections 189(1), 189(2), 109, 189(4), 190, 126(2), 118(1), 191(2), 191(3), and 61(2) (BNS), along with relevant sections of the Arms Act, including 25, 27, and 30.

Police have also seized four rifles (12-bore), live and spent cartridges, stones, sticks, and chilli spray used during the assault.

Pascal Postal, along with Jai Patil and approximately 10-15 female bouncers and security guards, has been named as wanted in the case.

Three dead after car plunges into well in Andhra

TDG NETWORK
ANNAMAYYA

At least three people died after a car lost control and plunged into a well in Balamvaripalli village in Andhra Pradesh's Annamayya district, police said on Sunday.

The deceased were identified as Lokesh, Chalapathi, and Shivanna; all three hailed from Tandupalli near Chintamani in Karnataka.

As per the police, there were five passengers in the car; two managed to escape safely, while three died inside the vehicle.

The incident happened when the five were travelling near Kuravapalli on



The deceased were identified as Lokesh, Chalapathi, and Shivanna; all three hailed from Tandupalli near Chintamani in Karnataka.

the Pileru-Sadum road at around 4:15 AM, their vehicle accidentally plunged into a roadside well, submerging all five passengers.

However, "two of them, Sunil and Tippa Reddy, managed to break the rear windows of the car and escape, thereby saving their

lives. The remaining three--Lokesh, Chalapathi, and Shivanna--drowned and lost their lives in the incident," the police official said. Upon receiving the information, police and locals reached the spot and, with the help of a crane, retrieved the vehicle from the well.

The deceased were shifted to Pileru Government Hospital for postmortem.

Inspector Mohan stated that Lokesh, Chalapathi, Shivanna, Sunil, and Tippa Reddy are residents from villages around Chintamani. "They formed a group and took up cooking at weddings as their profession.

ASHOKA VARSITY ASSOCIATE PROF HELD FOR POSTS ON OP SINDOOR

Two FIRs include charges of endangering national integrity and promoting enmity.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Ashoka University's head of the political science department, Ali Khan Mahmudabad, was arrested on Sunday after two FIRs were lodged on stringent charges, including endangering sovereignty and integrity, for his social media posts related to Operation Sindoor, police and his lawyer said.

The arrest comes after the Haryana State Commission for Women sent a notice to the assistant professor questioning his remarks, though Mahmudabad had maintained that they were "misunderstood" and asserted that he had exercised his fundamental right to freedom of speech.

"Ali Khan Mahmudabad has been arrested in Delhi," Assistant Commissioner of Police, Rai, Ajeet Singh said over phone, adding the action came in connection with some comments related to Operation Sindoor.

SERIOUS CHARGES

- Lawyer says he was arrested without warning, based on political complaints.
- Ashoka University is verifying details and co-operating with authorities.
- CPI(M), TMC, and AIMIM leaders slammed the arrest as an attack on free speech.
- Mahmudabad says his posts were misunderstood and aimed at promoting peace.



Deputy Commissioner of Police Narender Kadyan said two FIRs were lodged at the Rai police station here — one based on a complaint from the chairperson of Haryana State Commission for Women, Renu Bhatia, and the other on the complaint of a village sarpanch.

"On the Commission chairperson's complaint, the FIR has been lodged against Prof Ali of Ashoka University under BNS sections 152 (Acts endangering sovereignty or unity and integrity of India), 353 (statements conducing to public mischief), 79 (deliberate actions aimed at insulting the

modesty of a woman) and 196 (I) (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion)," Kadyan told reporters here.

"He has been arrested today...Two FIRs have been registered at the Rai police station," he said.

Police remand of Ali will be taken on the basis of a complaint of the Commission, he said.

According to the DCP and one of Mahmudabad's lawyer, Kapil Balyan, another complaint against the associate professor was lodged on Saturday by a local Sarpanch.

Balyan claimed the Sar-

panch "is also associated with State BJP Yuva Morcha".

"The case was lodged on Saturday and the next morning, the professor was arrested from Delhi. No notice was given to him and he was taken into custody by police," the lawyer said.

They said the case has been lodged on sarpanch's complaint under BNS sections 152, 196 (promoting enmity between different groups on ground of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language etc. and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony), 197 (imputations, as-

sertions, prejudicial to national integration) and 299 (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs).

All these sections are non-bailable.

In a statement, the Ashoka University said it was trying to ascertain details of the case and will continue to cooperate with the police and local authorities in the investigation.

"We have been made aware that Prof Ali Khan Mahmudabad has been taken into police custody earlier today. We are in the process of ascertaining details of the case," it said.

"The University will continue to cooperate with the police and local authorities in the investigation, fully," it said.

The CPI(M), AIMIM leader Asaddudin Owaisi and Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra were among those who condemned the arrest.



According to an official from transport department, the work to install ANPR cameras has almost been completed.

any other monitoring mechanism, shall be denied fuel, besides other legal actions under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1989.

"Get a No Objection Certificate from the transport department to take EoL vehicles outside NCR or scrap such vehicles at any RVSF," it said. According to an official from transport department, the work to install ANPR cameras has almost been completed.

"Only 10-15 pumps are left where cameras have

to be installed. We are installing cameras at all petrol pumps and CNG stations," he said. There are around 400 petrol pumps in Delhi and around 160 CNG pumps.

A representative from Delhi Petrol Dealers' Association said the government is installing ANPR cameras but there are some logistical issues.

"The cameras have been installed and there is a speaker machine which reads out the number plate of the overage vehicles.

Teen killed over playing music at event, 4 held

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

An 18-year-old boy died after being stabbed during a scuffle allegedly triggered by a dispute over playing music at an event in northwest Delhi, police said on Sunday. Bheem Sen, a resident of Badhola village was injured in the attack that took place in the village on Saturday. He was taken to Babu Jagjivan Ram Memorial Hospital by a friend, where he died during treatment, a police officer said.

Police said Sen had a minor altercation with a group of boys on Friday over playing music at an event. The next day, in an alleged act of retaliation, the group attacked him with a knife.

"He sustained two stab wounds and despite medical efforts, could not be saved. An FIR has been registered at Mahendra Park Police Station," the officer said.

He said that a crime team and forensic experts visited the scene and collected evidence. The body was sent for post-mortem, he added.

During investigation, four juveniles were apprehended and the weapon used in the attack is yet to be recovered, the officer said.

"Efforts are underway to trace and seize the knife used in the crime. Further investigation is in progress to ascertain the sequence of events and determine if more individuals were involved," he said.

Passenger kills cab driver after row over route in Inderlok

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A 40-year-old taxi driver was stabbed to death by an intoxicated man after he got into an argument with the victim over the route in Delhi's Rohini area, a police official said on Saturday.

The deceased, identified as Israfil, had multiple stab wounds on his body, the official said, adding that the accused, Rohit (23), has been arrested in connection with the case.

The incident came to light on May 15 when the police received information about a car with visible bloodstains, abandoned in Savda village near an agricultural field.



tified as that of Israfil, and his family informed police that he worked as a taxi driver.

A case under the relevant section of the BNS was registered at Kanjhawala Police Station.

The family further informed the police that Israfil had taken a booking from Inderlok Metro station around 11 pm the previous night, the DCP said.

"Based on the app-based taxi booking details, we traced a suspect named Rohit, a resident of Jhajjar district in Haryana," the DCP said, adding that he was taken into custody, and during interrogation, he confessed to the crime.

The body was later iden-

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police arrested two robbers and habitual criminals, Ravi alias Karan, aged 32 years, and Akash, aged 30 years. They are both involved in more than 150 previous cases.

Police have recovered one stolen motorcycle, two snatched gold chains, and three stolen mobile phones.

The team conducted an extensive technical investigation and analysed more than 500 CCTV cameras across the South-West, West, and North-West Districts. FRS (Facial Recognition System) was also used for identification.

The accused persons were observed using a two-wheeler and employing various deceptive tactics to

They were going to sell the mobile phones and the gold chain, but were arrested.

from their possession. Further, three stolen mobile phones were also recovered. Both accused were arrested and produced before the court.

During sustained interrogation, the accused persons confessed that to earn quick money, they used to commit gold chain and mobile phone snatching, and after committing the crime, they would sell the snatched gold chains and mobile phones to different individuals in Delhi.

They were going to sell the mobile phones and the gold chain, but were arrested.

Accused Ravi alias Karan resident of Uttam Nagar, Delhi, aged 32 years, is previously involved in more than 90 criminal cases and is a BC of PS Kirti Nagar.

CM orders support for families of victims in building collapse

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has expressed condolences over the death of three people following the collapse of an under-construction building in Delhi's Paharganj area and instructed the officials to provide all necessary support to the family of the deceased and injured.

The incident happened on Saturday evening which claims the lives of three while one other was left injured.

According to a post from Chief Minister's Office, District Magistrate of Central Delhi, Karol Bagh SDM,

The incident happened on Saturday evening which claims the lives of three while one other was left injured.

MCD along with Delhi police officials visited the incident site.

"A unfortunate basement wall collapse was reported at an under-construction building in Paharganj. It has claimed three precious lives & leaves one seriously injured. DM Central, SDM Karol Bagh, MCD & Delhi

Police officials visited the incident site," the Delhi CMO stated.

The CM's office further informed that DM Central has been directed to provide all possible assistance and help to the next of kin of the deceased and injured.

"Rescue operations were carried out by Delhi fire Service & NDRF personnel. DM central has been directed to provide all assistance and help to the next of kin of the deceased and injured. Our thoughts are with the families of deceased," the post added.

According to the officials, two of the deceased were from Bihar and one from Uttar Pradesh.



Devotees participate in the Maha Kumbabishekam ceremony at a Mariamman temple, at Trilokpuri in New Delhi. ANI

Fire breaks out at hotel in Paschim Vihar, none hurt

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A fire broke out at a hotel in Delhi's Paschim Vihar area on Sunday evening.

According to Delhi Fire Services Department officials, upon receiving information, six fire tenders were rushed to the spot, and the firefighting operation was started.

The fire broke out in one of the rooms and a hall on the hotel's third floor. The building comprised a basement, ground floor, and three upper storeys.

No casualties or injuries to anyone were reported in the incident.

"Fire was in Hotel Savera in Paschim Vihar. It was in

The fire broke out in one of the rooms and a hall on the hotel's third floor.

a room and a hall on the 3rd floor of the hotel. No casualty was involved. The building comprises a basement, ground, and three storeys. The fire is now under control," officials said.

Officials said that the fire has been brought under control. However, the cause of the fire was not clear.

Officials said that the dousing operation was carried out efficiently, and they prevented the flames from spreading to other areas of the hotel building.

Delhi's max temp 41 deg Celsius, rain expected today

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The maximum temperature in the national capital on Sunday was recorded at 41.1 degrees Celsius, a notch above the seasonal average, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The minimum temperature settled at 26.9 degrees Celsius, slightly higher than the normal by 0.4 degrees.

The IMD has predicted a thunderstorm accompa-



nied by rain on Monday.

The maximum and minimum temperatures are expected to hover around 39 and 27 degrees Celsius.

On Sunday, the relative humidity fluctuated be-

tween 62 per cent and 36 per cent.

The IMD reported about 1 millimetre of rainfall between 8 am on Saturday and 8 am on Sunday. Areas such as central Delhi, Gha-

The air quality was recorded in the "moderate" category at 9 am on Sunday, with an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 179, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

ziabad, Noida, Maharani Bagh, and Mayur Vihar witnessed rainfall.

The air quality was recorded in the "moderate" category at 9 am on Sunday, with an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 179, according to data from the Central

Pollution Control Board (CPCB). According to the CPCB, an AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 to 100 'satisfactory', 101 to 200 'moderate', 201 to 300 'poor', 301 to 400 'very poor', and 401 to 500 'severe'.

Delhi govt will strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystem

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government will set up two new incubation centres for micro food processing firms and three advanced technology labs for startups, Industries Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa said on Saturday.

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's flagship PMFME scheme, Rs 4.5 crore will be invested in food processing incubators



at Delhi Skill and Entrepreneurship University's World Class Skill Centres in Jhandewalan and Wazirpur.

Delhi Skill and Entrepreneurship University has

already received an initial Rs 50 lakh tranche and begun procuring bakery line equipment, Sirsa said.

He also said that separately, a Rs 3.06 crore corporate social responsibility grant from the Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation will finance two Internet of Things labs and a fabrication lab on Netaji Subhas University of Technology's East and Main campuses.

NSA DOVAL MEETS IRAN'S NSC SECY, DISCUSSES EXPANDING BILATERAL TIES

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on Sunday held a telephonic conversation with Ali Akbar Ahmadian, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran where he expressed India's interest in expanding bilateral cooperation in the development of Chabahar Port and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

The two also particularly spoke about the development of Chabahar Port and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

In a post on X, Iran's embassy in India stated, "Mr. Ajit Doval, National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of India, held a telephone conversation with Dr. Ali Akbar Ahmadian, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran and representative of the Supreme Leader. During the call, Mr. Doval emphasised Iran's constructive role in the region and expressed India's interest in expanding bilateral cooperation--particularly in the development of Chabahar Port and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). He also thanked Iran for its continued assistance and support."

BILATERAL TALKS

- Doval spoke with Iran's NSC Secretary about expanding cooperation.
- Discussions centered on Chabahar Port and the INSTC.
- Doval emphasized Iran's role in regional peace.
- Ahmadian stressed India-Iran's historical and strategic relationship.
- Doval thanked Iran for its ongoing assistance.



The two also particularly spoke about the development of Chabahar Port and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

ity Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran and representative of the Supreme Leader. During the call, Mr. Doval emphasised Iran's constructive role in the region and expressed India's interest in expanding bilateral cooperation--particularly in the development of Chabahar Port and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). He also thanked Iran for its continued assistance and support."

eral cooperation--particularly in the development of Chabahar Port and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). He also thanked Iran for its continued assistance and support."

"Dr. Ahmadian affirmed that Iran and India, as two ancient civilisations, share deep-rooted ties and vast potential for political and economic collaboration. He stressed the need to swiftly implement strategic projects and reiterated that bilateral cooperation serves the broader interests of regional peace and stability," the statement added.

Earlier on May 8, lauding bilateral ties between India and Iran, External Affairs

Minister S Jaishankar said that the cooperation between the two nations has progressed in many aspects in recent years.

In his opening remarks at the 20th India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting in Delhi, Jaishankar recalled the meeting held between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in 2024.

Jaishankar said, "It's a great pleasure to welcome you and your delegation to India and to co-chair along with you, the 20th India-Iran Joint Commission meeting today.

In recent years, our cooperation has progressed in many aspects. There are also situations that we need to address.

Prime Minister Modi and President Pezeshkian have met in Kazan in October 2024 and given us guidance on how to develop our ties further.

Centre taking steps to keep PACS financially sound: Shah

TDG NETWORK
AHMEDABAD

times," Shah said at 'Sah-kari Mahasammelan' organised here to mark the International Year of Cooperatives.

In a short time, the Centre is going to bring a new policy for quick settlement of PACS that have gone into liquidation and for registration of new PACS in their place, he added.

The Union Minister said initiative is also being taken to involve "a cooperative-owned company" for manufacturing equipment such as those for making ice cream, cheese, paneer, keeping milk chilled as well as measuring fat etc as part of promoting a circular economy in the dairy sector.

In a short time, the gov-

ernment also plans experimentation with a circular economy in the dairy sector by forming a cooperative society for the use of skin, bones, and horns of animals when they die, he said.

"If the cooperative sector has to move forward, then we will have to make efforts to bring awareness, training and transparency in every group. The Cooperative Department of the Union government has set this as the goal of the Cooperative Year. Therefore, the Centre has given importance to both Science of Cooperation and Science in Cooperation - reviving and modernising the science of cooperation and the use of technology in cooperatives," he added.

He said the cooperative movement, which started during the Independence movement, had ended in many parts of the country, except for Gujarat.

But it is the responsibility of the cooperative leaders of Gujarat to make the movement symmetric, Shah added.

Delhi Minister Sood distributes Rs 10 lakh Ayushman Bharat cards to senior citizens

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a major health initiative under the Pradhan Mantri Vay Vandana Yojana, Delhi Minister Ashish Sood distributed Ayushman Bharat cards to senior citizens aged 70 and above in Janakpuri, West Delhi.

The Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana cards, which offer cashless treatment up to Rs 10 lakh, were distributed to the public in A3 Block, Janakpuri during a public event aimed at reaching eligible elderly citizens.

Speaking to ANI at the event, Ashish Sood said, "Chief Minister Rekha Gupta started the distribution of Ayushman Bharat cards... We are ensuring that the beneficiaries get Ayushman Bharat cards so that they can avail its benefits..." He added, "The Chief Min-



He urged the public to spread awareness about the card's benefits, especially for the elderly.

ister started the distribution of Ayushman card in Delhi under the guidance of the Prime Minister. So far, we have prepared cards for thousands of people... we are providing the benefits of card facility along with the list of hos-

pitals, so that they can benefit from it by visiting those hospitals."

He urged the public to spread awareness about the card's benefits, especially for the elderly. "Make them aware that they should go to their elders and their children in any other state where they can benefit from these hospitals as well," he said.

At the Janakpuri event, he emphasised how user-friendly the card is for citizens. "The card can be used anywhere,... in case of illness," he explained. Ashish Sood highlighted the scale and vision behind the program, stating, "You have seen a lot of elderly people above seventy years old. Ah, a free card of one million rupees has been distributed to the elderly."

The Ayushman Bharat Yojana, launched by the Government of India, has continued to expand its reach in Delhi.

Stage-I GRAP measures lifted in NCR due to improved air quality

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Following the subsequent decrease in the air pollution levels, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) revoked the Stage-I measures of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) across the entire National Capital Region (NCR) on Sunday.

This comes two days after the CAQM had enforced Stage-I measures of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) across the entire National Capital Region in response to the sudden spike in air pollution levels.

The decision to revoke the Stage-I measures of the GRAP was taken by the



CAQM Sub-Committee unanimously.

According to an official release from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, on Sunday, Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) of the day clocked 179 as per the daily AQI Bulletin provided by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

In view of significant improvement in the daily average AQI of Delhi and also considering the meteorological forecasts by India Meteorological Department, the Sub-Committee on Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) of the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) met today to

review the current air quality scenario in the region and accordingly took an appropriate decision on the actions under Stage-I of the extant schedule of GRAP in place in the entire National Capital Region (NCR) since May 16.

While comprehensively reviewing the overall air quality parameters of Delhi-NCR and other aspects, the Sub-Committee observed that AQI of Delhi has shown significant improvement due to strong surface winds and thunderstorms followed by light rains.

The AQI of Delhi has been recorded as 179 for May 18 (in 'Moderate' category). Further,

IMD issues heavy rainfall alert for multiple regions across India till May 24

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a weather warning on Sunday for heavy to very heavy rainfall across several regions in India. The west coast--including Karnataka, Konkan, Goa, and Kerala--and adjoining parts of Peninsular India are expected to witness intense showers from May 18 to May 24, 2025.

According to the IMD release, heavy to very heavy rainfall, accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning, is likely to occur in Northeast India, Sub-Himalayan West Bengal, and Sikkim over the next 5-6 days. The region is also ex-



The west coast--including Karnataka, Konkan, Goa, and Kerala--and adjoining parts of Peninsular India are expected to witness intense showers from May 18 to May 24, 2025.

pected to experience fairly widespread to widespread light to moderate rainfall with gusty winds reaching speeds of 30-50 kmph during the same period.

Isolated heavy rainfall is predicted over various

states, including Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and Karaikal from 18th to 20th May; Kerala, Mahe, Coastal Karnataka, and North Interior Karnataka from 18th to 24th May; Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam from

20th to 22nd May; Rayalaseema from 18th to 20th May; and South Interior Karnataka from 18th to 21st May.

In addition, areas including Coastal Karnataka from 20th to 22nd May, South Interior Karnataka from 18th to 20th May, and North Interior Karnataka from 19th to 22nd May are expected to receive very heavy rainfall. Extremely heavy rainfall is likely in Coastal Karnataka on 20th May.

In Northeast India, isolated heavy rainfall is expected over Arunachal Pradesh from 18th to 20th May, Assam and Meghalaya from 18th to 24th May, and Tripura and Nagaland on 18th May.

Prashant Kishor barred from Nitish's hometown amid campaign push

TDG NETWORK
NALANDA (BIHAR)

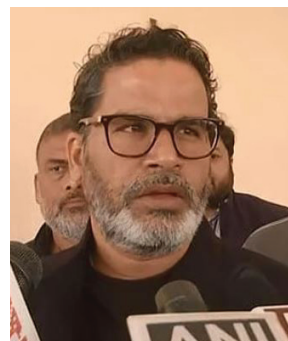
Prashant Kishor, founder of the Jan Suraj Party, was on Sunday stopped by the administration from entering Kalyan Bigha, the ancestral village of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, where he was to launch the party's signature campaign.

In response to the halt, Kishor stated, "The administration didn't stop me from visiting any village in the entire stretch of 3 km. The people here told me they are not receiving benefits and have complained

about corruption. Now, the administration is telling me I cannot visit Kalyan Bigha due to orders from the top."

Kishor questioned the restrictions and further stated, "We are law-abiding people, and when asked what will happen if I don't follow these instructions, they said they don't have any orders regarding this and must inquire first."

He also spoke about the infrastructure in the region, noting, "Nitish ji has made good roads here, and it should be done all over Bihar. This is the new tradition that has started in Bi-



har. Rahul Gandhi was in Bihar two days ago--such things were not common here." Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was on Thursday stopped by police on his way to Ambedkar hostel in Darbhanga where he was

The SDM replied, "You need permission as there might be a law-and-order situation. People have filed a complaint."

scheduled to interact with students.

Kishor also expressed doubts about the legitimacy of the administration's orders, saying, "I don't think Nitish Kumar can give such orders... the kind of 'jungle raj' is going on in the state."

Meanwhile, in a verbal exchange with the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Kishor confronted the official, asking, "Will you stop

me from entering the village? Do I need permission from you to visit the village? Was there no law and order situation when I visited other villages?"

He further said, "I want you to give it in writing, and then I will return. Are you threatening me by gathering people? We are law-abiding people."

The SDM replied, "You need permission as there

might be a law-and-order situation. People have filed a complaint. If my intention was to stop you, I would have done so in Bihar Sharif."

Kishor on April 30 had said that the Jan Suraj will launch the 'Bihar Badlaav Yatra' on May 20. The state-wide signature campaign will target Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's credibility on key issues.

Jan Suraj is set to contest its first Bihar Assembly election, expected to be held later this year. The party had earlier contested bypolls but failed to make

an electoral impact.

Earlier on Sunday, former Union Minister RCP Singh announced the merger of his 'Aap Sabki Awaz' party with Jan Suraj and vowed to work for the state's development.

Speaking to ANI, RCP Singh emphasised his commitment to Bihar's progress and said that people have high expectations from the Jan Suraj platform.

"People of Bihar have a lot of hopes from Jan Suraj... Our target is not small; we will work for the development of Bihar. Bihar has a very rich history," he said.

Welcoming Singh into his party, Prashant Kishor described the former bureaucrat-turned-politician as "an elder brother" and a seasoned leader with deep understanding of Bihar's political and social fabric.

Speaking to ANI, "Jan Suraj Party founder Kishor said, "RCP Singh is like my elder brother and one of the best persons who understands the society and politics of Bihar..."

"Very few people have such extensive experience in both governance and grassroots politics," Kishor said.



National Cadet Corps (NCC) expedition team holds the national flag as they successfully scaled Mt Everest. ANI

TRUMP'S REMITTANCE TAX TO HIT INDIA: REPORT

If enacted, the legislation would target money transfers made by non-US citizens, including green card holders and workers on temporary visas like H-1B and H-2A.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

US President Donald Trump's decision to impose a 5 per cent tax on international remittances sent by non-citizens will significantly impact Indian households, said Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), a trade-focused research Group, in its latest report.

The proposed US legislative move has triggered alarm across the globe, particularly in India, which has been one of the biggest beneficiaries of the US remittances.

These provisions are part of a major legislative package titled "The One Big Beautiful Bill", introduced in the US House of Representatives on May 12.

If enacted, the legislation would target money transfers made by non-US citizens, including green card holders and workers on temporary visas like H-1B



KEY POINTS

- Trump's 5% tax on remittances from non-citizens could hit Indian households hard, warns GTRI.
- India, the top recipient of US remittances, may face a \$12-18 billion shortfall annually if flows drop 10-15%.
- The move could weaken the rupee by Rs 1-1.5/\$ and prompt more RBI intervention in forex markets.
- States like Kerala, UP, and Bihar, which depend heavily on remittances, could see a dip in household consumption.

and H-2A. The proposed legislation exempts American citizens.

As per the rules, the tax would be collected by banks and remittance service providers, who would remit the funds quarterly to the US Treasury. For India, the stakes are high. The country received USD 120 billion in remittances in 2023-24, with nearly 28 per cent originating from the United States. A 5 per cent tax could

significantly raise the cost of sending money home, GTRI said in the statement, which was prepared by its founder and former Indian trade service officer Ajay Shrivastava. The report anticipates that a 10-15 per cent drop in remittance flows could result in a USD 12-18 billion shortfall for India annually. That loss would tighten the supply of US dollars in India's foreign exchange market, putting modest depreciation pres-

sure on the rupee, the report added.

The Reserve Bank of India may be forced to intervene more frequently to stabilise the currency. The rupee could weaken by Rs 1-1.5 per US dollar if the remittance shock plays out fully, the report added.

"The pain wouldn't stop at the exchange rate. In states like Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar, millions of families rely on remittances to

cover essential expenses such as education, health-

As per the rules, the tax would be collected by banks and remittance service providers, who would remit the funds quarterly to the US Treasury.

care, and housing. A sudden decline in these flows could hit household consumption hard--at a time when the Indian economy is already navigating global uncertainty and inflation pressures," the GTRI report added.

Globally, India is not alone. Countries like El Salvador, where remittances account for over 25 per cent of GDP, and Mexico (4 per cent of GDP) could also see painful repercussions, the GTRI added in the report.

Forex reserves hit 7-month high of \$690.6 B

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

India's foreign exchange reserves (forex) rose USD 4.553 billion to USD 690.617 billion in the week that ended on May 9, official data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed.

The previous all-time high was at USD 704.89 billion in September 2024.

After extending gains for the eighth straight week, forex kitty fell the next week, to again rise in the May 9 ending week. Barring the latest jump, forex reserves had slumped for about four months.

The latest RBI data showed that India's foreign currency assets (FCA), the largest component of foreign exchange reserves, stood at USD 581.373 billion.

The gold reserves currently amount to USD 86.337 billion, according to RBI data. It rose by a whopping USD 4.518 billion in the latest week.

Central banks world over



are increasingly accumulating safe-haven gold in their foreign exchange reserves kitty, and India is no exception. The share of gold maintained by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its foreign exchange reserves has almost doubled since 2021.

Estimates suggest that India's foreign exchange reserves are sufficient to cover approximately 10-12 months of projected imports.

In 2023, India added around USD 58 billion to its foreign exchange reserves, contrasting with a cumulative decline of USD 71 bil-

lion in 2022. In 2024, the reserves rose by a little over USD 20 billion.

Foreign exchange reserves, or FX reserves, are assets held by a nation's central bank or monetary authority, primarily in reserve currencies such as the US Dollar, with smaller portions in the Euro, Japanese Yen, and Pound Sterling.

The RBI often intervenes by managing liquidity, including selling dollars, to prevent steep Rupee depreciation. The RBI strategically buys dollars when the Rupee is strong and sells when it weakens.

India-UK apparel, home textiles trade to double under FTA: ICRA

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India's apparel and home textiles trade with the United Kingdom is poised for significant growth, with volumes expected to double over the next five to six years, driven by the recently concluded Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two countries, as per a report by credit rating agency ICRA.

The FTA is expected to be operational in calendar year (CY) 2026, subject to legal review.

"India's apparel and home textiles trade with the UK is expected to double from its current levels in the next 5-6 years, owing to the recently concluded FTA between India and the UK," the report added.

The UK and India entered into an FTA on May 6, following approximately three years of negotiations.

Under the agreement, India will reduce tariffs on 90 per cent of British goods, with 85

per cent becoming completely duty-free over a period of ten years. In return, Britain has agreed to lower its tariffs on certain products, resulting in 99 per cent of India's exports to the UK facing zero duties.

Currently, India-UK trade accounts for approximately 2 per cent of India's total trade, underscoring an underutilised partnership given the size and potential of both economies.

India is currently the 12th largest trading partner of the UK and stands in fifth position as far as apparel and home textiles imports are concerned. Apparel and home textiles imported by the UK from India stood at USD 1.4 billion in CY2024, representing a 6.6 per cent share of textiles imported by the UK.

Furthermore, the US and the European Union (EU) continue to be the major export markets for Indian apparel and home textiles exporters, accounting for a 61 per cent share in CY2024. While the UK's share had re-

mained stable at 7-8 per cent over the past five years amidst flattish growth, the same is expected to reach 11-12 per cent by CY2027, reflecting an 11 per cent CAGR between CY2024 and CY2027.

Currently, an 8-12 per cent duty is levied by the UK on apparel and home textiles imported from India. With tariffs being eliminated on 99 per cent of Indian goods, including textiles, incremental capacities are likely to be added in the next 4-5 years to execute orders.

In calendar year 2024, China was the biggest apparel and home textiles exporter to the UK with a 25 per cent share, followed by Bangladesh (22 per cent share), Turkey (8 per cent share) and Pakistan (6.8 per cent share). Post-implementation of the FTA, with zero-duty access on apparel and home textiles exported, India would have a level playing field compared to the existing duty-free access nation status like Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Pakistan.

Adani, Sparton partner for ASW systems

TDG NETWORK
AHMEDABAD

Adani Defence & Aerospace has signed a binding collaboration agreement with Sparton (DeLeon Springs LLC), a group company of Elbit Systems and a leading provider of advanced Anti-submarine warfare systems.

According to a statement from the Adani Group company on Sunday, this partnership marks a significant step toward localizing the assembly of complex electronic systems and advanced Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) solutions for the Indian and global markets.

Adani Defence & Aerospace claimed that it became the first private sector company in India to offer indigenised sonobuoy solutions.

The partnership will combine Sparton's pioneering ASW technology with Adani Defence's established expertise in development, manufacturing, and suste-



nance for the Indian Navy.

Sonobuoys are mission-critical platforms for enhancing Undersea Domain Awareness (UDA), providing an effective means to detect, locate, and track submarines and other underwater threats. Playing a key role in anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and other naval operations, they support in maintaining naval security and in protecting naval carrier strike groups.

For decades, India has been importing this critical naval capability from global markets, increasing our dependency on foreign original equipment manufacturers (OEMs).

Aligned with the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Make in India' initiative,

Sparton's ongoing relationship with the Indian Navy, will now facilitate Adani Defence to indigenise the delivery of these solutions that are made in India, for India. Jeet Adani, Vice President of Adani Enterprises, said, "In an increasingly volatile maritime environment, strengthening India's undersea warfare capabilities is not merely a strategic priority but an imperative for safeguarding sovereignty and national interests. The Indian Navy requires integrated, mission-ready ISR and anti-submarine warfare capabilities, including critical systems like sonobuoys, that are indigenously developed, swiftly deployable, and globally competitive."

Aligned with the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Make in India' initiative, Sparton's ongoing relationship with the Indian Navy, will now facilitate Adani Defence to indigenise the delivery of these solutions that are made in India, for India.

"Through this partnership with Sparton, Adani Defence & Aerospace becomes the first private company in India to offer indigenised sonobuoy solutions, enabling access to advanced technologies while fostering a future-ready, self-reliant defence ecosystem. This initiative reflects our Group's vision of empowering India's armed forces with world-class capabilities that are designed, developed, and delivered in India, for India and the world," Jeet Adani added.

Ashish Rajvanshi, CEO, Adani Defence & Aerospace, said: "For decades, India has been dependent on imports for such critical technology. This partnership to bring world-class

sonobuoy technology and integrating it with India's defence ecosystem, is a step towards building self-reliant capabilities in this critical domain." Donnelly Bohan, President and CEO, Sparton DeLeon Springs LLC, added: "Sparton has a long legacy for problem solving, advanced engineering and manufacturing of America's best maritime defense solutions. We are proud to partner with Adani Defence & Aerospace to bring our proven anti-submarine warfare (ASW) technologies to India. This partnership will enable us to localize assemblage, create high-technology skill sets, and deliver reliable ASW solutions tailored to the Indian Navy's needs."

Fruit traders in Prayagraj decide to boycott Turkish apples

TDG NETWORK
PRAYAGRAJ

Fruit traders based in Prayagraj have collectively decided to boycott Turkish apples, following the country's open support for Pakistan during the recent military conflict with India.

It was not immediately known how much apple quantity are imported to India from Turkey.

Similarly, traders in various Indian cities have unanimously decided to boycott Turkish products, including apples, other fruits and other products like marble stone.

A Prayagraj-based apple trader, Saurabh said, "... After the conflict, we have stopped selling Apples from Turkey. Customers who used to buy those apples have asked us to provide apples from countries other than Turkey. Neither are customers demanding Turkish apples, nor are we selling them."

Another apple trader from Prayagraj, Vinod, said, "Three to four varieties of fruits used to be imported from Turkey. Now all traders and customers have completely boycotted them. If the customers



BJP supporters hold the national flag as they take part in a Tiranga Yatra (tricolour march) following Operation Sindoor, in Prayagraj on Thursday. ANI

Turkey expressed its solidarity with Pakistan and supported Islamabad's proposal for an international investigation into the Pahalagam terror attack.

get to know that a fruit has come in from Turkey, they are refusing to buy them. The reason is that Turkey supported Pakistan during the conflict. We have always supported Turkey, but they betrayed us."

Earlier, Himachal Pradesh farmers had also demanded a ban on Turk-

ish apple imports, urging the central government to impose as high as 100 per cent duties on them. Himachal is a key grower of apples.

In a strong retaliatory move against Turkey and Azerbaijan's open support to Pakistan, the Confederation of All India Traders

(CAIT) announced a complete boycott of trade with these two countries this week. Turkey and Azerbaijan have rallied behind Pakistan despite its support for cross-border terrorism against India and its aggression after the Indian Armed Forces struck nine terror infrastructure sites in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir in response to the Pahalagam terror attack.

Azerbaijan, in its statement on India-Pakistan tensions, has echoed the

Pakistani line. Turkey expressed its solidarity with Pakistan and supported Islamabad's proposal for an international investigation into the Pahalagam terror attack. Turkey has also supplied military weapons to Pakistan.

Marble traders based in Udaipur, a key hub for marble in Rajasthan, have urged the central government to ban imports from Turkey, a country whose drones were found to be used by the Pakistani side in the recent conflict. Travel operators have also urged people to avoid non-essential travel to Azerbaijan and Turkey. Meanwhile, varities like Jamia Millia Islamia University and Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) have suspended all Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Turkish educational institutions, amid calls across the country to boycott Turkey over its vocal support for Pakistan during the recent conflict.

The central government has revoked the security clearance of Turkish ground-handling company Celebi NAS Airport Services, citing national security concerns.

'India emerges as global pharma powerhouse'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India has transformed itself into a global health leader in terms of affordability, innovation, and inclusivity over the past decade.

India's pharmaceutical industry is a global giant ranking third in volume and 14th in value.

It's the largest supplier of generic medicines providing 20 per cent of the world's supply and a key player in affordable vaccines.

In 2023-24, the sector's turnover hit Rs 4,17,345 crore growing steadily at over 10 per cent annually for the past five years.

For the common people, this means more medicines at lower prices, better healthcare and jobs in factories and labs across the country. From small towns to big cities, India's pharma growth is creating opportunities and saving lives.

The government claims that its schemes are the backbone of this success.

The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) runs 15,479 Jan Aushadhi Kendras, offering



generic medicines at prices up to 80 per cent lower than branded ones.

A heart medicine that once cost Rs 500 might now cost Rs 100. The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Pharmaceuticals with Rs 15,000 crore, supports 55 projects to make high-end drugs like cancer and diabetes medicines right here in India.

Another PLI scheme with Rs 6,940 crore focuses on raw materials like Penicillin G, reducing our need for imports. The PLI for Medical Devices backed by Rs 3,420 crore is boosting production of tools like MRI machines and heart implants.

Then there's the Promotion of Bulk Drug Parks scheme with Rs 3,000 crore building mega hubs in Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh to make

medicines cheaper and faster.

The Strengthening of Pharmaceuticals Industry (SPI) Scheme with Rs 500 crore, funds research and upgrades labs, helping Indian companies compete globally.

"These efforts mean medicines are made in India, for India and for the world keeping costs low and quality high," the government said in a statement.

India's pharma sector supplies 55-60 per cent of UNICEF's vaccines, meeting 99 per cent of WHO's DPT (Diphtheria, Whooping cough and Tetanus) vaccine demand, 52 per cent for BCG (Bacillus Calmette-Guerin) is a vaccine primarily used against TB), and 45 per cent for measles. From Africa to America, Indian vaccines save millions.

NATIONALISM IS NOT A FORWARDED MESSAGE

OPINION

TUSHAR V SHARMA

“The first casualty of war is truth” goes an old saying. Nationalism is about loving our country and standing proud with our people. But today we live in a “post-truth” world where false information spreads faster than ever. Social media and messaging apps are flooded with news: some true, many fake. In such times, what does it mean to be a nationalist? It means supporting our nation with truth and vigilance. We must ask: if we forward every message that praises our side or bashes the other, are we helping our country, or could we be unknowingly spreading lies? True patriotism is not about blindly believing everything we read.

To understand nationalism in the age of misinformation, let's look at a recent example close to our hearts. In April 2025, terrorists attacked pilgrims in Pahalgam, killing 26 innocent people. In response, our forces launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, striking terrorist camps across the border in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir. Every Indian felt proud of our Army's swift action. But what followed was not just military retaliation from Pakistan; it was an explosion of fake news on social media.

Within hours and days of the strikes, Pakistani so-

cial media handles started spreading false news claiming big victories against India. They pushed story after story on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, trying to show that Pakistan had struck back harder. In reality, many of these claims were completely fabricated. This was a coordinated effort to confuse people and shake our confidence. While our soldiers were fighting on the ground, another battle was raging online, a battle of information.

Some of the fake stories were so outrageous that they would be laughable if they weren't so dangerous. Here are a few examples of the misinformation spread during the event:

Fake “Indian Army Post” Attack Video: One video shared by a Pakistani account showed bodies on the ground with a voiceover saying “these Pakistanis have done a lot of damage” it claimed that Pakistan's Army destroyed an Indian Army post. The video was later proven to be staged and completely false. Our fact-checkers even noted that the video mentioned a unit called “20 Raj Battalion” which does not exist in our Army. This was a blatant lie aimed at spreading panic.

False Strike on Amritsar Base: Another rumour came as a video posted on social media alleging a Pakistani

missile strike on a military base in Amritsar with “numerous casualties.” This too, was fake. In fact, the video turned out to be footage of a wildfire from 2024, nothing to do with any attack. The government's Press Information Bureau (PIB) quickly flagged this post as “Pakistan Propaganda” and urged people not to fall for it.

Phantom Fighter Jet Shootdowns: We also saw claims that Pakistan shot down Indian fighter jets, including our advanced Rafale. Pictures and videos were circulated showing the wreckage of the aircraft. These claims were completely false. How do we know? Because the images were from old incidents: one was from a Mig-21 crash in Punjab in 2021, and another from a helicopter crash in 2019. Pakistani accounts took old crash photos and videos and tried to pass them off as current. They wanted to boast that “we shot down India's jets” but it was all recycled footage.

Misleading Surrender Story: Perhaps the most insulting fake story was one that tried to show Indian soldiers surrendering. An old video from 2019 showed Pakistani soldiers raising a white flag at the Line of Control (to retrieve their fallen comrades). Pakistani handles shared this video with a false caption that Indian Army troops were raising the white flag to recover the bodies of Indian soldiers. This claim was not only baseless, it flipped the truth on its head in an attempt to demoralise us.

In the race for TRPs, truth is becoming the first casualty. Up to now, we've focused on shadowy online rumours and enemy propaganda but what happens when our

mainstream media also falters? Unfortunately, during the crisis, some news outlets forgot that their first loyalty should be to the truth, not ratings. This is a dangerous development because people trust these channels for credible information. When that trust is misused, misinformation gets an even bigger megaphone. Take the example of a purported “exclusive” video of India's airstrikes that made the rounds on news channels. In their zeal to get a sensational story, some channels didn't vet it properly. Leading



NewsChannels, for instance, claimed India captured Islamabad, Pakistan Army Chief Asim Munir was arrested and aired dramatic visuals of missiles lighting up the night sky, implying it was footage of Operation Sindoor, only for fact-checkers to later reveal that the clip was actually from an old Israeli airstrike in Gaza. It didn't stop there. In print media, even a respected newspaper like The Hindu wasn't immune: it briefly published an unverified report suggesting Indian Air Force jets had crashed in Kashmir, before quickly removing it when the story turned out to be baseless. These examples show how, in the heat of the moment, parts of our media ended up spreading the very

falsehoods they should have been debunking. Why is this kind of sensationalism so dangerous, especially during wartime? Because when mainstream media outlets broadcast a story, people assume it's been verified. If they prioritise TRPs over truth, they risk becoming unwitting propagandists for the enemy, or at the very least, creating a lot of noise when the nation needs clarity.

As a democracy, we strongly uphold freedom of the press – Article 19(1)(a) of our Constitution guarantees the freedom of speech and

expression. But this freedom is not absolute; Article 19(2) permits reasonable restrictions for purposes like protecting the sovereignty and security of the State. Put simply, while journalists have the freedom to report and criticise, they are not free to spread false information that could endanger national security or public order. There are also journalistic codes of conduct. The Press Council of India, which sets the norms for print media, explicitly warns against publishing “inaccurate, baseless, misleading or distorted” information. On the broadcast side, the News Broadcasters Standards Authority guidelines urge channels to avoid content that “encourages or incites violence” or under-

mines national security. In fact, the NBSA has noted that even if provocative or unverified videos are circulating on social media, news channels have an obligation to verify content before airing it. These principles make it clear that patriotism in the press means exercising restraint and rigour, verifying news, not sensationalising it. The challenge, however, is enforcement. Self-regulatory bodies can issue guidelines and even censure or fine offenders, but these measures are often mild. Perhaps it's time to consider stricter enforcement or penalties for reckless wartime reporting. This doesn't mean gagging the press or discouraging investigative journalism; it means drawing a line between responsible reporting and harmful rumour-mongering. During a national crisis, a TV channel that knowingly broadcasts fake news (or fails to retract it quickly upon discovering the truth) is betraying the public trust. Some argue that existing laws (like the Disaster Management Act or various IPC now BNS sections) could even be invoked if a news report is shown to directly incite panic or hatred. At the very least, editors and anchors should face professional consequences, such as suspension or larger fines, when they flout basic verification in situations where accuracy is a matter of national security.

The youth of India, who consume a lot of news on TV and online, should be able to look up to news professionals as models of integrity and calm, especially in a crisis. It's often said in journalism, “when in doubt, leave it out.” That adage is never

more crucial than during a conflict. The bottom line for our media can be summed up in one urgent reminder: let's not mistake noise for news.

So, in this age of misinformation, how should we define nationalism? Nationalism is not just about chanting slogans or sharing patriotic posts. It's about standing by our country in truth and in deed. Being a nationalist today means we refuse to be fooled by fake news, even if that fake news flatters our beliefs or insults our rivals. Likewise, if the enemy is trying to mislead us, we honour our nation by not falling into their trap. In short, nationalism in 2025 means being smart, not just emotional.

It is up to each one of us, especially the youth who practically live online, to protect the truth. Every Indian citizen can be a digital soldier for our country by doing a few simple things:

Verify Before You Share: The next time you see a shocking news snippet or a forwarded message, pause and verify it. Check if any reliable news outlets or official sources are reporting it. Often, a quick internet search or seeing if PIB's fact-check handle has commented can save you from spreading a lie. Remember, misinformation often comes in the form of unverified “forwarded as received” messages. Don't let your WhatsApp or Twitter become a weapon for enemy propaganda.

Trust Official Sources: In times of conflict or national crisis, rely on official statements from our government, the Army, or trusted news. Our PIB has a fact-check unit precisely for this reason. They have even

given a WhatsApp number and email for people to report dubious news. Use these tools if something sounds fishy about our Armed Forces or any critical issue; report it. By doing so, you help stop the fake news from spreading further.

Educate Others: If you find a piece of news is fake, politely inform your friends or family who may have shared it. Many people spread fake news unintentionally. By educating one another, we create a chain reaction of truth telling. Encourage a healthy scepticism: it's not “unpatriotic” to question a viral news story, in fact, it's patriotic to ensure only the truth spreads about our country.

Stay Calm, Don't Panic: Misinformation is designed to create panic or hatred. By staying calm and thinking critically, we defeat that purpose. For example, if we saw claims of multiple cities under attack (when they're not), panicking would only serve the enemy's goals.

Nationalism in the age of misinformation requires a mix of patriotism and pragmatism. We must indeed be proud Indians, celebrating our country's victories, honouring our Army, and standing united against adversaries. At the same time, we must keep our eyes open and our wits sharp. Enemies of India, like those who spread fake news during the May 2025 conflict, want to divide us or mislead us. But we will not be divided. We will not allow lies to poison our unity or our understanding of what's happening.

Tushar V Sharma, Assistant Professor (Symbiosis Law School, Hyderabad)

Marital rape and Indian judiciary: Revisiting the exception in law through Gorakhnath Sharma vs. State of Chhattisgarh

OPINION

SNEHATIT SETT & SHRABANA CHATTOPADHYAY

The custom of marriage, which is anthropological, cultural, and legal, creates a socially accepted rights and responsibilities between people. Marriage serves as the foundation for the acceptance of sexual relationships in many cultures. However, there has always been ambiguity in the law around physical hostility and sexual misconduct in marriages. “Forcible sexual assault or violence by one spouse towards the other” is the definition of Marital Rape. Although numerous cultures have historically viewed the establishment of a sexual relationship between a married couple as a “right,” the scope of consent becomes just as significant as it is for nonmarried people. Women are primarily, though not alone, victims of marital rape. Chronic violence is often perpetuated by the couple's abusive relationships, which tend to develop a vicious cycle. This has been ignored in literary works and regulations and for ages, “marriage” has been utilised as a regular exemption or defence in situations of sexual

violence. Additionally, this has resulted in a decrease in seeking assistance, lingering trauma, and the negation of the experiences of victims of marital rape.

International conventions and views opposing intimate partner and sexual abuse in marriages have grown since the 20th century (more specifically, the prevalence of sexual assault against women). As of 2019, 150 nations currently have laws that acknowledge marital rape as a criminal offence. However, the number of countries that explicitly criminalize marital rape in their penal codes is reported as 52 by UN Women. Marital rape is not considered a crime by the law or culture in many countries, including India. Even in nations that consider rape as a crime and have laws against it, the victim and the offender are immune from the law's application if they are married. The “marital rape exception clause” is a common term for this. Because of the progress made in the area of gender equality, the first two arguments are no longer applicable in the current set-

ting. The initial defence was based on the notion that the wife was her husband's subordinate. Women had no rights within the marriage because they were their husbands' property. Since the husband was the woman's master and had authority over her body, it would be impossible to imagine a husband raping his wife in such a situation. This rationale was accompanied by the existence of the unity's hypothesis. This hypothesis was based on the notion that a woman's identity blended with her husband's after marriage. As a result, the law did not grant the married lady a personality apart from her spouse.

HISTORY OF THE MARITAL RAPE EXCEPTION IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

India is among the 36 nations that have yet to make marital rape a crime. The “Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy” claims that rather than using legal arguments, mediation and compromise are frequently used to resolve legal disputes regarding “consent” in cases of sexual abuse within marriage. According to some, marriage's “obligatory sexual interaction” clause violates both Article 14 (Right to Equality) and Article 21 of the Constitution. In order to improve women's safety and protection, India has passed laws such as the Sexual Harassment of Women at

Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act and the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. Appeals from numerous women's organisations, human rights associations, and ultimately the Justice Verma Commission's recommendation to criminalise marital rape have added fuel to the fire following the inhumane Nirbhaya case in Delhi and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act (2013)'s failure to address the problem.

The earstwhile Indian Penal Code (now Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023) in §375 (Section 63 of BNS) criminalises the offence of



rape. The concept of “rape” is broad and include both sexual relationships and other forms of sexual penetration, such as oral sex. The application of this provision to sexual activities or sexual intercourse between a husband and wife is, however, excluded in Exception 2. Therefore, if a husband rapes a woman, she has no legal recourse under Indian law. There is no explanation

given in Exception 2 of §375 of the IPC (the “exception clause”, now Section 63 of BNS, 2023) for why a man and his wife's sexual interactions or activities are not considered rape. Given that consent is the main topic of this section, it is plausible that an unquestionable presumption of consent applies in situations when the victim and the offender have a marital relationship.

The Supreme Court in Independent Thought vs Union of India, held that, “Constitutionally female have equal rights as of male and no statute or act can take away those rights from females and if such statute

or an act is passed regarding the same, it should be declared as null and void”. According to the Gujarat High Court, “The total statutory abolition of the marital rape exemption is the first necessary step in teaching societies that dehumanised treatment of women will not be tolerated and that the marital rape is not a husband's privilege, but rather a violent act and an injustice

that must be criminalised”.

JUDICIAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE MARITAL RAPE EXCEPTION: A CRITICAL LOOK AT GORAKHNATH SHARMA VS STATE OF CHHATTISGARH

In India, judicial reactions to marital rape have remained mainly uneven, despite growing societal and legal discussion about the issue. Although courts have periodically acknowledged the seriousness of the problem, the judiciary has frequently been constrained by the marital rape exclusion provision. The institutional immunity granted to sexual abuse within marriage has been reinforced by a series of decisions that have resulted in either diluted or completely denied justice for victims. The February 2025 ruling in Gorakhnath Sharma vs. State of Chhattisgarh is a recent case that has generated new discussion in this area. In addition to highlighting the shortcomings of existing legal measures, the case emphasises how urgently judges must have courage when interpreting laws in accordance with constitutional principles. This case exemplifies how the marital rape exemption serves to protect wrongdoers under the pretence of legitimate marriage. A brief overview of the case is as follows:

Facts: The present case was a Criminal Appeal by

the husband of the victim under Section 374(2) of CrPc which was filed against the judgement of conviction passed by the Additional Sessions Judge. In summary, the victim's husband, who was employed as a driver, was the appellant. The appellant physically harmed the victim and engaged in non-consensual unnatural sexual intercourse with her on the evening of December 11, 2017. Due to severe agony from the injuries sustained during the unnatural sexual encounter, she was later hospitalised to Maharani Hospital. She gave a dying declaration to a magistrate while she was in the hospital, claiming that she had suffered because of her husband's abuse on her. The police recorded her statements and began an inquiry after she tragically died on December 11, 2017, not long after the declaration was made. Gorakhnath Sharma was accused under several sections of the Indian Penal Code (now BNS, 2023) after she passed away, including Sections 376 (now Section 64 of BNS), 377 (unnatural offences), and 304 (penalty for culpable homicide not equal to murder, now under Section 105 of BNS). On February 11, 2019, Gorakhnath was found guilty by an Additional Sessions Judge who heard the case and examined the testimony of several witnesses. For each of the offences, he received a ten-year harsh jail

sentence, along with fines for nonpayment. Therefore, the current criminal appeal was filed, stating that the conviction was based mostly on the victim's untrustworthy dying declaration and that there was insufficient evidence against him.

ISSUES RAISED

Whether crimes under Sections 376 (now Section 64, BNS) and 377 of the Indian Penal Code apply when a husband and wife engage in sexual conduct together?

Whether a “dying declaration” by itself enough to convict someone in the absence of supporting evidence?

Whether it is possible to use Section 304 IPC (culpable homicide, now Section 105, BNS) in the absence of particular findings outlining the components of the offence?

Whether in circumstances of sexual actions between spouses, do revisions to Section 375 IPC (now Section 63, BNS) establish a legal repugnancy with Section 377 IPC? Judgement by the Hon'ble High Court, Chhattisgarh: A single-judge bench of justice Narendra Kumar Vyas overturned the accused's conviction, clearing him of all charges under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 376 (rape, now Section 64, BNS), 377 (unnatural sex), and 304 (culpable homicide, now Section 105, BNS). The court also ordered the accused's rapid release from custody.

FROM EMPIRE TO EQUILIBRIUM: A TRADE PACT REDEFINES TIES

Under colonial rule 1850 to around 1930–50, India was transformed into a supplier of raw materials and a market for British manufactured goods.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The May 2025 signing of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the United Kingdom marks a critical milestone in the evolution of their economic relations. Heralded as a pact that will increase bilateral trade by an estimated 15% annually through 2030, the FTA is not merely a modern diplomatic accord but also a symbolic and structural break from the colonial economic patterns that shaped India-UK ties for nearly two centuries. To appreciate its historical significance, this article contextualizes the agreement within the continuum of India-UK trade relations, exploring the transition from colonial extraction to post-independence realignment and finally to contemporary partnership.

COLONIAL FOUNDATIONS OF TRADE

India's economic relationship with Britain began in the early 17th century with the establishment of the East India Company. What started as mercantile trade in spices, textiles, and indigo soon gave way to political domination, culminating in the formal establishment of British rule after 1858. Under colonial rule, India was

transformed into a supplier of raw materials and a market for British manufactured goods.

The colonial economy was designed to serve British industrial interests. Policies such as the deindustrialization of Indian handicrafts and the imposition of tariffs on Indian goods disrupted local industries. The export of raw cotton and the import of machine-made textiles from Manchester exemplified the asymmetrical trade relationship. Famines and economic stagnation during British rule have been linked by many historians, including Dadabhai Naoroji and R.C. Dutt, to the drain of wealth from India to Britain.

By the early 20th century, India had become deeply integrated into the British imperial economy but in a subservient role. Trade was not about mutual growth but about resource extraction and the suppression of indigenous enterprise.

POST-INDEPENDENCE PROTECTIONISM (1947–1991)

India's independence in 1947 marked the end of formal colonialism but not an immediate break from economic dependency. In the initial decades post-independence, India pursued a path of economic self-reliance. The Nehruvian model emphasized import substitution industrialization



HMS Albion docked in Bombay on February 21. Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Mrs. Indira Gandhi are escorted along the flight deck by Lt. Commander C.P.D. Hunter, D.S.O., R.N., during their visit to witness a flying display. © IWM (A 33414)

(ISI), heavy state interventionism, and trade protectionism.

India's trade with Britain did continue, but it was reoriented. The balance of trade was less skewed, and India began to diversify its trading partners. Britain's relative economic decline and India's non-aligned foreign policy also contributed to a dilution of exclusive economic ties.

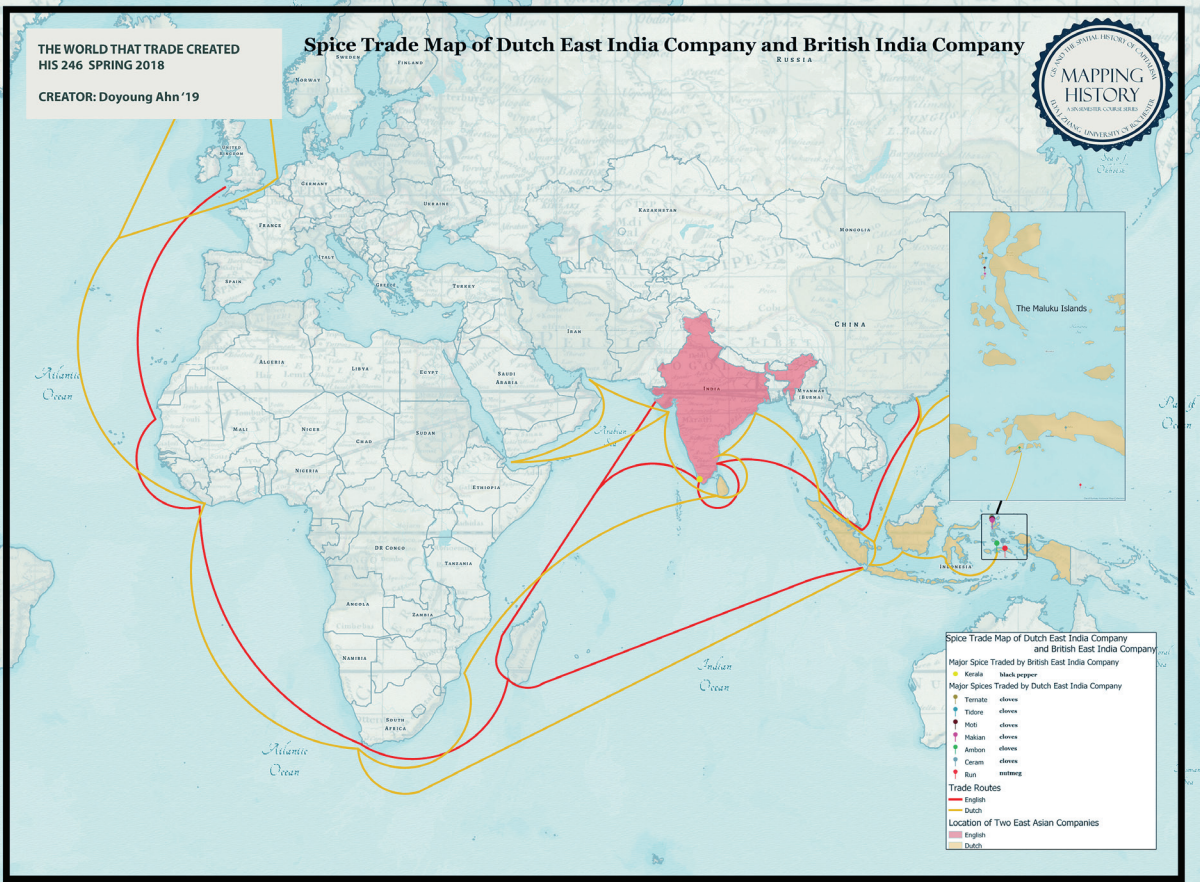
The 1960s and 70s saw India sign several bilateral

trade agreements and become part of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Nonetheless, trade relations remained modest, characterized more by diplomatic continuity than economic integration.

LIBERALIZATION (1991–2016)

The economic liberalization initiated in 1991 under the leadership of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh marked a transformative moment in India's global trade outlook. The dismantling of the License Raj, reduction in tariffs, and encouragement of foreign investment opened India to global markets.

In this new economic climate, Indo-British trade saw a modest uptick, especially in services, education, and pharmaceuticals. British companies such as Vodafone and Standard Chartered expanded their presence in India, while Indian firms like Tata and Infosys entered the UK market. The Tata Group's acquisition of British icons like Jaguar Land Rover and



Map created by Doyoung Ahn, Class of 2019.

Corus Steel (later Tata Steel Europe) in the 2000s symbolized a reversal of historic hierarchies.

Despite these developments, bilateral trade growth was inconsistent, often hampered by regulatory concerns, immigration issues, and broader geopolitical shifts, such as the UK's decision to exit the European Union.

BREXIT (2016–2024)

The Brexit referendum in 2016 introduced a new urgency into UK's trade diplomacy. Severed from the European single market, Britain sought new bilateral trade arrangements to mitigate potential economic fallout. India, with its large consumer base and growing middle class, emerged as a priority partner.

Negotiations for an FTA began in earnest in 2022 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. Both sides recognized the strategic and symbolic importance of such an agreement. For the UK, an India FTA represented a post-Brexit triumph; for India, it was an opportunity to cement its role as a global economic player and to rewrite historical economic relations on equitable terms.

The proposed agreement faced several hurdles: tariff reductions on alcohol and automobiles, data protection issues, and mobility for Indian professionals. How-

ever, persistent diplomatic engagement, including multiple rounds of negotiations and high-level visits, led to the resolution of major contentions.

THE 2025 FTA: TERMS, SCOPE, AND ASPIRATIONS

Signed in New Delhi on May 15, 2025, the India-UK Free Trade Agreement includes provisions for tariff elimination on 95% of goods traded between the two countries, enhanced access for Indian services in the UK, and liberalized visa norms for professionals and students.

KEY SECTORS

- Pharmaceuticals and healthcare
- Financial services and fintech
- Education and higher learning
- Renewable energy and climate technology
- Information technology and artificial intelligence

The agreement also contains clauses on digital trade, investment protections, and dispute resolution mechanisms, aligning it with global standards seen in other major FTAs like the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

The expected 15% annual growth in bilateral trade translates to a projected increase of \$40 billion in value by 2030. Small and medium enterprises

(SMEs), especially in textile, leather, and food processing, stand to benefit from reduced regulatory barriers and enhanced market access.

SYMBOLISM AND HISTORICAL RECONCILIATION

Beyond economic metrics, the 2025 FTA carries deep symbolic value. For a nation that was once colonized and economically plundered, entering into an equitable trade partnership with its former colonizer represents a significant transformation. It symbolizes a reversal of roles, where India is now an equal—if not leading—partner in shaping global economic trends.

The agreement can also be read as a form of historical reconciliation. While unresolved legacies of colonialism—such as the demand for reparations or the return of looted artifacts—persist in academic and political circles, the FTA suggests a pragmatic approach to redefining relations.

This shift is not unique to India and the UK. Former colonies across Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean are renegotiating their economic partnerships with former imperial powers. However, the India-UK case is particularly significant due to the scale of historical interaction and the potential for mutual growth.

ROAD AHEAD

Despite the optimism surrounding the FTA, challenges remain. Implementation will require bureaucratic alignment, especially in customs and compliance. The impact on domestic industries must be monitored to prevent market distortions or job losses.

Furthermore, the agreement will be tested by geopolitical uncertainties—such as tensions in the Indo-Pacific, EU-UK regulatory conflicts, and shifts in global supply chains post-pandemic. Both nations will also have to navigate domestic political resistance from labor groups and small-scale industry representatives wary of foreign competition.

Nevertheless, the long-term trajectory appears promising. The FTA provides a legal and institutional framework that can adapt to future developments in technology, climate action, and global finance.

A NEW CHAPTER, ROOTED IN HISTORY

The 2025 India-UK Free Trade Agreement is more than a policy document—it is a historical turning point. It embodies the evolution of a deeply entangled relationship, moving from colonial subjugation to post-colonial assertion and now toward cooperative engagement.

While trade agreements are driven by pragmatism and national interest, their deeper meanings lie in the stories they carry. This FTA tells a story of transformation: of a former colony asserting its economic agency, and of a former empire seeking renewed relevance in a multipolar world.

As both nations commemorate the 80th anniversary of Indian independence in 2027, this agreement could serve as a cornerstone of a more balanced and forward-looking partnership—one that acknowledges the past while forging new paths for the future.



Tata's Empress Mill in Nagpur, 1877. (Photo: tata.com)



European Council President Donald Tusk (left), Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (centre), and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker. (Photo: Harish Tyagi/EPA)



Archived image of U.S. President Harry Truman greeting Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru upon his arrival in Washington on October 11, 1949. Also seen are Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit (L), then India's Ambassador to the U.S., and Indira Gandhi (R). [Source: www.trumanlibrary.gov]



Prime Minister Keir Starmer hosts a meeting with Indian investors, 2024. (Photo: PA)

THE STORY OF APRA EKADASHI: A SACRED DAY OF FASTING AND DEVOTION

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

Apra Ekadashi, also known as Vishnu Ekadashi, is a significant fasting day in the Hindu calendar, celebrated during the Krishna Paksha (the waning phase of the moon) in the month of Ashadha (June-July). This day is considered auspicious for fasting, prayers, and devotion to Lord Vishnu, and it holds special importance for devotees seeking to purify their minds and souls.

THE MYTHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF APRA EKADASHI

The story behind Apra Ekadashi is closely linked to Lord Vishnu and the ancient scriptures. According to Hindu mythology, Ekadashi is the day when Lord Vishnu is said to rest in his cosmic abode, the Ksheera Sagar (the ocean of milk), during which he refrains from interacting with the world. On this day, Lord Vishnu is believed to be in a deep slumber, and it is a time for his devotees to perform special rituals and prayers to honor him and receive his divine blessings.

The Vrata (fasting) observed on Apra Ekadashi is said to remove the accumulated sins of the devotees, purify their hearts, and help them achieve peace, prosperity, and spiritual progress. The fast is believed to cleanse the soul of all negative energies, helping the devotee attain Moksha or liberation from the cycle of life and death.

THE LEGEND OF APRA EKADASHI

The story of Apra Ekadashi is believed to have been narrated by Lord Krishna to King Yudhishtira, the eldest Pandava. Lord Krishna explains that on the day of Apra Ekadashi, a devoted person who observes fasting with true faith and sincerity, chanting the name of Lord Vishnu, will be freed from all sins.

The most popular story associated with this Ekadashi is that of a demon named Muran, who had caused immense suffering to the gods and sages. Muran was a powerful demon who used his immense strength and terror to oppress the people of the world. His growing cruelty and evil deeds made the gods very anxious, and they turned to Lord Vishnu for help.

Lord Vishnu, in his divine compassion, engaged in a fierce battle with Muran. Despite Muran's power, he was unable to defeat Vishnu. After a long and intense battle, Lord Vishnu was victorious and defeated the demon, bringing peace to the world.

As a gesture of gratitude and to remove the lingering effects of Muran's evil influence, Lord Vishnu commanded that the observance of Ekadashi (fasting on this particular day) would become a divine remedy for the purification of the soul and body. Those who observe the fast and remain devoted will be blessed with eternal peace and spiritual growth.

FASTING AND RITUALS OF APRA EKADASHI
The fast observed on Apra

Ekadashi is considered one of the most auspicious fasts in the Hindu calendar. Devotees believe that fasting on this day helps in spiritual growth and removes obstacles from their lives. On Apra Ekadashi, devotees wake up early in the morning, take a holy bath, and offer prayers to Lord Vishnu.

THE FOLLOWING RITUALS ARE USUALLY PERFORMED:

Fasting: Devotees fast from sunrise until the next morning, abstaining from food and water. Some choose to observe a partial fast, consuming only fruits, nuts, and milk.

Puja and Chanting: Devotees perform special prayers (puja) to Lord Vishnu, offering flowers, incense, and lighting lamps. The chanting of Vishnu's names, such as "Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya" or "Hare Krishna", is central to the day's observance.

Donation and Charity: It is believed that donating to the poor, especially on Ekadashi, brings divine blessings. Devotees often give alms, clothes, or food to those in need.

Recitation of Scriptures: Many devotees also recite sacred texts, especially the Vishnu Sahasranama (the thousand names of Lord Vishnu) or the Bhagavad Gita.

Listening to Katha (Storytelling): Listening to or reading the story of Ekadashi from the Puranas is an important ritual to strengthen devotion and attain blessings.

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE
The spiritual significance



of Apra Ekadashi lies in its ability to cleanse the mind and soul, promote self-discipline, and help devotees remain in constant remembrance of Lord Vishnu. The day serves as an opportunity for self-reflection and introspection, encouraging individuals to abandon sinful ways and adopt a path of righteousness.

Moreover, it is believed that observing the fast of Apra Ekadashi brings prosperity, happiness, and spiritual liberation. Devotees believe that Lord Vishnu, who is considered the protector of the universe,

blesses those who worship him with devotion, even for the smallest acts of worship.

Apra Ekadashi is a day that holds great spiritual value for Hindus around the world. The fast, prayers, and devotion observed on this day not only help purify the body and mind but also foster a deep connection with Lord Vishnu, the preserver and protector of the universe. The mythological stories surrounding the day remind us of the power of devotion and the importance of living a life of righteousness.

verse in Hindu mythology. Observing a fast on Ekadashi is believed to purify the mind, body, and soul, bringing the devotee closer to divine blessings. On Apra Ekadashi, devotees believe that worshipping Lord Vishnu with devotion can help in attaining peace, prosperity, and spiritual liberation (moksha).

Fasting and Penance: On this day, many devotees observe a strict fast, refraining from consuming grains, pulses, and other food items. The fast typically involves eating only fruits, milk, and certain non-grain foods. Devotees spend the day engaging in spiritual activities like chanting the name of Lord Vishnu (japa), reciting religious texts, and participating in prayers and rituals. The fast is thought to have purifying effects, promoting inner peace and spiritual growth.

Rituals and Offerings: On Apra Ekadashi, temples dedicated to Lord Vishnu host special prayers and ceremonies. Devotees may visit temples, offer flowers, light lamps, and offer prayers to seek Lord Vishnu's grace. The day also marks a time for charitable acts, where many devotees donate food, clothes, and other essentials to the needy as a form of spiritual merit (punya).

The Mythological Connection: Ekadashi is said to have originated when the demon Mura was defeated by Lord Vishnu. The day is also associated with the Devi Ekadashi,

where it is believed that by fasting on Ekadashi, a devotee can be protected from the negative effects of sin and karma.

Cultural and Regional Importance: While Apra Ekadashi is celebrated in specific regions, it is considered equally important as other Ekadashis throughout the year. For instance, Vaishnavas (followers of Lord Vishnu) in Rajasthan and Gujarat celebrate this day with much fervor, and it is also observed in temples and households dedicated to Lord Vishnu across India.

OBSERVANCE OF APRA EKADASHI:

Fasting: Devotees abstain from eating grains, certain vegetables, and drinks during the day. They focus on spiritual reflection, worship, and fasting to honor Lord Vishnu.

Chanting and Prayers: Devotees may chant mantras like "Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya" to invoke the blessings of Lord Vishnu.

Charity: As part of the ritual observance, devotees engage in acts of charity, offering food, clothes, or money to those in need, as a form of gaining spiritual merit.

Apra Ekadashi is an auspicious day dedicated to Lord Vishnu, observed with fasting, prayers, and rituals. For devotees, it is a time to purify the soul, seek divine blessings, and reflect on spiritual teachings. It underscores the importance of discipline, devotion, and selflessness in the practice of religion.

Purifying your karma: Spiritual remedies for past life misdeeds

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

In the realm of Hindu philosophy, the concept of karma is one of the most profound and significant teachings. Karma, derived from the Sanskrit word meaning "action" or "deed," suggests that every action we perform has consequences. These actions accumulate over our lifetimes and create the sum total of our experiences, both positive and negative, which we carry with us into the present life. The cycle of karma and reincarnation means that the actions performed in one life can have a direct impact on the quality of the next life.

The question arises, then: how does one negate the bad karmas of previous lives? While it may seem daunting to carry the weight of negative actions from past lifetimes, there are spiritual paths and practices that guide individuals in purifying their karmic debt. By understanding the principles of karma and adopting the right practices, one can work towards negating the effects of bad karma and ensuring a more peaceful, fulfilling, and spiritually aligned life.

Understanding Karma and Its Effects

Before delving into how to negate bad karmas, it's essential to understand the nature of karma. In essence, karma is the universal law of cause and effect. Every action, whether good or bad, produces an effect. These effects can manifest as physical, mental, or emotional experiences, and they influence not only the

current life but also future reincarnations.

THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF KARMA:

Sanchita Karma – This is the accumulated karma from all of an individual's past lives, including both good and bad deeds. It's like the total "bank balance" of karmic credit or debt.

Parabdha Karma – This refers to the portion of sanchita karma that has started to bear fruit in the current life. It is the karma that is actively shaping our present circumstances and experiences.

Agami Karma – These are the new karmas being created in the present life. They will affect future lives, depending on the nature of the actions performed today.

The challenge is not just to manage the consequences of bad karma but to work toward transforming it into a more positive spiritual path. The process of negating bad karma is a transformative journey involving self-awareness, inner peace, and spiritual practices.

1. ENGAGE IN SELFLESS SERVICE (SEVA)

One of the most effective ways to negate bad karma is through selfless service, known as seva. In Hinduism, seva refers to acts of kindness and service done without any expectation of reward. This could involve volunteering time, helping others in need, supporting charitable causes, or engaging in community welfare.

When we serve others with pure intention, without seeking any personal gain, we create positive karma



that can offset the negative karmas from our past lives. The act of giving, without expecting anything in return, helps purify the mind and soul, allowing the individual to transcend ego-based actions. Seva, done with love and humility, is one of the best ways to balance the scales of karma.

2. PERFORMING SINCERE PENITENCE AND REPENTANCE

Acknowledging and repenting for past misdeeds is an essential step in purging bad karma. Penitence, in spiritual terms, involves sincerely feeling regret for the wrongs done in previous lives and even in the current one. While karma cannot be erased, it can be softened or mitigated by showing sincere remorse and committing to never repeat the mistakes.

In Hindu tradition, prayers of repentance are often recited, seeking forgiveness from the Divine for actions that have hurt others. A regular practice of asking for forgiveness—whether through prayers or rituals such as Yajnas (fire sacrifices) and Pujas

(devotional offerings)—is believed to purify the heart and mind and help diminish the burden of past negative karma.

3. MEDITATION AND SELF-REALIZATION

Meditation is a powerful tool for purifying the mind and attaining self-realization. Through deep meditation, one can come to understand the nature of their thoughts, actions, and their impact on the world. Vipassana meditation, Kundalini meditation, or other forms of meditation help the individual look within to identify patterns of bad karma and emotional blockages that have been carried over from past lives.

Meditation cultivates mindfulness and awareness, helping practitioners let go of negative emotions like anger, jealousy, and hatred—emotions often tied to bad karma. As you engage in regular meditation, you gain clarity and insight into the true nature of life, leading to a transformation in thought and action.

4. PERFORMING YAJNAS AND PUJAS (RITUALS)



Rituals, such as Yajnas (sacred fire rituals) and Pujas (devotional offerings), are integral in Hinduism for purifying the self and negating bad karma. The fire element, considered sacred, symbolizes purification. By participating in these rituals or even performing them at home, individuals can invoke divine energies and seek blessings to mitigate past negative actions.

Many Hindu temples and ashrams conduct large yajnas or homas (fire rituals), and offering prayers to deities, especially Lord Vishnu or Lord Shiva, can also assist in wiping away



To negate bad karma, it is crucial to practice compassion and forgiveness. Holding grudges and harboring negative emotions such as anger and resentment only perpetuate bad karma. Forgiving others and seeking forgiveness for your own wrongdoings helps you break the cycle of negative karma.

When you forgive, you free yourself from the burden of past wrongs and let go of the energy that perpetuates suffering. Practicing compassion toward others and yourself is key to creating new positive karmic imprints.

7. ENGAGE IN PILGRIMAGES

Hinduism places a great emphasis on pilgrimages to sacred places, which are believed to purify the mind and wash away past karmic debts. Locations like Varanasi, Rishikesh, and Haridwar, or visiting temples dedicated to Lord Vishnu, Lord Shiva, or Goddess Durga, are known for their spiritual significance.

By visiting these sacred places, one can invoke blessings and purify the

soul. The spiritual energy accumulated from these places is believed to wash away past misdeeds and encourage the individual to live in accordance with Dharma.

8. YOGA AND SELF-DISCIPLINE

The practice of Yoga is another effective way to negate bad karma. It involves both physical postures and mental practices that cultivate self-discipline, mindfulness, and a deeper connection with the divine. By practicing yoga, you cleanse the body and mind, release stored emotions, and purify negative karma.

The key lies in transforming oneself—through meditation, selfless service, repentance, chanting mantras, and upholding high moral values—and living in harmony with the divine laws of the universe. By actively engaging in these practices, individuals can create a path of light, gradually purging the darkness of past karmic debts and advancing toward spiritual enlightenment.

FROM STEEL PLANTS TO S-400S: INDIA-RUSSIA'S STRATEGIC JOURNEY

Even with a new policy, India is inclined towards the Soviet Union, which was perceived as a dependable friend in counteracting Western imperialism.

India-Russia relations have seen a dramatic change from a Cold War-era partnership to a contemporary, multi-dimensional partnership. Their long-term affinity has survived major changes in the world, and the countries' cooperation ranges across political, economic, defense, and cultural domains.

A SHARED VISION: EARLY DAYS OF CO-OPERATION

The India-Russia tie has its origins in 1947, the year India was independent. The Soviet Union, one of the two superpowers of the Cold War, was ascendant, and independent India was looking to make its mark globally. Both nations shared commonalities as both were pro-anti-colonial in their orientations and were eager to facilitate the freedom movements of new nations.

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru pursued a policy of non-alignment, attempt-



India and Russia held their first 2+2 dialogue in New Delhi on December 6 during President Putin's visit. They agreed to deepen economic ties and advance the Vladivostok-Chennai energy corridor as a strategic alternative to Middle East energy routes.

ing to be neutral between the two major sides of the Cold War the United States and the Soviet Union. Even with this policy, India inclined towards the Soviet Union, which was perceived as a dependable friend in counteracting Western imperialism. For the Soviet Union, India was a crucial player in the new world order and a vital ally in Asia.

During the first phase, economic and military co-operation dominated the relationship. The Soviet Union lent a helping hand to India by assisting the construction of important infrastructure, including the Bhilai Steel Plant in Madhya Pradesh, which was the beginning of an enhanced economic relationship between the two countries.

COLD WAR YEARS: BUILDING BONDS BETWEEN INDIA AND RUSSIA

India and the Soviet Union developed a close and strategic alliance during the Cold War years, driven by common anti-imperialism, mutual inter-

est, and a feeling of shared purpose. The Soviet Union extended both economic and military aid to India in bulk, including critical support in 1971 during the war with Pakistan. This alliance grew closer in 1971 when the two countries signed the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Co-operation. The treaty fortified India's military capabilities, with Soviet military assistance ranging from sophisticated aircraft to tanks being the driving force in India's military modernization. India also helped the Soviet Union's international positions, especially in the United Nations, which solidified their strategic alliance.

The relationship endured beyond the Cold War, with India and Russia retaining a close strategic partnership that has since grown across several sectors, including defense, technology, and trade.

THE POST-SOVIET ERA: NAVIGATING CHANGE

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 was a defining moment in India-

Russia relations. The sudden collapse of the USSR presented tremendous problems for India, where it had been heavily dependent on Soviet assistance across the board. At the same time, Russia as the inheritor of the USSR was dealing with its own do-

mestic political and economic restructuring.

In spite of all this, India and Russia were able to sustain their relationship. Throughout the 1990s, there was consistent defense cooperation with Russia continuing to provide India with military equipment. The two countries also increased cooperation in areas like space exploration, nuclear technology, and high-technology industries.

A milestone during this time was Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India in 2000. This marked a new era in their relation-



Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP) has decided to install solar power generation systems on the rooftops of various buildings in its plant. Image: SAIL's Website

ship with both countries deciding to raise their partnership to a "strategic level." This was characterized by heightened interest in defense cooperation, collaborative military exercises, and broadening areas of collaborative activity, such as technology and trade.

have been heavily challenged by terrorism, and their common interests have generated strong co-operation on intelligence sharing and joint operations. It is an extension of cooperation on regional security issues, especially in Afghanistan, where both countries have collaborated in ensuring stability.

Economic relations have also grown, with Russia becoming a major exporter of energy resources, particularly natural gas, to India. Russia's nuclear power expertise has also made it the major partner in ensuring India's energy security. Aside from energy, the two countries are developing new areas of cooperation in areas such as agriculture, infrastructure, and technology.

BRICS: A SHARED VISION FOR THE FUTURE

India and Russia's cooperation under the BRICS umbrella has also fortified their bilateral ties. BRICS, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, offers the two nations a platform to talk about

global problems like financial reform, climate change, and governance.

Through BRICS, India and Russia have more dovetailed their political and economic policies, striving for a multipolar world order that will empower emerging economies to play a greater role in international affairs. Their ongoing cooperation with this bloc has deepened a strategic bilateral relationship.

THE S-400 SYSTEM: A CORNERSTONE OF INDIA'S DEFENCE STRATEGY

The Russia-made S-400 missile defense system has emerged as the mainstay of India's defense policy. The S-400 was recently used successfully to intercept several Pakistani missile threats, highlighting its crucial position in India's defense system.

The capability of the S-400 system to target a range of aerial threats such as planes, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles at various ranges and altitudes gives India a sophisticated defense shield.

With an even more unstable region in general, especially after events like the Pulwama attack, the S-400 is a strong deterrent against possible missile attacks.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Although India and Russia's relationship is good, it has not been a smooth ride. India's increasing strategic convergence with the United States, especially through arrangements such as the Quad and the Indo-Pacific initiative, has provided a tricky balance-

ing act for India's foreign policy.

Moreover, Russia's own close association with China has brought a level of sophistication. As India moves closer to the U.S. and is concerned about the rise of China, Russia has to balance its strategy towards both India and China.

Defense cooperation has also suffered due to India's growing dependence on defense systems made in the United States. Nevertheless, India and Russia still cooperate in terms of joint military drills and research in cutting-edge defense technologies.

THE PATH AHEAD: AN ENDURING PARTNERSHIP

In the future, the India-Russia relationship is full of promise. Both countries understand the need to maintain their strategic alliance, particularly during a time of quickening global change.

As India's economic and military power increases, its relationship with Russia will remain one of the primary influences on its foreign policy.

The future of India-Russia relations will likely see even more robust collaboration across various sectors, including defense, energy, technology, and trade. With Russia's expertise and India's growing capabilities, the two countries have the potential to enhance their partnership in ways that could benefit both.

As the world's geopolitical dynamics continue to shift, the timeless connection between India and Russia will be a bulwark of international order.

—TDG NETWORK

Inside the LeT hit: Signs of shift in Pakistan's terror networks

Razaullah Nizamani, also known by his aliases Ghazi Abu Saifullah Khalid, Vinode Kumar, and Mohammed Salim, was gunned down by unidentified assailants on Sunday afternoon in Pakistan's Sindh province, according to Indian intelligence officials.

Saifullah Khalid was a top Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist, best known for planning the 2006 attack on the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) headquarters in Nagpur, where three terrorists were killed after ramming their car through a police barrier. He was also involved in other major attacks, including the 2005 Indian Institute of Science shooting in Bengaluru and a terror strike on a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) camp in Rampur.

His sudden killing comes at a time of heightened security and tensions in the region, especially after the April 26 terror attack in Pahalgam, which left 26 civilians dead. In response to that attack, India launched Operation Sindoor, striking multiple terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

SHOT DEAD IN BADIN DISTRICT AMID ISI WARNINGS

According to an intelligence officer, Saifullah Khalid was shot dead in Matli, a town in the Badin district of Sindh, when he stepped out of his house in the afternoon. His killing comes despite prior warnings issued by Pakistan's



military and its intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), to all senior Lashkar operatives. "Saifullah Khalid is close to LeT chief Hafiz Saeed and had planned to attack RSS headquarters on June 1, 2006 (three LeT terrorists were killed by police after they rammed their car through a barrier outside the RSS HQ in Nagpur). We have information that he has been shot dead by unidentified men in Pakistan's Sindh," an officer said. Multiple Pakistani news outlets also confirmed that Saifullah Khalid was shot by unknown gunmen on Sunday, although no group has claimed responsibility so far.

FROM NEPAL OPS TO PAKISTAN'S HEARTLAND

Saifullah Khalid was once a major player in LeT's overseas operations. A second officer explained that Khalid was deeply involved in Lashkar's operations in Nepal in the early 2000s. Back then, he went by several aliases and handled tasks such as recruit-

ment, funding, logistics, and facilitating the movement of terrorists across the Indo-Nepal border.

"Khalid used to head LeT's operations in Nepal in the early 2000 and had many aliases including Vinode Kumar, Mohammed Salim and Razaullah. He recruited new cadres, arranged financial and logistic support and facilitated the movement of LeT operatives across the Indo-Nepal border. He worked closely with the so-called launching commanders - Azam Cheema alias Babaji (now dead) and Yaqoob (LeT's chief accountant)," said the first officer.

After Indian agencies busted his network in Nepal, Khalid returned to Pakistan and resumed operations from there, this time working closely with top LeT and Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD) leaders, including Yusuf Muzammil, Muzammil Iqbal Hashmi, and Muhammad Yusuf Taibi.

TASKED WITH RECRUITING IN SINDH BEFORE HIS DEATH

In his final months, Kha-

lid had been assigned a new mission: recruit fresh terrorists and raise funds for LeT from the Sindh province, especially from areas like Badin and Hyderabad.

"He had been tasked by the LeT and JuD leadership in Pakistan to undertake the recruitment of fresh cadres from the areas of Badin and Hyderabad districts of Sindh and collect funds for the organisation," the officer added.

Reports suggest he was working directly under Abu Anas, one of LeT's current operational commanders. Earlier, Khalid reported to Abdul Rehman Makki - LeT's former deputy chief and brother-in-law of Hafiz Saeed - and Azam Cheema. Both Makki and Cheema died recently, reportedly due to heart attacks in December 2023 and March 2024 respectively.

OPERATION SINDOOR CHANGED THE GAME

The killing of Saifullah Khalid took place shortly after India launched Operation Sindoor, a massive counter-terror operation in response to the Pahalgam attack.

On May 7, the Indian Air Force launched pre-dawn strikes on nine terror camps located in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

The operation reportedly killed over 100 terrorists, according to political leaders who were briefed by the Defence Ministry.

—TDG NETWORK

When a border misstep becomes a diplomatic standoff

Purnam Kumar Shaw, a jawan of the Border Security Force (BSF) from West Bengal, returned to India after a dramatic 21-day ordeal at the hands of his Pakistani captors. What was just a routine border patrol in Punjab turned into an extended diplomatic crisis when Shaw crossed the border inadvertently on April 23, just a day after the Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives.

Shaw was said to have looked for shade under a tree when he inadvertently crossed into Pakistani territory. The Pakistani Rangers picked him up at once, and what should have been a swift handover became a tense standoff. His return, with Indo-Pak relations already tenuous, was bogged down in delays and uncertainty.

NEGOTIATIONS IN THE SHADOW OF CONFLICT

Under normal circumstances, a soldier who mistakenly crosses the border is typically handed back within a day or two. However, Shaw's case was different. The Pahalgam terror attack had escalated tensions, and Operation Sindoor - India's retaliatory air strikes on terror camps - only complicated matters. Flag meetings were stalled, and every Indian diplomatic effort was met with the same vague reply, "We are waiting for directions from the higher-ups."

Later, on May 10, the two nations came to an "understanding" to suspend military action along the



BSF jawan Purnam Kumar Shaw

The Pakistani Rangers picked him up at once, and what should have been a swift handover became a tense standoff.

International Border as well as the Line of Control. Four days after that, Shaw returned home at last through the Attari-Wagah border, giving great relief to his family.

MENTAL TORTURE OF BSF SOLDIER AND CAPTIVITY CONDITIONS

Shaw's experience was not an easy one. When he returned, he confided in his wife, Rajani, and shared the psychological impact of his captivity. "He was being given food at regular intervals. But he was not permitted to brush his teeth. When he talked, he was exhausted and said he was sleep-deprived," she explained to The Times of India.

Although physically not attacked, Shaw said he was put through severe mental

stress. Pakistani authorities, sometimes dressed in civilian clothes, blindfolded him and transferred him between three secret locations. One of them, Shaw suspects, was close to an airbase - he constantly heard planes overhead. At another time, he was placed in a prison cell and questioned repeatedly regarding patterns of BSF deployment and the details of senior officers. He was also under pressure to provide contact details. However, according to BSF procedure, he didn't carry a phone during the patrol.

A FAMILY'S AGONY AND HOPE

Meanwhile, in India, Shaw's family - particularly his pregnant wife Rajani - were wracked with anxiety. She and their infant son, along with other relatives,

went to Ferozepur to meet Shaw's commanding officer. Despite assurances that talks were being initiated, reports of Indian army action served to further intensify their anxiety.

"I remained glued to the news all day, hoping for something positive," Rajani said. The family's concerns were echoed by Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee, who demanded immediate government action. "We need to get him back immediately," Banerjee posted on social media.

Lastly, on May 14, their hopes were fulfilled. Shaw came back to Indian soil and was immediately debriefed by the government. His captor-worn clothes were checked and disposed of, and he was discovered to be physically and mentally fit.

WELCOME OF BSF JAWAN AND RE-NEWED RESOLVE

Despite the trauma, Shaw's family is in full support of his service. His wife was thankful to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for his release. His father, Bholanath Shaw, in a proud tone, said, "I want him to work for the country only. He will again go back to protect our country." Shaw is a member of the 24th Battalion of the BSF and was deployed to Punjab's Ferozepur sector, which borders Pakistan for 553 km. His case has reopened debates on border troops' challenges and risks, particularly during times of increased military and political tensions.

—TDG NETWORK

TRUMP SAYS WILL SPEAK TO PUTIN TO END UKRAINE ‘BLOODBATH’

First Russia-Ukraine talks in 3 years failed; Putin skipped, sending lower-level officials.

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON DC

United States President Donald Trump says he will phone his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, followed by Ukraine's leader and NATO allies on Monday in a push to bring the Ukraine war to an end.

“Hopefully it will be a productive day, a ceasefire will take place, and this very violent war — a war that should have never happened — will end,” Trump wrote on Truth Social Saturday.

Trump's remarks come a day after the first Moscow-Kyiv talks in three years failed to yield a ceasefire agreement. Putin had declined an invitation from Zelenskyy to attend Friday's talks, sending a lower-level delegation in his place, a move that led Zelenskyy to say the Russian leader was not taking peace efforts “seriously”.

Following the talks, which led to an agreement to exchange 1,000 prisoners each, Ukraine's Defence Minister



US President Donald Trump (right) with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin. (File photo)

Rustem Umerov said the “next step” would be a meeting between Zelenskyy and Putin. On Saturday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia considered the move possible, “but only as a result of the work and upon achieving certain results in the form of an agreement between the two sides”.

He did not elaborate on what would be required.

Peskov said both sides needed to complete the pris-

oner swap before fixing the next round of talks. Ukraine's head of military intelligence, Kyrylo Budanov, indicated the exchange could take place as early as next week.

Earlier on Saturday, a Russian drone attack in Ukraine's Sumy region killed nine bus passengers in what the National Police described as “a cynical war crime”.

Seven others were injured in the attack in Sumy's Bilopil- lia, Zelenskyy said in a post

on X, and called for tougher sanctions on Moscow. Russia's Ministry of Defence said it had targeted Ukrainian military equipment, the TASS state news agency reported.

“All the deceased were civilians,” Zelenskyy said, adding that preliminary reports indicated a father, mother and daughter had been killed. “And the Russians could not have failed to understand what kind of vehicle they were targeting.”

Zelenskyy meets US, EU leaders in Rome

Kyiv: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with top US officials and European leaders in Rome on Sunday, part of stepped-up diplomatic efforts ahead of a high-stakes phone call Monday between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin on ending the war in Ukraine.

Zelenskyy spoke with US Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio at the US ambassador's residence, while German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said he had spoken both to Zelenskyy and to Rubio on the sidelines of the new pope's inauguration.

Merz said that he had also agreed with the leaders of France and Britain “that we will speak again with the American president.”

‘Pak’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reports nearly 300 terror attacks in 2025’

AGENCIES
PESHAWAR

Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has witnessed 284 terrorist incidents so far in 2025, according to an official report on Sunday.

The northwestern province remained one of the hardest hit in the country by militancy.

A report by the Counter-Terrorism Department said that of the 284 incidents, the highest number -- 53 -- was recorded in North Waziristan district, followed by Bannu

(35), Dera Ismail Khan (31), Peshawar (13), and Kurram (8).

The report also said that 148 terrorists have been killed across the province so far this year, with the highest number -- 67 -- reported in Dera Ismail Khan, the home district of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

As many as 1,116 suspects have been named in terrorism-related cases across the province, of which 95 have been arrested so far.

In 2024, 732 attacks were reported in the province, up from 651 in 2023. This

marked the highest number of attacks since 2009 and 2010.

The law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa started deteriorating in mid-2021, and attacks have further increased since 2023.

Even the police headquarters of the provincial capital came under attack when a suicide bomber detonated explosives at the central mosque of the police lines in January 2023.

Over 86 policemen were killed and over 200 were wounded in the biggest attack on the force.



‘Russia launches war’s largest drone attack after peace talks,’ says Ukraine

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

Largest known Russian drone attack since full-scale war began in 2022 killed a woman in the Kyiv region and injured at least three people, Ukrainian authorities said early on Sunday, as Moscow stepped up strikes following peace talks on Friday. Russia launched 273 drones by 8 a.m. local time (0500 GMT), targeting chiefly the central Kyiv region and the Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk regions in the country's east, Ukraine's air force said.

Based on data provided by the air force, this was Russia's largest drone attack on Ukraine of the war. On the eve of the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 23, Moscow launched a then-record 267 drones.

The first direct talks in three years between Russia and Ukraine on Friday failed to broker the temporary ceasefire Kyiv and its

RUSSIA DOWNS 25 UKRAINIAN DRONES NEAR BORDER; ONE WOMAN KILLED

MOSCOW: Russian air defence forces destroyed 25 Ukrainian drones over two of its border regions overnight and on Sunday morning, the Russian Defence Ministry said, and the governor of another region said one woman had been killed in a drone attack.

Twenty-two drones had been downed over the Belgorod region and another three destroyed over the

Bryansk region, the ministry said in statements. Both regions border Ukraine.

Alexander Bogomaz, the governor of Bryansk, said the attempted attack did not inflict any damage or cause any casualties.

Alexander Khinshtein, governor of Kursk, another region bordering Ukraine, said a 69-year-old woman had been killed by an explosive dropped from a drone overnight.

war on each side.

U.S. President Donald Trump said he would speak to Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday.

The sustained overnight Russian drone attack on Sunday killed a 28-year-old woman in the capital region and injured at least three people, including a 4-year-old child, Ukrainian authorities said.

“Unfortunately, as a result of the enemy attack in the Obukhiv district, a woman died from her injuries,” Mykola Kalashnik, governor of the Kyiv region, posted on Telegram.

Kyiv and the region around it as well as the eastern part of Ukraine were under raid warnings for nine straight hours overnight before they were called off at around 9 a.m. local time (0600 GMT). Air defence units were engaged several times trying to repel attacks, the military said on Telegram.



allies have been urging. The 100 minutes of talks in Is-

tanbul yielded an agreement to trade 1,000 prisoners of

Iran vows to uphold pursuit of peaceful nuclear energy

AGENCIES
TEHRAN

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said his country will not abandon its pursuit of civilian nuclear energy under any circumstances, while reiterating that Tehran has no intention of developing nuclear weapons.

“We won't give up on peaceful nuclear energy by any means,” Mr Pezeshkian said in remarks aired on state TV on May 18. The Iranian President was speaking at a diplomatic forum in Tehran attended by Oman Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi, who has been mediating ongoing



nuclear talks between the US and Iran aimed at securing a new agreement over the Islamic Republic's atomic work.

His comments come as the rhetoric between Iranian and US officials intensifies. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah

Ali Khamenei on May 17 branded US President Donald Trump a liar and accused him of power abuse.

Mr Trump is trying to compel Iran to dismantle its nuclear programme – a condition Iranian officials

warn could jeopardise the negotiations – and has threatened military action if talks to reach a new deal collapse.

“We're not seeking war with anyone. We say they should recognise our rights,” Mr Pezeshkian said. “We have the right to conduct peaceful nuclear research and use it. We need this science for health, agriculture, and industry.” Mr Abbas Araghchi, Iran's Foreign Minister and lead negotiator in the talks, had previously said Tehran would not renounce its right to enrich uranium at home but is open to temporary limits to show its nuclear programme is peaceful.

AGENCIES
TEL AVIV

The Israeli army announced “extensive ground operations” Sunday as part of its newly expanded campaign in the Gaza Strip, where rescuers reported dozens killed in a wave of Israeli strikes.

The announcement came just hours after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu signalled Israel was open to striking a deal with Hamas that involved “ending the fighting” in the besieged Palestinian territory.

The military said that over the past day, troops had “begun extensive ground operations throughout the northern and southern Gaza Strip”, adding they had “eliminated



Israel says open to deal that includes ‘ending the fighting’ in Gaza



dozens of terrorists, dismantled terrorist infrastructure... and are currently being deployed in key positions”.

Israel says its ramped-up campaign is aimed at freeing hostages and defeating Hamas, but as the early stages of the operation got underway Saturday, Israel and the group were entering indirect talks in Qatar aimed at hammering out a deal.

In a statement on Sunday, Netanyahu's office said that “the negotiation team in Doha is working to exhaust every possibility for a deal -- whether according to the Witkoff framework or as part of ending the fighting”, referring to US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, who has been involved in previous discussions.

Such a deal, according to Ne-

tanyahu's statement, “would include the release of all the hostages, the exile of Hamas terrorists, and the disarmament of the Gaza Strip”.

Ever since a two-month ceasefire fell apart in March as Israel resumed its offensive, negotiations mediated by Qatar, Egypt and the United States have failed to reach a breakthrough.

Netanyahu has opposed ending the war without Hamas's total defeat, while Hamas has balked at the prospect of handing over its weapons.

Senior Hamas official Taher al-Nunu said on Saturday that the talks in Doha had kicked off “without any preconditions from either side”.

Pakistan to send its ‘peace’ delegation on global stage following India’s wide diplomatic outreach

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan once again scrambles to salvage its image in the wake of India's ‘Operation Sindoor’, which has exposed Islamabad's deep ties to terrorism.

In a move that appears to mimic India's recent diplomatic manoeuvres, where New Delhi has announced

seven multi-party delegations to represent India at world forums and brief world leaders on Operation Sindoor, Pakistan, in hesitancy, has also called for a delegation to present its case for ‘peace’ at the international stage.

This came after Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Saturday stated



that Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had tasked him to lead a delegation to present Pakistan's case on the recent escalations of tensions between the two nations.

“I was contacted earlier today by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who requested that I lead a delegation to present Pakistan's case for peace on the international

stage. I am honoured to accept this responsibility and remain committed to serving Pakistan in these challenging times,” Zardari said in a post on Facebook.

The announcement reflects Pakistan's desperate attempt to repair its tarnished reputation as it bore its longstanding support for terrorism, drawing widespread international

criticism.

Bhutto Zardari's delegation is likely to face an uphill battle, as Pakistan's credibility has been severely undermined by its failure to curb terrorism and its retaliatory actions that targeted Indian civilians as its response to Operation Sindoor, which targeted nine terror camps across Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied

Kashmir (PoK).

Earlier on Saturday, Union Minister Kiren Rijju announced a seven multi-party delegation who will be visiting key partner countries, including members of the UN Security Council, later this month in the context of Operation Sindoor and India's continued fight against cross-border terrorism.

PARESH RAWAL CLARIFIES EXIT FROM 'HERA PHERI 3'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Veteran actor Paresh Rawal has officially stepped away from the upcoming instalment of the beloved Bollywood comedy franchise 'Hera Pheri', confirming his exit from 'Hera Pheri 3' through a post on X (formerly Twitter).

The actor's departure sent ripples across social media, where fans have since been vocal about their disappointment.

Earlier this year, director Priyadarshan confirmed that 'Hera Pheri 3' was in the works, bringing back the iconic trio of Akshay Kumar, Suniel Shetty, and Paresh Rawal.

However, Rawal's announcement that he would



no longer reprise his role as the beloved Babu Bhaiya left fans shocked and disheartened.

While speculation initially suggested creative differences as the reason behind his decision, Paresh Rawal addressed these rumours in a public statement on Sunday.

"I wish to put it on record that my decision to step away from Hera Pheri 3 was not due to creative differences," he wrote on X,

adding, "I REITERATE THAT THERE ARE NO CREATIVE DISAGREEMENTS WITH THE FILM-MAKER. I hold immense love, respect, and faith in Mr. Priyadarshan, the film's director."

His post raised even more questions among fans, many of whom took to social media to express their disbelief and seek clarity.

One user questioned if the actor wanted to avoid being

typecast in the Babu Bhaiya role, while another speculated about possible issues with the production.

"Then what happened? Are the producers offering less money, or are you bored of playing the same role? Come on, Babu Bhaiyya, Hera Pheri without even one of the three main leads would be totally pointless. Please rethink." a fan asked online, "one user commented.

"You don't want to get trapped again in Babu Bhaiya Image...?" another user wrote.

For over 20 years, Paresh Rawal's portrayal of Baburao Ganpatrao Apte, lovingly called Babu Bhaiya, has become one of Indian cinema's most enduring and cherished comic roles.

Anupam, Boman gear up for Cannes screening 'Tanvi The Great'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Anupam Kher's directorial 'Tanvi The Great' is all set for its grand premiere at the Cannes Film Festival, and the team is already turning heads.

Ahead of their red carpet appearance at the prestigious film festival, veteran actor Anupam Kher shared a dapper video on his Instagram account with co-stars Boman Irani, Karan Tacker, Pallavi Joshi, and Shubhangi Dutt.

In the slow-motion video, the actors are seen walking together, all suited and



booted, looking ready for the big day.

Along with the video, Kher added a caption

that read, "We MISS the rest of the gang of #TanviTheGreat at #CannesFilmFestival! But we also

know you are WITH us! We will see them soon on screen at the #WorldPremiere Jai Ho!"

Take a look: Jackie Shroff and Arvind Swami play crucial roles, and Game of Thrones actor Iain Glen is also featuring in the film. Tanvi The Great features sound design by Resul Pookutty, the Academy Award-winning sound designer known for Slumdog Millionaire. It is produced by Anupam Kher Studios in collaboration with NFDC. The release date for Tanvi The Great has yet to be announced.

Akshay shares BTS video from 'Bhooth Bangla'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar has announced the final wrap of his upcoming movie 'Bhooth Bangla'. It is directed by Priyadarshan.

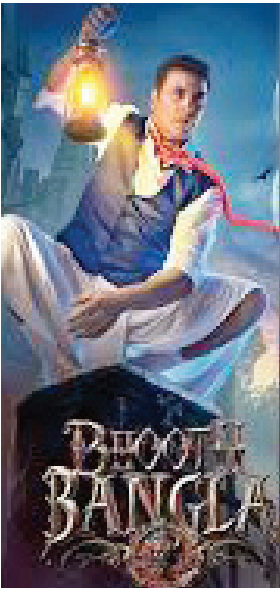
Priyadarshan's Bhooth Bangla is one of the most awaited horror comedies of Indian cinema. The film marks the reunion of Priyadarshan and Akshay Kumar for a movie on the big screens after 15 years.

Akshay shared a behind-the-scenes video from the sets featuring the actor and actress Wamiqa Gabbi to announce the final wrap of the movie.

The 'Housefull' actor took to his Instagram handle to share a video with a waterfall in the background. Akshay is seen dancing to the song while dressed in joggers and a green shirt.

While sharing the video, the actor wrote,

"And that's a wrap on #BhoothBangla! My seventh madcap adventure with the ever-inventive Priyan sir, my second outing with the unstoppable Ekta,



The film is co-produced by Faara Sheikh and Vedant Baali. The story is written by Akash A Kaushik and the screenplay is by Rohan Shankar, Abilash Nair and Priyadarshan.

and my first but hopefully not the last, magical journey with the ever-surprising Wamiqa. Grateful for the madness, the magic, and the memories."

Apart from Akshay Kumar, the film also stars Tabu, Paresh Rawal, Rajpal Yadav, Jisshu Sengupta, Asrani, and Wamiqa Gabbi.

As per the press note by the makers, the film has been shot in Rajasthan, Jaipur and Hyderabad.

Bhooth Bangla is produced by Shobha Kapoor

and Ektaa R Kapoor's Balaji Telefilms and Akshay Kumar's production house, Cape of Good Films.

The film is co-produced by Faara Sheikh and Vedant Baali. The story is written by Akash A Kaushik and the screenplay is by Rohan Shankar, Abilash Nair and Priyadarshan.

The dialogues are by Rohan Shankar. Bhooth Bangla is slated for its theatrical release on 2nd April 2026.

Nawazuddin Siddiqui is my go-to actor: 'Costao' director Sejal Shah

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Filmmaker Sejal Shah says she knew only an actor with a calibre like Nawazuddin Siddiqui would be able to pull off the complex role of former customs officer Costao Fernandes in her directorial debut "Costao".

What made her even more confident in her choice was that she and Siddiqui had already collaborated on the 2020 film "Serious Men", on which Shah served as a producer. In "Costao", the 50-year-old actor plays a



fearless customs officer named Costao Fernandes, who took on gold smugglers and corruption despite personal setbacks. It is streaming on ZEE5. "I was very clear that I

always wanted to cast Nawaz for 'Costao' because I knew that only he would be able to pull off a role like this. There are different shades to this character and I was already

working with him on 'Serious Men'.

We went to him and by the time the script got ready, we got the dates. "He is like my go-actor. I love Nawaz, I wish I could keep working with him. The big problem working with Nawaz is that he spoils you so much that you want to keep working with him all the time. He is such a fantastic actor and he elevates the script, he completely surrenders to it, which is a very big thing for such an experienced actor to do," Shah told PTI in an interview. The filmmaker said Sid-

diqui is a performer who has a lot of respect for the director's vision. "I'm a new director, so many times it happens that there are so many scenes where we are discussing and then he just tells me that 'This is what I feel, ultimately the call is yours'. He's one of those actors who is so committed to his craft," she said. Shah, who has backed web series such as "Asur" and "Decoupled", said she spent around three years doing research for the film which involved interactions with the real-life Costao, his family, and several customs officers.

Rock band Guns N' Roses returns to India after 13 years

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Rock band Guns N' Roses performed at a jam-packed venue in Mumbai on Saturday to mark their return to India after 13 years.

The rock band performed in India as a part of their ongoing Asia tour. The show took place at the Mahalakshmi Race Course in Mumbai.

All the members of Guns N' Roses were present at the event, including Axl Rose (Vocals, Piano), Duff McKagan (Bass) and Slash (Lead Guitar).

With the electrifying performance of the rock band, the Mahalakshmi Race Course transformed into a sea of screaming fans and



blazing lights.

In the visuals shared by Guns N' Roses, the fans were seen dancing and singing the popular songs of the band as they performed on the stage.

The rock band expressed their gratitude to their fans in Mumbai for attending the

show in large numbers.

Guns N' Roses shared glimpses from their performance in Mumbai on their Instagram handle.

The band members gave their best to entertain the crowd with their over-the-top performance and iconic songs.

Babil Khan drops out of Sai Rajesh's film

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Late actor Irrfan Khan's son, Babil Khan, has confirmed that he has stepped away from filmmaker Sai Rajesh's upcoming project—just days after his emotional social media posts criticizing the Bollywood industry. Both Babil and Sai took to Instagram



to share lengthy notes announcing the end of their collaboration. According to reports, Babil was set to star in the Hindi remake of Sai's film Baby.

Babil wrote, "With a lot of grit, passion, and mutual respect, Sai Rajesh sir and I both got along on this journey of creating magic together. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen

circumstances, things didn't go ahead as everyone had planned."

He added, "Since I will be taking some time off currently, I wish the best to Sai Rajesh sir and the film team on their future journey. I know there is immense love between us, and we will meet soon in the future and create magic together. Babil Khan."

Cannes 2025: Robert, Jennifer's 'Die, My Love' earns standing ovation

AGENCIES
CANNES

The Jennifer Lawrence and Robert Pattinson starrer 'Die, My Love' earned a six-minute standing ovation following its world premiere at the ongoing 78th edition of the Cannes Film Festival, reported Variety.

The Scottish filmmaker Lynne Ramsay's directorial 'Die, My Love' is competing for the Palme d'Or at Cannes 2025.

As per the outlet, the cast of



the movie, including Jennifer Lawrence, Robert Pattinson and director Lynne Ramsay, attended the premiere of the show.

After the premiere, the cast of the movie received a standing ovation. The director Ramsay cut her ovation short and said,

"Wow. I'm so overwhelmed. Thanks to these amazing actors. I've got to get it together, I'll see you in a minute," as quoted by Variety.

As per the outlet, the movie 'Die, My Love' is based on author Ariana Harwicz's 2017 novel of the same name, which centres on a new mother who enters psychosis after developing postpartum depression.

Oscar winner Lawrence stars in Ramsay's film as the mother, with Pattinson playing her husband.

CHAI, CHATTER, AND CHAOS: STORIES FROM INDIAN TRAINS

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

There's something undeniably magical about train journeys in India. They are not just about getting from point A to point B—they are a microcosm of India itself. In the rattle of wheels on metal tracks, the cries of “chai, chai!” echoing through the corridors, and the chaotic buzz of a hundred conversations, lie stories that are funny, emotional, and deeply human.

THE RITUAL OF CHAI

Every Indian train story, it seems, begins with a cup of chai. Whether you're at a bustling platform or in a sleepy compartment at dawn, chai is the great unifier. Poured from dented kettles into tiny paper or clay cups, it is piping hot and always sweet enough to make your teeth hurt. Yet, no matter how you usually take your tea, this is the cup you will remember. It's less about the flavor and more about the moment—the way the steam curls in the cold morning air, the whistle of the train about to leave, and the vendor's

rhythmic call that makes your heart race if you haven't got your cup yet.

STRANGERS WHO BECOME FRIENDS

Indian trains have a curious way of turning strangers into companions. You start by awkwardly placing your luggage under the berth, then slowly the conversations flow. Someone will offer you puris packed in newspaper. Another will ask where you're from. Children run up and down the aisle, while elderly couples share homemade theplas or laddoos with whoever is willing. It's not unusual to know someone's life story by the end of a 12-hour ride—where they work, whom they married, what their children do, and what they regret. These transient connections are surprisingly intimate, yet fleeting.

A MOVING THEATRE

Each coach of an Indian train is a performance stage. You might encounter a traveling musician singing old Bollywood songs with a harmonium, or a group of students playing antakshari with full-blown audience participation.



There could be heated debates on politics or cricket between total strangers. Somewhere, a quiet couple might be stealing glances, their story playing out in subtle smiles and careful silences. And often, all this plays out against the backdrop of scenic countryside slipping past—fields of mustard, sleepy villages, and glimpses of temples in the distance.

CHAOS AND CHARM

Yes, there's chaos. Trains



running late. Confusing platform changes. Uncooperative fans or lights in non-AC coaches. Vendors jostling for space. But it is this very chaos that adds character. An Indian train journey is not meant to be sterile or silent—it's meant to be lived. It's where people read entire novels, write poetry, cry silently while looking out the window, or have life-altering realizations as the train chugs through a lonely night.

THE EMOTIONAL GOODBYES

The journey doesn't end at the destination. It ends at the tearful or joyful goodbyes. You part ways with your co-passengers, now familiar faces. You wave at the friend you made over shared snacks, or the elderly aunty who reminded you of your grandmother. And as you step out, the noise of the platform replaces the rhythm of the tracks, but the stories linger.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Trains in India are more than a mode of transport. They're a space where the country's diversity comes alive—where cities, languages, and lives collide for a few hours or days. The next time you board a train, don't plug in your earphones or bury yourself in your phone. Look around. Listen. Engage. Because in the chai, chatter, and chaos—you just might find a story worth telling.

Learning Scuba Diving in Lakshadweep: A gateway to India's underwater world

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The idea of breathing underwater may seem daunting at first, but for many travelers seeking adventure and serenity, scuba diving offers an unmatched sense of wonder and discovery. And when it comes to learning scuba in India, few places rival the pristine beauty and biodiversity of Lakshadweep.

A HIDDEN PARADISE

Located about 400 kilometers off the coast of Kerala in the Arabian Sea, Lakshadweep is India's smallest Union Territory. Comprising 36 islands, only a few are open to tourism, ensuring minimal crowds and a largely untouched ecosystem. With crystal-clear waters, thriving coral reefs, and an abundance of marine life, the islands offer ideal conditions for both beginners and experienced divers.

IDEAL LEARNING CONDITIONS

Lakshadweep's calm lagoons, shallow dive sites, and warm waters make it one of the best places in India to learn scuba diving. Dive schools on islands like Kadmat, Agatti, and Bangaram provide certified courses from internationally recognized organizations like PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) and SSI (Scuba Schools International). These courses typically include classroom theory, pool or shallow water practice, and open-water dives.

What makes Lakshadweep particularly appealing for learners is its excellent visibility and gentle currents, making underwater navigation less intimidating for first-timers.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHILE TRAINING

The scuba learning journey begins with understanding the basics of pressure, buoyancy, equipment handling, and safety protocols. Practical sessions in shallow water help students gain

confidence in breathing through a regulator, clearing a water-filled mask, and managing buoyancy. Once comfortable, students graduate to open water dives, where they explore vibrant reefs teeming with life.

First-time divers often describe their initial experience as surreal—floating weightlessly, surrounded by colorful fish, sea turtles, rays, and occasionally even dolphins. The calm and silence of the underwater world contrasts starkly with everyday life, creating a meditative and transformative experience.

BEYOND THE DIVE

Scuba diving in Lakshadweep is not just a sport; it's an opportunity to connect

with nature and understand the importance of marine conservation. Local dive instructors, many of whom are from island communities, often share insights about coral health, climate change, and the importance of sustainable tourism.

Visitors also get to experience the simplicity of island life. With no bustling tourist traps, limited internet connectivity, and minimal commercial activity, Lakshadweep offers a unique chance to disconnect and rejuvenate.

IMPORTANT TRAVEL TIPS

Permits: Indian citizens need an entry permit to visit Lakshadweep, which is typically arranged by tour

operators or the resort.

Best Time to Visit: The ideal time for scuba diving is between October and May, when the seas are calm and visibility is high.

Responsible Travel: Since Lakshadweep is ecologically sensitive, tourists are advised to follow guidelines that protect marine life and respect local traditions.

A DIVE WORTH TAKING

For those looking to embark on a journey of self-discovery, adventure, and learning, Lakshadweep is a perfect destination. Learning scuba diving here is not just about earning a certification—it's about experiencing the ocean in its purest form, guided by the rhythms of the sea and the wisdom of island life.

In a world full of fast-paced vacations and digital overload, scuba diving in Lakshadweep offers a rare chance to slow down, look inward, and marvel at the beauty that lies beneath the surface—one breath at a time.

In a world full of fast-paced vacations and digital overload, scuba diving in Lakshadweep offers a rare chance to slow down, look inward, and marvel at the beauty that lies beneath the surface—one breath at a time.



SHAKE, STIR, SIP: INDIA'S MOST INNOVATIVE COCKTAIL DESTINATIONS TO EXPLORE RIGHT NOW

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India's cocktail culture is entering a golden age. From regional infusions and Himalayan botanicals to menus inspired by Indian art and summer nostalgia, bartenders across the country are rewriting the rules of mixology. Here's a look at some of the most inventive cocktail destinations that are shaking things up in style.

IDYLL, BENGALURU – A COCKTAIL BOOK THAT TELLS INDIA'S STORY

Bengaluru's IDYLL has launched *India Illustrated*, a one-of-a-kind cocktail book that celebrates the country's visual culture through mixology. Head Bartender Virendra Singh has crafted 15 signature cocktails, each inspired by India's regional culinary landscapes and traditional art—from temple carvings to street murals. The drinks are beautifully presented, offering a multisensory experience that blurs the line between a beverage and a piece of art. Each cocktail is an ode to India's layered identity and priced between Rs 625 to Rs 975.

PARTTWO, BENGALURU – BOTANICAL INNOVATION IN A GLASS

Also in Bengaluru, ParTTwo on Lavelle Road brings a fresh, spontaneous approach to both food and cocktails. The bar's mixology program draws inspiration from Karnataka's rich botanical diversity—using ingre-



dients like Coorg coffee, Devanahalli pomelo, and Udipi jasmine in classic formats like martinis and highballs. The idea is to keep things local, yet global in execution. Helmed by Chef Karan Upmanyu, ParTTwo's menu is designed for drinkers who appreciate bold, regional flavors served with flair.

TOSCANO – TIMELESS EUROPEAN ELEGANCE MEETS INDIAN FLAIR

With outlets across cities in India, Toscano blends

European sophistication with cocktail creativity. Highlights include the Deliziosa, a refreshing vodka-based watermelon and basil drink, and Saturnia, which pairs vodka with Aperol, lime, and ginger beer. Esmerelda, a nitro-infused tiramisu cocktail, adds a touch of decadence, while Saint Florent, made with gin, elderflower, and rose, is perfect for floral note lovers. Toscano's range is elegant yet inventive—ideal for those who love classics with a twist.

MY OH MY, MUMBAI – PLAYFUL, POPSICLE-INSPIRED SUMMER SIPS

Located in Andheri West, My Oh My channels the carefree vibe of summer with its “From the High Lab” cocktail menu. Drinks like Cocomero (featuring watermelon and a popsicle garnish), Pineapple Express, and Alice Alice (a tangy tangerine mix) are light-hearted yet sophisticated. Other favorites like

Enchanted Forest and Local for Vocal mix herbs like lemongrass and mint for a more grounded profile. Devil's Advocate surprises with nostalgic flavors and quirky presentation, making this venue perfect for sunny-day lounging.

ACROSS, MUMBAI – A TASTE OF THE HIMALAYAS

In Mumbai's Kala Ghoda district, ACROSS serves cocktails that echo the soul of the Himalayas. Founded by Chef Viraf Patel and Prakriti Lama, the bar's creations are inspired by mountain herbs, foraged ingredients, and regional liquors. Expect drinks infused with rhododendron liqueur, wild berries, high-altitude honey, and Himalayan salt. The minimalist aesthetic and deep storytelling make each drink feel like a spiritual journey through the mountains.

Whether you're a purist or an adventurous sipper, these bars are raising the bar—quite literally—on what cocktails can be in modern India.



ART AS PROTEST: REVISITING INDIA'S MODERN MASTERS AT PROGRESSIVE ART GALLERY, DUBAI

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

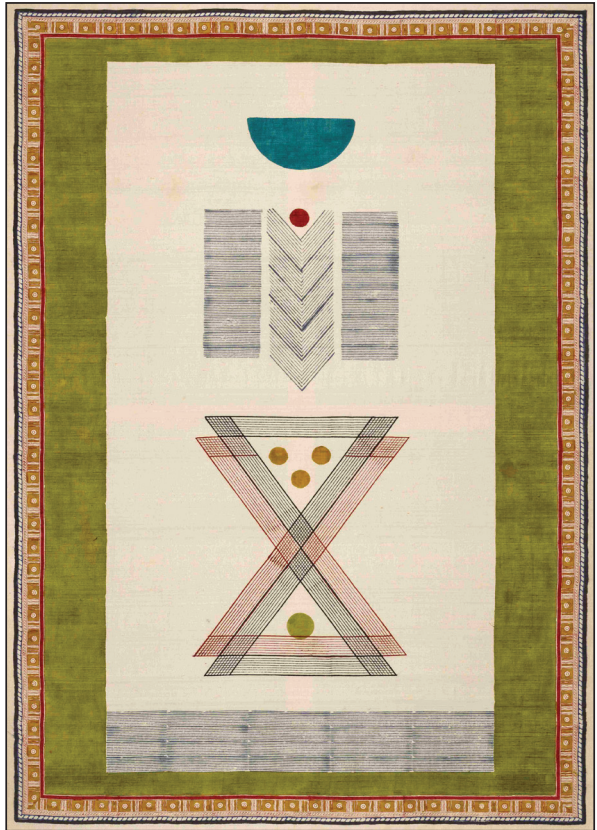
In the heart of Dubai's thriving cultural scene, Progressive Art Gallery unveils an exhibition that dares to ask—can protest be quiet, spiritual, or even aesthetic? Titled «Intertwined: Revisitation of the Indian Art Narrative», this landmark showcase invites visitors to walk through a visual history of dissent, individualism, and innovation within Indian Modern Art.

Running until 31st May 2025, the exhibition brings together an extraordinary constellation of artists whose works continue to shape conversations about identity, resistance, and legacy.

Curated by Wendy Amanda Coutinho, Intertwined re-frames protest beyond its political connotation—positioning it as a deeply personal, creative force that transcends slogans and manifests through form, colour, and symbolism.

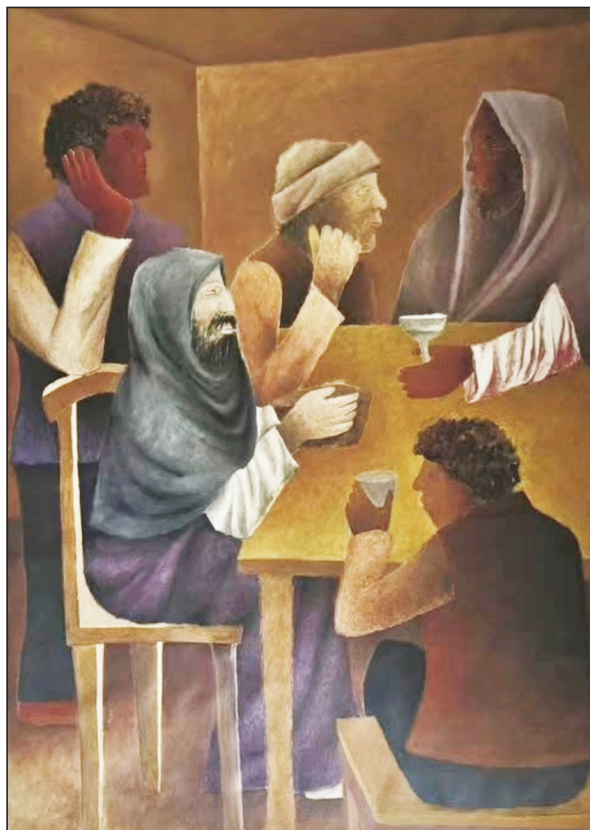
“Art's relevance lies not in the adherence to any ideology, but in its potential to dare, to question, and to unearth the unseen truths of its time,” says curator Wendy Amanda Coutinho. “This exhibition is not about loud declarations, but about the layered acts of defiance—intimate, philosophical, formal—that shaped the trajectory of modern Indian art.”

A Pantheon of Masters
From the pioneering Progressive Artists' Group—including M.F. Husain, F.N. Souza, S.H. Raza, K.H.



Ara, H.A. Gade, and S.K. Bakre—to modern visionar-

ies like Tyeb Mehta, Bhupen Khakhar, Jehangir Sabavala,



and V.S. Gaitonde, Intertwined highlights how these artists resisted not just colo-

rial hangovers, but also the confinement of ideologies, markets, and expectations.



Alongside these modern masters, the exhibition also presents powerful feminist and folk-rooted counter-narratives by artists such as Anjolie Ela Menon, B. Prabha, Madhvi Parekh, and Arpita Singh—women who dared to tell stories often ignored by the dominant discourse.

Their protest was often formal rather than political—seen in Raza's meditative abstraction, Souza's provocative figuration, or Gaitonde's Zen-infused minimalism.

BEYOND THE FRAME

Alongside these modern masters, the exhibition also presents powerful feminist and folk-rooted counter-narratives by artists such as Anjolie Ela Menon, B. Prabha, Madhvi Parekh, and Arpita Singh—women who dared to tell stories often ignored by the dominant discourse.

The inclusion of visionaries like Jamini Roy, Ganesh Pyne, Jogen Chowdhury, Shyamal Dutta Ray, and K.G. Subramanyan further expands the conversation, showing how protest in Indian art was rarely linear—it was layered, introspective, mystical, and at times, heartbreakingly personal.

A DIRECTOR'S REFLECTION

“This exhibition is a celebration of artists who didn't just paint pictures, they carved paths,” says Harshvardhan Singh, Director of Progres-

sive Art Gallery. “Their works, drawn from across decades and ideologies, converge here to speak a common truth—art is, and always has been, a powerful agent of change.”

EXHIBITION DETAILS

Venue: Progressive Art Gallery, Dubai
Dates: Open to public until 31st May 2025
Timings: Monday to Saturday, 11 AM – 7 PM
Progressive Art Gallery remains the only dedicated space in Dubai for showcasing Modern Indian Art with a growing global presence.

Speaking Stones: Rock Art of Ladakh — An exhibition of photographs

Based on the book by Ahtushi Deshpande, Banff Mountain Book Award Finalist 2024

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

EXHIBITION DETAILS:

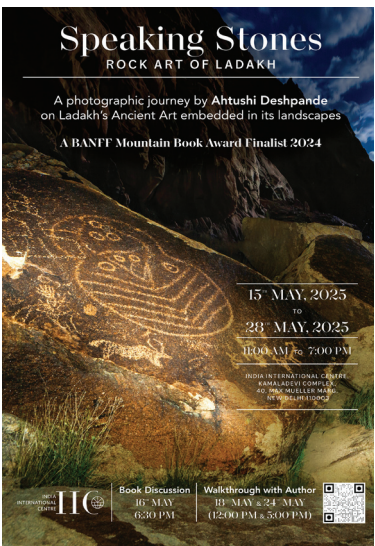
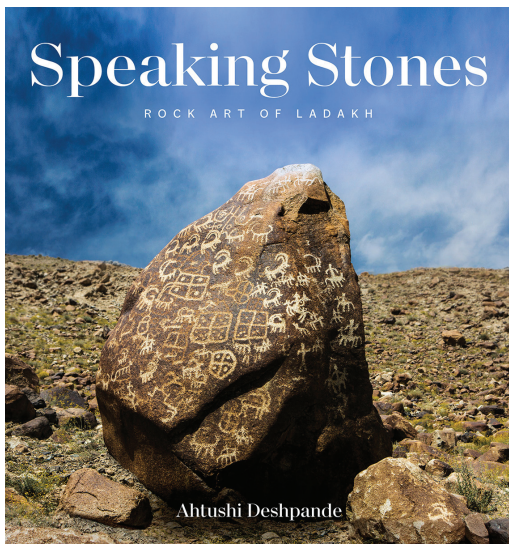
India International Centre, Kamaladevi Complex Art Gallery
Dates: 15th May 2025 – 28th May 2025
Timings: 11 AM - 7 PM (Every Day)

This exhibition, based on Ahtushi Deshpande's critically acclaimed book and featuring photographs from the author's decade long documentation, explores the lesser-known rock art galleries of Ladakh.

It showcases a museum-grade curated collection of ancient art, offering a unique insight into the region's hidden heritage. After a successful two-month run in Paris, this exhibition makes its debut in Delhi.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

16th May, 6:30 PM: Book Discussion with Dr. Alka Pande and (if she comes on board she will help curate it into a good book discussion)



The exhibition showcases a museum-grade curated collection of ancient art, offering a unique insight into the region's hidden heritage. After a successful two-month run in Paris, this exhibition makes its debut in Delhi.

and we can see who else to rope in)

18th May (Sunday): z Walkthrough of the exhibition with the author at 12 PM

& 5 PM
24th May: Walkthrough with the author at 12 PM & 5 PM.



‘Colours of India’ showcases the spirit of Indian dance

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a mesmerizing celebration of India's rich cultural heritage, Trikayaa Dance Foundation presented its production, ‘Colours of India’, at Kamani Auditorium. The event was a grand tribute to the country's classical, folk, and martial dance traditions, brought to life through powerful performances by over 50 artists from across the nation.

Conceptualized and choreographed by Rakesh Sai Babu (recipient of the SNA Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar) and Priya Srinivasan (Kalakshetra alumna and Director, Trikayaa Dance Foundation), Colours of India was not just a performance, it was a journey. From the intricate storytelling of Bharatanatyam to the athletic grace of Mayurbhanj Chhau, and the emotive elegance of Odissi, Kathakali, Kathak, and Kuchipudi, the evening showcased a seamless fusion of styles, capturing the soul of India's artistic heritage.



Equally captivating were the vibrant folk dances of Rajasthan, Punjab, Kashmir, Karnataka, and West Bengal, which added rhythm, colour, and regional essence to the tapestry.

The performances moved fluidly between tradition and innovation, reflecting the Foundation's ethos of cultural preservation through dynamic expression.

The production also served as Trikayaa Dance Foundation's annual showcase, celebrating a year of artistic growth, rigorous training, and community engagement. From junior students to seasoned performers, the stage came alive with rhythm, expression, and devotion.

In her message, Priya Srinivasan said, “‘Colours of India’ is a tribute to the unity that lies in our diversity. Every step, every rhythm tonight reflected not only the beauty of Indian dance, but the cultural dialogue that binds us across regions.”

Rakesh Sai Babu added, “We envisioned this production as a living canvas—where classical discipline meets folk vitality, and ancient traditions are carried forward by today's generation of dancers.”

With Colours of India, Trikayaa Dance Foundation reaffirmed its place as a vibrant cultural institution, dedicated to nurturing the next generation of artists while celebrating the timeless beauty of India's performing arts.



KL'S CENTURY DRIVES DC TO COMPETITIVE 199/3 AGAINST GT

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

A masterclass century under pressure by opener KL Rahul and his useful partnerships with Abishek Porel and Axar Patel helped Delhi Capitals (DC) march to 199/3 in their 20 overs against Gujarat Titans (GT) at Arun Jaitley Stadium on Sunday.

With this century, KL has scored his fifth IPL ton and overall seventh in T20s. DC needs to defend 200 to secure their seventh win of the season and boost their playoff chances.

After GT put DC to bat first, the visitors surely proved their decision right as for the first three overs, GT pacers Mohammed Siraj and Arshad Khan built up pressure on openers KL Rahul and Faf Du Plessis, not letting them even collect singles. Faf continued his mediocre run, succumbing to the pressure. He gave an easy catch to Siraj at mid-on,



but Arshad Khan dismissed him for five in 10 balls. DC was 16/1 in 3.2 overs.

Abishek Porel joined KL on the crease, and the experienced Indian batter put back pressure on GT, with two well-timed runs against Siraj and by looting 17 runs off Kagiso Rabada's first over, the final one of the powerplay. This included two sixes and four from Rahul.

At the end of six overs, DC was 45/1, with KL (36*) and Axar (1*) unbeaten.

DC brought up their 50-run mark in seven overs. KL brought up another fifty in the season, in just 35 balls, with five boundaries and two sixes. This was his fourth of the season.

With Porel and Rahul upping the attack, DC reached 81/1 in 10 overs, with KL (56*) and Porel (15*) unbeaten.

After getting to his fifty, Rahul upped the ante, with two sixes against Rabada.

Their 90-run partnership ended, with Sai Kishore getting Porel caught behind by Jos Buttler for 30 in 19 balls (with a four and three sixes). DC was 106/2 in 12 overs.

Skipper Axar Patel joined KL at the crease, and the duo collected some boundaries against spinners. At the end of 15 overs, DC was

136/2, with Axar (10*) and Rahul (86*) unbeaten.

The promising partnership between KL and Axar was cut short as the skipper was caught by Sai Kishore on a Prasidh Krishna delivery at third man for 25 in 16 balls, with two fours and a six. DC was 151/3 in 16.2 overs.

KL continued his innings unaffected by the falling wickets, absorbing all the pressure. He finally reached his fifth IPL century in 60 balls, with 12 fours and four sixes, giving Prasidh his most expensive spell of the season: 1/47 in four overs.

DC ended their innings really well, getting 16 runs in the final over, including two fours by KL and a gigantic six by Tristan Stubbs. At the end, KL was unbeaten at 112* in 65 balls, with 14 fours and four sixes and Stubbs at 21* in 10 balls, with two sixes. DC was 199/3 in their 20 overs.

Prasidh, Sai, and Arshad each got a wicket.



Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan tweeted this picture on his X account, congratulating Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra for breaching the elusive 90-metre barrier with a throw of 90.23 m in the men's javelin throw at the Doha Diamond League 2025

Harpreet Brar's 3/22 storms PBKS to victory over RR by 10 runs

AGENCIES
JAIPUR

A Brilliant bowling performance from left-arm spinner Harpreet Brar guided the Punjab Kings (PBKS) team to victory over the Rajasthan Royals (RR) by 10 runs at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium on Sunday.

With this win, the Punjab side moved to the second spot (17 points in 12 games), on the other hand, the Rajasthan team slipped to the ninth position (6 points in 13 matches) in the IPL 2025 points table.

Chasing a mammoth total of 220 runs, the Rajasthan Royals openers Yashasvi Jaiswal (50 runs off 25 balls) and Vaibhav Suryavanshi (40 runs from 15 balls) started attacking the bowlers from the first over.

The Sanju Samson-led side touched the 550-run mark in the third over as Jaiswal slammed a boundary on the penultimate ball of the over.

Both batters were dealing in sixes and fours. Jaiswal and Suryavanshi scored 67 runs in 25 balls before running for a single. The first wicket fell in the fifth over at the score of 76 as Suryavanshi was sent back to the pavilion. After the fall of the first wicket, team skipper Sanju Samson came out to bat alongside Jaiswal. The Rajasthan-based franchise completed the 100-run mark in the 8th over.



Punjab Kings' Shashank Singh and Azmatullah Omarzai run between wickets during the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 match against Rajasthan Royals, at Sawai Mansingh Stadium, in Jaipur on Sunday. (ANI Photo)

In the 11th over, the Royals lost the second wicket as Jaiswal was sent back to the dressing room on the bowling of Brar. Following his dismissal, Riyan Parag came to bat.

Samson (20 runs in 16 balls), Parag (13 runs off 11 balls), and left-hand batter Shimron Hetmyer (11 runs from 12 balls) were unable to make their mark in the game. Dhruv Jurel (53 runs in 31 balls) scored some crucial runs for the side, but it was not enough to take his team over the line.

For the PBKS side, three wickets were snapped by Brar (3/22 in 4 overs), and two wickets each were grabbed by Marco Jansen (2/41 in 3 overs) and Azmatullah Omarzai (2/44 in 4 overs) in their respective spells. Earlier, after winning the toss and opting to bat first, openers Prabhsimran Singh and Priyansh Arya started by striking

some boundaries. However, Tushar Deshpande got Priyansh for nine in seven deliveries, with Shimron Hetmyer taking a catch at mid-off. PBKS was 19/1 in 1.5 overs.

Debutant Mitchell Owen joined Prabhsimran. While Prabhsimran continued his rich run of form by attacking Kwen Maphaka, Owen was dismissed by the South African U19 star for a two-ball duck, with skipper Sanju Samson taking a catch. RR was 34/2 in three overs. Deshpande just could not be kept out of action as he removed Prabhsimran for 21 in 10 balls, with three fours and a six. PBKS is 34/3 in 3.1 overs.

Towards the final few balls of the powerplay, skipper Shreyas Iyer and Nehal Wadhwa collected some boundaries against RR pace, with PBKS bringing up their 50-run mark in 5.2 overs.

Manika, Manav cruise to second round

AGENCIES
DOHA

Star Indian table tennis player Manika Batra cruised to the second round of the World Championships with a dominant straight-game win while Manav Thakkar also made a confident start to his singles campaign, here Sunday.

Seeded 22nd, Manika registered a commanding 4-0 (11-5, 11-6, 11-8, 11-2) victory over Nigeria's Fatima Bello in a women's singles fixture that lasted just 24 minutes. She will be up against Korea's Park Gahyeon in the round of 64.

India's top-ranked male singles player, Thakkar, also began in style, defeating New Zealand's Timothy Choi 4-1 (11-3, 11-8, 6-11, 11-7, 14-12) in his men's singles opening round. However, it was a forgettable debut for



18-year-old Ankur Bhat-tacharjee, who exited in the first round after a 1-4 (11-4, 7-11, 9-11, 10-12, 8-11) defeat to Hong Kong's Lam Siu Hang in his men's singles outing. In the doubles action, the ninth-seeded pair of Manush Shah and Diya Chitale made a strong start, registering a comprehensive 3-0 (11-2, 11-7, 11-6) win over Algeria's Mehdi Bouloussa and Malissa Nasri.

But it was disappointment for the men's doubles duo of Harmeet Desai and Sathi-

yan Gnanasekaran, who bowed out in the opening round, losing 1-3 (9-11, 12-10, 14-16, 10-12) to Austria's Maciej Kolodziejczyk and Moldova's Vladislav Ursu. Desai also faced heartbreak in the mixed doubles, partnering Yashaswini Ghorpade.

The 14th-seeded Indian pair failed to capitalise on a 2-0 lead and also squandered three match points to lose 2-3 (11-8, 11-6, 10-12, 8-11, 10-12) to France's Thibault Poret and Leana Hochart.

Diksha rises to tied 4th in Dutch Ladies Open

AGENCIES
HILVERSUM

Diksha Dagar, who shot 71 in the first round, was back in action early on the second day and shot 2-under 70 to get into the Top-5 of the Dutch Ladies Open. The second round was still in progress, but Mimi Rhodes of England, who has been having a great season, was on top with 69-69 at 6-under and two ahead of Diksha, who is Tied-fourth.

Avani Prashanth, in her rookie season, had a 73 on the first day. In the second round, she was 2-under through 17 holes in the second. AT2-over total, she had a chance to make the cut, which was likely to fall at 2-over, as per the Dutch Ladies Open press release. The 2024 Hero Women's Order of Merit winner, Hitaashee Bakshi (71) was in the Top-



20 at Tied-17th, but was yet to begin her second round. Tvesa Malik was 2-over 74 in the first round, and Pranavi Rooks had an off-day with a 77 and withdrew with an injury. Diksha had two birdies against one bogey in round one, but on the second day, she rode a roller coaster with five birdies against three bogeys.

She was tied fourth with Anne Van Dam of the Netherlands, who had rounds of 72-69.

World No. 1 Scheffler three ahead of field; Aaron slips to 36th at PGA

AGENCIES
CHARLOTTE

Scottie Scheffler landed a superb eagle on the Par-4 14th with a great tee shot and holed a three-footer as he went into a three-shot lead with one round to go in the 107th PGA Championship at Quail Hollow Club.

Scheffler's 6-under 65 took him to 11-under 202, and he led Alex Noren (66) at 8-under by three as three players, including Jon Rahm (67) were tied in third at 7-under. Rahm was among those five shots behind. DeChambeau was six back as per a press release from PGA.



In 2024, Scheffler captured seven official PGA Tour titles, including the Masters, The Players, the Tour Championship, and four signature events. He also claimed gold at the Olympic men's competi-

tion in Paris and, to wrap up the year, he successfully defended his Hero World Challenge title in the Bahamas. In 2025, he won his first title earlier this month at the CJ Byron Nelson.

Indo-British Aaron Rai,

who was fourth after the first day, slipped down further as he carded 74 and is now T-36th, down from T-17 after two days. Akshay. Bhatia missed the halfway cut, while Sahith Theegala withdrew due to a neck strain.

Playing as if he were putting up a clinic, Scheffler was brilliant on the back nine over the final hour of the day. Scheffler, the world's No. 1 player who at one stage trailed by three, turned that into a three-shot lead over Alex Noren (66), who only last week returned from seven months away with a hamstring injury.

PHF wants Asian Body to guarantee visa to participate in Asia Cup

AGENCIES
KARACHI

Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) wants the continental body to guarantee visas for its contingent to participate in the Asia Cup to be held in India from August 27 to September 7, according to an official here.

Pakistan's participation in the tournament, to be held in Rajgir (Bihar), is in serious doubt because of the tensions between the two countries after the Pahalgam terror attack, and Hockey India (HI) has said it is awaiting a government advisory on the matter. "It is too early



to say anything but we will follow the government's directive on this issue, which has been the case in the past. We can't predict anything right now especially after the recent barbaric Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor

that India conducted following that," HI secretary general Bholanath Singh had told PTT.

A senior PHF official said that the Asia Cup was vital for Pakistan as it is a qualifying tournament for next

year's men's World Cup to be held in the Netherlands and Belgium. "We don't want to lose the opportunity of going to the World Cup via the Asia Cup," the official said. "So we believe, one solution could be moving the event from India or Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) guaranteeing visas for our team," he added. The PHF official said there would also be the World Cup qualifying events in early 2026 but the Asia Cup represented a good chance to qualify. Pakistan didn't qualify for the last World Cup held in 2023 in India.

Khelo India: Sports minister announces introduction of multiple games

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Sunday announced the broadening of the scope of the Khelo India initiative with the introduction of multiple Games to cover school sports, martial arts, beach and water sports from this year onwards.

While launching Khelo India Annual Calendar, Mandaviya said that the government will soon introduce a

series of Khelo India Games and other competitions, including Khelo India North-East Games, among others. He said the aim was to strengthen India's sporting ecosystem, provide strategic year-round schedule to boost grassroots competitions, talent identification. "The Khelo India Annual Calendar is not just a schedule but it is a strategic blueprint strengthening India's domestic competition structure for transforming



India into a global sporting powerhouse," Mandaviya said

. "Over the past decade, In-

dian sports have undergone a remarkable transformation.... We have created a dynamic and inclusive sport-

ing ecosystem with regular national-level competitions under the Khelo India initiative. "Taking this vision forward, we will soon introduce Khelo India Beach Games (KIBG), Khelo India School Games (KISG), Khelo India Water Sports, Khelo India North-East Games, among others." Mandaviya said these events will be pivotal in identifying, nurturing, and preparing India's young talent. The Khelo India plat-

form already includes four structured national-level Games, namely the Khelo India Youth Games, Khelo India University Games, Khelo India Para Games, and Khelo India Winter Games.

A special focus is being given to the Khelo India School Games (KISG), which will follow a tiered structure, starting from the district level, moving to the state level, and culminating in national-level competitions.

Furthermore, the inclusion of events like the Khelo India Martial Art Games, Khelo India Tribal Games, and Khelo India Swadeshi Games aims to bring indigenous and traditional martial arts into the mainstream, the sports ministry said.

The first edition of the Khelo India Beach Games (KIBG) is set to take place in Diu from May 19-25, which will draw national attention to coastal and beach sports,

while also highlighting the region's tourism potential.

The calendar for the remainder of the year includes events such as the Khelo India School Games (August to December), Khelo India University Games (March-April), Water Sports and North-East Games (May-June), Tribal Games (September in Chhattisgarh), and the Indigenous and Martial Art Games (July-August in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh).