



Pakistan breaches ceasefire agreed with India

RAHUL DUTTA, MOHIT KANDHARI ■
New Delhi, Jammu

Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri slammed Pakistan Saturday night for the ceasefire violation along the Line of Control (LoC) and the International Border (IB) within hours after an understanding was reached between the Director General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan to stop the military action that was going on for the last few days.

Briefing media persons after Pakistan resorted to multiple ceasefire violations across Poonch, Rajouri, Akhnoor and RS Pura sectors, the Foreign Secretary said the forces have been instructed to deal strongly with any violations on the borders.

"An understanding was reached this evening between the DGMOs of India and Pakistan to stop the military action that was going on for the last few days. For the last few hours, this understanding has been violated by Pakistan. This is a serious breach," Misri said.

Referring to the Indian response to these fresh incidents of ceasefire violations, the Foreign Secretary said, "The Indian Army is retaliating and dealing with this border intrusion. This intrusion is extremely condemnable and Pakistan is responsible for it. We believe that Pakistan should understand this situation properly and take appropriate action immediately to stop this intrusion." He asked Pakistan to contain the aggression by its Army.

Before the press briefing started, suspicious movement was spotted by an alert sentry at the Nagrota Military station in Jammu late Saturday night. The sentry sustained a minor injury during a brief exchange of fire. Nagrota-based White Knight Corps in a post on X said, "On noticing suspicious movement near the perimeter, alert sentry at Nagrota Military Station issued a challenge, leading to a brief exchange of fire with the suspect. Sentry sustained a minor injury. Search operations are underway to track the intruder(s)." Before India and Pakistan agreed to a ceasefire agreement, six persons, including a senior J-K government official and



(Left) Vehicles moving on a road during blackout in Srinagar; (Right) Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a high-level meeting Saturday evening with top government functionaries, including Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, following the announcement that India and Pakistan have reached an understanding to stop military actions. NSA Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan and all three service chiefs were among those who attended the meeting. PTI

a BSF Sub Inspector, were killed in intense mortar shelling and drone strikes by Pakistan across different sectors early Saturday morning.

At the same time, explosions were also heard in Srinagar late Saturday night, prompting the Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, to question, "What happened to the Ceasefire?" "What the hell just happened to the ceasefire? Explosions heard across Srinagar!", posted Omar Abdullah.

Earlier, India and Pakistan on Saturday agreed to ceasefire from five pm and stop all firings and military action on land, air and sea. The two sides also agreed to hold talks on May 12 to review the implementation of the pact, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri announced.

He said the two sides consented to immediate cessation of activities after Director general of military operations (DGMO) of Pakistan called his Indian counterpart at 3.35 pm.

The announcement came days after India carried out 'Operation Sindoor' on

SUSPENSION OF INDUS TREATY, VISAS TO STAY

Even as the two countries have come to an understanding to halt all military action on land, air and sea, suspension of Indus Water Treaty and visas to Pakistani nationals will continue, it was learnt. These measures were announced on April 23, a day after the Pahalgam terror act. Also, terrorism will not go unpunished and India's resolve on terrorism remains firm, sources said. On the understanding between the two sides to end the hostilities, they said Pakistan called it a bilateral arrangement.

May 7 striking nine terror infrastructures in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (PoK) to avenge the Pahalgam attack on April 22 killing 26 tourists.

Since the operation, Pakistan attempted to target various Indian military installations on Thursday and Friday by launching drones and missiles targeting Indian military installations and cities. India,



however, repulsed all attempts and neutralized the incoming drones.

The brief announcement by the foreign secretary, meanwhile, came shortly after US President Donald Trump said India and Pakistan have agreed to a "full and immediate" ceasefire.

The DGMO of Pakistan called the DGMO of India at 3.35 pm earlier this afternoon, Misri said. "It was agreed between them that both sides would stop all firing and military action on land, and in the air and sea, with effect from 1700 hours IST Saturday," he said.

"Instructions have been given on both sides to give effect to this understanding. The DGMOs will talk again on May 12 at 1200 hours," he added.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said in a social media post later "India and Pakistan have today worked out an understanding on stoppage of firing and military action. India has consistently maintained a firm and uncompromising stance against terrorism in all its forms and man-

ifestations. It will continue to do so."

India and Pakistan directly worked out the stopping of military actions, government sources said on Saturday. The source-based clarification came after US President Donald Trump announced that India and Pakistan have agreed to a "full and immediate" ceasefire after talks mediated by the US. There is no decision to hold talks on any other issue at any other place, they said. Every misadventure and future escalation by Pakistan will be responded to with strength and decisive action, Indian military said. The remarks came shortly after the two neighbours reached an understanding to stop military actions.

"While we will be adhering to the understanding reached today, we remain fully prepared to defend India's sovereignty," Commodore Raghu Nair said.

We remain fully operationally ready to launch whatever operations may be required in defence of the nation, he said at a media briefing.

Wing Commander Vyomika Singh said

Pakistan's claim of destroying India's S-400 missile base is completely false.

Several attempts were made by Pakistan to spreading mis-information, she added. Pakistan has suffered heavy losses in both land and air domains, Singh said. The military officer also said Pakistan's claim of destroying a BrahMos installation was false. "After a long night of talks mediated by the United States, I am pleased to announce that India and Pakistan have agreed to a FULL AND IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE," the US President announced in a social media post.

"Congratulations to both Countries on using Common Sense and Great Intelligence. Thank you for your attention to this matter!" Trump added.

The announcement by Trump came after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir.

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Any act of terror will be war, warns India

J GOPIKRISHAN ■ New Delhi

In a significant toughening of its counter-terrorism doctrine, the Government on Saturday declared that any future "act of terror" will be treated as an "act of war" and will be responded to accordingly.

A top Government official said, "Any future act of terror in India will be considered an act of war against the country and will be responded to accordingly." The statement marks a formal shift in India's rules of engagement, drawing a clear red line for Pakistan-based terror groups. New Delhi has made it clear that it will not hesitate to respond militarily to any attack, anywhere in India.

With this decision, the Government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sought to draw a red line against terror incidents and makes clear that it will follow a similar military response as it has after the Pahalgam incident if terrorists linked to Pakistan target India again.

The Government's decision formalises India's firm response to any future act of terror. The warning is not an escalation, but a clear red line drawn in response to Pakistan's repeated acts of aggression, including sustained drone and missile attacks targeting Indian military and civilian infrastructure.

In international law, an "act of war" refers to action taken by one state against another that amounts to the use of armed force or aggression, typically signalling the start of an armed conflict or war. The United Nations Charter (Article 2(4)) prohibits member states from using

force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, except in cases of self-defence (Article 51) or when authorised by the UN Security Council.

The term "act of war" is not strictly defined in the UN Charter, but historically, it referred to actions that could justify a state in responding with military force. Any act of terror which would be

The Government, since 2014, has drastically amped up its response to terror incidents linked to Pakistan, targeting nine terror sites in the neighbouring country

considered a declaration of war would include bombings, firing, flight hijacking, and cyber, biological or chemical attacks. These include attacks on Government buildings, military camps and institutions.

While non-State actors usually carry out terror activities, some nations openly support terrorism, such as terror attacks launched at the behest of and after encouragement and instigation by Pakistan. India has blamed Pakistan-based terror groups for a series of violent incidents targeting soldiers and civilians inside its territory for a long period of time, with the April 22 killing of 26 civilians at Kashmir's famous tourist site only the latest in such acts.

PM Modi has chaired a number of high-level meetings, including with the security establishment, since the hostil-

ities broke out between the two countries, and the decision was an outcome of extensive consultations.

The Modi Government, since coming to power in 2014, has drastically amped up its response to terror incidents linked to Pakistan, with the armed forces, in their most expansive strike against terrorist organisations, targeting nine terror sites in the neighbouring country and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on May 7 under Operation Sindoor.

Pakistan has since then attempted to attack a number of military installations and civilian population along India's northern and western borders. India has said it has responded befittingly. India on Saturday said it has effectively blunted Pakistan's provocative action of employing multiple threats along the western border using drones, long-range weapons and fighter jets, targeting civilian areas and military infrastructure, as the conflict between the two neighbours widened further.

Pakistan has been observed to be moving its troops into forward areas, indicating an "offensive intent", to further escalate the situation, the Indian military said, adding that it remains in a high state of operational readiness.

As fears of a larger military conflict loom, military spokeswoman Colonel Sofiya Qureshi said the Indian armed forces reiterate their commitment to non-escalation, provided it is reciprocated by the Pakistani military. India has asserted that it was Pakistan that escalated the situation with the Pahalgam terror attack.

Indian strikes killed five top terrorists

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

Operation Sindoor killed five top terrorists, including Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief Masood Azhar's brothers-in-law Hafiz Muhammad Jameel and Mohammad Yusuf Azhar, who were among the masterminds of IC 814 Kandhar hijacking in 1999. The five terrorists, who were killed in Indian strikes, were identified as Mudassar Khadian Khas, Hafiz Muhammad Jameel, Mohammad Yusuf Azhar, Khalid alias Abu Akasha, and Mohammad Hassan Khan, who were tasked with important roles in the Pakistan-based terror groups, JeM and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

Funerals of these terrorists were attended by senior Pakistan Army officers and police personnel. Besides wreaths were placed on behalf of the chief minister of Pakistan's Punjab province, Maryam Nawaz, providing an open testimony of the Pakistan's collusion with terrorist organisations.

Sources said Mohammad Yusuf Azhar, listed at number 21 in the most wanted list of terrorists prepared by the Union Home Ministry, was the brother-in-law of Maulana Masood Azhar and one of the masterminds of the IC-814 hijacking in 1999. Yusuf, who was in his late 50s, had sneaked into India in 1998, a year before hijacking, using a fake passport arranged by his point person Abdul Latif. At the time, Yusuf had an Interpol Red Notice against him.

In 2002, India gave his name to Pakistan as a wanted terrorist. He was also a designated terrorist under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act and wanted for

the hijacking of the Indian Airlines flight to Kandahar in December 1999. The hijacking ended with India releasing JeM founder Masood Azhar and two other terrorists, Omar Sheikh and Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar, in exchange for passengers and crew.

Officials said he made plans several times to free Masood Azhar from the Jammu jail. In 1999, he travelled to

Wreaths were laid on behalf of the Pakistan Army Chief and Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz, the daughter of former PM Nawaz Sharif and niece of current PM Shehbaz Sharif

Dhaka with Latif and was joined by Masood Azhar's brothers Abdul Rauf and Ibrahim Athar at various points. Rauf arranged posh accommodation in Dhaka's cantonment, officials said.

Yusuf Azhar was present in the Bahawalpur headquarters of the JeM, where he imparted weapons training to the cadres, with his family members, when Indian munitions hit it with clinical precision, reducing it to rubble.

Another brother-in-law of Masood Azhar, Hafiz Muhammad Jameel, who was in-charge of Markaz Subhan Allah in Bahawalpur, a massive training centre for JeM terrorists, was also eliminated in the strike. Jameel was actively involved in the radical indoctrination of youth and fundraising for the JeM. LeT terrorist Mudassar Khadian Khas, who went by the alias Mudassar and Abu Jundal and was

in-charge of Markaz Taiba, Muridke, was killed in the strike on the proscribed organisation's nerve centre by Indian forces. His funeral exposed the active collusion between the Pakistan State and terror after videos of him getting a guard of honour from the Pakistan Army were circulated on social media.

It was noticed that wreaths were laid on behalf of the Pakistan Army Chief and Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz, who is the daughter of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and niece of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The funeral prayer was led by Hafiz Abdul Rauf of Jamaat al-Dawah — who is a designated global terrorist — and attended by a serving Lt General of the Pakistan Army and the Inspector General of Punjab Police in a government school, concrete evidence of the State being hand in glove with the terrorists.

A Lashkar terrorist, Khalid alias Abu Akasha was involved in multiple terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, besides weapons smuggling from Afghanistan. His funeral, held in Faisalabad, was attended by senior Pakistani Army officials and the Deputy Commissioner of Faisalabad. Mohammad Hassan Khan, the son of the operational commander of JeM in PoJK, Mufti Asghar Khan Kashmiri, was also eliminated in the strike. Khan played a key role in coordinating terrorist attacks in Jammu & Kashmir, they said.

Sources said Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, the spokesperson for the Pakistan Army, has a dark past with a shadow of terrorism looming large.

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Operation Sindoor: India's new response to cross-border terror

GEN ASHOK KUMAR MEHTA ■ New Delhi

There was no let up in the trading of drones and missiles between the two warring nations for the third day following India's bold and effective kinetic retribution for the Pahalgam massacre. It deserves repetition that Operation Sindoor marked a paradigm shift in India's response matrix to cross border terrorism (CBT).

Christine Fair, whose study of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism and proxy wars excels any other study on the subject, has noted that she was terribly surprised by India's daring strikes against dens of terrorism in Muridke and Bahawalpur; that too in the heart of Punjab, adding she was also impressed by the sophistication of the precision strikes. But it did not mean the end of CBT.

While Balakot strikes had strategic implications they caused no damage to terrorist infrastructure, she said.

So, where were we on the escalation ladder? After testing India air defences with drones and missiles for two days, Rawalpindi finally launched its counter offensive, Operation Buniyan ul Marson — taken straight out of the Quran.

It targeted Indian military airfields and installations across the International Border (IB) and the Line of Control (LoC) using its full spectrum of air assets inflicting limited damage and causing civil and military casualties.

India's response was directed at Pakistan's air bases, radars, weapon dumps, and command and control facilities, inflicting substantial damage. Further India's response was qualified with the usual adjectives 'non-provocative' and 'non-escalatory'. The nature of damage caused to each other's war waging capacity is unknown. India's strategy was to locate and take out air defence systems, followed by disabling the air fields as part of counter-air operations.

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Night felt endless: 16-year-old recalls Pakistan attacks

PARINA KANDHARI ■ Jammu

It was a normal school day. After returning home, everyone in the family was busy with their daily routine. I was studying in my room, papa was engrossed in his office work, dadu was watching television, my sister was riding her bicycle outside, and mummy and dadi were sitting in the balcony, enjoying the pleasant evening breeze. Everything felt calm-until the clock struck 8:15 pm.

At first, I heard a few explosions, but dismissed them as firecrackers. However, as the intensity grew, I realised something was wrong. I rushed out of my room and alerted Papa. We stepped outside to see what was happening-and for the first time in my life, I witnessed something that chilled me to the core: around 15 to 20 red projectile-missiles or flares streaking across the night sky. It was a terrifying sight. My sister, who had been cycling with her friends, screamed in panic and threw her bicycle aside upon seeing the red trails in the sky.



Papa quickly ran to the rooftop to record the incident. Moments later, a complete blackout engulfed the area, and warning sirens wailed through the air.

To give some context, I am 16-years-old,

born and brought up in Jammu. As far back as I can remember, I have never experienced such an intense and direct attack. It was the first time in the history of the India-Pakistan conflict that civilian areas were

being so openly targeted. While the Sunjwan Army Cantonment, just 10 minutes from our home, has been attacked in the past, and other such incidents have occurred across Jammu and Kashmir, this time it was different. This time, it was personal. The trajectory of those projectiles indicated they were aimed at damaging strategic locations like the Sunjwan Cantonment and the Jammu Airport. The initial explosions were followed by several more throughout the night. It was then that I truly felt what it means to live in a conflict zone. That night felt endless.

The next morning, both my school and coaching institute were closed due to security concerns. My sister and I remained shaken, but Mummy and Papa reassured us and encouraged us to follow our routine. Despite the closures, online classes continued as scheduled via Google Meet and Zoom. We attended sessions, completed our assignments, and tried our best to stay composed throughout the day.

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India boosts airport security after drone attack threats

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

In a bid to strengthen airport security, the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) has temporarily assigned the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) as the Aviation Security Group, focusing on cargo operation and the in-line hold baggage screening system. "In a significant decision to boost security across Indian civil airports, the Director General of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) has issued an Official Memorandum (OM) dated May 9, 2025, temporarily extending the role of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) as the Aviation Security Group (ASG) to provide additional security cover to Cargo operations and the In-line Hold Baggage Screening System (ILHBSS)," CISF said.

A spokesperson for the paramilitary force said the move has been initiated following a directive issued by the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) on May 9 "temporarily" extending CISF's cover to these processes in "direct response" to the terrorist attack in Pahalgam and the subsequent security scenario in the country.

This new arrangement will be in place till May 18, the spokesperson said. The CISF usually is only entrusted to frisk passengers and their cabin baggage.

The cargo and In-line Hold Baggage Screening System (ILHBSS) checking was done by private security staff engaged by the airlines and airport operators.

"The enhancement of CISF's mandate is essential to reinforce security arrangements at all civil airports," the spokesperson said. He added that the CISF has responded immediately and resumed "oversight" over cargo and baggage operations.

The CISF will also "oversee" operations



and the security staff of airport operators for ILHBSS, he said.

The directives also authorise CISF personnel to perform random checks and oversee access control to these "critical" facilities (airports), the spokesperson added.

All the airports under cover of the CISF have "already implemented" the new strengthened system, he said.

Prior to this directive, CISF's deployment as the primary aviation security force did not explicitly extend to the direct security and screening of cargo operations and the ILHBSS, officials explained.

The decision aims to introduce a crucial secondary layer of security checks to enhance aviation security, he said.

At least 60 domestic flights to and from the Delhi airport were cancelled on Saturday.

Security measures have been beefed up, and at least 32 airports in northern and

western parts of the country have been temporarily shut as the military conflict between India and Pakistan.

The source said 30 domestic departures and 30 arrivals were cancelled at the Delhi airport from 5.00 am to 2.30 pm. On Friday, 145 flights to and from the Delhi airport were cancelled by various airlines.

There have been multiple flight cancellations at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in the last few days. In a post on X on Saturday, DIAL said airport operations continue as normal.

"However, due to evolving airspace conditions and enhanced security measures as directed by the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, some flight schedules may be impacted and security processing times may take longer," it said.

Passengers have also been advised to arrive early to accommodate potential delays at security checks.

Further, DIAL has requested passengers

to cooperate with airline and security staff for smooth facilitation. Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) operates IGIA. A total of 32 airports across northern and western parts of the country, including Srinagar and Amritsar, have been closed for civilian flight operations till May 15. The airports where the civil flights have been suspended include Adhampur, Ambala, Amritsar, Awantipur, Bathinda, Bhub, Bikaner, Chandigarh, Halwara, Hindon, Jaisalmer, Jammu, Jamnagar, Jodhpur, Kandla, Kangra (Gaggal), Keshod, Kishangarh, Kullu Manali, Manali, Kishangarh, Kullu Manali (Bhuntar), Leh, Ludhiana, Mundra, Naliya, Pathankot, Patiala, Porbandar, Rajkot (Hirasar), Sarsawa, Shimla, Srinagar, Thoise, and Uttarai. "The Airports Authority of India (AAI) and relevant aviation authorities have issued a series of Notices to Airmen (NOTAMS) announcing the temporary closure of 32 airports across northern and western India for all civil flight operations, effective from 9th to 14th May 2025 (which corresponds to 0529 IST on 15th May 2025), due to operational reasons." In a previous direction, 24 airports had been shut for civil operation until May 10.

Hours after India accused it of using commercial flights as shields amid drone attacks, Pakistan on Saturday shut down its airspace for all air traffic. The decision, notified through a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM), came amid heightened tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.

The move follows a night of intense drone activity along India's northern and western borders, after Pakistan launched a coordinated wave of drone attacks targeting military infrastructure across 26 locations, ranging from Leh in the north to Sir Creek in the south.

Opposition seeks Parliament session on US-brokered truce

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Opposition parties on Saturday questioned the "US-brokered" ceasefire between India and Pakistan and demanded that the government brief political parties about it and call a special session of Parliament to discuss the events of the past 18 days, even as the BJP credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for bringing the "enemy on its knees". Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said the prime minister should chair an all-party meeting to take political parties into confidence in view of the "unprecedented announcements from Washington DC". "A US-brokered ceasefire once again! Like it or not, it reaffirms the US position once again as being the single biggest outside balancer of power in multiple regions of the World," Congress leader Manish Tewari said in a post on X.

The BJP hailed the prime minister's leadership and the bravery of the armed forces following the announcement of a ceasefire between India and Pakistan.

BJP IT department head Amit Malviya underscored that the ceasefire was announced after the Pakistan Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) reached out to his Indian counterpart, requesting a ceasefire. "India accepted the offer but only after announcing a revised war doctrine: henceforth, any future terrorist attack on Indian soil will be treated as an act of war," Malviya said.

Ramesh said there was a need, more than ever before, for — the prime minister to chair an all-party meeting and take political parties into confidence.

There is also now a need, more than ever before, for a special session of Parliament to discuss the events of the last 18 days, beginning with the brutal Pahalgam terror attack and the way forward, and to demonstrate a collective resolve, he said.

Congress leaders, meanwhile, shared on X photographs of former prime minister Indira Gandhi with armed forces personnel during various points in time and said, "India misses Indira."

BL Kashyap wins contract for Sky Palazzo Residences in Gurugram

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Trinity has awarded a construction contract valued at ₹5.10 billion to BL Kashyap and Sons Ltd for the development of its flagship luxury residential project, Sky Palazzo Residences, located in Sector 88B, Gurugram.

Sky Palazzo Residences is set to be North India's first high-rise residential community with a man-made beach, designed to offer a unique living experience that combines luxury with a resort-like atmosphere.

The project is part of Trinity's strategic vision to cater to the growing

demand for high-end living spaces in the National Capital Region (NCR).

Vineet Kashyap, Managing Director of BL Kashyap and Sons Ltd, expressed his enthusiasm about the project: "We are pleased to announce the addition of this significant order to our growing portfolio. "With this ₹5.10 billion project for Sky Palazzo Residences, our order book reflects strong momentum and a healthy pipeline."

The project is poised to contribute to Gurugram's skyline, combining luxury with contemporary urban living to meet the increasing demand for high-end residential spaces in the region.

VIT founder conferred with honorary PhD

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Dr David C Munson, the President and Dr Prabu David, the Provost and Senior Vice President for academic affairs at Rochester Institute of Technology honoured Viswanathan with the honorary doctorate towards his vision and leadership in the expansion of Science, Technology, Engineering and Management (STEM) Education across India and in recognition to his dedication towards supporting the underprivileged.

The recognition marks a rare significance wherein an Indian has been conferred honorary doctorate by the US Universities for the 3rd time.

Previously, the chancellor was honoured with an honorary doctorate by West Virginia University, USA in 2009 and by the State University of New York, Binghamton University, USA in 2024 in addition to being conferred a honorary doctorate by St. Xavier's University, Kolkata in the year 2025.

Expressing gratitude for the honour,



VIT Chancellor's Doctorate

PIONEER PHOTO

Viswanathan thanked RIT for conferring the honorary doctorate on him.

On the occasion, Sankar Viswanathan and Dr Sekar Viswanathan, vice-presi-

ents of VIT, Dr Kanchana Bhaaskaran, vice-chancellor and Dr R Seenivasan, director of international relations, was present.

Missile remains and shell fragments found in two districts of Himachal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Una/Nurpur (HP)

Missile remains and shell fragments were recovered from two Himachal Pradesh districts, officials said on Saturday and added three explosions were heard in the forest areas of Kangra district.

The recoveries came during a military standoff between India and Pakistan following Operation Sindoor. The two countries have since agreed to a ceasefire, with Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri announcing that the directors general of military operations of India and Pakistan had decided to stop all firings and military action on land, air and sea with effect from 5 pm on Saturday.

During preliminary investigation, splinters and components of guided missiles were found at the blast sites in Kangra district's Dantla area, as confirmed by defence personnel, according to a statement issued by the police headquarters. While there were no human casualties, two cattle were found dead, bushes charred and electrical wiring damaged. Meanwhile, suspected shell fragments were found in the Behad village of Una district, according to the statement. Suspicious objects resembling drone remains were also found.

Located around 10 kilometres from the Chintpurni temple, Behad was rocked by the sound of an explosion at 1:30 am on Saturday during a blackout in the region amid the Pakistani military's attempts to hit Indian installations, the officials said. The village is adjacent to Punjab, which shares a 532-kilometre-long border with Pakistan.

The officials said locals spotted the



The debris of an unidentified projectile which landed amid the conflict between India and Pakistan, near Chintpurni of Una district in Himachal Pradesh on Saturday

object in the morning and informed the police. The district administration said in a statement that while preliminary investigations suggested that the object was unarmed, a team of experts was examining it. Pakistan tried to attack India's northern region on Friday and early Saturday and it seems rocket fragments fell at Behad, the officials said.

The area has been cordoned off by the police and locals told to remain alert and not approach such objects.

In Hamirpur, residents spent a sleepless night after army aircraft could be heard piercing through the night sky around 2 am, the officials said.

Deputy Commissioner (Hamirpur) Amarjeet Singh had directed all departments to remain alert and prepared for any emergency.

He had urged people to avoid spreading misinformation on social media and beware of artificial intelligence-generated fake news and videos.

Operation Sindoor: India's new response...

Continued from >> P1 Rawalpindi stated that majority of Indian missiles did not cause damage to air assets as per initial damage assessment, implying some damage was done. Delhi too admitted 'limited damage' to some of its air bases.

The imponderable on 10 May was: is Pakistan satisfied with its 'one notch up' response to declare victory and de-escalate? Or would it attempt further drone and missile strikes to achieve full satisfaction. As the satisfied power, Delhi has regularly indicated its readiness to deescalate provided Islamabad follows suit. Meanwhile, the US

has been working the back-channel in total secrecy. Pakistan's Director General of Military Operations (DGMO), who traditionally speaks to his Indian counterpart every Wednesday at noon, broke protocol this afternoon at 3 PM to urge for a ceasefire, which was accepted. As of 5.00pm on 10 May both countries will cease to fire at land, in air and at sea. The two DGMOs are to meet on 12 May to take further the ceasefire arrangement. The ceasefire of February, 2021 requested by India and brokered by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), was not cancelled by either side.

So what about the Trump statement claiming full credit for the ceasefire and the agreement by both sides to hold talks at a neutral site. Unanswered question: has India agreed to dialogue, breaking its long held policy that terror and talks do not go together? If the ceasefire holds India and Pakistan would have fought their shortest non-contact, four-day standoff aerial war. But Operation Sindoor will not end CBT. For that, deterrence has to be restored. Meanwhile, former Generals who wished the breakup of Pakistan will have to wait for their progeny to make the wish come true.

INDIAN STRIKES KILLED FIVE TOP TERRORISTS

Continued from >> P1 Lt Gen Chaudhry, a three-star general, has been briefing the press in his capacity as the chief of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) since India conducted intelligence-based strikes at nine terror camps, including the headquarters of the Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba, to avenge the fatal attack on 26 people, mainly tourists, in Pahalgam on April 22. As per the United Nations documents, Chaudhry's father, Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood, was known to have met the late al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

Born in Amritsar, Mahmood allegedly provided insights into the infrastructure necessary for a nuclear weapons programme as well as the effects associated with nuclear weapons.

He was also accused of raising funds for a fundamentalist organisation, Ummah Tameer-e-Nau, founded in 1999 to support humanitarian causes in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan before the US invasion in 2001.

Mahmood, who retired from the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, has authored several books on the intersection of religion and science, including "Mechanics of the Doomsday and Life

after Death", in which he reflects on the ultimate fate of the universe from an Islamic perspective. Currently 85, Mahmood lives in Islamabad.

He was arrested in 2001 after reportedly admitting to meeting Osama bin Laden, but was later released when authorities concluded that he lacked the technical knowledge to transfer nuclear secrets. His name also figures in the Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) and Blocked Persons list of the US Treasury department. Lt Gen Chaudhry was appointed as the Director General of ISPR by Pakistan Army chief General Asim Munir in December 2022. He was the first officer from the Pakistan Army's Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering to rise to this position.

He previously held significant roles, including the director general of the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DESTO), a clandestine military research entity, besides working in military operations. The Ummah Tameer-e-Nau, which was banned and sanctioned by the US in 2001, had ties to several notable figures in Pakistan, including the controversial former director general of ISI, Lt Gen Hamid Gul.

Night felt endless: 16-year-old recalls Pakistan attacks

Continued from >> P1 But as evening approached, so did the fear. We knew the enemy might retaliate again. At exactly 8 pm, another blackout. Tension filled the air. And then it began—those same red flares lit up the sky, accompanied by deafening explosions and sirens. We later learned that enemy drones were being intercepted mid-air by advanced Indian defense systems. The blasts were so close, we could feel them

in our residential complex. This barrage continued until 10 pm, but to our dismay, sporadic explosions persisted until dawn. Now, as I write this, it's the third morning since the first attack. We are still hoping for peace, for a return to normalcy. But amidst the chaos, my spirit remains unshaken. I am a proud Indian, coming from the land of Dogra warriors, and I stand with unwavering faith in our armed forces,

our people, and our destiny. The enemy may try to shake our courage, but they will never break our spirit. As the saying goes, "Wars don't determine who is right; they determine who is left." But if the enemy dares to challenge us again, we shall surely retaliate to prove not only who is right, but also who remains standing in the end.

(Parina Kandhari is a class XI at DPS Jammu)

Pakistan breaches ceasefire agreed with India

Continued from >> P1 Rubio also made a similar statement on social media. "Over the past 48 hours, @VP Vance and I have engaged with senior Indian and Pakistani officials, including Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Shehbaz Sharif, External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir, and National Security Advisors Ajit Doval and Asim Malik," he said. He said he was "pleased to announce the Governments of India and Pakistan have agreed to an immediate ceasefire and to start talks on a broad set of issues at a neutral site". "We commend Prime Ministers Modi and Sharif on their wisdom, prudence, and statesmanship in choosing the path of peace," he added.

In Islamabad, Pakistan Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar confirmed the ceasefire with immediate

effect. "Pakistan and India have agreed to a ceasefire with immediate effect. Pakistan has always strived for peace and security in the region, without compromising on its sovereignty and territorial integrity!" Dar said in a social media post.

Meanwhile, residents across Jammu and Kashmir woke up to air raid sirens and deafening sounds of explosions around 5 am, while the border residents spent a sleepless night in the wake of intense shelling from across the border.

According to defence officials, Pakistan's blatant escalation with drone strikes and other munitions continued along the western borders on Saturday.

"Pakistan's blatant attempt to violate India's sovereignty and endanger civilians is unacceptable. Indian Army will thwart all enemy designs," they said.

Raj Kumar Thapa, Additional District

Development Commissioner, Rajouri, and his two staff members were seriously injured when an artillery shell hit his official residence in Rajouri town, the officials said. They were rushed to the Government Medical College, where Thapa succumbed to his injuries, they said.

Condoling Thapa's death, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said in a post on X, "Devastating news from Rajouri. We have lost a dedicated officer of the J-K Administration Services. Just yesterday he was accompanying the Deputy CM around the district and attended the online meeting I chaired. "Today the residence of the officer was hit by Pak shelling as they targeted Rajouri town killing our Additional District Development Commissioner Sh Raj Kumar Thappa. I've no words to express my shock & sadness at this terrible loss of life. May his soul rest in peace."

Two more persons - two-year-old Aisha Noor and Mohd Shohib (35) - were killed and three others were injured in Pakistani shelling near an industrial area in Rajouri town, the officials said. Fine dining reservations According to the officials, a 55-year-old woman named Rashida Bi lost her life when a mortar shell hit her house at Kanghra-Galhatta village in Mendhar sector of Poonch district.

In another incident, Ashok Kumar alias Shoki, a resident of Bidipur Jatta village, was killed in cross-border firing along the International Border in the R S Pura sector of Jammu district, they said. The BSF officer 'killed in action' has been identified as Sub Inspector Md Imteyaz. He laid down his life in service of the nation on 10 May 2025 during cross-border firing along the International Boundary in R S Pura area, District Jammu.

Police identifies basement shelters, forms special unit for disasters

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Delhi Police has intensified its emergency preparedness efforts, including identifying basements that can serve as shelters during air raids and compiling a list of children and elderly residents to ensure swift evacuation.

Instructions have been issued to all district units to identify and earmark safe shelters, especially basements of residential and commercial buildings and metro stations, where civilians can take refuge in the event of an air raid or missile attack, the official said.

A special drive has also been launched in various localities to prepare lists of vulnerable individuals, including children and elderly citizens.

"The idea is to ensure quick access to those who might need assistance during an emergency. This data will help the police and civil defence personnel act faster and more effectively," a senior police officer said.

Police said civil defence volunteers, resident welfare associations (RWAs), and local beat constables have been roped in to coordinate the groundwork.

They are tasked with creating awareness on how to respond if sirens are sounded, including taking cover in secure locations,



A security personnel stands guard during a drill, being conducted as part of the nationwide civil defence drill in New Delhi on Saturday

avoiding open spaces and following police advisories through official channels.

"The Delhi Police is not only working on rapid response mechanisms but also proactively educating people about the precautions they should take in the event of aerial attacks," another official added.

District DCPs have also been directed to review available infrastructure that could be used for shelter or relief and to coordinate closely with municipal agencies and the Delhi Disaster Management

Authority (DDMA) for resource mobilisation.

Meanwhile, in a bid to bolster its emergency preparedness, the Delhi Police has formed a specialised unit — the Delhi Police Disaster Response Force (DPDRF) — to handle natural disasters, man-made emergencies, and critical incidents in the capital, the official said.

The newly constituted force comprises around 270 personnel, including constables and sub-inspectors, who are under-

going a six-week intensive training programme conducted by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), he said.

"These personnel are being equipped with specialised skills to carry out rescue operations during incidents such as fires, building collapses and urban floods. They are also being prepared to respond effectively in the event of an air raid," the officer said.

A police source added that the DPDRF is also being trained to deal with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) emergencies, expanding the scope of their response capabilities.

So far, around 150 personnel have completed their training at the NDRF facility in Ghaziabad while the remaining members are expected to finish by the end of this month. Once trained, the personnel will be divided into three companies that can be deployed quickly during any crisis.

Officials are also exploring the possibility of stationing the units at strategic locations in South, East and New Delhi to ensure faster response times during emergencies, the officer added.

Amid the ongoing military conflict between India and Pakistan, authorities have urged residents to stay calm and cooperate with official directives. Further drills and awareness campaigns are expected to be conducted in the coming days.

Hospitals instructed to conduct mock drill for emergency

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Amid the intensifying military conflict with Pakistan, the Delhi Government has directed all government hospitals and health facilities to ramp up emergency preparedness, including painting a Red Cross sign on hospital rooftops to signify medical facilities from the air.

The instructions, issued in the wake of learnings from the recent Operation Abhyaas mock drill, mandate urgent steps to ensure uninterrupted patient care and readiness for any emergency.

According to a Government official, hospitals have been instructed to conduct a fresh mock drill on emergency preparedness.

Additionally, they must ensure adequate stockpiling of essential medicines and consumables, maintain operational generator sets with sufficient fuel backup and confirm the full functionality of emergency services such as ICUs, oxygen supply systems, and ventilators.

The hospitals have also been directed to cancel leaves of key specialists such as surgeons, orthopaedicians, and burn care experts to ensure round-the-clock availability of trauma care.

Further, facilities must update ICU bed and equipment data on the designated ICU portal, ensure cyber-security of hospital websites, and maintain ample food supplies to keep canteens and mess

services running without disruption.

Hospital heads have been told to personally monitor preparedness measures and ensure seamless coordination with district magistrates and chief district medical officers (CDMOs).

The Government emphasised that each hospital's disaster management plan should be thoroughly in place, including the availability of fire extinguishers and other critical infrastructure for handling emergency scenarios

The government has also instructed healthcare facilities to prepare a spreadsheet online that can be circulated for real-time inputs, and all written and WhatsApp directives are to be treated with top priority and complied with at the earliest.

The Government emphasised that each hospital's disaster management plan should be thoroughly in place, including the availability of fire extinguishers and other critical infrastructure for handling emergency scenarios.

Any additional action plans, as deemed necessary by the Medical Superintendent or Medical Director, are also to be implemented without delay.

DU's Academic Council passes resolution supporting Government, armed forces

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Academic Council of Delhi University on Saturday unanimously passed a resolution expressing support for the Government of India and the Armed Forces amid military conflict with Pakistan.

The resolution, adopted during the Council's 1022nd meeting, conveyed solidarity with Operation Sindoor — a precision military operation launched to counter cross-border terrorism. "The University fraternity firmly stands with the nation, its citizens, the Government of India and the valiant Armed Forces," the resolution said, commending the operation for its "power, planning, precision and courage".

Operation Sindoor, launched on May 7, targeted terror camps across the border in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The strikes were carried out in retaliation to the April 22 terror attack near Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir, which left 26 people dead, including 25 tourists. Officials have attributed the attack to cross-border elements.

Since the operation, tensions along the Line of Control have escalated, with Pakistani forces reportedly resorting to heavy shelling for three consecutive days. This has prompted mass evacuations from



Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh

vulnerable areas, including Baramulla, Kupwara and Bandipora districts as authorities remain on high alert.

Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh expressed support for the armed forces in a series of posts on X. "Operation Sindoor is a testament to Prime Minister Modi's resolute leadership firmly pivoted on Rashtra Pratham, unreservedly backing the Indian Armed Forces while they exhibit their best tradition of service, responding valiantly to the terrorists and their patrons," he post-

ed. In another post, Singh said, "Salute to the Indian Army for its valour and courage. We are proud of you. Under the strong and decisive leadership of Prime Minister Modi, India will not tolerate any compromise with its sovereignty and security."

The Academic Council assured the Centre of all possible cooperation during this period and reaffirmed the unity of the university community with national interests. The resolution was passed in both Hindi and English.

RWAs in Delhi step up emergency preparedness

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

From verifying visitors to coordinating with police and running mock drills, Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) across Delhi have stepped up their emergency preparedness measures amid heightened security concerns in view of the ongoing India-Pakistan conflict.

Several RWAs have informed that they are taking cautious steps, staying alert and ready for any situation.

In East Delhi, RWAs have begun keeping a closer watch on non-residents entering the area.

BS Vohra, president of the East Delhi RWA Federation, said, "We are asking our team members to remain alert and vigilant. Surveillance of outsiders entering the locality has been increased."

He added that all residents are being made aware of safety precautions.

"At the same time, we are reassuring them that with the Indian Army in place, there is no need to panic. Confidence among residents is important during such times," Vohra said.

Residents have also been advised to stock up on essential supplies and strictly follow safety guidelines issued by government, he said.

In Dwarka, a housing society has

temporarily restricted the entry of delivery personnel beyond the main gate for 48 hours as a precautionary measure.

Security guards have been instructed to keep the gates shut and allow entry only when necessary, according to a statement issued by the society. "We need to be extra cautious right now. The situation is sensitive and calls for preventive action," it read.

In North Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar, which houses a large number paying guest accommodations for students, RWAs are focusing on identity verification and emergency readiness.

BN Jha, president of the area's RWA, said, "We are verifying all PG accommodations and their residents. On Friday, a siren was sounded around 3 pm to alert people about safety protocols." He said that guidelines are being distributed among residents, especially those in PGs, with particular attention to the safety of children.

"Local police are supporting us in awareness drives and verification to ensure everyone is properly documented," Jha added.

Volunteers and RWA members are also visiting homes and educational institutions to personally explain emergency preparedness measures, he said.

India cannot be divided on religious lines, says LG Saxena

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Saturday said India cannot be divided on religious lines and stressed the strength of the nation's pluralistic identity.

The governor was addressing 'Sarva Dharam Sabha' organised at Delhi's Raj Niwas. The event brought together leaders from various religions, senior officials, and top Delhi government representatives.

"This country has a speciality — every religion has not only survived here but thrived," he said.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said, "When our 26 innocent people were brutally killed by terrorists last month, every Indian wanted justice. I thank the armed forces, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh," she said.

Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa, MCD Mayor Raja Iqbal Singh, Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee President Harmet Singh Kalka, Acharya Rajesh Ojha, Hafiz Mohammad Javed from Jama Masjid and other religious representatives were also present.

Monsoon rains expected to arrive in Delhi in July

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The southwest monsoon rains are expected to hit India's southern coast on May 27, five days earlier than usual, marking the earliest arrival in at least five years, raising hopes for bumper harvests of crops such as rice, corn, onion, cotton, bajra (pearl millet), maize, tur, black gram and soybean.

The monsoon, the lifeblood of the country's \$4 trillion economy, delivers nearly 70 per cent of the rain that India needs to water farms and recharge aquifers and reservoirs.

Nearly half of India's farmland, without any irrigation cover, depends on the annual June-September rains to grow a number of crops. The arrival of the main rain-bearing system over the Indian mainland is officially declared when it reaches Kerala, usually around June 1.

India is likely to see above-normal rainfall in the four-month monsoon season (June to September)

— M RAVICHANDRAN, SECRETARY IN MOES

The monsoon typically covers the entire country by July 8. It starts withdrawing from northwest India around September 17 and completes by October 15. The monsoon had set in over the southern state on May 30 last year; June 8 in 2023; May 29 in 2022; June 3 in 2021; June 1 in 2020; June 8 in 2019; and May 29 in 2018.

An IMD official said there is no direct relationship between the onset date and the total rainfall over the country during the season. "The monsoon arriving early or late in Kerala does not mean it will cover other parts of the country accordingly. It is characterised by large-scale variabilities and global, regional and local features," the official said.

According to IMD, analysing circulation anomalies at the sub-seasonal scale, outputs from NWP-based models indicate the influence of moist equatorial

waves like equatorial Rossby waves. These waves, which could either be progressing or quasi-stationary, are expected to begin impacting weather patterns over the Indian region in the coming days. Their presence may accelerate the advance of the monsoon.

The forecast indicates that regions such as Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Tamil Nadu, Bihar and the north-eastern states might experience below-normal rainfall. In contrast, states forming the core monsoon zone, including Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, are expected to receive normal to above-normal rainfall. This distribution is crucial as the core monsoon zone is primarily dependent on rain-fed agriculture, making the forecast critical for farmers in these areas.

The IMD had, in April, forecast above-normal cumulative rainfall in the 2025 monsoon season, ruling out the possibility of El Niño conditions, which are associated with below-normal rainfall in the Indian subcontinent.

"India is likely to see above-normal rainfall in the four-month monsoon season (June to September), with cumulative rainfall estimated at 105 per cent (with a model error of 5 per cent) of the long-period average of 87 cm," M Ravichandran, secretary in the Ministry of Earth Sciences, had said.

According to the IMD, rainfall between 96 per cent and 104 per cent of the 50-year average of 87 cm is considered 'normal'.

Rainfall less than 90 per cent of the long-period average is considered 'deficient'; between 90 per cent and 95 per cent is 'below normal'; between 105 per cent and 110 per cent is 'above normal'; and more than 110 per cent is considered 'excess' precipitation.

The monsoon is crucial for India's agriculture sector, which supports the livelihood of about 42.3 per cent of the population and contributes 18.2 per cent to the country's GDP.

CM chairs emergency review meeting with all sectors

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta chaired a high-level meeting on Saturday at the Delhi Secretariat with Heads of Departments (HODs) from key sectors including health, transport, education, fire services, and workers' welfare. The focus was on assessing departmental preparedness for the current emergency situation and reviewing ongoing development work.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister emphasized the need for a multi-tiered, coordinated, and active strategy to address emergencies effectively in the capital. She issued specific directives to all departments to enhance readiness and response capabilities. The Health Department was instructed to ensure hospitals are fully prepared, including availability of ambulances, sufficient stock of medicines and consumables, backup electricity for ICUs, and well-defined duty rosters for medical staff.

The Power Department was directed to ensure rapid response to outages and provide uninterrupted power to essential services. The Delhi Jal Board (DJB) was told to protect the water supply infrastructure, deploy water tankers, and ensure 24/7



Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta during a high-level review meeting with all the department heads at Delhi Secretariat

backup power for pumping stations.

The Revenue Department was asked to activate District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs), identify and prepare emergency shelters, and ready Civil Defense Volunteers (CDVs) for immediate deployment. Coordination with the

armed forces, railways, and airport authorities was stressed for swift response during crises.

The Home and Police Departments were tasked with ensuring 24x7 security of critical infrastructure and maintaining the integrity of essential service supply chains.

Minor boy molested in Madrasa, Delhi Waqf Board complains

VAISHNAVI MISHRA ■ New Delhi

The Delhi Waqf Board, on Friday, wrote a letter to DCP South district stating that it has received a complaint regarding an alleged attempt to molest a minor boy inside a Madrasa, situated inside the premises of Noori Mosque in Sadiq Nagar.

As per the complaint letter, the Delhi Waqf Board has received two complaints from Haji Rous Mohammad, the mutawalli or manager of the mosque at the time of the incident and Mohd. Ilyas, who is the Imam or priest at the mosque, against the caretaker of the mosque, Hafiz Siddique and a few others for molesting a minor boy studying and residing inside the mosque.

The complaint further mentions a pen drive containing videos which show the

inappropriate conduct involving the child, and photographs related to the crime.

As per the complaint letter, the Delhi Waqf Board has received two complaints from Haji Rous Mohammad, the mutawalli or manager of the mosque at the time of the incident and Mohd Ilyas, who is the Imam or priest at the mosque

When asked about the complaint, Rous Mohammad said, "The incident took place on the night of September 15, 2024 and we got to know about it on the very next day. I immediately checked the CCTV footage

of that night. To my surprise, the incident was captured, and one can see the accused and the victim."

The victim is a 13-year-old boy and used to study and reside at the Madrasa situated within the premises of Noori Mosque. He told his teacher, Imam Abdul Rahim, about the incident, and he informed me about the same. I met the boy and he told us that the caretaker, Hafiz, used to molest and sexually assault him at night when everyone else slept. He also told us that he is not the only victim." He added.

As per Rous Mohammad, the victim had been residing in the Madrasa for two to three years, whereas his parents live in Mehrauli. His father works as an Imam in a nearby mosque.

There were around 23 students who used to reside and study in the Madrasa when

the incident took place, Rous.

"I was appointed as a Mutawalli at this Madrasa in 2021 by the Delhi Waqf Board. As a Mutawalli, I was responsible for the safety and security of the children studying there. Here, I met Hafiz, who was around 60 years old and used to work here as a caretaker for more than 12-13 years. I thought he would be a good man and would take care of the children." Said Rous. "After the incident, I was ousted from my position. I wrote complaint letters to the Delhi Waqf Board and the Defence Colony Police Station. It is only now that the police are hearing the matter," he added.

According to DCP South Ankit Chauhan, the complaint was received late at night on Friday, and further investigation will take place as per the evidence.

Pakistan claims of destroying Indian Air Force bases false: Misri

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

India responded on Saturday to the Pakistani military's "provocative" and "escalatory" actions in a measured way and Islamabad is resorting to a wanton campaign of targeting innocent people and civilian infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said.

As the military conflict between the two neighbours escalated, Misri said at a media briefing here that Pakistan's claims of destroying various places and military installations in India are "completely false". The Indian and Pakistani militaries targeted each other's installations using missiles in the last over 12 hours, further escalating the already tense conflict situation.

The foreign secretary said the Pakistani claims about destroying the Sirsa and Surat air force stations are "completely false". "There is a claim that has been made that the S-400 base at Adampur was destroyed, completely false, once again," he said.



Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri addresses the media on 'Operation Sindoor' in New Delhi

"Claims made about large sections of Indian critical infrastructure, power systems, cyber systems etc. Being attacked and destroyed are completely false," he said. The foreign secretary said that Pakistan is peddling these lies for "obvious purposes". "Pakistan continues with its execrable and wanton campaign of targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, especially in the states of Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab," he said.

"There is also, on its part, a consistent attempt to sow discord between communities in India," Misri said.

The foreign secretary noted that there has been a particular focus in Pakistan's targeting of civilian infrastructure and the population in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab. "Earlier this morning, Pakistan shelled the town of Rajouri, killing Additional District Development Commissioner Raj Kumar Thapa, adding to the civilian casualties and damage there," he said. "We have also observed overnight damage to property and injuries to civilians in Ferozpur and Jalandhar, among other places," he added.

DG Shipping increases maritime security for Indian ports

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Directorate General of Shipping has increased maritime security for Indian ports, terminals, and Indian-flagged vessels to "MARSEC Level 2 or heightened security", considering the ongoing conflict between India and Pakistan, a senior government official said.

The directive was issued on May 8, the official added.

The Directorate General of Shipping functions under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

The International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, developed by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), forms a crucial part of the SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea) Convention. It was adopted in response to growing global concerns over maritime security, especially in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

One of the core components of the ISPS Code is the classification of security levels. These levels are designed to ensure that ships and port facilities can operate securely under varying threat environments. Security Level 2 involves maintaining of appropriate additional protective

security measures for a defined period of time, in response to a heightened risk.

This level is activated before an incident occurs, often as a precautionary measure based on credible information.

The International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, developed by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), forms a crucial part of the SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea) Convention. The directive was issued on May 8

Level 2 requires escalation of standard procedures and close monitoring of threat updates.

Earlier this month, India banned ships bearing the flag of Pakistan from visiting any Indian port. Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Friday conducted a comprehensive review of key maritime projects to ensure normal cargo movement. He directed officials to ensure that the business remains normal.

Kamikaze drones deployed by Pakistan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

From swarm drones, including the kamikaze variant, to armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), Pakistan deployed these aerial assets to breach India's airspace in a bid to cause destruction during the ongoing conflict but the Indian military has effectively repulsed the attacks.

A kamikaze drone or suicide drone drops with or without a payload on a target and then engages in self-destruction, or it destroys itself after dropping ammunition, sources familiar with the technology said.

While drones, as a means of non-contact warfare, have played a key role in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict and Russia-Ukraine war, it is seemingly the "first time" that drones have been used on such a large scale when seen in the context of India and Pakistan, sources in military establishment said. Pakistan has used swarm drones to intrude into Indian airspace, but have met with a proportionate and effective response from the Indian military thanks to its robust air defence system, they said.

On the intervening night of May 8-9, the Pakistan military carried out multiple violations of Indian airspace along the entire western border with an intent to target military infrastructure, Wing Commander Vyomika Singh said at a press briefing here, along with Colonel Sofiya Qureshi and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri.

"Along the International Border (IB) and Line of Control (LoC), drone intrusions were attempted from Leh to Sir Creek at 36 locations with approximately 300 to 400 drones.

"Indian Armed Forces brought down a number of these drones using kinetic and non-kinetic means. The possible purpose of these large-scale aerial intrusions was to test the AD (air defence) systems and

gather intelligence," she said during the briefing on May 9. Forensic examination of the drone debris is being undertaken, military officials have said.

"Preliminary reports suggest them to be of the ASISGUARD Songar drone of Turkey. Later in the night, an armed UAV of Pakistan attempted to target Bathinda military station, which was detected and neutralised," Wing Commander Singh had said.

A kamikaze drone or suicide drone drops with or without a payload on a target and then engages in self-destruction, or it destroys itself after dropping ammunition, sources familiar with the technology said

Songar armed drone system, developed by ASISGUARD, can be used in any kind of day or night military and security operations. The system can broadcast real-time video and operate within a mission radius of up to 5 km, according to the website of the Ankara-based company.

The military confrontation between the two nuclear-armed neighbours escalated in the past few days, with both military and civil authorities in India remaining on high alert.

On Saturday morning, the Indian Army said that Pakistan's "blatant escalation with drone strikes and other munitions continues along our western borders".

From the border areas of Rajasthan in the west to Jammu in the north, sighting of many drones in parts of these locations in the last couple of days, have caused anxiety among local residents, many of whom are spending sleepless nights amid blackouts and sounds of sirens after dark.

"In the early hours of today, at approximately 5 AM, Pakistani forces launched multiple Byker YIHA III kamikaze drones across the International Border towards Amritsar in Punjab, in a blatant attempt to strike densely populated residential areas," a defence source said. "As a result of the vigilance and rapid response of the Indian Army's Air Defence (AAD) network, the hostile drones were detected, tracked and engaged within seconds of breaching Indian airspace," the source said.

Using quick-reaction air-defence guns positioned in depth along the border belt, AAD gunners brought down the drones in mid-air, "ensuring that no debris fell on civilian property and that no casualties were sustained", they said. "Initial analysis indicates that the drones carried high-explosive payloads intended to inflict maximum damage on innocent civilians," the source added.

A kamikaze drone is essentially an unmanned air vehicle that "carries its own warhead", loiters over an area to locate a target, and then crashes into it, destroying both itself and the intended target, the source in the military establishment said.

The prompt neutralisation of this threat underscores the effectiveness of India's layered air-defence grid, which integrates ground-based radars, electro-optical sensors and automated command-and-control systems, they said.

Wing Commander Singh, along with Colonel Sofiya Qureshi and Foreign Secretary Misri, also briefed the media on Saturday morning on the current situation.

"Pakistani military continued with its provocations, carrying out aggressive actions employing multiple threat vectors all along the western border. Pakistan employed UCAV, drones, long-range weapons, loitering munitions and fighter aircraft to target civilian areas and military infrastructure," the IAF officer said.

Congress welcomes SC relief to women Army officers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Congress on Saturday welcomed the Supreme Court's interim directive asking the Centre not to release from service Short Service Commission women Army officers who have challenged the denial of permanent commission to them, and asserted that it boosts the morale of women officers in the current environment.

Addressing a press conference at the Congress' 24, Akbar Road office here, Congress leader and Wing Commander (ret) Anuma Acharya said that in the current situation in the country, "we reiterate our commitment towards the Indian Armed Forces and salute their valour and courage".

"The central government had said that only 250 short service commission officers can be given permanent commission every year. It is very important to have a young cadre of officers in the army.

"On this, the Supreme Court said that the experienced women officers are also very important for the guidance and mental strength of the young soldiers," she said.

This decision of the Supreme Court is a ray of hope for women officers, Acharya said. The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Centre not to release from service the Short Service Commission women Army officers.

The top court called for not bringing the morale down of the women army officers in "the prevailing situation".

The decision of the Supreme Court gives a lot of relief and boosts the morale of women officers in the current environment of the country, she said. "Policies changed continuously after

2006. Two and a half years ago, women also got entry in the army through the NDA. Now we can imagine that after 30 years from today, we will see one or more women as the Army Chief," Acharya said.

Now the decision of the Supreme Court has come that women officers should be retained till the next hearing is held in August, she said.

"We welcome this decision of the Supreme Court. We are with the army of our country. We respect all the people of the army who keep the tricolour above themselves. We salute the bravery of every soldier," Acharya said.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kottiswar Singh, which posted a batch of pleas filed by 69 officers for hearing in August, said they should not be released till the next hearing. "In the prevailing situation, let's not bring their morale down. They are brilliant officers, you can use their services somewhere else. This is not the time that they be asked to roam around in the Supreme Court.

They have a better place to be and serve the country," Justice Kant said. Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, said it was an administrative decision based on a policy to keep the armed forces young.

She urged the top court not to grant any stay on their release and said the Indian Army needed young officers and every year, only 250 personnel were granted permanent commission.

Senior advocate Maneka Guruswamy, appearing for Colonel Geeta Sharma, referred to the case of Colonel Sofia Qureshi, one of the two women officers who had briefed the media on the Operation Sindoor on May 7 and 8.

Monsoon likely to reach Kerala on May 27: IMD

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The southwest monsoon is likely to reach Kerala on May 27, earlier than the usual date of June 1, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Sunday.

If the monsoon arrives in Kerala as expected, it will be the earliest onset over the Indian mainland since 2009, when it began on May 23, according to IMD data. The arrival of the main rain-bearing system over the Indian mainland is officially declared when it reaches Kerala, usually around June 1.

The monsoon typically covers the entire country by July 8. It starts withdrawing from northwest India around September 17 and completes by October 15. The monsoon had set in over the southern state on May 30 last year, June 8 in 2023, May 29 in 2022, June 3 in 2021, June 1 in 2020, June 8 in 2019, and May 29 in 2018.

An IMD official said there is no direct relationship between the onset date and the total rainfall over the country during the season.

"The monsoon arriving early or late in Kerala does not mean it will cover other parts of the country accordingly. It is characterised by large-scale variabilities and global, regional and local features," the official said.

The IMD had, in April, forecast above-normal cumulative rainfall in the 2025 monsoon season, ruling out the possibility of El Niño conditions, which are associated with below-normal rainfall in the Indian subcontinent.

"India is likely to see above-normal rainfall in the four-month monsoon season (June to September), with cumulative rainfall estimated at 105 per cent (with a model error of 5 per cent) of the long-period average of 87 cm," M Ravichandran, secretary in the Ministry of Earth Sciences, had said.

According to the IMD, rainfall between 96 per cent and 104 per cent of the 50-year average of 87 cm is considered 'normal'.

Rainfall less than 90 per cent of the long-period average is considered 'deficient'; between 90 per cent and 95 per cent is 'below normal'; between 105 per cent and 110 per cent is 'above normal'; and more than 110 per cent is considered 'excess' precipitation.

The monsoon is crucial for India's agriculture sector, which supports the livelihood of about 42.3 per cent of the population and contributes 18.2 per cent to the country's GDP. It is also vital for replenishing reservoirs critical for drinking water and power generation across the country.

SJM slams IMF loan to Pakistan amid conflict

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) slammed the IMF on Saturday for approving loans to Pakistan and requested the member states, who supported the move, to reconsider their decision in view of the neighbouring country's continued support for terrorism.

It is "deeply concerning" that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approved a \$1.4 billion loan to Pakistan from its climate resilience fund, along with an additional \$1 billion loan under the existing \$7 billion economic stabilisation programme, the RSS-affiliate said in a statement.

The SJM "strongly expresses" its displeasure with the IMF's decision, it added.

"While we refrain from directly calling this IMF funding a support for terrorism, the fact remains that loans provided to Pakistan in the past have often failed to serve their stated purposes," SJM national co-convenor Ashwani Mahajan was quoted as saying in the statement.

These funds may be diverted to strengthen Pakistan's military or indirectly aid terrorist activities, rather than contribute to meaningful economic reforms, he said, taking serious exception to the IMF's decision.

"The SJM urges the member countries of the IMF who supported this loan to reconsider their decision in light of Pakistan's continued support for terrorism," Mahajan said.

"We also call upon the government of India to engage all available diplomatic channels to ensure that the newly-approved IMF funds are not misused," he said.

The SJM called for greater transparency and accountability in the IMF's "lending practices" and requested it to seriously consider the "broader geopolitical implications" of its financial support to Pakistan.

"In light of the recent Pahalgam ter-

ror attack, which claimed the lives of 26 civilians, SJM reiterates India's longstanding concerns over Pakistan's alleged support for cross-border terrorism," Mahajan said.

"We urge the IMF to implement strict monitoring mechanisms to audit how previously-disbursed funds were utilised, and whether they were used for economic stabilisation as intended or diverted for unintended purposes," he added.

The Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) hailed the government's "firm and resolute" response to the "continued terrorism", supported and abetted by Pakistan, and said India's "bold step" has reflected the will of its people and leadership, and reaffirmed the country's "unwavering commitment" to protect its sovereignty, territorial integrity and the safety of its citizens.

"Pakistan has nurtured terrorism as an instrument of its state policy, resulting in the loss of countless innocent lives and sustained instability in the region.

India's decisive retaliation sends a clear and unambiguous message that terrorism will not be tolerated, and those who shelter and support such forces will face the consequences," it added.

The SJM also urged the international community to hold Pakistan accountable for its persistent role in sponsoring cross-border terrorism.

"In this critical hour, the Swadeshi Jagran Manch stands firmly with the government, our armed forces and the people of India. We appeal to all citizens to maintain unity, remain vigilant and support national initiatives aimed at eradicating terrorism from our soil," Mahajan said.

"Amidst the ongoing action against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, where our armed forces are engaged in the fight against terror, the Pakistani army is seen siding with terrorists, for example a slain terrorist is being given a state funeral wrapped in the national flag of Pakistan," he added.

RSS calls for unequivocal support to armed forces

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Amid the intensifying military conflict with Pakistan, the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) on Saturday asked its affiliates to postpone all forms of strikes and agitations and provide "unequivocal" support to the government as well as the armed forces of the country. It also appealed to government employees at the Centre and in the states to refrain from taking leaves unless absolutely necessary. "Those who have taken leaves are requested to cancel them and resume their duties promptly," the BMS, an affiliate of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), said in a statement. "Postpone all forms of strikes, agitations, demonstrations and other trade union activities. If necessary, work overtime and increase productivity without taking any overtime charges. Raise awareness among workers and the general public on

the necessary precautions to be taken during war-like situations," the statement said. "Provide all necessary assistance to the Indian defence forces," it added.

Those employed in various departments and sectors, including defence, space, railways, civil aviation, road transport, telecommunications, health, power, and scientific establishments, both in states and at the Centre, will be instrumental in assisting the defence forces amid the prevailing situation, the RSS body said.

"The Kendriya Karya Samiti (national executive body of the BMS) directs all federations to modify their organisational programmes and prioritise this national cause, collaborate with the district authorities in civil defence works, blood donation programmes, local transportation, and other relevant initiatives," it said.

The BMS also asked all of its affiliates and trade unions to organise solidarity programmes in support of the armed forces

at the district and industry levels.

BMS general secretary Ravindra Himte said the decisions were taken at a national executive body meeting held virtually on Friday. In a resolution passed at the meeting chaired by BMS president Hiranmay Pandya, the national executive congratulated the armed forces for "successfully" executing Operation Sindoor, Himte said.

"The operation effectively demonstrated the government's resolve in combating anti-India terrorist forces operating from Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack," the resolution noted.

"The bravery exhibited by both male and female soldiers of the armed forces is commendable," it added. According to Himte, the meeting also expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for taking "decisive decisions and demonstrating unwavering political will to combat cross-border terrorism without any compromise".

The necessary precautions to be taken during war-like situations," the statement said. "Provide all necessary assistance to the Indian defence forces," it added.

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India debunks claims of drone attack on Nankana Sahib, Pakistan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The government on Saturday debunked claims that India had launched a drone attack on the Nankana Sahib gurdwara in Pakistan.

The Fact Check Unit of the Press Information Bureau (PIB) said such content is being circulated to create communal hatred in India.

"A video shared on social media is claiming that India has carried out a drone attack on the Nankana Sahib gurdwara. This claim is completely fake," it said.

Nankana Sahib is the birthplace of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak and the gurdwara is a revered shrine and pilgrimage centre for Sikhs.

The clarification came after a video aired

by a platform named "AIK News" claimed on live television that the strategic air base was destroyed by Pakistan.

"A video aired by AIK News on live TV claimed that Pakistan had destroyed the Udhampur Air Base," the PIB Fact Check Unit said, adding, "Udhampur Air Base remains operational".

The PIB Fact Check Unit also flagged what it described as a surge in coordinated disinformation campaigns aimed at India, largely propagated through Pakistani media and social media platforms, with some reach within Indian digital circles as well.

The Press Information Bureau (PIB) termed the misinformation drive a form of psychological warfare, intended to spread panic and confusion among Indian citizens.

The government also dismissed as "fake" certain social media posts claiming that an Indian pilot ejected from his fighter aircraft in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and that a woman air force pilot was

captured in Pakistan.

It also debunked claims that India's power grid has been rendered dysfunctional in a cyberattack by Pakistan and that there was a temporary closure of the Mumbai-Delhi airline route.

"These claims are fake," the government said.

The Fact Check Unit of the Press Information Bureau (PIB) said such content is being circulated to create communal hatred in India

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has extended the temporary closure of 25 segments of Air Traffic Service (ATS) routes within the Delhi and Mumbai flight information regions due to operational reasons, it added.

The government also said an old video showing Indian soldiers crying was actu-

ally of youngsters from a private defence coaching centre celebrating their selection in the Army.

The Press Information Bureau (PIB) Fact Check Unit said the video in question was uploaded on Instagram on April 27 and was not related to the Army.

"The video depicts students from a private defence coaching institute celebrating their selection into the Indian Army. The youth in the video reportedly became emotional with joy upon receiving news of their successful recruitment," it said.

The government also debunked reports in a section of foreign media about 10 explosions around the Srinagar airport on Friday as well as separate claims of blasts near the Jaipur airport.

"These claims are fake. Rely only on official sources for authentic information," a government official said. The PIB Fact Check Unit said claims on social media about the destruction of Indian Army posts are false and that a video shared in this regard dated back to 2020.

Punjab and Haryana wake up to noise of explosions, air raid sirens

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chandigarh

After a night of bristling tension, people woke up to explosion-like sounds in Punjab's Pathankot and Jalandhar districts, while air sirens rang out in Hoshiarpur, Amritsar and Ferozepur districts, as the military conflict between India and Pakistan took a sharp upturn, officials said.

In Haryana's Sirsa too, some locals claimed they heard blast-like sounds after midnight.

An unidentified projectile landed in a residential area at Kanganiwal village in Punjab's Jalandhar district early Saturday, officials said.

The locals said a migrant labourer was injured in the incident, while a few houses in the area also sustained damages. Parts of the unidentified object were lying in the area, they said.

"I was standing near a window when some object hit a water tank (of a house) around 1.30 am, shattering glasses of 4-5 houses before landing," a woman from the area said. A migrant labourer who suffered injuries on his arm was taken to the hospital, she said.

Satinder Kumar, a local, said, "The water tank of our house was damaged, while many window panes were also shattered. There was smoke all around."

Another local resident, Muskan, too said a big explosion took place at night



The debris of an unidentified projectile which landed amid the conflict between India and Pakistan in Jalandhar, Punjab on Saturday

that forced several people to come out of their homes.

"One car was damaged... We were all scared," she said. Sharing her experience, Surjit Kaur said a red-coloured light flashed in the sky which was followed by a big explosion. "Water tanks of some other houses in the area were also damaged," she said.

Jalandhar Deputy Commissioner (DC) Himanshu Aggarwal has urged people to avoid large gatherings or crowding as part of the precautionary measures.

He also urged people to avoid moving

out in the open and movement in tall buildings, besides ordering closure of markets in Jalandhar Cantt and Adampur.

"Malls and high-rise commercial buildings in the rest of the district will remain closed today," the DC said, asking people to stay calm.

Blast-like sounds were also heard around 5 am in Pathankot and around 8:30 am in Jalandhar. However, there was no official word in this regard.

Meanwhile, air raid sirens were sounded in Hoshiarpur, Amritsar and

Jalandhar on Saturday morning, officials said. The Amritsar district administration at 7:54 am asked people to remain indoors and stay away from windows.

There were reports of explosion-like sounds being heard early Saturday in Amritsar and Goindwal Sahib in Tarn Taran district.

Debris of unidentified objects were found at some places at Beas in Amritsar, Jalandhar and Tarn Taran districts, officials said. The strikes followed after Pakistan launched a fresh wave of drone attacks targeting 26 locations in India — from Jammu and Kashmir to Gujarat — for the second night on Friday.

According to officials, the security forces thwarted multiple drone attacks launched by Pakistan in Punjab's Ferozepur, Pathankot, Fazilka and Amritsar districts.

In Ferozepur, three members of a family were injured on Friday night after a crashing projectile from a Pakistani drone destroyed by the Indian air defence system landed at their house at Khai PHEME Ke village, setting the structure and a car on fire.

Tensions between India and Pakistan soared significantly after the Indian armed forces on Wednesday conducted precision strikes targeting terror launchpads in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in response to the April 22 Pahalgam attack that had cross-border linkages.

Locals in UP shower flower petals at Indian army convoy

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Garh

In a powerful display of national pride and unity, a group of Indian Army soldiers received a heartwarming and emotional send-off from local residents and staff at a roadside eatery in the Garh region of Uttar Pradesh on Saturday morning. The soldiers, who were travelling from Bareilly towards the northern border as part of their deployment, had briefly halted for a meal, unaware that their short break would turn into a spontaneous celebration of patriotism.

As the soldiers stepped out of the dhaba (roadside eatery) after finishing their breakfast, they were greeted with chants of "Bharat Mata ki Jai", "Vande Mataram", and "Jai Hind". The staff and passersby had gathered near the entrance and began showering the uniformed men with flower petals. Many folded their hands in reverence, while others saluted the soldiers with pride.

"We did not expect anything like this," said Naik Saurabh Yadav, one of the soldiers in the convoy. "This kind of love and respect from ordinary citizens gives us even more strength. It reminds us what we are fighting for — the people and the spirit of India."

The dhaba staff had also arranged drinking water bottles and snacks for the soldiers, insisting they take them along for the journey ahead. "It is a small gesture," said Rajeev Tiwari, a cook at the eatery. "These men are ready to give their lives for our safety. The least we can do is make sure they are cared for on the road."

The emotional farewell came in the backdrop of Operation Sindoor, a large-scale counter-terror operation launched by the Indian Army in response to the recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir.

The Indian Air Force had also carried out precision airstrikes targeting terror launch pads across the border in Pakistan, further raising patriotic sentiment across the country. "Every Indian stands with the armed forces right now," said Sangeeta Mishra, a schoolteacher who had stopped for tea and witnessed the scene. "What happened in Pahalgam shook us. But the way our forces are responding shows the strength of our nation. We owe them our unwavering support."

The gathering turned into an impromptu tribute to the Indian Army, with onlookers capturing the moment on their phones, clapping, and even singing patriotic songs like "Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon". Children waved small paper flags and tried to interact with the soldiers, who humbly acknowledged the affection.

"We feel safe because they are out there on the frontlines," said Anwar Ali, a local shopkeeper. "In a way, every citizen is part of this mission. By standing with our soldiers, we are telling the enemy that India is united and unbreakable."

The convoy resumed its journey after a few minutes, but the moment left a lasting impression on all those present. Some eyes were moist and voices cracked as people raised their hands in final salutes.

CM Yogi, Rajnath to inaugurate BrahMos missile production unit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Lucknow will mark a historic milestone in India's defence journey on Sunday with the inauguration of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile production unit — part of the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor.

Launched by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh (joining virtually from Delhi), the facility underscores India's push for self-reliance in defence and a major boost to UP's industrial growth.

It signals a powerful stride toward strengthening India's indigenous defence manufacturing capacity.

On this occasion, CM Yogi Adityanath and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will also inaugurate the Titanium and Super Alloys Materials Plant (Strategic Materials Technology Complex). This plant will produce high-quality materials for the aerospace and defence sectors, which will be used in missions like Chandrayaan and in fighter jets.

Along with this, the BrahMos Aerospace Integration and Testing Facility will also be launched. This facility will play a key role in testing and assembling missiles. UP Defence Industrial Corridor, announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018, has been a top priority for the Yogi government.

There are six nodes in this corridor — Lucknow, Kanpur, Aligarh, Agra, Jhansi, and Chitrakoot — where major investments are being made to boost defence manufacturing. In addition to the BrahMos unit, the foundation stone for a Defence Testing Infrastructure System (DTIS) will also be laid at the Lucknow node. This system will help in testing and certifying defence products.

Short films will be shown during the inauguration ceremony, highlighting BrahMos Aerospace, Aero Alloy Technology, and the Defence Corridor. DRDO Secretary Dr Sameer V Kamat will deliver the welcome speech, while Sachin Agarwal, Chairman of PTC Industries, will talk about the company's contribution.

Built at a cost of ₹300 crore, the BrahMos production unit in Lucknow stands on 80 hectares of land provided free of cost by the Yogi government. Completed in three and a half years, the facility will manufacture the world's fastest supersonic cruise missile — a joint India-Russia project with a range of 290 to 400 km and a top speed of Mach 2.8. The BrahMos can be launched from land, sea, or air and uses a "fire and forget" system, making it highly precise and difficult to intercept.

Uttar Pradesh is the second state after Tamil Nadu to establish a Defence Industrial Corridor, launched in 2019. Both corridors are key to the 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiatives, aimed at reducing defence imports, boosting indigenous production, generating employment, and encouraging participation from private firms, MSMEs, and startups. The six nodes in Uttar Pradesh's corridor — Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi, Aligarh, Agra and Chitrakoot — are located near major expressways like the Purvanchal Expressway and Ganga Expressway.

This ensures smooth transport and logistics. The corridor is being developed under the Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA). Its strategic location offers excellent logistics for transporting raw materials, finished products and exports.

This strengthens India's defence self-reliance and supports its role in the global supply chain.

Security arrangements tightened at various installations in State, says Odisha Police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bhubaneswar

A day after Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi revealed that there is a threat from the sea amid the military conflict between India and Pakistan, the police on Saturday said it has ensured unprecedented security cover along the coastline and around vital installations in the state.

The state police have made special security arrangements for safeguarding various installations like the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur in Balaore district, Shree Jagannath temple in Puri, Hirakud Dam in Sambalpur, Paradip Port in Jagatsinghpur, Ordinance Factory in Bolangir district and other public places.

Taking to X, the Odisha Police said, "The Indian Army is conducting Operation Sindoor and has issued a high alert. In this context, the state police is patrolling day and night to ensure the security of the coast of Odisha."

Trawlers and all suspects are being thoroughly checked, they said.

"We are always ready to prevent any terrorist attack. We are always vigilant to provide safety to the public. Their safety is our priority," the Odisha Police said on social media.

The state police are patrolling day and night to ensure the safety of the people of Odisha.

"Security arrangements have been tightened at railway stations to counter possible terrorist attacks. Armed forces have been deployed at all entrances and exits of stations. All train coaches and platforms are being checked using metal

detectors. If you see a suspicious person inside a moving train or at a station, immediately inform the police," the state police appealed to the people.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi had on Friday said that Odisha sees a possible danger in the sea as it has a long coastline of 480 kilometres, and houses major installations like the missile testing centre at Chandipur and Shree Jagannath Dham in Puri.

The police conduct proper checking and frisking of devotees and they are requested to cooperate. Anti-sabotage squad personnel are conducting regular checks around the temple in Puri

— VINIT AGRAWAL, PURI SP

"Though there is no specific threat to Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri, the extra precautions have been taken since terrorists had opened fire on tourists at Pahalgam in J and K after inquiring about their religion," a senior official said. Armed police personnel have taken positions around Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri as lakhs of pilgrims from across the country visit the shrine every year, he said.

"The police conduct proper checking and frisking of devotees, and they are requested to cooperate. Anti-sabotage squad personnel are conducting regular checks around the temple. The entire temple area and the pilgrim town are under CCTV surveillance," Puri SP Vinit Agrawal said.

A team of the National Security

Guard (NSG) visited Puri on May 5 and 6 and supervised the security arrangements at the 12th-century shrine. They reviewed the existing security arrangements at the entry and exit points, crowd management protocols, emergency response mechanisms and others, the official said. Puri district police sources said that hotel owners are also instructed to keep proper records of their guests and regularly update police if they find anything suspicious.

Regular checking of vehicles is underway at various locations across Puri, the police said, adding that marine fishing communities have been asked to keep an eye on vessels.

A high-level emergency meeting was held on the security of the ITR, Chandipur, on Friday afternoon.

The ITR premises also house the Proof and Experimental Establishment (PXE), a premier DRDO laboratory.

Senior police officers, DRDO officials, coast guard and marine police personnel have chalked out a plan for ensuring proper security at ITR and Wheeler Island, where major missiles are test-fired, the sources said.

The security arrangements have also been strengthened at the Army Air Defence College near Gopalpur, the ordinance factory in Bolangir, INS Chilka and the Indian Rare Earths Limited (IERL) near Chhatrapur, they said.

The Hirakud Dam in Sambalpur district, which is the longest earthen dam in Asia, has also been placed under heightened surveillance.

The authorities of the Paradip Port in Jagatsinghpur district are also on high alert, another official said.

Rajasthan CM holds all-party meeting amid military conflict

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Jaipur

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma on Saturday held an all-party meeting at his office here and briefed party representatives about the state government's preparedness amid the ongoing military conflict between India and Pakistan.

The western part of Rajasthan, which shares International Border with Pakistan, has been facing aerial threats from the neighbouring country.

Even today, a high alert was issued in the border districts Jaisalmer, Barmer, Bikaner and Sri Ganganagar amid threats of potential strikes by Pakistan.

The all-party meeting was attended by Leader of Opposition Tikaram Jolly and representatives of other political parties.

The chief minister shared details regarding the state government's preparations and also sought suggestions.

"The CM called an all-party meeting to discuss the situation. Details regarding our preparations were shared with the leaders of political parties and suggestions were sought. The leaders of all parties extended support," Parliamentary Affairs Minister Jogaram Patel said.

He said that representatives from all parties are united and gave their suggestions.

Leader of Opposition Jolly said that the government has made elaborate arrangements in view of the situation and the entire opposition is with the government.

He said that the entire nation stands with the defence forces of the country.

Karnataka won't approve leaves of policemen: Parameshwara

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bengaluru

In view of the prevailing security situation in the country, policemen will not be given leaves, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara said on Saturday. He said the Chief Minister will hold a special meeting this evening to review the preparedness to deal with any situation.

"We will not approve any leaves or holidays of policemen at this juncture because we don't know when normalcy returns. The Centre will inform us when the normalcy returns. Till such time we have to be alert," Parameshwara told reporters here.

He said the state government has to work effectively everywhere especially in the coastal region. "Learning from our past experience during war, security should be strong in the coastal regions. We have to be alert all along the coastal line, right from Uttar Kannada to Dakshina Kannada," the Minister explained.

According to Parameshwara, there are three layers of security in the coastal area, which are police, security arranged by ports and the Indian Navy.

He also said that Siddaramaiah will chair a meeting with officials of Home and Revenue Department to review the preparedness of the state government to deal with any situation.

Granthi dies in heavy Pakistan shelling

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

Amarjeet Singh, an ex-serviceman and a devout Granthi who regularly performed Paath at the Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha in Poonch town of Jammu on Wednesday, performed his last duty as a 'true soldier' before he became the target of the heavy Pakistan shelling and succumbed to his injuries. Minutes before stepping out of the Gurdwara, Amarjeet Singh used the public address system to appeal to the residents to stay indoors in the wake of heavy shelling in the Poonch town.

A local scribe from Poonch told The Pioneer, "It was around 7.00 am, I heard Amarjeet Singh relaying the advisory of the local police to stay indoors to ensure their safety and security as Poonch town was witnessing heavy shelling. Ten minutes later, as he stepped out to return to his home, he was badly hit by splinters of the Pakistani shell that exploded near the boundary wall of the Gurdwara."

Singh, who lived in the close vicinity of the Gurdwara, was immediately rushed to the district hospital, where doctors tried their best to save his life, but he succumbed to his fatal injuries.

16 civilians, including five children, were killed in cross-border shelling by the Pakistan army on Wednesday. Three other members belonging to the Sikh community, including a 33-year-old Balvinder Kour, Amreek Singh and Ranjit Singh, were among the deceased civilians. A local cleric from Mandi, Maulana Mohd Iqbal, who taught young children at Madrasa Zia-ul-Uloom in Poonch city, also lost his life in the heavy shelling. A seven-year-old Maryam Khatoon, became



Family members of Amarjeet Singh

the youngest victim of heavy Pakistani shelling while four minor kids, including siblings 14-year-old Ayan, 12-year-old Aruba, and 13-year-old Vihaan Bhargava, also lost their lives in the targeted shelling of civilian areas hours after India launched 'Operation Sindoor' to demolish terror factories operating in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir late Tuesday night. At least 10 other children were injured in the cross-border shelling.

After witnessing 'death and destruction', Poonch is silently mourning the loss of precious human lives.

The bustling Poonch town remains shut and the main markets wear a deserted look. The religious places hit during the shelling have once again opened their gates to allow disciples to offer prayers and heal themselves. However, uneasy calm prevailed everywhere as the majority of city inhabitants had shifted temporarily to safer places, and the ones who decid-

ed to stay behind bid farewell to their loved ones.

Narinder Singh from the District Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Poonch, while paying tributes after the cremation ceremony, said Amarjeet Singh, survived by his wife, a son in Class 6 and a daughter, used to regularly play the tabla at the gurdwara, while another victim, Amreek Singh, served as a raagi for over 28 years in Poonch. It is a great loss for the members of the Sikh community in Poonch as they have lost these people in the cross-border shelling.

33-year-old Balvinder Kaur, a homemaker, was killed in Mankote. She had three children, the youngest just a year and a half old.

The members of the Sikh community have appealed to the district administration to restore confidence in the local population to maintain communal harmony during testing times.

Ram Mandir makes special arrangements for Ramlala

KAMLESH SRIVASTAVA ■ Ayodhya

With Uttar Pradesh witnessing erratic summer weather — ranging from intense heatwaves to overcast skies and sporadic drizzles — the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust has initiated several measures to ensure the well-being of Ramlala, the child form of Lord Ram seated in the sanctum sanctorum of the Ayodhya Ram Mandir.

In recent weeks, the temperature in Ayodhya has been hovering around 38°C, making the conditions inside the stone sanctum particularly harsh. The heat had begun affecting not only devotees visiting the temple but also the priests conducting daily rituals in the inner sanctum. Responding to concerns raised by the temple priests and devotees, the Trust has now installed two high-capacity coolers inside the sanctum to regulate the temperature.

Apart from enhancing the infrastructure, the temple administration has also introduced seasonal changes in Ramlala's daily worship routine. Recognising the intense heat of the summer months, particularly during the Hindu calendar month of Jyeshtha, several cooling offerings and garments have been introduced into the seva (daily service).

Ramlala is now being adorned in specially designed garments made from light silk and breathable cotton fabrics. These clothes not only offer comfort but are also in line with the traditional aesthetics of temple rituals. Floral decorations using fragrant summer flowers such as jasmine, desi gulab (native rose), champa and juhi are being used to create garlands and enhance

the sanctity of the inner chamber.

To help keep the deity cool, offerings of curd, fresh fruit juices, and lassi are now a part of the daily afternoon bhog (offering). In addition, Ramlala is being served Madhupark — a sacred mixture of honey, curd and desi ghee — five times a day, from Shringar Aarti in the morning to Shayan Aarti at night. According to temple priests, this mixture is both nourishing and symbolically cooling, and is believed to be among the Lord's preferred offerings.

The temple priests have welcomed these timely arrangements, stating that they make the worship environment more comfortable and spiritually conducive. "The sanctum is made of stone and naturally retains heat. During peak summer afternoons, it becomes difficult to perform rituals. These coolers and the seasonal changes in offerings have made a big difference," said one of the senior priests.

With the weather in Uttar Pradesh remaining unpredictable — shifting between hot spells and cloudy relief — the temple authorities have expressed their intent to continue monitoring conditions closely and make necessary changes to ensure Ramlala's comfort. Sources within the temple administration say that if the temperatures rise further, more cooling mechanisms, including fans and possibly air conditioning, could be considered.

These changes are part of a broader effort to maintain a balance between age-old traditions and modern comforts, ensuring that the spiritual and devotional atmosphere of the Ram Mandir remains intact while also addressing practical needs during the harsh summer months.

Russia assured full support to India in its fight against terrorism: MoS Defence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Moscow

Russia has assured full support to India in its fight against all manifestations of terrorism and promised to promptly fulfil military orders in the pipeline, visiting Union Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth said on Saturday. Seth, who represented India at the 80th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in the Second World War, called on Russian Deputy Defence Minister Col Gen Alexander Fomin to discuss deepening military and technical cooperation.

"Russia assured that it will support us in our battle against all manifestations of terrorism and said the cooperation between the two nations will continue to advance based on existing agreements," Seth said before leaving for New Delhi.

Russia promised to promptly fulfil military orders in the pipeline, he said.

Both sides agreed to enhance ties



Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth

through existing frameworks and regular consultations. During the meeting, he thanked Russia for its support against cross-border terrorism.

During the visit, Seth laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. He also addressed the members of the Indian community in Moscow on Friday.

"The colder the weather in Russia, the warmer the friendship with India," he said, observing that the month of May is supposed to be pleasantly warm, but this year it was unusually cold. Seth said he was highly impressed by Russian President Vladimir Putin's humble nature. "I had an opportunity to meet President Putin thrice. He very warmly greeted me and impressed me with his humble nature," he said. Seth was chosen to represent India at the Victory Day parade as PM Narendra Modi or Defence Minister Rajnath Singh could not travel abroad in view of escalating tensions with Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack.

China urges India and Pakistan to exercise calm

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Beijing

China on Saturday strongly urged India and Pakistan to exercise calm and restraint and return to the track of peaceful settlement amid reports of escalation of the military conflict between the two neighbours.

China is closely following the ongoing situation between India and Pakistan and is deeply concerned about the escalation, a statement by the Chinese Foreign Ministry said here. "We strongly urge both sides to act in the larger interest of peace and stability, exercise calm and restraint, return to the track of political settlement through peaceful means, and refrain from any action that could further escalate tensions," the statement issued by the ministry said.

He was referring to a question about the reports of escalation of conflict between India and what it terms as iron-clad ally, Pakistan.

"This will be important for the funda-

mental interest of both India and Pakistan, and for a stable and peaceful region. This is also what the international community hopes to see. China is willing to continue to play a constructive role to this end," it said.

Since the Pahalgam terrorist attack, China, while condemning it, has called for restraint, besides a fair and swift investigation into the attack.

Tensions between India and Pakistan increased after the Indian armed forces on Wednesday conducted precision strikes targeting terror launchpads in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in response to the April 22 Pahalgam attack that had cross-border linkages. Pakistan launched a fresh wave of drone attacks targeting 26 locations in India — from Jammu and Kashmir to Gujarat — for the second night on Friday, with the Indian defence ministry saying the enemy's attempts to hit vital installations, including airports and air bases, were successfully thwarted.

Bangladesh to ban Hasina's political party

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dhaka

Bangladesh's interim government on Friday said it would take a "quick decision" on banning deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League.

The announcement by the interim government chief Professor Muhammad Yunus's office in a statement came after student-led newly floated National Citizen Party (NCP) activists overnight rallied in front of his official residence demanding Hasina's party be disbanded.

NCP leadership had spearheaded the massive student-led protests that resulted in the ouster of Hasina on August 5 last year, and Yunus had taken over on August 8. Those students came together to form the NCP earlier this year.

"The government considers with seriousness the recent demand raised on behalf of different political parties, organisations and the people to disband Awami League over allegations of autocratic rule and terrorist activities," the interim government statement said.

The government has established contacts with different political parties and "will take a quick decision in consultation with them," it said.

The NCP set up a makeshift stage near Yunus's official residence 'Jamuna' after midnight Thursday. The party activists also offered Friday prayers at the scene.

The government statement came as leaders of different Islamist parties and groups such as Jamaat-e-Islam, its student front Islami Chhatra Shibir and Hefazate-Islam on Friday also joined the rally of the NCP.

The statement urged everyone to keep restraint until a decision is made and added that the government has disbanded what it called "terrorist Chhatra League" regarded as the Awami League's front organisation.

"Our movement has started. This campaign may continue for one day or even a month. We will have to remain on the street until the announcement of banning Awami League is made," an NCP leader Sarjis Alam told the rally.

The activists also chanted slogans against the Awami League.

Later, NCP protestors enforced a road blockade at Shahbagh Square.

Media reports suggest that the movement spread to various parts of the country. "Until the government notification is issued on the ban, we will not return to our

home. We will dig Awami League's grave at Shahbagh," Alam said, as more rightwing and Islamist groups joined the Shahbagh blockade.

NCP convenor Nahid Islam, meanwhile, said on his verified Facebook account that activists would march towards Dhaka until an immediate decision comes.

He said the NCP activists had already erected blockades at different parts of the capital.

Earlier, NCP leader Abul Hasnat Abdullah on Thursday night initiated the sit-in protest near Yusuf's residence along with several supporters and other leaders such as Islam joined him after midnight.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which was Awami League's main rival, has already distanced itself from the demand saying they are opposed to a ban on any political party.

Most of the leaders of the Awami League are in jail or on the run at home and abroad.

Since its inception, NCP has been demanding a ban on Hasina's party.

The former prime minister, currently believed to be in India and several of the Awami League leaders face a series of cases against them in various Bangladesh courts.

Saudi minister Discusses tensions with Pak minister Dar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dubai

Saudi Arabia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Faisal bin Farhan on Saturday evoked its "close and balanced relations" with both India and Pakistan and discussed efforts to de-escalate tensions and end ongoing military confrontations between them.

Faisal held two phone calls, with Minister of External Affairs India S Jaishankar and Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, a statement from the Saudi Foreign Office said. The discussions focused on efforts to de-escalate tensions and end ongoing military confrontations, it said, adding, Faisal affirmed the Kingdom's commitment to the security and stability of the region and its close and balanced relations with both friendly countries.

The Saudi statement came as the Indian and Pakistani militaries targeted each other's installations using missiles in the last more than 12 hours, further escalating the already tense conflict situation.

Earlier on Saturday, a brief statement from the Foreign Ministry said that upon the directives of the Saudi leadership, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel Al-Jubeir visited India and Pakistan on May 8 and 9 as part of the Kingdom's "ongoing efforts to de-escalate tensions, end current military confrontations, and promote the resolution of all disputes through dialogue and diplomatic channels." Al-Jubeir travelled to New Delhi on Thursday on an unannounced visit and discussed with Jaishankar the situation that has developed since India's military strikes on terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir early Wednesday prompted by the April 22 terror attack that killed 26 people in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam.

On Friday, the Saudi minister visited Islamabad, where he held talks with Pakistan's top leadership.

Tensions between India and Pakistan increased after the Indian armed forces on Wednesday conducted precision strikes targeting terror launchpads in Pakistan and PoK.

Gravely concerned: Singapore on India-Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Singapore

Singapore has said it is gravely concerned about the ongoing "military confrontation" between India and Pakistan and has urged both parties to de-escalate.

Tensions between India and Pakistan soared significantly after the Indian armed forces on Wednesday conducted precision strikes targeting terror launchpads in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in response to the April 22 Pahalgam attack that had cross-border linkages.

Pakistan launched a fresh wave of drone attacks targeting 26 locations in India — from Jammu and Kashmir to Gujarat — for the second night on Friday.

"Singapore is gravely concerned about the ongoing military confrontation between India and Pakistan following the heinous terror attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, on April 22," Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) said in a statement on Friday.

"We call on both parties to de-escalate tensions through diplomatic means and ensure the safety of all civilians," it said.

Singapore had strongly condemned the April 22 terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, which claimed 26 lives.

On May 7, the MFA advised Singaporeans to defer all non-essential travel to Jammu and Kashmir in India, and to Pakistan.

"Travellers should exercise precaution, especially at the border regions between Pakistan and India," said the MFA, citing the volatile security situation between the two countries.

Singaporeans in India and Pakistan are advised to remain vigilant and take all necessary precautions for personal safety, including avoiding large gatherings, monitoring local news closely, and heeding instructions of local authorities, the MFA said.

Around 30 dead in separatist attack in southeastern Nigeria: Amnesty International

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Abuja (Nigeria)

At least 30 people have been killed after gunmen attacked travellers on a major highway in the southeastern part of Nigeria, rights group Amnesty International said.

The rights group said Friday that more than 20 vehicles and trucks were set ablaze during the Thursday attack along the Okigwe-Owerri highway in Imo state.

Police confirmed the attack but not the death toll.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but police suspect the Eastern Security Network, the paramilitary wing of the proscribed separatist group Indigenous People of Biafra.

The rights group said Friday that more than 20 vehicles and trucks were set ablaze during the Thursday attack along the Okigwe-Owerri highway in Imo state.

The secessionist campaign in southeastern Nigeria dates back to when the short-lived Republic of Biafra fought and lost a civil war from 1967 to 1970 to become independent from the West African country. An estimated 1 million people died in the conflict, many from starvation.

The rights group said "international law requires the Nigerian government to promptly investigate unlawful killings with a view to bringing perpetrators to justice." One suspect connected to the attack was killed in a joint operation by law enforcement agencies, police spokesperson Okoye Henry said in a statement.

"An intensive manhunt is ongoing to apprehend the fleeing suspects and bring them to justice," Henry said.

Two of the group's prominent leaders, Nnamdi Kanu and Simon Ekpa, are in custody in Nigeria and Finland, respectively. Kanu is standing trial on a seven-count charge bordering on terrorism and treasonable felony. He has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The Nigerian government said Friday it has not begun extradition proceedings but is in talks with Finnish authorities to ensure Ekpa is held accountable for his alleged actions. For many years Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation with at least 210 million people — has been wracked by violence related to the activities of armed extremist groups.

United States to accept white South African refugees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Washington

The Trump administration will welcome more than two dozen white South Africans to the United States as refugees next week, an unusual move because it has suspended most refugee resettlement operations, officials and documents said.

The first Afrikaner refugees are arriving Monday at Dulles International Airport outside Washington, according to a document. They are expected to be greeted by a government delegation, including the deputy secretary of state and officials from the Department of Health and Human Services, which has organised their resettlement under its Office for Refugee Resettlement. The flight will be the first of several in a "much larger-scale relocation effort", White House deputy chief of staff Stephen Miller told reporters.

"What's happening in South Africa fits

the textbook definition of why the refugee programme was created," he said. "This is persecution based on a protected characteristic — in this case, race. This is race-based persecution."

State Department refugee programmes have been put on hold since President Donald Trump ordered a review in February. While halting arrivals from Afghanistan, Iraq, most of sub-Saharan Africa and throughout Latin America, Trump also issued an executive order prioritising the processing of white South Africans who claim racial discrimination in their home country. "The US Embassy in Pretoria has been conducting interviews and processing pursuant to President Trump's Executive Order on Addressing Egregious Actions of the Republic of South Africa," the State Department said. "The Department of State is prioritising consideration for US refugee resettlement of Afrikaners in South Africa who

are victims of unjust racial discrimination."

The department said nothing about the imminent arrival of what officials said are believed to be more than two dozen white South Africans from roughly four families who had applied for resettlement in the US. Their arrival had originally been scheduled for early last week but was delayed for reasons that were not immediately clear.

The HHS refugee office was ready to offer them support, including with housing, furniture and other household items, and expenses like groceries, clothing, diapers and more, the document says. "This effort is a stated priority of the administration."

HHS didn't respond to messages seeking comment. The Trump administration has taken an outspoken adversarial position in regard to South Africa, which is the homeland of close Trump adviser Elon Musk and also holds the rotating presidency of the Group of 20 developed and devel-

oping nations. Secretary of State Marco Rubio notably boycotted a G20 foreign ministers meeting in Johannesburg in March because its main agenda centered on diversity, inclusion and climate change. Rubio also expelled South Africa's ambassador to the US in March for comments that the Trump administration interpreted as accusing the president of promoting white supremacy. Shortly thereafter, the State Department ended all engagement with the G20 during South Africa's presidency. The US is due to host G20 meetings in 2026. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's office said in a statement Friday that he had spoken with Trump late last month on issues including the US criticism of South Africa and the Trump administration's allegations that Afrikaners are being persecuted. Ramaphosa told Trump that the information the US president had received "was completely false", the statement said.

Myanmar's military government chief holds meeting with China

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bangkok

The chief of Myanmar's military government, Senior Gen Min Aung Hlaing, has for the first time since seizing power four years ago met with President Xi Jinping of China, a top ally of his military government, state-run media in the Southeast Asian nation reported Saturday. The Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper reported that Xi pledged to provide assistance for recovery after Myanmar's devastating earthquake in March and aid in efforts to end the country's civil war. The two leaders met Friday in Moscow on the sidelines of the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II.

Its report said they also discussed "bilateral relations, enhancing cooperation in all sectors, and cooperating in regional stability and peace" China has been using its influence with ethnic rebel organisations to ease their pressure on the military government in an apparent effort to stabilise it. China, along with Russia, is a major arms supplier to Myanmar's military in its war against pro-democracy and ethnic minority resistance forces. Beijing is also Myanmar's biggest trading partner and has invested billions of dollars in mines, oil and gas pipelines and other infrastructure. Its interests in security in Myanmar are especially strong because the two nations share an 890-mile (1,440-kilometer) border. China's government has maintained good working relations with Myanmar's ruling military, which is shunned and sanctioned by many Western nations for the army's February 2021 takeover from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi and for major human rights violations. It is also one of the countries providing major relief and

reconstruction assistance after the 7.7-magnitude March 28 earthquake that killed more than 3,700 people in Myanmar and injured more than 5,100. The quake worsened an already dire humanitarian crisis, with more than 3 million people displaced from their homes and nearly 20 million in need due to the war, according to the United Nations. Beijing has been concerned about instability that threatens its interests in Myanmar since Myanmar's army suffered unprecedented battlefield defeats over the past few years, especially in areas near the Chinese border. An offensive began in October 2023, by the "Three Brotherhood Alliance", comprising the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, the Arakan Army and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, was able to quickly capture towns and overrun military bases and command centres and strategic cities along the Chinese border in northeastern Shan state. It was widely seen at the time as having Beijing's tacit support to help stamp out rampant organised crime activities in areas controlled by ethnic Chinese. In early 2024, Beijing helped broker a ceasefire, but that quickly fell apart when the alliance launched new attacks. Myanmar's ruling generals and China's government showed concern as pro-democracy guerrillas and armed ethnic minority groups, sometimes working hand in hand, gained the initiative in fighting. The alliance's offensive lost momentum after China shut down border crossings, cut electricity to Myanmar towns and took other measures to discourage the fighting. Under increasing pressure from Beijing, the Myanmar National

Democratic Alliance Army or MNDAA, withdrew its forces and administration authorities last month from the strategically important town of Lashio in northeastern Myanmar, which hosts a major regional military headquarters but which the rebel group seized in August last year.



CHANGE OF NAME

I, Sanjeev Dhingra, S/o Madan Lal Dhingra, R/o G-49, Top Floor, Lajpat Nagar-2, New Delhi has changed my name from Sanjeev Dhingra to Sanjiv Dhingra for all future purposes.

PD(2010)C

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client, Sajda, wife of Lt. Sh. Javed Akhtar, resident of House No. 239, Street No. 3, New Lahore Colony, SDM Court, Shastrī Nagar, East Delhi, Delhi-110031, has disowned her daughter Rani Baby (DOB: 28.01.2002) from all my movable and immovable properties due to her misconduct and misbehavior. She has severed all relations with her, and my client shall not be responsible for any of her acts, deeds, or financial transactions of any nature whatsoever from this day forth.

GAGAN KUMAR SINGHAL, D/4022/2015 (Advocate) for GCS LEGAL.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mr. Manoj Singh Mehta to inform to the public at large that Mrs. Urvasi Rana Ch. Padam Singh Rana is purchasing the Built-up Second Floor Front Side (Left Portion), Flat Pvt. No. SF-01, without roof rights, built on land area measuring 100 Sq. Yds., out of total land area measuring 350 Sq. Yds., out of Khasra No. 1915, situated in the area of Village Burari, abadi known as Satyawati Bhawan, Gali No.2, A-1 Block Extn., Sant Nagar, Burari, Opp. Burari Police Station, Delhi-110084 from Mrs. Anita Kumari who became owner vide Notarized GPA dated 10.07.2023, Notarized ATs dated 10.07.2023 & Notarized Deed of Will dated 10.07.2023 executed by Mr. Ram Kumar Tomar and same to be financed & mortgaged by Aditya Birla Housing Finance Ltd. So to comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim/ right/interest/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 15 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc. Lucern Legal LLP B-93B, Second Floor, Opp. SBI Bank Sector 2, Noida, UP-201301 Contact No: 720-4289379

कार्यालय, नगर पालिक निगम, कोरबा (छत्तीसगढ़)
ई-प्रोक्चरमेंट निविदा सूचना
क्र. 1441/निर्माण/2025 दिनांक 02.05.2025
एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली अंतर्गत सक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु (Online) आनलाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

क्र.	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (रु.लाख में)	निविदा डालने की अंतिम तिथि
1.	नगर निगम कोरबा अंतर्गत बोरवेल हेतु आर.सी.सी. चैम्बर के साथ नॉन इलेक्ट्रीकलस कन्वर्शन चूनिट का प्रदाय एवं स्थापना कार्य (प्रो.पे.सं.नि. मद) (प्रथम निविदा)	99.94	26.05.2025 (T.No. 167793)

उपरोक्त कार्यों की निविदा की जानकारी ई-प्रोक्चरमेंट वेब पोर्टल <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> से डाउनलोड की जा सकती है, साथ ही निगम के वेब साईट www.korbamunicipal.in पर भी देखी जा सकती है।

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नगर पालिक निगम
कोरबा (छत्तीसगढ़)

राष्ट्रीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान, कुरुक्षेत्र
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
(Under the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)
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National Institute of Technology Kurukshetra invites online applications through Google Form for admissions to M.Tech. (left over seats of CCMT-2025, Self-Financed, Sponsored) and M.Sc. (left over regular and Self-Financed seats of CCMN-2025) for the Academic Year 2025-26
The Google Form will be opened from May 07, 2025 to June 13, 2025 5:00 p.m. Application submitted without fee, incomplete or late will not be considered.
For more information kindly visit the Institute website: www.nitkr.ac.in under Admissions 2025.
Registrar /lc

Spieth chases Grand Slam again at PGA Championship 2025

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Washington

Jordan Spieth headed to Quail Hollow for the PGA Championship with more expectations than pressure for being next in line to join the most elite fraternity in golf with the career Grand Slam. Only the Wanamaker Trophy was missing. That was eight years ago. He tied for 28th.

"I really had no reason not to have had a better chance," Spieth said as he tried to recall the 2017 PGA Championship. He was fresh off his astonishing birdie-eagle-birdie-par finish to win the British Open at Royal Birkdale, the third leg of the Grand Slam.

Spieth had said going into that PGA, "If I don't win one in the next 10 years, then maybe there's added pressure. And hopefully, we don't have to have this conversation in 10 years."

It's getting close to that. He tries for the ninth time when the PGA Championship returns to Quail Hollow on May 15-18. If there are renewed expectations, they come from Rory McIlroy getting the final piece of his Grand Slam puzzle with a dream win at the Masters.

Now the attention falls to Spieth, although there are glaring differences, particularly their form. McIlroy had already won Pebble Beach and The Players Championship this year going into the Masters. Spieth hasn't won in more than three years.

Not many doubt Spieth is capable. He shot 62 in the final round of the CJ Cup Byron Nelson, enough to ask if golf could get another career slam in a span of 35 days. "Odds would say he's good enough

to do it," Scottie Scheffler said. Spieth, however, is only six months removed from surgery on a left wrist he believes first was injured toward the end of 2017 and the start of 2018.

As much as he has talked about this being a fresh start, and a 10-year outlook for what he wants to achieve, he can't help but look back and wonder how differently his career could have gone if he had taken care of his wrist sooner.

"If I'm really feeling petty about myself, I lost six years because of this," he said.

"I can remember specific lessons where my grip got too weak and I couldn't strengthen it by the time I got to a 4-iron. ... And then I started getting into really bad habits just to make up for an open face. And never fixed it until the end of '20 and beginning of '21."

But the pain never went away. The tendon that connects the forearm to the wrist would pop out, first a week before the 2023 PGA Championship, even during the final round of the British Open last year at Royal Troon. That's when he realized surgery was his best option.

"I look back at that and say, 'If I did something right away, I think last year looks a lot different,'" Spieth said.

As much as he wants to move forward, the past is where Spieth needs to look to rebuild the swing that took him to No. 1 in the world and three majors before his 24th birthday.

The past also tempts to remember how good it was.

"Yeah, I've lived that way before and it doesn't help," Spieth said. "I bounce around back a little bit, like 'What if I had just got on top of it back then? What could



have happened?' Really, in 19 and '20, I was living in the past every day."

That wouldn't seem to help. "Not at 25 years old," he said. "It's not really healthy."

He has talked about giving himself grace in his return to golf after being out six months from the August surgery. He is writing in a journal, his thoughts mainly about gratitude to be playing again. But then he gets into competitive mode and finds himself in a hurry to have everything the way it once was.

Ten years ago, he won the Masters and U.S. Open, and he was tied for the lead in the British Open when he missed a 5-foot par putt on the 17th hole at St. Andrews. He missed the playoff by one shot, and a month later was runner-up to Jason Day in the PGA Championship.

He was three shots away from a shot at the Grand Slam. Jack Nicklaus in 1975 was the only other player that close (aggregate score) in the four majors.

"Let's not forget when he won all the majors and all the tournaments at such a young age, they came so quickly," Curtis Strange said. "Can you sustain that over the next eight or ten years. He didn't. One was because of some injuries. But his ball striking ... Just look at the stats. His ball striking is not near what Scottie Scheffler's is. What does he have to do? He has to chip and putt like we know Jordan can, and sometimes that doesn't happen every single day."

Spieth was 22 during that dream season in 2015, which ended with him winning the FedEx Cup. Now he is married, the father of two, another on the way this summer.

How does he convince himself his best golf is ahead when the past includes a season that only comes along once in a career for anyone not named Nicklaus or Tiger Woods. "My situation is a really interesting one," Spieth said.

"You want to be as present as possible, and in my situation it's a really hard thing to do. Because I'm trying to live a little bit in the past, but I'm also trying to satisfy the future for the past, for whatever length of time I have left playing at a high level."

Spieth played in the final group on Saturday of the 2019 PGA Championship at Bethpage Black. He was seven shots behind and had no idea where the ball was going unless he had a putter in his hands. He tied for fourth, six shots behind. That was his best finish in the PGA with the Grand Slam at stake and it was never close.

As tough as it was for McIlroy to finally win the Masters, he doesn't see it much easier for Spieth in the PGA Championship.

"You have to go back to the same tournament every year for Jordan, but not the same golf course," McIlroy said. "It's a bit of a different proposition for him rather than me having to go back to the same venue every year."

What doesn't change are the stakes. McIlroy now can speak from experience.

"You know that you're not just trying to win another tournament, you're trying to become part of history, and that has a certain weight to it," McIlroy said. "I've certainly felt that at Augusta over the years. I'm sure Jordan has felt that a bit going into each PGA that he's had a chance to do the same thing."

India face tricky Sri Lanka test in ODI final showdown

PRESS TRUST OF INDIAN ■ Colombo

Indian women's team will bank on its smooth-functioning batting line-up to ward off a tricky Sri Lanka and win the ODI tri-series final here on Sunday.

India's lone defeat in this event came against the Lankans but Harmanpreet Kaur's side has been the most dominant team, finishing at the top of the points table with three wins from four matches.

Sri Lanka finished second with two wins and as many losses while South Africa were at the bottom of the pile with only one win in four games.

Winning this contest will also be paramount for both India and Sri Lanka, as it would help them in the buildup to the ODI World Cup later this year.

The primary reason behind India's fine run in the tournament is their excellent batting effort. With 201 runs at an average of 67, including a century (123) against South Africa, Jemimah Rodrigues has been India's best batter here.

Others like Pratika Rawal (164), Smriti Mandhana (148) and Deepti Sharma (126) have proved to be vital cogs with timely contributions.

Deepti's 93 consolidated India's position against South Africa in a league match but it was also symbolic of the stability in their lower-order.

Skipper Harmanpreet hasn't had any big score to her credit so far and often failed to convert the starts into big scores. However, her 41 not out, 30 and 28 in the last three matches indicate a big knock could be around the corner.

Sneh Rana has been the best bowler in the competition taking 11 wickets which included a five-wicket haul against South Africa. On their part, Sri Lanka will hope star batter Harshitha Samarawickrama



continues to fire against India in key clashes as her 53 played a pivotal role in the hosts' win in a league match.

The 26-year-old Samarawickrama will also draw confidence from her match-winning 69 not out against India in the T20 Asia Cup final last year, which had powered the Islanders to an eight-wicket victory. With two fifties and 177 runs in four matches, the left-handed Samarawickrama has been Sri Lanka's best batter in this series. The home captain and key all-rounder Chamari Athapaththu, with 88

runs and five wickets in four matches, hasn't been at her best so far and her contributions in the summit clash could also influence its outcome. Dewmi Vihanga (nine wickets) has had the strongest of impacts in the competition among Lankan bowlers but the Indian batters have negated her well earlier in the tournament.

Teams (from): India: Pratika Rawal, Smriti Mandhana, Harleen Deol, Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (wk), Deepti Sharma, Kashvee Gautam, Arundhati

Reddy, Sneha Rana, Nallapureddy Charani, Yastika Bhatia, Amanjot Kaur, Tejal Hasabnis, Shuchi Upadhyay.

Sri Lanka: Vishmi Gunaratne, Hansima Karunaratne, Hasini Perera, Piumi Wathsala, Harshitha Samarawickrama, Anushka Sanjeevani (wk), Nilakshika Silva, Chamari Athapaththu (c), Kavisha Dilhari, Manudi Nanayakkara, Rashmika Sewwandi, Dewmi Vihanga, Inoshi Priyadarshini, Achini Kalasuriya, Sugandika Kumari, Malki Madara, Inoka Ranaweera.

Ayush, Unnati lose in semifinal at Taipei Open

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Taipei

Rising shuttlers Ayush Shetty and Unnati Hooda ended their impressive runs with semifinal finishes in the men's and women's singles respectively, bringing curtains down on India's campaign at the \$240,000 BWF Taipei Open Super 300 here on Saturday.

Ayush, 20, a bronze medalist at the 2023 World Junior Championships, fought hard before going down 18-21, 17-21 to local favourite and world No. 7 Chou Tien Chen, a veteran of nearly two decades on the international circuit.

Earlier, Unnati, the 2022 Odisha Masters and 2023 Abu Dhabi Masters winner, showed early promise but couldn't sustain the momentum, losing 19-21, 11-21 in 43 minutes to top seed and world No. 8 Tomoka Miyazaki of Japan, the 2022 World Junior Champion.

Armed with a powerful smash and solid net play, Ayush had beaten top names including All England runner-up Lee Chia Hao, former world No. 1 Kidambi Srikanth, and Canada's Brian Yang in earlier rounds.

He began strongly against Chou, attacking the forecourt and using sharp angles to build an 8-4 lead.

But a few unforced errors allowed Chou to close the gap to 10-9 before taking a narrow lead at the break.

From 11-11, both players matched each other point for point. Ayush continued to push with his forehand smashes and attacking play, but Chou's experience showed.

At 18-18, the local star produced a body smash and followed it with a

sharp backhand to take the opening game. The intensity remained high in the second game. Ayush stayed aggressive, mixing up his strokes well to keep Chou guessing and led 11-10 at the interval.

However, Chou quickly turned the tables, winning a net duel and a parallel exchange to go up 13-11. Ayush fought back to 14-13, but a couple of long shots hurt his rhythm.

Chou kept up the pressure with angled returns, pushing Ayush to the corners and earning four match points at 20-16. The Indian saved one but eventually sent a backhand into the net to concede the match.

Hooda vs Miyazaki
Hooda started brightly, showing good control in the front court and using her smashes well to unsettle Miyazaki, opening up a 7-3 lead.

A body smash, a quick net return, and a deceptive block gave her an 11-6 advantage at the break.

After the change of ends, errors crept into Hooda's game. Miyazaki narrowed the gap to 10-12 and eventually levelled at 18-18 when Hooda netted a return.

The Japanese grabbed a game point as Hooda went wide and sealed it with a perfectly placed straight smash.

Miyazaki raced to a 4-0 lead in the second game as Hooda looked rattled. Trailing 2-8, the Indian missed key opportunities, including a point when her opponent was on the floor.

Hooda's inconsistency continued, while Miyazaki stayed sharp, capitalising on a lucky net chord and building a 15-6 lead before closing out the match with ease.

Indian archers win gold, silver and bronze at Archery World Cup Stage 2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Sanghai

Indian compound archers delivered a stellar performance, clinching a gold, silver and bronze apiece in the team events at the Archery World Cup Stage 2 here on Saturday.

The highlight of the medal rush was the gold won by the men's team comprising Abhishek Verma, Ojas Deotale and Rishabh Yadav who defeated Mexico 232-228 in a tense final.

India began strongly taking a 2-point lead with a near-flawless 59 in the first end to Mexico's 57. The second end saw Mexico fighting back with 58, while India managed 56 to level the match at 115-115

at the half-way stage.

In the third end, India edged ahead again with a 58 as Mexico posted 57, giving the Indians a slender 173-172 lead.

The Indian trio held their nerve in the final end, shooting a superb 59 to seal the gold with Mexico managing only 56.

In the women's compound final, the team of Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Madhura Dhamangaonkar and Chikitha Taniparthi settled for silver after a 221-234 loss to a strong Mexican side.

It was a one-sided contest, but the Indian women showed promise throughout the tournament to earn a podium finish. Adding to the medal tally, the Indian compound mixed team of Verma and

Madhura clinched bronze, defeating Malaysia in a low-scoring third-place playoff. The 24-year-old Madhura, who had never won a World Cup medal before, is making her second appearance in the competition having made a comeback after three years. Her last appearance was in the 2022 Archery World Cup Stage 4 in Medellin. These results underline India's growing depth and consistency in compound archery on the world stage.

With compound archery set to make its Olympic debut at the Los Angeles 2028 featuring a solitary event in the mixed team category, India will be eyeing its first-ever medal in archery in the mega sporting show.

Gimenez brace lifts Milan to 3-1 win over Bologna



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Milan

Santiago Gimenez scored twice and had a goal disallowed as AC Milan rallied to beat Bologna 3-1 in Serie A on Friday and keep alive its hopes of European soccer next season.

It was the second game in row in which Milan has come from behind to secure three points.

Milan is eighth in the Italian league, a point above Fiorentina and two points behind a faltering Bologna. The top four will go into the Champions League and the

fifth- and sixth-placed teams qualify for the Europa League and Europa Conference League, respectively.

Juventus is fourth with 63 points, the same as the two teams behind it, Roma and Lazio. Bologna was hoping to snap a two-game winless run and it took the lead after 48 minutes when Riccardo Orsolini cut in from the right and fired a low drive past Mike Maignan.

However, Gimenez equalized in the 73rd minute with a cool finish after Christian Pulisic set him up inside the box.

The Argentina-born Mexican interna-

tional had a second goal disallowed two minutes later but another goal seemed inevitable as Milan pushed forward. It came four minutes later and again Pulisic was involved. Joao Felix's 79th-minute shot was blocked but fell perfectly for the American and he coolly slotted the ball home from 12 meters out.

Gimenez capped a standout performance in stoppage time when he made space for himself inside the box and scored his second and Milan's third. The game was a dress rehearsal for next Wednesday's Coppa Italia final in Rome.

Aditi Ashok fails to make cut at Mizuho Americas Open

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Jersey City (USA)

Aditi Ashok failed to make the cut at Mizuho Americas Open after shooting a second round of even par, having previously carded 77 in the first round and finished with a total of five-over 149. Starting on the back nine, Aditi opened the day with a birdie before dropping a shot on the 13th hole. She soon picked up another shot on the 18th hole. On the eighth, Aditi made another birdie to close the day at even par.

The first day's score of five-over par proved to be a detriment to her campaign

this week as the cut fell at one under par.

The world No 1 Nelly Korda played four-under par for the second day in a row as she placed herself in tied first alongside Somi Lee (69-67) and Andrea Lee (68-68) with a combined total of eight under par. Nelly started her round from the back nine and had birdies on the 11th and 14th holes before dropping shots on the 17th and 18th holes.

In the front nine, she played a perfect game as she opened with a birdie on the first hole and then strung together consecutive birdies on the fifth and sixth holes before closing the round with another birdie on the ninth hole.

Teen star wins in squash opener

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chicago (USA)

Making a stupendous start to her World Championship campaign, young Indian squash player Anahat Singh knocked out world No 28 American Marina Stefanoni here. The 17-year-old Anahat, ranked 62 in the world, overcame loss in the first game win in the opening round of the high-profile tournament on Friday.

Anahat has a tough task ahead as she faces world No 15 Fayrouz Aboelkheir next, who beat fellow Egyptian Hana Moataz 3-1 in her first round contest of the \$656,500 tournament.

In times of turmoil, it is often cinema that rekindles the spirit of national unity through stories of heroism and honour, says **ABHI SINGHAL**



CINEMA SALUTES

THE BRAVEHEARTS

Border (1997): Based on the Battle of Longewala during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971. It features an ensemble cast including Sunny Deol, portrays the courage and sacrifice of Indian soldiers. The film's stirring music and patriotic narrative made it a major critical and commercial success.

"REAL HEROES DON'T WEAR CAPES, THEY WEAR UNIFORMS AND STAND AT THE BORDER" — INDIAN SOLDIERS DO NOT FIGHT FOR PERSONAL GLORY; THEY FIGHT FOR EVERY LIFE AND EVERY HEARTBEAT OF THEIR NATION. THEY STAND AS THE SILENT GUARDIANS OF OUR FREEDOM AND PEACE EACH HOUR AND DAY



Hindustan Ki Kasam (1973): Hindustan Ki Kasam (1973), directed by Chetan Anand, is a patriotic Hindi war film set against the backdrop of the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971. The story follows an Indian Air Force pilot who undertakes a covert mission deep into Pakistani territory after being presumed dead. The film stands out for its powerful portrayal of national duty, emotional intensity, and aerial warfare sequences, making it a tribute to the Indian armed forces. With music composed by Madan Mohan and a memorable title track evoking patriotic fervour, the film captured the spirit of the era and continues to resonate with audiences today.

unlawful captivity. With a gripping narrative and powerful performances by Manoj Bajpayee, Ravi Kishan, Piyush Mishra, and Deepak Dobriyal, the film highlights themes of resilience, sacrifice, and patriotism. Critically acclaimed for its authenticity and emotional depth, 1971 serves as a reminder of forgotten war heroes and unacknowledged suffering.

Few Good Men, set against the backdrop of the Indian Army. The film follows two army lawyers, Majors Siddhant Chaudhary and Akash Kapoor, as they defend a fellow officer accused of murder in Kashmir. As the case unfolds, hidden truths emerge, forcing the protagonist to confront his own values and fears. The film stars Kay Kay Menon, Rahul Bose, Javed Jaffrey and Deepak Dobriyal.



LOC Kargil (2003): War film based on the 1999 Kargil conflict between India and Pakistan. Featuring a vast ensemble cast, it recounts the bravery of Indian soldiers during Operation Vijay. The film emphasises patriotism, sacrifice, and the harsh realities of mountain warfare.

Sam Bahadur (2023): Directed by Meghna Gulzar, biographical war drama that chronicles the life of India's first field marshal, Sam Manekshaw. The film traces his military career, from his early days at the Indian Military Academy to his pivotal role in the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War, which led to the creation of Bangladesh. The narrative showcases Manekshaw's strategic brilliance and commitment to the nation.

1971 (2007): Directed by Amrit Sagar, is a Hindi-language war drama based on the true story of Indian soldiers held as prisoners of war (POWs) in Pakistan following the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971. The film follows six Indian Army officers who attempt a daring escape from a Pakistani camp after years

Shaurya (2008): Directed by Samar Khan, is a courtroom drama inspired by the Hollywood film — A

Uri: The Surgical Strike (2019): Based on India's 2016 surgical strikes in Pakistan-administered Kashmir the film follows Major Vihaan Singh Shergill of the Para (Special Forces) as he leads a covert operation to avenge a deadly terrorist attack in Uri, Jammu and Kashmir. The film has won four National Film Awards. The ensemble cast features Vicky Kaushal, Yami Gautam, Paresh Rawal, and Mohit Raina.



These films are more than just cinematic experiences as they are powerful chronicles of courage, sacrifice and patriotism. As they continue to resonate with audiences, especially during times of national reflection, they serve as emotional anchors and reminders of our shared history. In every scene and dialogue, they echo a united call: we stand together, always.

The Ghazi Attack (2017): Hindi-Telugu bilingual war film inspired by the mysterious sinking of Pakistan's PNS Ghazi during the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War. The film portrays the crew's tense underwater standoff as they attempt to thwart an enemy attack on India's aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant. The cast includes Rana Daggubati, Kay Kay Menon, Atul Kulkarni.

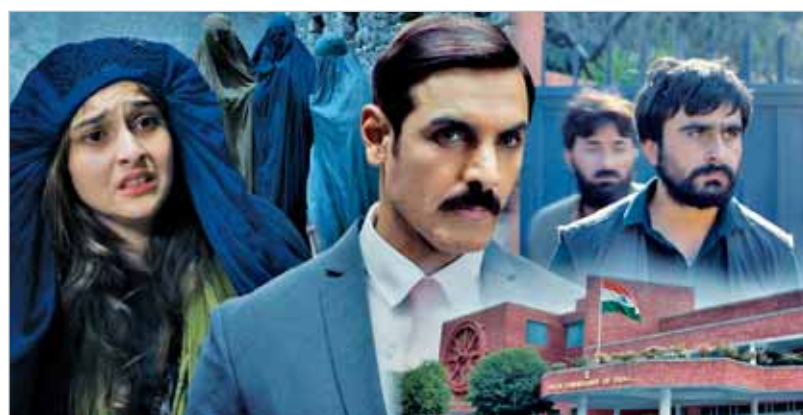


John Abraham shines again in a Patriotic Drama

A taut story of an Indian woman's fight for freedom in a foreign land finds its soul in *The Diplomat*, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**

When I hear the name *John Abraham*, a strong wave of patriotism rises within me. Over the years, he has become synonymous with roles that portray undying national pride and commitment to duty. Whether it is donning the uniform of an army officer, stepping into the shoes of a government official, or now taking on the role of a sharp and compassionate diplomat, his performances are so compelling that one might easily imagine John as an actual government representative, embodying the spirit of national service with conviction and intensity.

John's latest film, *The Diplomat*, now streaming on Netflix, takes that patriotic resonance to another level. The movie is based on the true story of Uzma Ahmed, an Indian woman who found herself trapped in Pakistan under distressing circumstances, only to be rescued through the bold efforts of Indian diplomacy. The film opens powerfully, with a distressed Uzma bursting into the Indian Embassy in Islamabad, pleading for help to return to her homeland, India.



The narrative then unfolds to reveal the events that led her to this desperate situation. Uzma, living in Malaysia, was lured into a trap by Tahir, a man from Pakistan posing as someone trustworthy. Fooled by his false promises and charm, she travelled to Pakistan only to discover the harsh truth behind his real intentions. The film captures her trauma and the fear of being held against her will, evoking empathy from the audience.

Cast — John Abraham, portraying JP Singh, the Deputy High Commissioner of India in Pakistan, delivers a power-packed performance. His body language, calm authority and nuanced dialogue delivery add immense weight to the character. John's ability to blend into such roles like a chameleon proves once again why he is a

favourite for films with patriotic themes. *Sadia Khateeb*, as Uzma Ahmed, gives a deeply moving performance. She portrays a range of emotions — from initial hope to fear to sheer desperation — with remarkable authenticity. Her portrayal of a woman caught in a foreign land, fighting for her basic right to return home, forms the emotional core of the film.

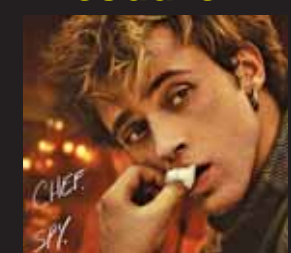
Kumud Mishra plays NM Sayeed as the Pakistani advocate adds a touch of much-needed humour and warmth in an otherwise intense story. *Jagjeet Sandhu*, previously known for his role in *Paatal Lok*, convincingly plays Tahir, the antagonist who traps Uzma. His menacing presence and powerful screen delivery make his character both believable and chilling. His performance captures the manipulative nature of his role, making the audience loathe him with every scene. Veteran actress *Revathy* appears as the late Sushma Swaraj, Union Minister of External Affairs.

Final Thoughts — The movie is well-paced, and the tension builds gradually with gripping courtroom scenes and powerful diplomatic exchanges. Also, the best part is doesn't have to prove again and again that it is a patriotic film and just leans on the story storyline. The climax is especially stirring. As the tricolour unfurls and patriotic music swells in the backdrop, set dramatically at a border location reminiscent of Wagah, it is hard not to feel emotional, leaving viewers teary-eyed and proud.



RATING
★★★★

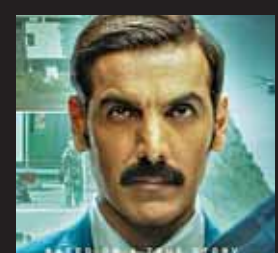
SUGGESTED BINGES



Carème
OTT - Apple TV+
Cast - Benjamin Voisin, Jérémie Renier, Lyna Khoudri



The Royals
OTT - Netflix
Cast - Ishaan Khatter, Bhumi Pednekar, Sakshi Tanwar, Zeenat Aman



The Diplomat
OTT - Netflix
Cast - John Abraham, Kumud Mishra, Vishal Vashishtha, Sadia Khatib, Revathy, Ashwath Bhatt



Long Way Home
OTT - Apple TV+
Cast - Ewan McGregor, Charlie Boorman



Gram Chhikitsalay
OTT - Amazon Prime Video
Cast - Vinay Pathak, Anil Parashar, Akash Makhija

Get in touch at vivacity@dailypioneer.com

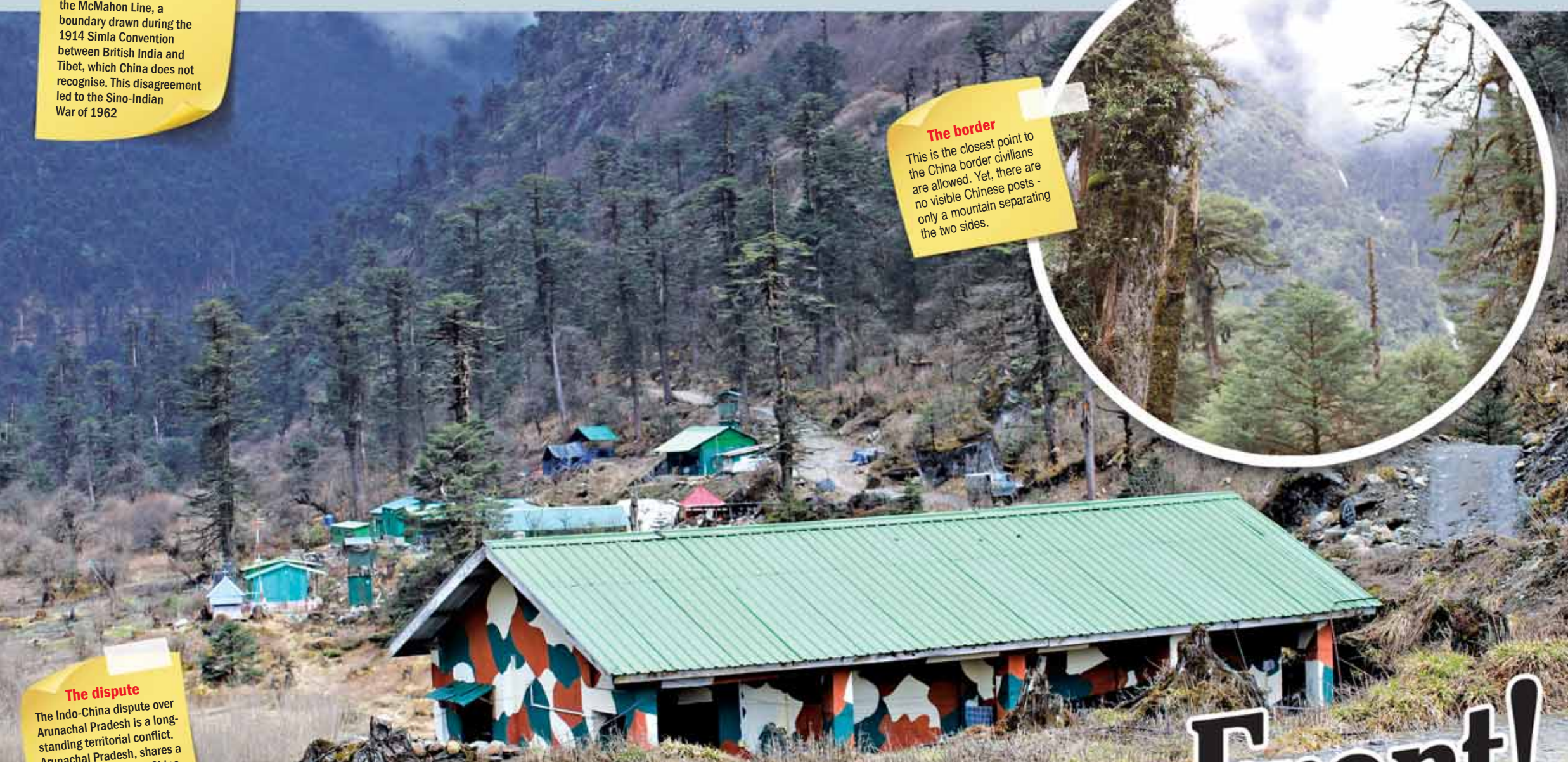
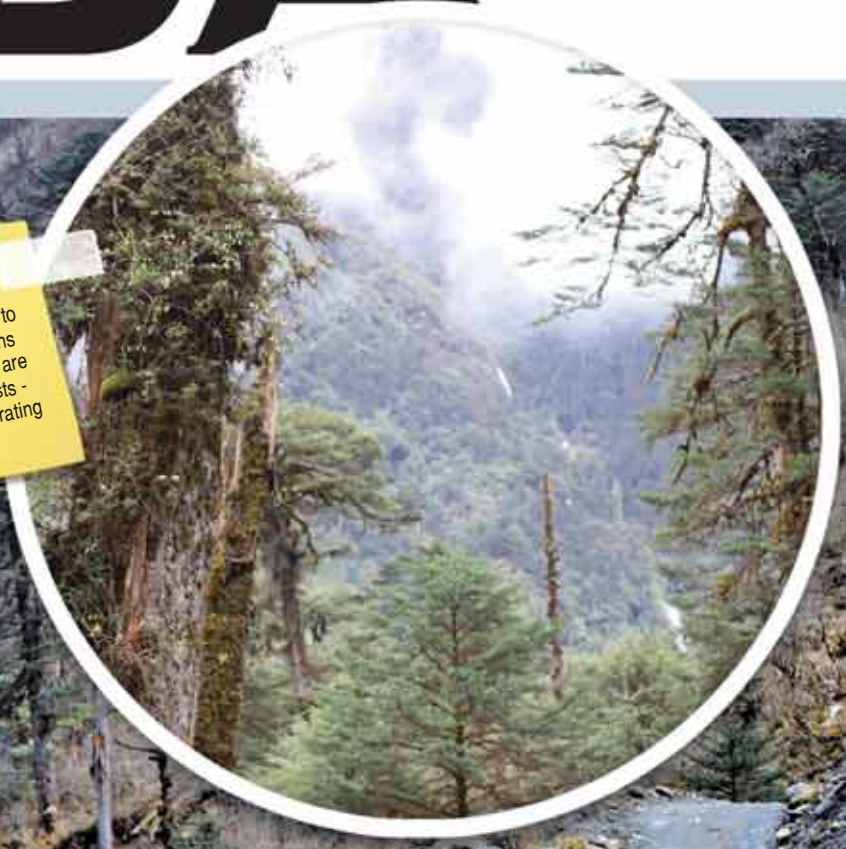
The Pioneer AGENDA

"Reflecting on where I came from helps me to appreciate and balance what I have now"
— Meghan Markle

The root of conflict
The roots of the conflict lie in the McMahon Line, a boundary drawn during the 1914 Simla Convention between British India and Tibet, which China does not recognise. This disagreement led to the Sino-Indian War of 1962

The border
This is the closest point to the China border civilians are allowed. Yet, there are no visible Chinese posts - only a mountain separating the two sides.

The dispute
The Indo-China dispute over Arunachal Pradesh is a long-standing territorial conflict. Arunachal Pradesh, shares a 1,129 km border with China and has been a point of contention since the 1950s



All quiet on Eastern Front!

As we trace the winding roads, climb misty hills, and meet the soldiers who call this unforgiving terrain home, we begin to understand the true cost of peace, the quiet dignity of service, and the powerful contrast between performative nationalism and the real courage of standing a post, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**



As we prepare to leave Machuka in Arunachal Pradesh for the Indo-China border, there is a quiet thrill among us — the anticipation of witnessing firsthand how our borders are guarded, and what it takes to man some of the harshest terrains on Earth, where temperatures in winter can plummet to minus 50 degrees Celsius.

Our motorcade departs early. The road to the Palang border is smooth, winding through the hills in a journey that takes roughly two hours. The landscape is breathtaking. Arunachal Pradesh, after all, boasts the highest forest cover in India — nearly 85 percent of its area is blanketed in lush greenery.

As we ascend, human habitation becomes sparse. Villages dwindle to mere clusters of one or two houses. Along the way, we pass cascading waterfalls, jagged rock formations, and spiritual landmarks — a temple, a monastery, and a Gurudwara — their small prayer flags fluttering in the crisp April breeze. Our driver points to a rock formation said to resemble Lord Hanuman, believed by locals to guard the border.

We stop. The resemblance is uncanny. Some of us clasp our hands in awe, others close their eyes in silent prayer. Some simply marvel — it's more a matter of faith than reason. In such places, we often see what we believe. The breeze turns colder, the road bumpier. At a check post, our permits are verified, and headcounts taken. We're reminded to



avoid photographing army installations. As we move on, the drizzle begins, but the weather remains pleasant enough to continue.

We halt briefly near a waterfall where an army post — resembling a cottage perched on the hillside — overlooks the path. After a few more vehicle checks, we arrive at the point where we must proceed on foot for the last kilometre. This is the furthest civilians are allowed. Soldiers are scattered across the area, many relaxed, and temporary army quarters dot the landscape.

A flat expanse, roughly the size of a football field, serves as both a helipad and an open-air gym. Today, it's a cricket pitch where soldiers are engaged in a friendly match, a large cutout of "I Love My India" standing behind them — a popular selfie spot for visitors. We are told this is the closest point to the China border. Yet, there are no visible Chinese posts — only a mountain separating the two sides. The actual border lies less than a kilometre away as the crow flies, but it takes eight days on foot for a patrol party to reach it due to the unforgiving terrain.

Our guide, a young soldier named Dinesh from Haryana, dressed in track pants and a jacket, walks with us, sharing valuable insights. The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the Indian Army primarily man this area. Though the border has been mostly peaceful, the Galwan clash changed the equation, prompting both nations to increase infrastructure and presence.

Guarding such a remote frontier is no small feat, before confronting any adversary, soldiers must first withstand the brutal elements. I learn that the ground beneath my feet lies buried under six feet of snow in winter, the only colour visible then being white. Today, however, it is a vibrant green, with moss — covered trees and camouflaged posts that blend seamlessly into the landscape, invisible from even 100 meters away. Patrolling is conducted for six months of the year; during the harsh winter — from November to March — neither side sends patrols. When active, patrols consist of 20 or more soldiers and take eight days to complete a round. To mark

their presence, they leave behind biscuit wrappers and empty cans — a subtle, silent message acknowledged by the Chinese in kind.

I ask Dinesh if he has ever seen Chinese soldiers up close, and whether they ever exchange words. He smiles: "Not usually. Sometimes from a distance. But we're not here for pleasantries. We do our job, they do theirs. The tension and vigilance, however, are constant." On our way back, we pass a riverbank where the remains of a crashed helicopter lie — a tragic reminder of a pilot who lost control two decades ago. The wreckage still rests there, undisturbed. We are now at the foothills of the mountain that separates two powerful nations. Even in an age of fighter jets and missiles, human presence on the ground remains vital.

Life here is grueling. Soldiers are posted for three years at a stretch. Though patrolling stops during the deep winter, the posts remain manned. Troops live in modest cabins, warmed by diesel generators, with minimal mobile connectivity, far from their families. Many hail from southern India — some have never seen snow before. Now, they must wear snow boots and brave temperatures reaching — 40°C in winter. It is a job like any other — but far tougher, far riskier. As I return, breathless from the climb back to base, a thought lingers: How many of our politicians — who so readily cry for war and challenge China or Pakistan — would be willing to send their own children here? Or come themselves? For that matter, how many of us would be willing to take up this ultimate duty of courage and endurance?

It's easy to indulge in armchair patriotism — to forward nationalistic messages on WhatsApp and challenge enemies from behind our screens. But it is here, at the post, where true patriotism is tested. We must ask ourselves: do we really mean it, or are we simply excusing ourselves by saying "it's not my job"? Fair enough if it isn't — but let us not make it harder for those who do. They have families too. They have children waiting. They have mothers — especially today, on Mother's Day — waiting with pride, and with prayers.

THE DISPUTE

China claims approximately 90,000 square kilometers of the state's territory as part of its "South Tibet" region, a claim India strongly rejects, asserting full sovereignty over the area. Tensions persist through periodic border incursions, diplomatic protests, and military standoffs, such as the one in Tawang in 2022. Despite several rounds of talks, both countries have yet to reach a permanent resolution. The issue remains a sensitive and strategic concern for India, especially as China continues to object to Indian infrastructure development and visits by Indian leaders to the region.



LIFE HERE IS GRUELING. SOLDIERS ARE POSTED FOR THREE YEARS AT A STRETCH. THOUGH PATROLLING STOPS DURING THE DEEP WINTER, THE POSTS REMAIN MANNED. TROOPS LIVE IN MODEST CABINS, WARMED BY DIESEL GENERATORS, WITH MINIMAL MOBILE CONNECTIVITY

VINTAGE VIBES

MODERN MUNCHIES

Set against the colonial backdrop of Lutyens' Delhi, SOCIAL's new outlet celebrates bold tastes and bites, says ABHI SINGHAL

With already 56 outlets in operation, SOCIAL, the hyped café-bar has opened its 57th outlet in Connaught Place, and it is nothing short of a love letter to Delhi's past. The newest outlet has its walls in the heart of the capital, Lutyens' Delhi. SOCIAL blends the charm of India's postal legacy with the brand's signature edge, creating a one-of-a-kind dining and cultural experience.

Bold Flavours, Big Cravings

SOCIAL's food offering continues to impress, and Connaught Place SOCIAL is no exception. The menu is a mix of crowd favourites and exclusive new creations, catering to every mood and palate. The *Butter Chicken Biryani* is a must-try, rich, creamy and indulgent. The *Crispy Corn Chakna* and *Fully Loaded Nachos* are perfect bar snacks, while *Old School Chicken Tikka* and *Paneer Tikka* bring smoky, satisfying flavours to the table. The *Hot Tennessee Chicken Wings* in the Munchies section is delicious and juicy with fried chicken wings tossed in a delicious hot sauce. Vegetarians will also enjoy the *Bell Pepper Pizza*, a zesty and cheesy delight. From the momos section

SOCIAL SUBSTANTIALS

From the special section you have many options like the *Classic Mac N Cheese Pasta*, *Keema Spaghetti Pasta*, for the main course lovers — *Kadhahi Paneer*, *Dal Makhani*, *Punjabi Kadhi Chawal* and much more to savour.

the momo lovers can enjoy *Classic Veggie Momos* and other variations, with street taste and dough softer like no other.

A Cultural Playground

More than just a café or bar, the Connaught Place SOCIAL is set to become a buzzing cultural hub like its other outlets. With plans to host live music, curated performances, and artistic pop-ups, it is designed as a space where Delhiites can connect, create and celebrate. It is not just about the food or ambience, it is an experience in itself.

FACT SHEET

Connaught Place Social
Address: First Floor, The Colonnade, Plot No 5, Middle Cir, Block B, Connaught Place, New Delhi, Delhi 110001
Price for Two: ₹1,600

BEVERAGES TELLING A STORY

No SOCIAL experience is complete without its legendary cocktails. Signature drinks such as *The Pink Pound*, *Trip on the Drip*, and the spa-inspired *Thai Malish* are just the beginning. The drink *LLITS* — (Longest Long Island Iced Teas) remains the crowd's favourite also delivering a potent punch and plenty of personality to the beverage lovers.

AMBIENCE: A POST OFFICE REIMAGINED

Inspired by the nostalgia of the Indian Post Office, this café-bar brings the bygone era of handwritten letters and telegrams alive through its immersive design. Every corner pays homage to the past, from vintage currency notes and old postal stamps to framed letters, telegrams, and even sorting tables repurposed as service counters. The grand oval-shaped bar draws inspiration from British-era teller windows, and the palette of deep reds, forest greens, and rich wooden textures instantly transports guests to a sepia-toned memory lane. The vibe is old-world yet electric, making it ideal for work, play or both.

THE CRISPY CORN CHAKNA AND FULLY LOADED NACHOS ARE PERFECT BAR SNACKS, WHILE OLD SCHOOL CHICKEN TIKKA AND PANEER TIKKA BRING SMOKY, SATISFYING FLAVOURS TO THE TABLE

CHOOSING IS YOUR POWER

The #Atmanirbhar China Box in the menu is where you can make your own combos by customising what you want to get added in there. You have the options of Fixes — paneer, chicken, prawn; Sauces — hot garlic, shezwan, social sexy and more; Carbs — fried rice, hakka noodles, steamed rice and the egg fried rice. Your choice, your taste!

If you are a shake lover you can go for the *Oreo Chocolate Shake* that would come in with a great presentation of a plant served in a mud pot. The *Ferrero Rocher Shake* is a bit thick and the after-taste is something different, chances only the Ferrero Rocher lovers might like it.

OFFERINGS AND VIBES AT SOCIAL

Connaught Place SOCIAL keeps on curating an exceptional lineup of events, featuring artists, musicians, and cultural experiences that reflect the soul of the city. From intimate performances, Mehfil Nights to thought-provoking gatherings, Connaught Place SOCIAL is where history and contemporary culture converge to create something truly extraordinary already loved and approved by the people at other outlets having the same fun and experience.

Flame-Kissed Feasts Worth the Hype

Although The Pit is undoubtedly a haven for non-vegetarians, even the vegetarians were left satisfied — a achievement in a meat-forward dining experience



PAWAN SONI
COLUMNIST
Food critic and founder of the Big F Awards

while the *Mushroom Sando*, served in pillowy soft bread, was a savoury treat even the non-meat eaters couldn't resist.

Then arrived the true evening heroes. The *Buttery Garlic Prawns* were decadently rich, while the meatloaf provided the kind of comforting depth reminiscent of classic American diners. The *Philly Cheese Sub* was packed with flavour, the *Chicken Wings* had just the right kick, and the pork belly — simply outrageous. The smoked grilled chicken came with crisped, golden skin and melt-in-the-mouth meat. The *Lamb Chops* were cooked to tender perfection, and the *Humble Jacket Potato* stood out enough to be a main course.



Punjabi Food Passion on a Plate

At Pind-e-Zaika, the essence of Punjab wasn't just served but was celebrated in flavours, writes ABHI SINGHAL

The taste of Punjab came alive at *Shangri-La Eros New Delhi* during the much-celebrated *Pind-e-Zaika* pop-up at *Tamra*. This exclusive culinary event paid tribute to the lively food culture of Punjab — a land known for its robust flavours, warm hospitality, and rich culinary heritage.

At the heart of the experience was *Chef Tikka Manpreet Singh*, a master of Punjabi cuisine whose deep-rooted knowledge and royal kitchen experience shaped every dish served. *Chef Singh* brought his culinary magic to *Tamra*, presenting a feast that captured the soul of Amritsar and beyond. Guests were treated to a menu steeped in authenticity and nostalgia, each dish telling a story of Punjab's bold spices and traditional cooking methods.

Signature creations by *Chef like Ferozpur Railway Mutton Curry*, *Tikka Singh Da Meat Tarrwala*, and *Paneer Bharwein Aam Ras* delighted meat

lovers and vegetarians alike, while classics such as *2 Din Walli Dal* and *Murgh Dahi Kali Mirch Walla* offered comforting, hearty bites. The Vegetarian delicacies like *Chooran Walli Bhindi* and *Chakunder Moongphali Di Tikki* added earthy depth to the spread.

The last of the meal were the awaited desserts such as *Rau Di Kheer* that provided a sweet end to this cultural journey.

FLAVOUR REVIVAL

Guests were treated to a menu steeped in authenticity and nostalgia, each dish telling a story of Punjab's bold spices. *Chef Tikka Manpreet Singh* brought his culinary magic to *Tamra*, presenting a feast that captured the soul and ingredients of Amritsar. A celebration of Punjab's rich culinary legacy unfolded in New Delhi.



SPECIAL MENTION

First, the cocktails. The *Jamuntini* — a bold twist on a martini made with frozen fresh jamun was beautifully balanced. What impressed me most

was the Pit's refusal to cut corners: no artificial syrups, no pre-mixes — just real ingredients. This commitment to quality shone through every drink.



"TO DESCRIBE MY MOTHER WOULD BE
TO WRITE ABOUT A HURRICANE IN ITS
PERFECT POWER"

— MAYA ANGELOU

A LOVE THAT FILLS EVERY ROOM

There's a quiet moment that no one sees. When the child falls asleep and the house is finally still, she looks at the bills, the dishes, the dreams. Her body aches, her heart carries stories no one knows. But she smiles. She touches her child's head gently and the storm inside her calms. She's not just raising a child. She's building a future. She's breaking cycles. She's rewriting what family means. She is not "incomplete." She is overflowing with love, with grit, with grace.

WHAT THE WORLD DOESN'T APPLAUD

There are no awards for showing up every single day. No medals for enduring courtrooms, stigma, or sorrow. No headlines for skipping meals so the child can have music lessons. Yet her victories are real. It's in the child who says "Mummy, I'm proud of you." In the teacher who says "She's a confident girl." In the friend who whispers "You've raised a good human." She doesn't need applause. But she deserves reverence.

All in a mother's heart

Honouring the strength, sacrifice and love of mothers who shape lives everyday, says SAKSHI PRIYA

Behind every Princess is a mother who built the castle, her arms were walls, her love was the roof that sheltered us: She built a castle called home. She wasn't just my mother — she was my quiet warrior, my constant support, my compass. She carried the weight of the world with grace and never once let it touch us. In every small act of love, in every silent sacrifice, she became the hero I looked up to — strong, steady and endlessly giving.

She Plays Every Role

I've watched her for as long as I can remember. Every morning, she was up before dawn, while the rest of us still lay asleep. The clock had barely struck 5 and already, she was in the kitchen, kneading dough, stirring pots, packing lunchboxes. She worked so we could live well. By the time I was out of bed, she had already created a day's worth of meals, packed in containers, ready for the day ahead. Yet, it was never just about the food she cooked. It was about the sacrifices that went unnoticed, the sleepless nights when she stayed awake with her thoughts and fears, the extra hours at work to make sure there was enough to cover everything. She wanted us to rise above, to have a future filled with possibilities. She worked tire-

lessly, not just to earn a living, but to teach us how to make a living, to instil in us a sense of responsibility, and above all, to ensure that we knew how to survive on our own.

Home is where mother is

Behind every princess, there's a mother who builds the castle. And hers was no fairy tale. It wasn't made of gold or jewels, but of small moments, long days, late nights and endless sacrifices. It was built on love, hard work and the quiet promise to give us everything she never had. Her arms were the walls that held everything together and her love was the roof that sheltered us, no matter how heavy the storms outside. She didn't ask for recognition or reward.

There was no applause for the countless hours she spent working, no accolades for the patience she showed, no thank-yous for the love she gave. She did it because, in her eyes, this was what a mother does. This is what love looks like when it is unconditional. She stood for herself. She stood for us. She built a life out of nothing, piece by piece, brick by brick. She never faltered, never gave up, even when the world around her seemed to crumble. Her resilience was our inheritance. Her strength was our foundation. I think of her now

— how, even when her own dreams were delayed, she never let us doubt that we could chase ours. Her own struggles became lessons for us. She showed us what it meant to fight through life's challenges, to face hardship without complaint and to always, always rise above. Her courage wasn't loud, but it was constant. Her love wasn't flashy, but it was fierce. And every time she came home with hot meals, a tired smile on her face and no complaint on her lips, I saw the warrior she was. She wasn't just my mother — she was my hero.

Not all mothers were created equal

Some are widowed. Some are separated. Some walked away from violence. Some never married. But all of them made a decision: to protect, to nurture and to carry forward, alone. No woman dreams of doing it all by herself. But when life left them no choice, they stepped up. They didn't wait for rescue. They became their own rescue. And in a country where every festival, every form, every social event insists on a father's name or a husband's shadow, single mothers stand tall, unapologetic and unbroken. People question with stares not realising, how her child is thriving, happy, well-adjusted, deeply loved. Because presence matters more than tradition.

LET'S RAISE A TOAST

Single mothers don't want our pity. They want policies that recognise their reality. Workplaces must support single-parent households with flexible hours, maternity protections and empathy. Schools must stop insisting on a father's name. Landlords must stop asking questions. Society must stop staring. Because the truth is, she's doing the work of two, often better than both. So this Mother's Day, forget the marketing fluff. Let's raise a toast not just to mothers, but to her struggle, to her tears, her to-do lists, her tucked-away dreams. To the child she is raising, not despite the odds, but because of them. She doesn't need the world's permission to feel whole. She is the world.

SHE CREATES A COCOON OF NORMALCY IN A WORLD THAT OFTEN REFUSES TO ACCEPT. BUT SHE DOESN'T NEED THEIR APPROVAL. HER CHILD'S SMILE IS HER STAMP OF SUCCESS

WRAPPED IN LOVE

Maneyoon (name changed) is a woman whose life in the remote hills of Arunachal Pradesh is a quiet yet powerful story of resilience and love. She works for an NGO, dedicating her time to helping others and her greatest responsibility is the tiny bundle she carries every day. Wrapped securely in a simple towel, her baby rests close to her chest as she moves through her work, a reminder that she balances a carer and motherhood, fiercely protective and unyielding in her devotion. The towel holds not just a baby, but the weight of her dreams, the sacrifice of every moment spent away from her child, and the quiet strength that allows her to keep going. As she walks from task to task, with her little one cradled in that cloth, she shows what it means to love fiercely, to fight for her family, and to never stop, no matter the odds. Her journey is one of quiet determination.

The world does not pause for her, but she continues, motivated by the soft breaths of her baby against her chest. Every step she takes is a reminder of the sacrifices she makes and the strength she draws from her love for her child.

Balancing work and motherhood is never easy, but for Maneyoon, it's a daily act of love, and each moment is a treatment to her resilience. Her story is one of unspoken heroism, filled with sacrifices, tears and moments of vulnerability. She seeks neither applause nor recognition. Her quiet strength, her devotion to her family and the love she carries in her heart show that even the smallest acts of courage can create lasting impact.

IN HER OWN WORDS

Aastha Kumari (name changed), a teacher and single mother, lives alone with her 10-year-old son and 15-year-old daughter in Pakur, Jharkhand. Balancing work, family and the emotional weight of raising two children on her own, she navigates the daily struggles with strength and determination.

What's the hardest part of being a single mother?

"Not having someone to share the daily decisions with. Big or small, I have to figure it out alone, whether it's school fees, health scares, or just what to cook for dinner when I'm exhausted."

What do you wish people understood?

"People assume things or ask too many personal questions. But over time, I've learnt to tune it out. My focus is my child and our life. That's what matters and single mothers don't need sympathy. Just understanding and basic respect. We're doing our best, just like everyone else."

What keeps you going?

"My kids smile. When I see them going to school in their uniforms, laughing and learning, I feel everything is worth it."

MOTHERHOOD WITH STRENGTH AND GRACE

Nitu Singh is a single mother of two daughters, from Ranchi, Jharkhand, who has built her life with strength. She is someone who finds joy in the little things, the quiet presence of animals. Life hasn't always been kind, but she has met each challenge with steady resilience and a generous heart. Her roles are many, animal activist, organic farmer, social worker, and a dedicated member of the Khadi Board.

Beyond the titles, she is simply a woman who gives herself fully to whatever she does. In her presence, there is calm. In her silence, there is strength. And in her daily acts of service often unseen, often unspoken, there is the quiet courage of a woman who has chosen compassion as her path. She stands not in the spotlight but in the light of her own making, built from years of selfless care, honesty, and a belief in doing good — quietly, steadfastly, beautifully.

WHAT'S THE HARDEST PART OF BEING A SINGLE MOTHER?

The hardest part of being a single mother is being oneself. You want a companion to live your single life with and that person is nowhere to be found so sometimes, it hurts. But once you understand this, it becomes easier to handle yourself.

AND THE BEST PART?

The best part you show your children what it means to love oneself. How to trust oneself. Sometimes it can be difficult, but when you learn to trust yourself and teach your children the same, everything becomes easier.

ARE SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS DIFFERENT FOR SINGLE WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE?

Definitely yes. Society does not look at a single mother from the lens of motherhood. She is judged as a woman. Instead of helping her, people keep a sharp eye on her every activity. People judge you, create difficulties, or present



you differently. Men do not respect women, they often engage in character assassination.

HOW DO YOU HANDLE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL LIFE?

Only assumptions can be made about my personal life, it cannot be interpreted. The one who has not even seen a glimpse of my struggle, what can they guess? I follow the theory of "Let it go" and "less communication, less reaction."

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER SINGLE MOTHERS?

Being a single mother is a matter of pride. Surely, we must have some special capability—that is why God chose us for this role. And I am happy with it.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE WORK LIFE?

Balancing between both, raising growing children and working, is the most difficult part. It depends on the situation. Time management is the key, which makes coordination easier. This is my life, and I have the right to live it while setting boundaries.

ARE YOU JUDGED AND HOW YOU REACT?

I don't care what others think about my life, because those who haven't stood with me in my struggle, what opinion can they have about my life?

A MOTHER WHO DOES EVERYTHING ALONE IS A WOMAN WHO HAS LEARNED THAT PERFECTION IS A MYTH. IT'S THE EVERYDAY EFFORT, THE ENDLESS LOVE AND THE BELIEF IN YOUR OWN STRENGTH THAT COUNT

STORIES OF LOVE AND SACRIFICE

Motherhood, in all its forms, is a journey of love, sacrifice, and resilience. Whether it's a protective single mother rediscovering her identity, a woman navigating the harsh realities of poverty, or a surrogate learning the true meaning of love, these four films and series explore the multifaceted nature of being a mother. From Helicopter Eela to Mimi, each story delves into the emotional complexities and transformative power of motherhood, showing that no matter the circumstance, a mother's love knows no bounds.

Helicopter Eela (2018)

Starring Kajol, Helicopter Eela follows a single mother who, after dedicating her life to her son, returns to college to rediscover her dreams. The film explores the balance between motherhood and personal growth.

Maid (Netflix Series, 2021)

Maid is about Alex, a young single mother who, after

escaping an abusive relationship, becomes a maid to support her daughter. The series highlights the struggles of poverty, trauma, and resilience in single motherhood.

Gilmore Girls (2000-2007 and 2016)

This beloved series centers on the close relationship between single mother Lorelai and her daughter Rory. It celebrates unconditional love, sacrifices and the complexities of being a mother and daughter.

Mimi (2021)

Mimi tells the story of a young woman who becomes a surrogate mother and faces unexpected challenges. The film explores themes of motherhood, sacrifice, and societal judgment, showcasing the strength of a woman's love.





YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week heralds a wave of good vibes that deepens your connection with your higher self. You'll feel a presence with you that is encouraging and shifting you towards greater awakening and understanding. The challenges you face will be resolved as you listen to your inner wisdom which is guiding you towards trust and confident decisions. The festivities, whether through new relationships, personal milestones, or fortuitous events will result in a bountiful amount of love and inspiration. Creative inspiration will also pour forth, bursting forth like a fountain overflowing with color. As you make progress on your goals, it will be evident that your deepest desires were indeed fulfilling. In love and friendship, even career – in all aspects of life, you will flow without friction and with immense ease, joy and effortless beauty.

**Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Mint
Lucky day Monday**



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week starts with some emotional strains with your close connections. As much as you wanted to stay optimistic, the actions of people around you may leave you feeling bitter. A wish to be alone may emerge as you want to hide from the rest of the world in order to find your footing again. Progressing through the week, challenges remain, needing you to be alert and concentrated on your tasks. An upcoming trip is likely, maybe with friends or family, changing the tempo and offering a good distraction. You could undergo a transition from deep thoughts caused by solitude to enhanced levels of enthusiasm which will inspire a shift in perspective mid-week. Personally, you will be sensitive, warm, and caring, whereas, in the professional life, your strengths as a go-getter will stand out.

**Lucky number 17 | Lucky colour Mustard
Lucky day Sunday**



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

You are eager to expand your skills and explore new opportunities, with a strong focus on your material well-being. It's important to pay attention to practical matters, gather useful information, and reflect on your values. A new business venture or project is on the horizon, so keep organized by making lists and securely storing important documents. Your commitment and patience will lead to a growing awareness. Midweek brings favorable conditions for your career, with potential for a business increase, a new assignment, or even a job offer. A new income source or a romantic opportunity could also arise. Towards the end of the week, be cautious—there may be some tension or disagreements, but a relative may come through with support. If you're facing any medical tests, the results will be positive.

**Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Lavender
Lucky day Saturday**



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week, you will face the truth head-on, even when it's difficult, quickly assessing situations with sharp insight. Your strong intuition allows you to detect hidden motives and understand others' desires, giving you the ability to get straight to the heart of the matter. You value honesty and directness, steering clear of games and deception. However, there is a need for balance—ensuring that work and action are harmonized with self-care, emotional control, and healthy habits. Trust your judgment and choose what is best for your well-being. If there are any legal matters, expect a fair resolution. You will soon be recognized and rewarded for your hard work, gaining the respect you deserve while restoring order to any chaos that once surrounded you.

**Lucky number 19 | Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Wednesday**



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

Explore unconditional and trust based bonds this week. A more emotionally nurturing and balanced connection is opening up, bringing with it peace and a sense of security. Release self doubt. Your actively frustrating career is growing. Heightened expectations arrive midweek, and with them the determination to take charge of one's fate. You are successful as a partner, father, and leader, so long as your authority is not questioned. The current phase is good for 'out for blood' investments and hard work. Towards the end of the week, expect to be thrown into the deep end of unfamiliar territory all at once. Support at work will come from coworkers as well as family, but one of your family members is likely to need to head out of town for a bit.

**Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Navy Blue
Lucky day Wednesday**



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

A fresh perspective will emerge regarding a lingering concern, bringing clarity. While intellectual achievements are important, it's essential to balance knowledge with compassion. You're steadfast in pursuing your goals, undeterred by obstacles, conflicts, or challenges that may arise. In your professional sphere, be prepared for competition, as someone may show interest in your field. The atmosphere at home could become tense, with strained communication leaving you feeling like walking away. However, stay grounded—change is on the horizon, working in your favor. With a blend of courage and sharp intellect, no obstacle will stand in your path. There are guiding forces at play, especially willpower and self-discipline. A consultation with a seasoned leader will offer invaluable guidance, providing the support needed to turn your dreams into reality.

**Lucky number 1 | Lucky colour Maroon
Lucky day Thursday**



GEMINI May 21-June 20

Sharing your work with a partner can lead to growth, provided they match your dedication and responsibility. Your schedule will be filled with new projects and tasks, demanding focus and teamwork. Strategic planning, resource coordination, and tapping into the collective strengths of your team will be essential for success. You are in harmony with your emotions and exude a deep sense of wisdom. Your nurturing side shines as you offer support and healing to others through gentle gestures and understanding. In both personal and professional realms, you maintain a calm, composed demeanor. You have a strong presence in the business world, valuing structure. A spiritual journey may beckon, leading you to practices like meditation or community prayers, bringing transformative growth.

**Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Saturday**



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

As the week progresses, you feel a deep sense of happiness and satisfaction seeing the fruits of your efforts. Emotional release and new unexpected ties mark deepening relationships. While heart and mind seem in conflict, resolving one will clarify the other, unfolding towards success. An exploration or a different form of imaginative expression may capture your interest midweek which promises taking revolutionary steps towards your goals. You feel full of energy and in the best of health, ready to take on any challenges. In the end of the week, you find yourself in all aspects of equilibrium and savoring the bliss in all aspects of life – financial, emotional, material and spiritual. Your social bonds are healthy and the relationships you have are fulfilling.

**Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Teal
Lucky day Thursday**



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

You exhibit emotional balance, confidence, and selflessness because you tend to think about other people. In relations, whether it be dialogue, friendship, or romance, you display a distinctive combination of charm, passion, and stimulation. But, it's crucial to make certain you keep that energy at its highest peak. Getting lost way too far into the deep end's either getting consumed by intense passion, or feeling waaay too overwhelmed by emotional depth could spin the wheel of unwanted consequences. Especially from midweek, there might be hurdles tied around your workplace that introduce rivalry and competition. Be careful as some might try to take credit for your work. Concentrate on your profession, remember to use your diplomacy, tact, and 'executive politeness' to sail through toughest of situations. Defuse the blame approach and instead be more receptive to other possibilities.

**Lucky number 16 | Lucky colour Charcoal
Lucky day Sunday**



CANCER June 21-July 22

You are at a stage of profound balance and coherence in which trust and understanding provide support to deal with challenges. A choice or an action will require one to deliberate deeply on the most prudent option. While some situation may seem hindering at first, in the end it will always come up as a valuable lesson or a set of opportunities. Your creative energy is at its peak, and because of your natural self-belief you will be able to assume control of affairs. Participation in social events and other activities will be energizing and beneficial to you in ways that you did not anticipate. By the close of the week, you will receive some form of recognition or supportive remarks that will not meet, but exceed, your expectations.

**Lucky number 14 | Lucky colour Lilac
Lucky day Tuesday**



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week, you remain focused on your spiritual journey your heart and head guiding you. A mentor or a trusted guide might be required to help you with your inner self and the divine within you irrespective of what you believe in. Prayers and group activities make you feel part of a community which you are comfortable in. As the week develops, your work life comes into focus and you handle it with a great deal of confidence and courage. You will participate in spirited auctions and take on new projects. There is bound to be new development in your career and you shall continue to enjoy good healthy relations with your peers. At the moment, you seem to be enjoying a position of great power and .

**Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour Olive
Lucky day Monday**



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week offers exceptional warmth, love, and support from family and friends. The environment around you is upbeat and balanced within the household. Your imagination and creativity are at their best, and family gatherings are enjoyable. Children bring so much of this joy into your life as most of them are doing wonderfully. For those wishing to expand their families, there is good news coming in terms of birth or conception announcements. By midweek, expect some newfound discipline, where you will apply it to both your professional and personal life through imposed routines. Stay on target but be careful not to put too much attention on a single issue. Obtain calmness and surety but accept that old habits are hard to break during the growth and renewal stages.

**Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Emerald
Lucky day Wednesday**

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THOUGHTFUL INSIGHTS



Dr. Tanu Jain

Free yourself from emotional bondage – it is not worth sacrificing your mental and emotional well-being for relationships that are one-sided or draining

Moving From Inner Struggle to Conscious Evolution

Shifting from negativity to positivity is perhaps one of the most daunting journeys in life. Through personal experience, I have realised that while everyone advises us to “stay positive,” “be patient,” and “trust that things will change,” the real challenge lies much deeper than mere words or passing motivation.

Negativity is deeply ingrained in all of us, often in ways we don't fully comprehend. Our first thoughts are frequently clouded with doubt, fear, or hesitation — rarely are they purely positive or hopeful. Why is this so? Because we are socialised to see life through the lens of scarcity, struggle, and comparison. From a young age, we are taught to strive, compete, and measure our worth through external achievements.

As children, our needs are simple and our joys are spontaneous. But as we grow older, our desires become more layered, shaped by societal expectations and personal ambitions. Life, however, does not always align with these aspirations. We realise early on that it does not hand us everything we long for. Over time, the widening gap between desire and reality moulds our learned behaviour, breeding compromises, self-doubt, and the belief that life is full of unavoidable limitations.

We encounter strained relationships, financial hardships, career uncertainties, and a fiercely competitive world. Friends change, perceptions shift, and our notions of permanence are tested. Life teaches us many lessons — often the hard way. We



come to understand that even people we once believed were truly “ours” may, in fact, be part of a largely transactional world, where emotional loyalty is rare and self-interest often prevails.

So, what do we do? We must carve out a life for ourselves — consciously, courageously, and without fear of solitude. It is in those solitary moments that we begin to discover who we truly are. Strength does not always roar; sometimes, it whispers quietly in the background, guiding us through chaos.

First, strengthen your emotional quotient.

You cannot constantly seek emotional validation from others. It's an exhausting cycle that leaves you unfulfilled. Begin by recognising your triggers and learning to self-soothe. As Sri Aurobindo profoundly said: “Emotion must not govern the intellect, nor the intellect stifle the soul's deeper feelings; all must harmonise in the light of the Spirit.”

Let your feelings exist, but don't let them control you. Be rational, be practical. Understand the emotional needs of others — not to absorb them, but to protect your own peace. With that understanding, lib-

erate yourself. Create healthy distances. Free yourself from emotional bondage — it is not worth sacrificing your mental and emotional well-being for relationships that are one-sided or draining.

Second, master a skill with passion. Learning should not feel like a burden; it must be a fulfilling pursuit. Whether it's writing, coding, painting, or gardening, immerse yourself in something that sparks joy. Learning can become your greatest anchor in uncertain times. As Osho beautifully reminds us:

“Learn as if you have all the time in the

world — relaxed, playful, joyous. Then the learning becomes not just a means, but an end in itself.”

In a world obsessed with instant results and quick success, find peace in becoming a student of life. Be curious. Let learning become a lifestyle, not a task.

Third, and most importantly, invest in building yourself. That is the greatest and most reliable investment you can make. This includes developing your character, expanding your wisdom, and nurturing your spiritual and emotional foundations.

God has created you with immense potential. Strive every day to reach the highest version of yourself — not out of competition, but out of love for who you are capable of becoming. Be grateful for your body, your mind, your breath — for you already have everything you need to perform, flourish, and inspire. The journey from negativity to positivity is not about blind optimism. It is not about denying pain, or pretending that everything is fine. It is about conscious evolution — living with awareness, with resilience, and with gratitude.

It is about showing up for yourself each day, even when the world feels heavy. It is about refusing to let bitterness win, choosing instead to move forward with faith, and a belief that light always follows darkness.

— The author's views are personal. (The author is a civil servant at the Ministry of Defence and a spiritual speaker)