

Chandigarh administration issues air warning alert, sounds sirens

CHANDIGARH: The Chandigarh administration on Friday issued an air warning of a possible attack, following which sirens were sounded.

“This is a precautionary measure in view of an air warning received from the Air Force Station. Citizens are advised to stay calm, remain inside their homes, and await further instructions from official sources,” said a statement from the DC’s office.

In Chandigarh, the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana, authorities declared the closure of all educational institutions till Saturday.

A barrage of coordinated disinformation has been carried out by certain social media handles in general and mainstream media in particular in Pakistan with the sole objective to instil fear among the Indian masses, the Press Information Bureau (PIB) said on Friday.

The fact-check unit of the PIB said a video of a drone attack in Jalandhar in Punjab was widely being circulated to create panic among the masses. The PIB investigated the video and found that it was an unrelated video



of a farm fire. The video had a timeline of 7.39 p.m., while the drone attack began later. The same was backed by the Deputy Commissioner of Jalandhar.

Amid heightened tension, Punjab, which shares a 532-km border with Pakistan, has ordered the closure of all educational institutes and cancelled exams. I.K. Gujral Punjab Technical University in Jalandhar on Friday said that with the approval of the competent authority, the end semester examinations being held have been postponed until

further notice due to unforeseen circumstances.

The revised schedule for the examinations will be announced at least five days prior to the new date of commencement, it added. The state government has set up a control room for the convenience of people. It can be reached at landline phone numbers 0172-2741803 and 0172-2749901.

Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains said in view of the evolving situation, “it is hereby ordered that all schools, colleges, and universities — gov-

ernment, private, and aided — across the entire Punjab would remain completely closed for the next three days.

On Thursday night, blackouts were reported in six border districts of Punjab — Ferozpur, Pathankot, Fazilka, Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Tarn Taran, where Pakistani drones attempted to infiltrate.

Amid soaring tensions between India and Pakistan, people in some border villages of Punjab have started moving to safer places. Villagers settled in Amritsar, Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, and Tarn Taran districts close to the International Border began shifting their belongings to safer places despite the BSF, the Indian Army and even the local civil authorities not having issued any official evacuation orders.

The leave of all Punjab Police personnel was also cancelled. Punjab shares a 532-km-long border with Pakistan. Therefore, during any military tension, the role of the Punjab government and its security and law enforcement agencies becomes extremely crucial.

Punjab’s single engine is heavier than Haryana’s double engine government says Hooda



SATISH HANDA
Ambala

In the Save Constitution campaign in Ambala on Sunday, Congress leaders launched a massive attack on the policies of the central and state governments. The Congress Party organised a Save Constitution campaign at a Banquet Hall in Ambala city paid tribute to the citizens martyred in Pahalgam by observing two minutes of silence, followed by launching an attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government. Lok Sabha MP Deepender Hooda, state president Udaybhan and the organiser of the programme Ambala city MLA and former minister Chaudhary Nirmal Singh targeted the BJP’s double standards regarding the water crisis, the condition of constitutional institutions and people’s rights. Lok Sabha MP Deepender Hooda, while showering questions on BJP said, how did Punjab’s single engine overpower Haryana’s dual engine government? If the Chandigarh engine is shut down, then why is Delhi’s engine not able to draw water?

Taking the government to task, Deepender Hooda said that the BJP government’s indecisive attitude on important issues like SYL canal is the reason for the plight of Haryana’s farmers. Demanding a special session of the Assembly, Hooda said that time should be taken to meet the Prime Minister by taking all

the MPs along. He said sarcastically, “We have been waiting to meet the Prime Minister for the last nine and a half years, but this government is only running the vehicle of false promises, whereas there is no work on the track.” The basic spirit of the Constitution is being crushed”, Congress State President Udaybhan expressed concern over the current state of the Constitution in his address and said, there is an atmosphere of undeclared emergency in the country. “The dignity of constitutional institutions is being lowered and the politics of hatred is prevalent. Today the same people are invoking the Constitution, who had once burnt its copies,” Udaybhan said that the basic spirit of the Constitution through which Baba Saheb Ambedkar gave equal rights to everyone, is being crushed today. The Congress Party will fight at every level to protect the Constitution and will make the public aware and stand against this dictatorial thinking.

“Every promise of BJP is limited to speeches only,” Former minister and Ambala city MLA Chaudhary Nirmal Singh took the BJP to task and said, the government which is wasting Haryana’s water at the feet of Punjab is now shedding crocodile tears for Haryana’s rights. Every promise of BJP is limited to speeches only, there is nothing on the ground.” He said sarcastically, “The BJP which did

Possible terror attack averted in Punjab; Pak-ISI linked terrorist hardware recovered



JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Punjab Police’s State Special Operation Cell (SSOC) Amritsar, in joint operation with a central agency, recovered a large cache of terrorist hardware during an intelligence-led operation carried out at a secluded forested area near Tibba Nangal-Kular Road in SBS Nagar, said Director General of Police (DGP) Punjab Gaurav Yadav here on Tuesday.

The recovered terrorist hardware includes two Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs), two Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), five P-86 Hand Grenades and one Wireless Communication Set with Accessories.

DGP Gaurav Yadav said that preliminary investigation has revealed that the recovered consignment was deliberately concealed by hostile operatives as part of a premeditated plan to disrupt public order in the state. Probe has also indicated a coordinated effort by Pakistan’s ISI and allied terror outfits, to revive dormant sleeper cells in the state, he said.

The DGP said that these recoveries are part of Punjab Police’s sustained crackdown on terror modules sponsored by Pakistan’s ISI. Punjab Police remains firmly committed to neutralising these threats and safeguarding the state’s peace and security, he added.

Over 5,000 families get relief through efforts of Haryana Right to Service Commission



GULSHAN KUMAR
Chandigarh

As a result of the continuous efforts of the Haryana Right to Service Commission, financial assistance has been provided to 5,192 eligible families under the first phase of the National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS). This scheme, run by the Central Government, offers Rs.20,000 as financial support to families that have lost their breadwinner.

Sharing information in this regard a spokesperson from the Commission said that matter came to the Commission’s notice that around 14,805 families in Haryana had been waiting for over two years to receive the assistance amount under this scheme. It was found that the delay in disbursement during 2022 was mainly due to technical issues in the proposals sent by the State Government to the Centre, especially errors in the formatting of the usability certificates. Due to this issue the Central Government couldn’t release the funds on time.

Martyr Lance Naik Dinesh Kumar Sharma Laid to Rest with full State Honours in Palwal



GULSHAN KUMAR
Chandigarh

Lance Naik Dinesh Kumar Sharma, a valiant soldier from village Nagla Mohamadpur in Palwal district, who attained martyrdom in a cross-border attack in Poonch, was cremated with full state honours today. The air of his native village echoed with chants of “Bharat Mata Ki Jai,” “Vande Mataram,” and “Dinesh Kumar Sharma Amar Rahe” as people gathered to pay their last respects.

With tearful eyes, the martyr’s parents, brothers, wife, and children bid an emotional farewell to the brave son of the soil.

A large number of dignitaries, including Union Minister of State Krishan Pal Gurjar, Haryana Urban Local Bodies Minister Vipul Goyal, Minister of State for Food and Supplies Rajesh Nagar, Minister of State for Sports Gaurav Gautam, and Hodal MLA Harinder Singh, were present during the cremation. They joined the family in laying floral tributes and saluting the supreme sacrifice made by Lance Naik Dinesh Kumar Sharma.

Soldiers of the Indian Army and Haryana Police performed the ceremonial last salute. His mortal remains were consigned to flames by his father, Daya Chand, who expressed immense pride in his son’s service to the nation. The martyr’s mother, Smt. Meera Devi, overcome with grief, raised the slogan “Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan” and said she was proud of her son’s martyrdom.

Suspected missile shells found in the agriculture fields in Amritsar

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Suspected parts of missile shells/debris were found in the morning today at various locations in the Amritsar district.

As per reports debris of suspected missiles shells were found at village agriculture fields of Jethuwal, Makhan Windi and Pandher.

Residents of these affected villages were visibly panicked. Moreover Amritsar is the border district having close proximity to the Pakistan border.

Nevertheless, city inhabitants heard loud sounds of explosions besides flashing lights in the sky after 1.15



am on Thursday followed by a complete blackout which remained till 4.00 a.m.

Police said that it was a part of the investigation that what kinds of objects were found, yet it is difficult to say that from where all that

fallen here.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Amritsar has announced that all educational institutions in the district would remain shut till May 11, 2025 due to the prevailing situation.

Corrupt ministers, MLAs, officials are on the radar: Haryana CM Naib Saini

SATISH HANDA

Ministers, MLAs and officers in Haryana involved in corruption are on the radar of Chief Minister Naib Singh Saini’s government, which is busy in finding clues and a list is being prepared by the government. Information reveals that Chief Minister Saini government has tightened the noose on ministers, MLAs and officials involved in corrupt practices in the state, getting these illegal acts investigated through an agency reporting directly to the Chief Minister. The investigation includes assessing the working methods, relations with contractors and activities on internet media, aiming to wipe out irregularities in the state enabling the Chief Minister to establish a transparent and welfare governance in the state.

Sources reveal, Haryana CM Saini has a suspicious eye on those ministers, MLAs and officers of his government who are either themselves



involved in corruption or are encouraging corruption through family members . The investigation of the work of identifying such officers, ministers and MLAs in the state has been started across the state. Information is being collected about their working methods and links are being discovered through which corruption is being perpetrated. The Chief Minister’s aims to provide transparent, good governance and welfare services to the people in Haryana state. Sources reveal, the Chief Minister has hired an agency for this work and has been working in the state for the last several days reporting directly to Chief

Minister Saini, sending daily reports to the government. The agency is also investigating the coordination between the MLAs and the officials. The relations between the contractors, officials and MLAs are being investigated.

Information reveals that this agency also keeps an eye on the internet media accounts of ministers, MLAs and senior officers, and is preparing a report every day by assessing their actual working style and their following on internet media. Information also reveals, the Chief Minister is also getting his own working system assessed through this agency. The agency has been asked to send a report on the working system of the District Deputy Commissioners as well as Additional District Deputy Commissioners, their dealing with the public and the percentage of resolution of problems of people who approach the DC and SP in their district. A survey reveals that the system of resolving public

grievances immediately in every district introduced by the Saini government in the state has come to rescue suffering people.

According to information, special report is being prepared regarding the percentage of rectification of defects in CM Window, Family Identity Card and Property ID. The agency has been asked to closely investigate the relations between contractors and officers. They have also been asked to prepare a list of such officers who are being pressured to indulge in corruption and who are already involved in corruption. Information reveals that in the past most of the agents (brokers) mushrooming in government offices were seen active to get work done by the concerned officers and the staff in government offices. According to information, the Chief Minister Saini has taken about two dozen such major decisions in his tenure so far, which are also a part of the BJP’s election manifesto.

Two held by Amritsar Rural Police for Sharing Intelligence with Pak



JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Amritsar Rural, arrested two people for allegedly transmitting sensitive intelligence to Pakistan’s intelligence agency.

Ina official release, based upon a confidential input received by the SHO of Police Station Ajnala, it was revealed that Falaksher Masih, son of Jinder Masih, and Suraj Masih, son of Chuga Masih, both residents of Balarhwal, living under the jurisdiction of police station Ajnala, were in contact with Pakistan’s intelligence

agency. Both were allegedly involved in collecting and transmitting crucial information such as army movements, location of BSF camps, location of airports, photographs, and other sensitive data to their handlers in Pakistan. Taking swift action, FIR was registered at Police Station Ajnala under Sections 3, 5, and 9 of the Official Secrets Act, Section 67 of the Information Technology Act, and Section 61(2) of BNS. Both individuals were arrested, and two mobile phones were recovered from their possession.

Haryana govt approves the new excise policy for 2025-27

SATISH HANDA

Haryana government has approved the new excise policy for year 2025-27 (Haryana Excise Policy 2025-27) in the state cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Naib Singh Saini, major structural reforms were approved in this policy. While holding a meeting, Haryana Chief Minister Naib Singh Saini warned that the liquor sellers should be careful to implement excise policy rules, failing which the license of the dealer will be cancelled. According to the new policy, liquor shops will not be opened in villages with a population of less than 500. The distance of liquor shops from schools and religious places has been increased to 150 meters. The government has fixed a fee for opening the premises, which will also increase government revenue. Saini said the excise policy year will now be linked with the financial year, and will be applicable from June 12, 2025 to March 31, 2027 i.e. for 21.5



months, after which all future policies will be governed as per the financial year starting from April 1 and ending on March 31.

As strictly stated, the liquor contracts will not be opened in villages with a population of less than 500. Information reveals that at present there are about 700 such villages, due to which the 152 contracts already operating there will also be closed down. Under the new excise policy, the government has set a target of earning revenue of Rs 14 thousand 64 crore for the financial year 2025–26. According to information, in

the financial year 2024–25, the Excise and Taxation Department earned a revenue of Rs 12,700 crore against the target of Rs 12,650 crore. In such a situation, the rates of liquor are bound to increase, as such the government has increased the license fee amount for opening new premises. In the new Haryana Excise Policy, the number of present liquor contracts shops identified as 2400 has not been increased in the state, and will continue to operate as before.

According to new excise policy, liquor shops will be opened at a distance of 150 meters from religious places, will be opened only at a distance of 150 meters from bus stands, schools, colleges and religious places, since earlier this distance was only 75 meters which has been increased in the new excise policy with a provision has been made in the new policy that liquor shops should not be directly visible from the national and state highways and will not have direct connection with the highway. According to

the new policy, if liquor shops or their advertisements are found visible at a near distance from the national and state highways, then along with imposing a fine on the concerned license holder, action will be taken to cancel their license. In case of a violation, for the first time a fine of one lakh rupees will be imposed, for the second time this amount of fine will be two lakh rupees and for the third time the fine amount will be three lakh rupees and after that the license of the dealer will be cancelled.

In the new liquor policy, a fee has been fixed for opening a compound. In Guguram and Faridabad, the fee for opening a compound is four percent of the license fee, in Sonipat and Panchkula, three percent of the license fee and in the rest of the districts across the state, a compound can be opened by paying one percent of the license fee. According to the new policy, no liquor bar will be able to open in less than one thousand square meter area.

Fake liquor factory supplying liquor in Haryana- Punjab busted in Ambala district: 6 arrested

SATISH HANDA

Ambala Police got a big success in busting an illegal factory manufacturing illegal liquor on 3rd May and seized huge stocks of liquor being supplied in Haryana and Punjab in different brands. Shahzadput police in Ambala district arrested four accused and produced them in the court, from where they were sent on police remand. Police has now arrested another accused in this case and the number of total arrests has reached six. However, the timely action has saved a big mishap like in past few months in which a large number of people had lost lives in Ambala and Yamunanagar districts after consuming the liquor being manufactured in an illegal factory in Ambala district.

Haryana police in Ambala has now busted an illegal li-



quor factory in Shahzadpur, seizing a large quantity of spurious liquor and materials to manufacture the same. Four individuals, Gurpreet Singh of Uprali-Dhamauli village, Surinder Singh of Bapauli village, Sandeep, and Sachin both residents of Govindpur village were arrested during the police raid. The illicit operation was owned by Satwinder Singh alias Bittu of Dhanana

village originally hailing from Himachal Pradesh, who has been arrested. The police confiscated spirit, liquor labeled under various brands, empty bottles, packaging, and sealing machines. The illegal liquor manufacturing unit was operating in a rented house in a colony of Shahzadpur town. The raid resulted in the seizure of a massive quantity of illicit liquor and related materials.

Acting on a tip-off received late Wednesday night, a police team led by Shahzadpur police Station House Officer Jitender Dhillon raided a rented property near Modern City Colony in the town.

During the raid, the police seized 109 boxes of spurious country-made desi liquor labeled under the brands Punjab Rasila Santra Marka, Masti Malti Marka and Asli Mota Santra Marka. Notably, none of the boxes carried batch numbers on the bottles. The police team confiscated 540 litres of spirit kept in three drums containing 250, 160, and 130 litres respectively; 9,600 empty bottles; 6,400 bottle caps; 2,050 empty liquor packaging boxes; 12 large and 30 small empty drums, wrappers, holograms, QR codes, and other packaging materials, two machines used for sealing bottle caps.

NATION

Tahawwur Rana sent to Jail till June 6 as NIA Questioning Ends

NEW DELHI: A Special NIA Court on Friday sent 26/11 Mumbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Rana to judicial custody till June 6, marking a temporary break in questioning by the federal probe agency.

On May 3, the NIA had collected voice and handwriting samples of Rana, a Pakistani-Canadian national, in court as a precursor to match them with recordings of his telephonic discussions with 26/11 co-accused David Coleman Headley, an official said.

Rana, who was recently extradited from the US, is suspected to have passed on to Headley handwritten notes sharing instructions, coordinates, and maps which were used to scout 26/11 targets.

The NIA also had plans to take Rana to Mumbai and other cities to reconstruct the chain of events preceding the terror attack that left 166 people dead.



Last month, the Special NIA court extended Rana's NIA custody by 12 more days to allow investigators to question him. Special Judge Charan Jit Singh accepted Senior Advocate Dayan Krishnan's plea that the investigating agency needed more time to uncover Rana's role in the Mumbai attack of 2008.

Rana was presented in court for an extension of his NIA custody after his 18-day remand ended on April 28.

During the court proceed-

ings, the Special Judge was informed by the NIA about the alleged evasive technique adopted by Rana during questioning. The court had earlier directed the NIA to conduct a medical test of Rana every 24 hours and allow him to speak to his lawyers every second day. During his NIA remand, Rana was also questioned by Mumbai Police officers. During the interrogation, Rana claimed that he had "no connection whatsoever" with the planning or execution of the

attack.

He also claimed that his childhood friend and co-accused Headley was solely responsible for the reconnaissance and planning aspects of 26/11. Headley is currently in a US jail.

Headley, who turned approver in the case, had earlier admitted to conducting reconnaissance missions across India, including in Mumbai, on behalf of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

During questioning, Rana said that apart from Mumbai and Delhi, he had also travelled to Kerala. When asked about the purpose of his visit to Kerala, he claimed he had gone there to meet a known acquaintance and had provided the individual's name and address to the agency.

Rana, a former officer of the Pakistan Army's Medical Corps, was extradited to India from the US recently to stand trial in the Mumbai attack case.

Pakistan's Imported Weaponry No Match Against India's Indigenous Missile Systems



NEW DELHI: India's home-grown missile systems are proving to be a formidable deterrent to Pakistan's imported military assets. As part of the Central government's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative in the defence sector, Indian indigenous systems like the Akash missile have significantly bolstered the country's military capabilities.

The Akash surface-to-air missile system, developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), recently successfully shot down a Pakistani JF-17 fighter jet in the Pathankot sector. This achievement underlines India's growing self-sufficiency in defence technology and its effectiveness in active combat situations.

In response to its impressive performance, the Akash system is now being deployed on a larger scale along forward areas. Both the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force are currently equipped with the missile system, particularly in sectors along the Pakistan border.

The Akash missile is a medium-range system with a strike range of 25 to 30 km. Operating under radar-based command guidance, it is capable of intercepting and destroying aircraft, drones, and cruise missiles with high accuracy.

The system can be launched from mobile platforms, making it versatile and adaptable to different terrains.

The Pakistani jet downed by Akash was a JF-17, a fighter aircraft jointly developed by China and Pakistan. However, Pakistan remains heavily dependent on China for the supply, maintenance, and operational training related to these aircraft.

Analysts point out that this dependency limits Pakistan's understanding of the full capabilities of its imported platforms.

Full support to govt, to deal with Pak, love to defence forces says Rahul

KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

The Congress has reaffirmed and reiterated its support to the country's defence forces and the government to deal with Pakistan following the terror attack in Pahalgam.

A meeting of the Congress Working Committee was held here today, which was presided over by the party president Mallikarjun Kharge and attended, among others, by the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, General Secretary (Organisation) K.C. Venugopal, Priyanka Gandhi, Jairam Ramesh and other senior leaders of the party.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Cong President Kharge said the Congress is



proud of the Indian Armed Forces, who, under Operation Sindoor, in a daring and decisive action, gave a befitting reply to Pakistan.

He said the Indian National Congress stands shoulder to shoulder with our brave soldiers who are defending the unity and integrity of the

country with courage, determination, and a great sense of patriotism. He said our soldiers have always kept national security, unity, and integrity of the country above everything and laid down great sacrifices.

Kharge said the CWC reaffirmed and reiterated its support for every decisive action

Operation Sindoor is Bharat's response to Pahalgam terror attack, says HM Amit Shah

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday hailed the Indian armed forces for carrying out 'Operation Sindoor', saying it is India's response to the brutal Pahalgam terror attack, which claimed the lives of 26 innocent civilians on April 22.

He also reaffirmed India's commitment to eliminating terrorism from its roots.

In a military operation following the Pahalgam terror attack, India launched 'Operation Sindoor', striking nine high-value terror targets deep inside Pakistani territory.

Taking to X, HM Shah posted, "Proud of our armed forces. Operation Sindoor is Bharat's response to the brutal killing of our innocent brothers in Pahalgam." "The Modi government is resolved to give a befitting response to any attack on India and its people. Bharat remains firmly committed to eradicating terrorism from its roots," he added.

The operation targeted in-



frastructure linked to terror groups responsible for the April 22 Pahalgam attack, which killed 25 Indian nationals and one Nepali citizen in Jammu and Kashmir.

Sources said the Prime Minister remained in constant communication with top military commanders and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval during the operation.

According to official statements, the nine targets included camps and logistical bases associated with terror groups operating from within Pakistan and PoK.

The Indian Army's spokesperson emphasised the precise nature of the strikes, stating, "Our actions have been focused and precise. We have

only targeted terrorist camps from where attacks against India have been planned and executed."

The Army further clarified that the operation was non-escalatory in intent and execution, aiming strictly at dismantling terror infrastructure while sparing civilian, military, and economic structures in Pakistan.

"Justice is served. Jai Hind," the spokesperson added.

Indian intelligence agencies had earlier traced the Pahalgam attack to Pakistan-based groups, with The Resistance Front -- a Lashkar-e-Taiba proxy -- claiming responsibility.

In response, India had vowed a decisive countermeasure, combining diplomatic pressure with military preparedness.

Operation Sindoor marks one of the most significant cross-border actions taken by India since the Balakot airstrikes in 2019.

Cash at judge's residence: CJI forwards 'in-house' panel probe report to President, PM



NEW DELHI: Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna, who is due to retire next week, has forwarded to the President and the Prime Minister the report of the top court-appointed "in-house" enquiry panel formed against the backdrop of the cash discovery allegations against the then Delhi High Court judge, Justice Yashwant Varma.

"Chief Justice of India, in terms of the In-House Procedure, has written to Hon'ble the President of India and Hon'ble the Prime Minister of India enclosing therewith copy of the 3-Member Committee report dated 03.05.2025 along with the letter/response dated 06.05.2025 received from Mr Justice Yashwant Varma," said a press statement released by the apex court on Thursday.

Justice Varma is embroiled in a controversy surrounding the alleged discovery of a huge pile of burnt cash in the storeroom attached to his bungalow in the national capital after the fire brigade had gone there to douse a blaze on March 14. Within two weeks, Justice Varma's transfer from the Delhi High Court to the Allahabad HC, amid an in-house probe, was cleared by the Union government.

War and strife are not in anyone's interest: JIH

KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

The continued tension, shelling, and attacks between India and Pakistan are a serious cause of concern. We appreciate the declaration by Indian officials that there is no intention to escalate the conflict. We hope that there will soon be concrete progress toward lasting peace.

Both countries are striving to overcome poverty and deprivation and working for the prosperity and progress of their people, and both are nuclear powers. In such a situation, war and unrest serve no one's interest and will most severely harm the poor populations of both countries. We hope that the political and military leadership of both countries will now take swift and concrete steps toward sustainable peace. There are continued reports of the deaths of ordinary Indian citizens living in border areas. The threats faced by innocent civilians demand our immediate attention. We express our heartfelt condolences to the families of those killed and demand that the government provide these families with all necessary assistance and protection on a priority basis.



Jamaat-e-Islami Hind President Syed Sadatullah Husaini Voices Concern Over Developments Post-Pahalgam



KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

The President of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH), Syed Sadatullah Husaini, has expressed concern over the unfolding chain of events following the terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing the monthly press conference at the JIH headquarters, Syed Sadatullah Husaini reiterated his strong condemnation of the heinous terror attack that took place in Pahalgam, South Kashmir, on 22 April 2025. "We once again express deep sorrow and outrage at the tragic loss of life in the terror attack in Pahalgam. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their grieving families. There can be no justification for such a barbaric act. It is completely inhuman and deserves absolute and unequivocal condemnation," stated the JIH President. Syed Sadatullah said, "The terrorist attacks and loss of innocent lives show that security arrangements are still not up to the mark, and despite the heavy military presence in the region, there exist policy loopholes that make the lives of innocent citizens vulnerable. We want the perpetrators of the Pahalgam attack to be brought to justice, security failures to be properly investigated, and more robust arrangements to be put in place." Talking about the situation in Kashmir, the JIH President stated, "Following the abrogation of Article 370 and an extended period of stringent security measures, the government asserted that terrorism in Kashmir was effectively curbed.

Six Killed, 1 Injured as Helicopter Crashes Near Uttarakhand's Gangnani

DEHRADUN: Six tourists were killed on the spot and one injured as a helicopter, in which they were travelling, crashed near Gangnani in Uttarakhand's Uttarkashi on Thursday.

The incident occurred around 9 a.m. near Gangnani when the helicopter, belonging to a private company, was flying from Dehradun's Sahastradhara to Harshil. Seven people were on-board the helicopter, including passengers Vinit Gupta, Arvind Agarwal, Vipin Agarwal, Pinki Agarwal, Rashmi and Kishore Jadhav, and pilot Robin Singh.

Four passengers hailed from Mumbai while two others from Andhra Pradesh. After hearing about the accident, locals, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Quick Response Teams (QRTs) and 108 ambulance vehicles rushed to the spot. Two police teams, headed by cops Naveen Kumar from Bhatwadi and Pushar Jeena from Ujeli, rushed to the spot. The SDRF team spotted the helicopter in a 200-250 metre gorge, after



which the rescue operation was launched. The cause of the accident is yet to be identified.

After getting the news of the tragic incident, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami expressed grief over the demise of those killed in the accident. He also prayed for peace to the departed souls and strength to the bereaved families to bear the irreparable loss. The Chief Minister also instructed the administration to provide all possible help to the injured and probe the incident.

In a post on social media

platform X, he said: "Got the news of some casualties in a helicopter crash near Gangani in Uttarkashi. SDRF and district administration teams have immediately reached the spot for relief and rescue work."

"May God grant peace to the departed souls and strength to the bereaved families to bear this immense sorrow. I have instructed the administration to provide all possible help to the injured and probe the accident. I am constantly in touch with the officials and monitoring every situation," his post read.

War Always Dangerous for Humanity: Jathedar Kuldeep Singh Gargajj

Jathedar Akal Takht and SGPC president condemn killing of civilians and attack on Gurdwara in Poonch by Pakistani shelling
JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargajj, officiating Jathedar of Akal Takht the highest Sikh temporal seat has condemned the attack in the Poonch region of Kashmir, where civilians, including Sikhs, were killed and a gurdwara was attacked amid rising tensions and cross-border attacks between India and Pakistan.

Jathedar Gargajj stated that during Pakistan's retaliatory shelling in Poonch—following India's Operation Sindoor—the central Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh

Sabha was hit. During the attacks in Poonch, three Gursikhs were killed - Bhai Amrik Singh (a raagi), Bhai Amarjeet Singh (a retired army soldier), and Bhai Ranjit Singh (a local shopkeeper). Additionally, reports have emerged of a Sikh woman named Ruby Kaur being killed in the Mankote area. Other civilian casualties in Poonch have also come to light. The Jathedar offered prayers for the spiritual peace of those who lost their lives and strength for their families to endure the loss.

He emphasized that both nations' governments must immediately make sincere efforts to restore peace. "War always severely harms humanity, often resulting in the deaths of many innocent people," he said. "Therefore, every possible effort must be made to resolve the current



situation peacefully."

Jathedar Gargajj also noted that since 1947, both countries have suffered immense losses due to ongoing hostilities—particularly the Hindu and Sikh communities in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.

He urged border residents to support one another during these tense times, seek solace in Gurbani, and pray to the Akal Purakh (the One Timeless being) for peace and strength.

However, president of the Shi-

romani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Harjinder Singh Dhami, has also termed the attack on a Gurdwara Sahib in the Poonch area of Kashmir—following heightened tensions along the India-Pakistan border—as deeply distressing. He also expressed heartfelt condolences over the killing of four Sikhs during the attack in Kashmir.

The SGPC President said that this painful incident has inflicted deep wounds on the Sikh community. Paying tribute to the Sikhs who lost their lives in the attack, Dhami offered Ardas (Sikh prayer) before the Karta Purakh (the Timeless One Being), asking for eternal peace for the departed souls. He further stated that the SGPC stands in solidarity with the affected families during this tragic time.

Cong seeks probe into purchase of Subramanian's 2 lakh books by Union Bank of India



Asks Gol to prevail upon IMF not to grant \$1.2 billion loan to Pakistan

KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

The Congress has demanded an investigation into the purchase of two lakh copies of a book "India @100: Envisioning Tomorrow's Economic Powerhouse" by the Union Bank of India, at a cost of Rs 7.25 crore.

The book has been written by K.V. Subramanian, a former Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India, whose tenure as the Executive Director at the International Monetary

Fund was cut short recently by the government.

Addressing a press conference at the AICC office, party spokesperson and Chairperson of the Social Media and Digital Platforms, Supriya Shrinate, revealed that the public sector bank, Union Bank of India, had purchased two lakh copies of the book for a whopping sum of Rs 7.25 crore. She said Subramanian was removed from his post at the IMF six months ahead of the completion of his three-year tenure. She added that the government was yet to come out with an authorised version as to why he was removed.



Manufacturing push powers GST growth

The country's Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection in April has once again set a new benchmark. Since its rollout in 2017, April collections have consistently posted record highs, driven by year-end financial settlements. This year was no different, with gross GST receipts touching Rs 2.37 lakh crore—up 12.6 per cent from April 2024. After refunds, the Centre retained over Rs 2.09 lakh crore, reflecting a healthy 9.1 per cent year-on-year rise. Beneath these figures lies a broader trend of improved compliance, aided by rapid fintech adoption, particularly among micro, small and medium enterprises. India's fintech usage, at 87 per cent, far exceeds the global average. It has helped draw millions into the formal banking and taxation fold, easing regulatory oversight and enabling faster refunds—a lifeline for small businesses with tight cash flows. Notably, April also saw an 86 per cent increase in GST refunds to exporters and a 20.8 per cent rise in import-related revenues. This aligns with the strong showing in the HSBC India Manufacturing PMI, which hit 58.2—its highest in ten months. A surge in new export orders, the largest in over 14 years, suggests Indian producers are benefiting from shifting global supply chains. With U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods set to resume after a 90-day pause, India is emerging as a preferred alternative for sourcing, with Apple planning to make most of its U.S.-bound iPhones in India. Yet, this global tailwind is likely to prove temporary. India's manufacturing growth slowed to 4 per cent last year, underscoring the need for structural support. Durable gains will depend on boosting domestic demand and securing meaningful concessions in ongoing trade negotiations. April's GST surge is encouraging—but sustained momentum will require deeper policy resolve.

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EDITORIAL & OPINION



ABHIJIT SINGH ON WHY AN INCREASINGLY MILITARISED ARCTIC DEMANDS NEW THINKING

Arctic Policy Needs Revisiting



As conflict zones multiply globally, another frontier is quietly slipping into turmoil — the Arctic. Long seen as a realm of scientific cooperation and environmental protection, the polar north is becoming a theatre of military and geopolitical competition. With Russia more assertive, China expanding its Arctic ambitions, and Washington renewing interest in Greenland, the region appears set for a renewed phase of strategic contestation. In a curious way, the Arctic's movement from the margins of international politics to the heart of great power competition is an outcome of more than just clashing geopolitical ambitions. Climate change has been decisive, opening new maritime corridors and resource frontiers, and spurring a scramble for access. The Northern Sea Route (NSR), once passable only during narrow summer windows, is now virtually an open sea lane. Traffic is rising, potentially redrawing global trade patterns. **A growing militarisation** Alongside this commercial promise lies a more concerning development: the steady militarisation of the high north. With Arctic states reopening old military bases, deploying submarines, and reinforcing claims through visible shows of force, the stakes for control and influence in the region are higher than ever. To be sure, the militarising impulse of Arctic powers is not new. Nor is the tendency to leverage polar presence for wider strategic manoeuvring. United States President Donald Trump was the first to drop pretences when he proposed buying Greenland in 2019. Far from the absurdity many deemed it, the idea had clear geopolitical merit; behind Mr. Trump's theatrics lay a deeper instinct — a recognition that the Arctic was no longer peripheral to global power play, but central to it. For non-Arctic powers such as India, the implications of a militarised Arctic are

serious, prompting many to reassess their regional postures. Even so, New Delhi remains curiously insulated from the region's shifting realities. Faced with complex challenges closer to home, India appears oddly impassive to the dangers taking shape in the high north. India's 2022 Arctic Policy offers a thoughtful road map focused on climate science, environmental protection and sustainable development. It draws strength from the parallels between the Arctic and the Himalayan "Third Pole" — anchored in the belief that glacial melt and atmospheric shifts in the far north have cascading effects on South Asia's water security and monsoon cycles. Yet, the policy underplays the Arctic's rapidly evolving strategic landscape. As regional actors pivot from cooperative science to geopolitical contestation, India's restrained posture risks relegating it to the margins. The predisposition to remain apolitical — justifiable in an earlier era — now appears increasingly anachronistic. Besides being absent from conversations reshaping access and governance, India remains detached from the emerging politics of influence in the Far North. This is not to say that India lacks a pres-

ence in the Arctic. It operates a research station in Svalbard, contributes to polar expeditions, and holds observer status in the Arctic Council. But these mechanisms were designed for a more benign order — one built on consensus and mutual trust. With the existing order visibly fraying, scientific diplomacy no longer seems fit-for-purpose. **A constructive role for India** The stakes for India are far from hypothetical. As the NSR becomes more viable, trade flows may shift northwards, potentially undercutting the relevance of the Indian Ocean sea lanes. Should Russia and China consolidate control over Arctic sea routes, India's aspirations to be a connectivity hub in the Indo-Pacific — articulated through initiatives such as Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) — could face serious headwinds. More concerning for New Delhi is the blurring of boundaries between the Arctic and the Indo-Pacific. Growing Russia-China strategic coordination in the Arctic and China's expanding naval presence in the Indian Ocean are making it harder for India to focus solely on its maritime interests in the south. An added challenge is the growing unease among Nordic states over India's long-standing ties with Russia, particularly as Moscow's brazenness in the Ukraine war deepens. India has yet to reassure its Arctic partners that an approach guided by strategic autonomy, rather than alignment, can still be beneficial for all sides. **A more purposeful engagement** New Delhi, then, needs a recalibration — one that retains its climate-conscious ethos but builds sharper strategic focus. This calls for a three-part strategy. First, India must institutionalise Arctic engagement beyond science, with dedicated desks in the Foreign and Defence Ministries, regular inter-agency consultations, and collaboration with strategic think tanks. Second, New Delhi should partner with like-minded Arctic states on dual-use initiatives — polar logistics, maritime domain awareness, and satellite monitoring — that enhance India's credibility without raising red flags. Third, India must claim a seat at the table as new Arctic governance forums emerge — on infrastructure, shipping regulation, digital standards, and the blue economy. India must also approach the Arctic's political landscape with sensitivity, avoiding an extractive mindset and engaging local communities with restraint and respect. India's current Arctic posture is not without merit, but it is no longer adequate. It rests on the hope that scientific cooperation and climate diplomacy can smooth over growing geopolitical fault lines. That hope is fast fading. The Arctic is now shaped less by principle than by power. Those unwilling to adapt could find themselves edged out of the emerging order.

Abhijit Singh is the former head of the maritime policy initiative at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), New Delhi. Views are personal.



PUSHPA SUNDAR EXPLAINS HOW TIGHTER RULES SHRINK FOREIGN SUPPORT TO NGOS

NGOs struggle as India turns inward on aid



India's attitude to foreign aid — both official and private — has always been ambivalent: sometimes welcoming, at other times wary or outright hostile. With U.S. President Donald Trump's targeting of USAID, the death knell for official aid from the West may have already been sounded. Other donor countries, particularly in Europe, could follow suit, driven by geopolitical tensions, anti-immigration sentiment and slowing growth. The writing on the wall could not be clearer. In India's case, that writing has been visible for some time—long before Mr Trump's actions. Western donors increasingly see India not as a country in need of aid, but as a rising economic power, frequently hailed as the fifth-largest economy in the making. Its high growth rate, assertive global posture and majoritarian domestic politics have further reinforced this perception. India began seeking foreign aid shortly after Independence, largely to help close the developmental gap with the West. At the time, aid was directed mainly to the government, viewed as the principal agent of change. From 1955 to 1965, most aid came from Western countries, with a small share going to private organisations. However, official development assistance began declining steadily after 1970. By the 1990s, as India's economy liberalised, aid as a share of GDP or public investment had become marginal. Today, India prioritises foreign direct

investment (FDI) and global cooperation on trade, climate change and technology. While declining official aid is no great loss, the fall in private foreign aid—particularly to non-governmental organisations (NGOs)—is more consequential. This decline carries implications not only for Indian civil society but also for donor economies, including job losses in aid agencies and wasted humanitarian resources. NGOs in India are likely to bear the brunt. These organisations supplement state provision and act as watchdogs over both state and market. In the pre-Independence era, and for some years after, they survived mainly on public donations. But since the 1960s, their two principal funding sources have been government grants and foreign aid. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds have gained traction only since 2013, when CSR contributions were made mandatory for large firms. External aid to NGOs steadily increased for decades. Yet in recent years, inflows from both official and private sources have declined. Between 2017-18 and 2021-22, NGOs received around Rs 88,882 crore. However, precise estimates of foreign contributions under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) are difficult to obtain, and available data suggests a sharp downward trend. **The Regulatory Chill** The fall in aid is less a result of donor fatigue and more a reflection of the Indian government's increasingly restrictive posture. The FCRA, first enacted in 1976, was intended to regulate foreign donations to NGOs. Even before the Emergency of 1975, the phrase "foreign hand" had begun to acquire pejorative connotations. The state often blamed foreign-funded NGOs for fostering dissent, fuelling conversions and opposing large infrastructure projects. Under the FCRA, NGOs are required to register with the Ministry of Home Affairs and use funds strictly in accordance with government rules. Since 2010, the Act has been repeatedly amended—in 2010, 2011, 2020, 2023 and 2024—each

time tightening the rules further. Many NGOs have since lost their registration, while others have faced delays, scrutiny or denial of funds. Certain private donors, such as the Open Society Foundations (founded by George Soros), have been actively discouraged. Taken together, these restrictions are slowly but surely squeezing foreign aid out of India's civil society landscape. **Why It Matters** Foreign aid, for all its flaws, brought tangible benefits. While sometimes misaligned with local needs, it offered flexibility, scale and global exposure—advantages not often matched by government grants. It also strengthened the sector's capacity to engage in evidence-based policy advocacy and to challenge state or market excesses. A complete halt to foreign aid would have wide-reaching consequences: job losses in the voluntary sector, abandoned or incomplete projects, and slower progress in the social sector. Most critically, it would weaken an essential counterbalance to government overreach. Self-reliance is, of course, a worthy goal. But dismantling the infrastructure of support for civil society under the banner of sovereignty risks undermining India's long-term national interest.

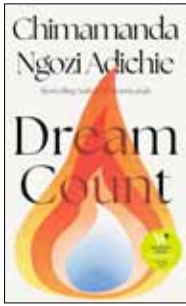
Pushpa Sundar is the author of *Foreign Aid for Indian NGOs: Problem or Solution?* (2010). Views are personal.

BOOKS: REVIEW

New book explores grief, memory, and womanhood

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Dream Count* is not a novel with a conventional plot, nor does it attempt to be. Rather, it is a collection of interwoven voices, anchored by four women—Chiamaka (Chia), Zikora, Kadiatou and Omelogor—who carry the novel's emotional weight across a backdrop of immigration, middle age, class, and personal reckoning. Their stories overlap and diverge, offering readers a textured, intimate look into the lives of African women navigating the complexities of American life. Set at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the novel opens with Chiamaka, a Nigerian travel writer marooned in introspection. With travel on pause and life forcibly slowed, she turns inward, sifting through past relationships, personal failures and quiet triumphs. Adichie captures her voice with wit and clarity. Chia is both humorous

and self-aware, reflecting on romantic missteps—a bombastic academic lover, a boring but good-hearted Igbo man, and a doomed affair with a married Englishman—with a mix of regret and wry detachment. Through her, Adichie gently questions the passage of time and the myth of the well-lived life. In contrast, Zikora's narrative is more urgent and emotionally raw. A successful lawyer grappling with the aftermath of a relationship turned traumatic, she gives voice to the anger and confusion that follows betrayal. Her character speaks to the emotional cost of navigating life with resilience expected as default. Zikora's strained relationship with her mother—like several maternal ties in the novel—provides a framework for personal reckoning and transformation. Kadiatou, the Guinean housekeeper, emerges as the novel's most moving and po-



Dream Count By Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie Fourth Estate, 657 pages; Rs 599.

litically resonant figure. Inspired by the real-life case of Nafissatou Diallo, who accused Dominique Strauss-Kahn of sexual assault in 2011, Kadiatou's story crackles with rage and quiet strength. Adichie does not turn her into a symbol of victimhood; instead, she restores her humanity, crafting a complex portrait of a woman buffeted by systems of injustice but never entirely broken by them. The writing here is among the novel's finest—furious, empathetic, precise. Omelogor, Chia's sharp-witted cousin and a morally ambiguous banker, closes the narrative arc with a provocative twist. She embezzles funds from her corrupt Nigerian employer to finance women's businesses—an act she proudly brands as 'Robyn Hood'. Her story, though the least emotionally compelling, raises questions about ethics, power and gendered rebellion. Her abrupt decision to abandon everything and move to the U.S. feels narratively underdeveloped, but her presence adds an essential shade of grey to the novel's spectrum of womanhood. Threaded through each of these voices is the lingering shadow of grief. In her author's note, Adichie writes that *Dream Count* is, at its core, a tribute to her late mother. That grief, "still stubbornly in infancy", permeates the novel without overwhelming it. Loss here is both specific and collective—personal and political, private and inherited. While *Dream Count* is primarily a meditation on female friendship, identity and loss, it is also sharply observant about American society and the immigrant experience. Adichie skewers liberal pieties and pro-

gressive jargon with surgical precision. Chia's friends critique everything as "problematic", while Zikora endures the cold, mechanical language of the American medical system. The novel is acutely aware of the gaps between cultures, languages and expectations—and the exhaustion that comes with constantly translating oneself. Still, *Dream Count* is not without flaws. Its feminism can feel a touch nostalgic, painting men in uniformly unflattering tones—from the absurd to the abusive. The novel's ending lacks the clarity and force of its earlier sections, tapering off where one expects it to crescendo. But these are minor blemishes in what is otherwise a rich, intelligent and emotionally layered work. Written over the course of a decade, *Dream Count* confirms Adichie's singular talent for storytelling. She brings a fierce intellect, a keen ear for dialogue and a poet's touch to the prose. At a time when so much fiction strives to be urgent, Adichie dares to be reflective. The result is a novel that, despite its quietude, resounds long after the final page.

Nitin Gadkari clls for Biofuel Revolution to Cut Imports, Boost Rural Economy

NEWDELHI: Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, on Thursday advocated for a nation-wide biofuel revolution, calling it a “once-in-a-century opportunity” to transform India’s rural economy, reduce its massive fossil fuel imports and tackle air pollution.

Speaking at the ‘International Summit Expo on Bio-energy Value Chain’ here, the Union Minister said the time has come to turn agricultural waste, crop residue, bamboo and biomass into green fuel and value-added products.

Gadkari highlighted the urgent need to cut India’s Rs 22 lakh crore fossil fuel import bill and reduce pollution caused by burning crop waste and vehicle emissions.

“India must shift from being an energy importer to becoming an energy exporter,



which he believes is achievable through sustainable bioenergy initiatives,” Gadkari mentioned. The minister praised Brazil for its success with aviation biofuel and noted that India too has begun implementing similar fuel alternatives at its airports.

“Sustainable aviation fuel is a huge market for the future,” he said, emphasising the need for quality research and eco-

nomically viable technologies. Addressing the issue of stubble burning in north India, Gadkari said it should not be seen as a problem but as an opportunity. “Rice straw from Punjab and Haryana can be converted into bio-CNG, ethanol, bio-bitumen, and even aviation fuel,” he said.

He pointed to Indian Oil’s Manpur project as a successful example, which processes

two lakh tonnes of crop waste into high-value fuel every year.

He also suggested turning India’s vast stretches of wasteland – 70 per cent of which is unproductive – into bamboo plantations for energy production.

Gadkari revealed that NTPC has already agreed to buy bamboo as white coal for thermal power plants, offering a new income stream for farmers and rural entrepreneurs.

“Agriculture must be diversified towards the energy and power sector,” he said, adding that higher crop prices from ethanol demand – like the rise in corn prices from Rs 1,200 to Rs 2,600 per quintal – are proof that biofuels can boost farm income.

“Without economic viability in agriculture, we cannot achieve real growth,” he stressed.

Elon Musk’s Starlink Receives Indian Govt Nod for Satellite Internet Services



NEW DELHI: Starlink, the satellite internet arm of Elon Musk’s SpaceX, has received a Letter of Intent (LoI) from the Indian government, signaling progress toward securing a satellite communication (satcom) license in the country.

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) issued the LoI, according to official sources. This marks a significant development in Starlink’s long-standing attempt to enter India’s growing digital connectivity market. The company aims to offer high-speed, low-latency internet through its network of low Earth orbit (LEO) satellites, which orbit about 550 km above Earth. Unlike traditional satellite services that rely on geostationary satellites, Starlink’s LEO network—currently consisting of about 7,000 satellites—is designed for faster, more responsive internet access suitable for streaming, gaming, and video conferencing. SpaceX plans to expand the network to over 40,000 satellites in the coming years.

Starlink’s India entry had been delayed due to regulatory and security concerns. “It is a little complicated issue... Security is one of them,” said Union Minister Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, noting that the approval process is now in its final stages.

NSE denies reports of Seeking Govt Intervention in IPO Deadlock

MUMBAI: The National Stock Exchange (NSE) on Thursday publicly denied media reports suggesting that it has approached the Government for intervention in its ongoing stand-off with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) over its delayed Initial Public Offering (IPO).

In a post on social media platform X, the exchange categorically refuted claims that it had reached out to the government for assistance. “The story is denied by NSE,” the exchange stated in its clarification, adding that there has been “no correspondence with the Government of India in the last



30 months relating to its IPO.”

This statement comes in response to a news report citing unnamed sources who claimed that NSE had recently written to the Ministry of Finance requesting help in resolving regulatory hurdles holding up its long-awaited IPO. The report alleged that the letter followed the rejection of NSE’s latest application to SEBI in March for a ‘No Objection Certificate’ (NOC)

required to proceed with the listing. According to the report, the exchange had previously approached the government on similar grounds in 2019, twice in 2020, and most recently in August 2024. The report suggested that the NSE’s letter urged the ministry to engage with SEBI’s newly-appointed Chairman to address concerns raised by the regulator, including governance issues and the appointment of top executives. “The letter requests the Ministry of Finance to engage with the newly-appointed SEBI Chairman to address and resolve the concerns raised by SEBI regarding NSE’s pending public offer,” the report said.

Captains of Trade and Industry Hail Landmark India-UK Free Trade Pact

NEW DELHI: India’s apex business chambers and trade organisations on Tuesday hailed the landmark India-UK Free Trade Agreement, terming it a major milestone achieved under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) President Sanjiv Puri said: “CII commends the Government of India for finalising the landmark India-UK Free Trade Agreement. This transformative accord reflects our shared commitment to deepening economic ties, bolstering technology collaboration, diversifying global supply chains, and fostering a more business-friendly environment.”

Guided by the 2030 Roadmap, the timely agreement will help advance a comprehensive strategic partnership between India and the UK, steering bilateral trade towards the ambitious



target of \$100 billion by 2030, Puri said.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President S.C. Ralhan said: “The India-UK FTA eliminates or significantly reduces tariffs on a wide range of Indian goods, giving our exporters preferential access to one of the world’s most affluent and consumption-driven markets. Key sectors poised to

benefit include: Textiles & Apparel as removal of tariffs will enhance India’s competitiveness against countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam.”

“Leather & footwear will gain through increased access to high-end UK retail markets. Besides, Gems & Jewelry Pharmaceuticals as well as Agriculture & Processed Foods will get better access to the UK

Gautam Adani Sees Group’s Pact to set up 5,000 MW Projects in Bhutan



NEW DELHI: Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani on Thursday said the signing of the MoU to jointly develop 5,000 MW of hydropower projects in Bhutan represented a deepening of the group’s partnership with the Himalayan country.

He also thanked Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay for reposing his trust in the Adani Group.

“Was honoured to deepen our partnership with Bhutan. We are committed to a greener and more prosperous future. Thank you PM Bhutan Tshering Tobgay for your trust and vision”, Gautam Adani posted on X. The Bhutan Prime Minister, on his part, said that he was “delighted that that Druk Green Power Corporation and Adani Power have made significant progress on the Wangchhu hydropower JV project, and that they have signed an MoU Druk Green Power Corporation (DGPC) of Bhutan to jointly develop 5,000 MW of additional hydropower in Bhutan”.

“Grateful to my friend Gautam Adani,” Prime Minister Tobgay remarked. The partnership is strongly backed by both the Bhutan and Indian govern-

ments, underscoring a shared vision for clean energy growth and economic integration.

The MoU, signed in Bhutan by DGPC’s MD Dasho Chhewang Rinzin and Adani Green Hydro Ltd’s COO (PSP & Hydro) Naresh Telgu in the presence of the Prime Minister Tobgay, Minister for Energy and Natural Resources Lyonpo Gem Tshering and other senior dignitaries, builds on the ongoing partnership for the 570/900 MW Wangchhu Hydropower Project, in which DGPC will hold a majority 51 per cent stake and the Adani Group will hold 49 per cent. The broader 5,000 MW initiative will encompass additional hydropower and pumped storage projects to be identified, Detailed Project Reports prepared, and taken forward for implementation in phases.

“This strategic partnership with Adani will further strengthen our very strong engagement with the Government of India in harnessing Bhutan’s abundant hydropower resources, which is considered the cornerstone of the exemplary and friendly relations between our two countries,” said DGPC’s MD Rinzin. “We look forward to

taking this partnership forward with Adani and learning from their huge successes across the globe.” In a further milestone, the DGPC and the Adani Group also initialled the Shareholders’ Agreement for the Wangchhu Project, marking significant progress in their collaborative efforts to advance Bhutan’s hydropower sector.

The Adani Group, India’s leading infrastructure and renewable energy player, brings extensive expertise in project development, financing, and market access. It will support Bhutan in scaling up its hydropower capacity and facilitating access to Indian energy markets. As part of this collaboration, the group will ensure reliable power offtake and integration with India’s commercial power markets, further reinforcing Bhutan’s role in the regional energy trade. This initiative also aligns with Bhutan’s Renewable Energy Roadmap, which aims to achieve an additional 20,000 MW of generation capacity by 2040. The roadmap prioritises diversification into solar and geothermal energy, and also encourages strategic partnerships to attract investment and innovation.

The DGPC, Bhutan’s premier hydropower developer, has decades of experience in managing the nation’s renewable energy resources. It plays a pivotal role in Bhutan’s clean energy journey, contributing to both domestic energy security and sustainable development. Through such partnerships, the DGPC is also helping to strengthen Bhutan’s position in regional energy cooperation.

GAIL Hikes Startup Investment Fund to Rs 500 Crore in FY25 says Hardeep Puri



NEW DELHI: GAIL (India) Limited increased its startup investment fund from Rs 100 crore to Rs 500 crore in FY25, Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri, said on Tuesday, as the country becomes the third largest startup ecosystem in the world.

In a post on X social media platform, the minister said there has been a startup revolution in Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government. “Country becomes the third largest startup ecosystem in the world. GAIL (India) Ltd’s startup initiative ‘PANKH’ is giving a new flight to the youth’s startups. It is strengthening the country’s energy power by promoting innovations in the field of energy,” Puri informed. The Union Minister further informed that during the financial year 2024-25, the state-owned energy corporation has increased the startup investment fund from Rs 100 crore to Rs 500 crore. “GAIL is supporting 38 startups related to natural gas, pipeline, petrochemical, energy, renewable energy, energy storage etc. These start-ups have created about 1,000 jobs in the last three years,” said Minister Puri. The minister recently informed that six oil marketing companies (OMC) in India have invested Rs 290 crore from their Rs 550-crore startup fund — nurturing 303 startups so far.

Hardeep Puri further stated that the country has over 1.5 lakh startups and 120 unicorns. “Contributing to this remarkable progress are the 6 Oil Marketing Companies under @PetroleumMin, which have created a Rs 550 crore startup fund. Already, Rs 290 crore has been invested to support 303 startups,” the Union Minister informed. According to the minister, this is real empowerment, real impact, and a real vision for the “future-enabled by the far-sighted leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi”. The government, in the Union Budget 2025-26, made a substantial allocation towards developing deeptech and AI-enabled platforms through the Rs 10,000-crore Fund of Funds scheme. With more than 1.59 lakh startups recognised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), India has firmly established itself as the key startup ecosystem in the world.

HPCL clocks 18 pc jump in Q4 net profit at Rs 3,355 crore, declares Rs 10.50 dividend

NEWDELHI: Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (HPCL) on Tuesday reported a standalone net profit of Rs 3,355 crore in for the January-March quarter of financial year 2024-25, which represents an 18 per cent increase over the corresponding figure for the same quarter of 2023-24.

The government-owned oil refining and marketing major’s total income during the fourth quarter came in at Rs 1.19 lakh crore. HPCL also announced a final dividend of Rs 10.50 per equity share for the financial year which ended on March 31, 2025. The record date to determine the eligibility of the shareholders set to receive the payment has been set at August 14. HPCL has drawn up a Rs 1.3 lakh crore investment plan for 2025 and beyond. The



company aims to increase crude oil imports, expand its Vizag refinery, and commission the new Barmer oil refinery, and is also aiming for 10 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030.

The company plans to increase the capacity of its Vizag oil refinery in southern India by as much as 20 per cent to meet growing local fuel demand.

HPCL recently expanded the capacity of the Vizag refinery to 300,000 barrels per day and is looking for a further increase. The company now has plans for another 20 per cent expansion of the refinery.

Small Country, Big Concern for the US: Ireland’s Pharma Exports



DR. ANIL KUMAR ANGRISH

On March 12, 2025, the US President met Micheal Martin, Irish Prime Minister, and in his presence, Donald Trump said that ‘Ireland had used its tax policies to lure away pharmaceutical and other companies from the U.S., but U.S. reciprocal tariffs would help rebuild U.S. manufacturing. Trump also blamed U.S. leadership for allowing U.S. pharmaceutical companies and others to move to Ireland.’

Because of quantum of pharmaceutical exports from Ireland, Donald Trump, the U.S. President had to say, ‘All of sudden Ireland has our pharmaceutical companies, this beautiful island of five million people has got the entire US pharmaceutical industry in its grasp.’ This was also relevant in the background that Chemicals & related products formed almost 75 per cent of Total Imports by the USA from Ireland in the Calendar Year (CY) 2023 (January – December). This percentage went up by 5 per cent to touch 80.31 per cent in CY24. Export of Pharmaceuticals from Ireland to the US reached €10.5 bn (\$11.8 bn) in February 2025, up from €1.9 bn in February 2024 thereby reflecting 452 per cent growth YoY basis.

Ireland is ranked second

in the European Union (EU) in terms of per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of €79,300 which is above EU average of €37,600. Geographical size of the country is 69,947 km² which is just 0.71 per cent of the geographical size of the U.S. (98,33,520 km²). Even with respect to India, Ireland is just 2.13 per cent of India’s geographical size (32,87,263 km²). Prominent IT companies of the U.S.-origin have set up their European Headquarters in Ireland. The list comprises Apple, Google, Meta, Amazon, X, LinkedIn, Adobe to name a few.

Ireland has become a leading nation in pharmaceutical sector as well. Ireland’s Central Statistics Office (CSO) data shows that over-all exports of medical and pharmaceutical products in 2024 stood at €99.9 Bn. In 2024, exports of medical and pharmaceutical products accounted for 44.64% of all Irish goods exports, and exports of pharma products rose by 29.0%. In contrast to this, India exported pharmaceutical products worth \$30.38 Bn in FY25 out of which exports to the USA alone stood at \$10.51 Bn (34.61 per cent of the total pharma exports). In 2023, Ireland was 4th largest exporter of pharma products after Germany, Switzerland, and the U.S. whereas India was 11th largest exporter of

Table 1: Statistics about Ireland’s Exports including Exports of Medical & Pharma Products

Total Exports in 2024 (January – December)	€223.8 Bn
Exports of Medical & Pharmaceutical Products in 2024 (January – December)	€99.9 Bn
Share of Exports of Medical & Pharmaceutical Products in Total Exports from Ireland (2024)	44.64%
Increase in Exports of Medical & Pharma Products in 2024 (as compared to 2023)	€22.4 Bn

Source: Compiled from Goods Exports and Imports December 2024, Central Statistics Office, Ireland

Table 3: Global Innovation Index (GII) Ranking of Ireland (2020-24)

Year	GII Rank	Innovation Inputs	Innovation Outputs
2024	19	25	15
2023	22	26	18
2022	23	25	19
2021	19	22	19
2020	15	20	11

Source: Global Innovation Index (GII) 2024

pharma products.

It is interesting to observe the growth of pharmaceutical industry in Ireland. Ireland has become an attractive destination for pharma companies to set up their base. 10 of the world’s largest pharmaceutical companies are based in Ireland. Prominent pharmaceutical companies which have their operations in Ireland include Johnson & Johnson (J&J), Eli Lilly, Pfizer, Merck, Takeda, Sanofi, Novartis, Bristol Myers Squibb, Regeneron, Gilead, janssen, AbbVie, MSD, GE Healthcare, Baxter, Zoetis, among others. Pharmaceutical Companies consider skilled workforce, regulatory environment, and pro-innovation government policies as major factors behind their presence

in Ireland. Johnson & Johnson is operating in Ireland since 1935. J&J employs more than 6,000 persons from Ireland. J&J operations span ten sites across Ireland, and operations include R&D, manufacturing, shared services, and commercial operations.

Pfizer opened its first site in Ireland in 1969. Since then, the company had invested \$8 bn in operations. The company has six sites in Ireland, and carry out functions such as R&D, manufacturing, shared services, treasury and commercial operations thereby employing around 3,700 employees.

Merck Group has been active in Ireland since 1977. Merck Group is represented in Ireland by Merck Serono (Ireland) Ltd., Merck Mil-

Table 2: Export of Chemicals & Related Products and Total Exports to the USA from Ireland

	Dec 2023	Dec 2024	Jan – Dec 2023	Jan – Dec 2024
Export of Chemicals & related Products to the USA	3,176	4,075	40,457	58,328
Total Exports to the USA	4,265	5,198	54,034	72,628

Source: Compiled from Goods Exports and Imports December 2024, Central Statistics Office, Ireland



lipore Ltd., Ireland and Merck Life Science UK Limited.

MSD has significant presence in Ireland. MSD Ireland established its first site - MSD Ballydine in Ireland in 1976. Now, the company has six sites in Ireland. These sites cater to biologics-based medicines, global and national support services (Clinical Research, Medical Affairs, Regulatory Affairs, Sales, Policy & Communications and Marketing) among others. In January 2025, MSD acquired a vaccine plant from WuXi Biologics for €500 million (or \$521 million). WuXi Biologics had announced in 2019 about its investment of €200 million to build this vaccine plant.

The Company has invested \$3.5 billion in Irish operations and the company’s annual turnover ranks as one of the Ireland’s top 20 companies.

Eli Lilly established operations in Ireland in 1978. Eli Lilly is manufacturing Zepbound, its weight-loss drug at the manufacturing facility in County Cork. Eli Lilly also has a Global Business Solutions center in Cork that employs more than 2,000 employees by 2024-end. More than 50% of these employees work in clinical research and development. Eli Lilly announced the Limerick site in 2022, that became operational in March 2023. On September 12, 2024, Eli Lilly announced a \$1 bn expansion

of its Limerick, Ireland, manufacturing site for increasing production of biologic active ingredients. With this investment, total investment of Eli Lilly in Limerick stood at \$2 bn. To ensure safe, reliable supply of medicines, and right-first-time execution, the company deployed advanced technologies such as Machine Learning (ML), AI and automated robotics and systems on this site. Production of biologic active ingredients for Lilly medicines will start in 2026. Besides this, the company also unveiled its new \$800 mn facility expansion in Kinsale, Ireland which started manufacturing medicine sin 2023 to meet demand for the company’s latest diabetes and obesity treatments. Kinsale site has employed a digital-first process which integrates continuous manufacturing technology. In Kinsale, the company has the ‘single largest privately owned solar farm’ of 26 acres. Eli Lilly employs more than 3,700 employees across three sites and remote roles.

Multiple factors have encouraged pharmaceutical companies to set up their base in Ireland. These attractions include Low Corporation Tax, higher per capita GDP, availability of skilled workforce due to presence of all major pharmaceutical companies in the country, ranking in the Global Innovation Index (GII), to name a few. Low Corporation tax of 12.5 per cent is the key

attraction for companies to set up their operations in Ireland. The decision to introduce the rate of 12.5 per cent was originally announced in 1997 and became effective in 2003. This rate is still applicable for businesses with revenue less than €750 million. In October 2021, the country signed up to the OECD Pillar Agreement which included the agreement of a global minimum effective rate of 15 per cent.

In Global Innovation Index (GII) 2024, Ireland ranked 19th among 133 economies and ranked 11th among the 39 economies in Europe. Among the 51 high-income group economies, the country is ranked 18th.

To conclude, the USA is ranked as the largest economy in the world whereas Ireland is ranked 33rd economy in the world. But the increasing presence of the pharmaceutical companies of the U.S.-origin in Ireland and import of chemicals & related products from Ireland by the USA forming more than 80 per cent share of total imports by the USA from Ireland in CY24, has raised the concerns for the USA.

Dr. Anil Kumar Angrish- Associate Professor (Finance and Accounting), Department of Pharmaceutical Management, NIPER S.A.S. Nagar (Mohali), **DISCLAIMER:** Views are personal and do not represent the views of the Institute.

Overwhelming Response to RBI's Open Market Operation Signals Improved Liquidity Management

This has also been the policy in the past as well, as any large offloading of shares tends to depress share prices. The capacity of the market to absorb shares has to be kept in mind as part of any prudent stake sale, according to market analysts. For the financial year 2025-26, the Centre has set a disinvestment and asset monetisation target of Rs 47,000 crore.

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



India's booming digital ecosystem, with over 95 crore smartphones and rising creator earnings, signals a global storytelling revolution, powered by tech, and an audience hungry for authentic narratives.

In a buzzing Mumbai lane nestled between a sandwich stall and a tailoring shop, Priya was busy recording her latest story. Her voice carried the calm confidence of someone who had found her calling, but it hadn't always been this way. Two years ago, she was a commerce graduate with no clear path, scrolling endlessly through job boards and rejection emails. She wasn't fluent in English, had no elite degree, and certainly didn't have connections. But she had something most don't; an instinct to 'observe and narrate' the unsaid stories around her.

Armed with a second-hand smartphone, a borrowed mic, and unlimited curiosity, Priya began uploading short video stories on Instagram and YouTube - tales of chaiwalas with MBA dreams, grandmothers starting food channels at 65, and Gen Z garage musicians remixing Kabir dohas. Her videos were raw, real, and deeply human. One story about a 78-year-old Uber driver who recited Urdu poetry in traffic went viral in India and across continents. Suddenly, brands came knocking. So did followers, fellow creators, and eventually, funding.

Just days ago, Priya sat in

the audience at the 'WAVES Summit 2025' in Mumbai, this time as a guest creator. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the summit on the grand stage with a rousing speech, stating, "Storytelling is not just entertainment. It is India's ancient strength. With digital tools, our creators are the new rishis, taking our voice to the world." As the crowd erupted in applause, Priya smiled. It felt personal. This was validation for her and millions of creators across India.

The summit was buzzing with energy and insights. In a visionary address, Mukesh Ambani predicted that India's media and entertainment economy would 'triple in the next decade'. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw added, "India has a treasure trove of stories, and the world is now ready to listen." And then came a striking revelation from YouTube CEO Neal Mohan, who shared that creators in India had earned 'thousands of crores over the past three years', with even bigger investments on the horizon.

It wasn't just words; numbers backed it. India now has more than 95 crore smartphone users and is one of the world's most connected

India's Digital Storytelling Surge



nations. From villages in Bihar to metros like Delhi, the internet has become the new studio, and storytelling has become the latest startup.

Priya, now managing a team of five, runs workshops on digital storytelling in government schools and uploads subtitled content in Korean, French, and Spanish. What began as an escape from monotony has turned into a mission. "It's not about going viral anymore," she says. "It's about going 'valuable'." If one story changes how someone sees India, I've done my job.

Points to Ponder: The opportunities are immense as India's voice strengthens in the digital world. But success doesn't come with a filter. Creators must focus on authentic, value-driven content that educates, inspires, or uplifts, not

just entertains. Learning basic skills like editing, scripting, and platform algorithms is essential, but copying Western content formats blindly dilutes originality. The power lies in telling Indian stories with global relatability. For policymakers and platforms, the focus should be on building strong ecosystems in rural and vernacular creator communities, ensuring fair monetization models, and offering emotional wellness support. Brands and investors, on the other hand, need to partner with creators meaningfully, treating them as collaborators, not just ad slots, and investing in long-term formats, not short-term gimmicks.

The author is a senior journalist and columnist, views are personal.

Diljit: 'I am learning English' to Nicole Scherzinger in BTS from MET Gala

MUMBAI: Pussycat Dolls singer Nicole Scherzinger shared a behind-the-scenes moment from the MET Gala 2025 featuring Shakira, Tessa Thompson and Diljit Dosanjh, who said he was "learning English."

Scherzinger took to her Instagram stories, where Shakira could be seen getting her dress fixed and Diljit was on his phone. In the clip, Scherzinger is heard saying: "This is the behind-the-scenes that people don't see. Shakira just said ow because of the needles."

She pans the camera to Tessa and says that "she cannot sit down." Scherzinger then pans the camera to Diljit, who is seen reading on the phone. He then says "I am learning English."

Diljit also shared some pictures from the gala featuring



Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Nick Jonas and Shakira on his Instagram stories section. The Punjabi sensation looked every inch a Maharaja as he made his debut at the MET Gala 2025.

For the world's biggest fashion event, the actor-singer stayed true to his roots, donning a look that beautifully blended Punjabi culture with regal elegance. Diljit wore an outfit designed

by Prabal Gurung. He wore an ivory-hued ensemble, paired with a bejeweled turban, a neckpeice, and a sheathed sword. He completed it with a cape which had Punjabi wordings written on it. The Met Gala is the annual haute couture fundraising festival held for the benefit of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute in Manhattan. The Met Gala is popularly regarded as the world's most prestigious and glamorous fashion event.

The 2025 theme "Superfine: Tailoring Black Style," is inspired by Monica L Miller's book Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity, published in 2009. The fashion gala for the first time has put the spotlight on menswear.

Sonam Kapoor Is In Awe of Diljit Dosanjh's Met Gala Look: You Look So Handsome

MUMBAI: Actor and singer Diljit Dosanjh has been receiving a lot of praise for bringing his Punjabi roots to the International platform through his debut appearance at the Met Gala.

Joining the list of his admirers, actress Sonam Kapoor said that the 'Good Newwz' actor looked absolutely handsome as he walked the Met Gala red carpet. Sharing a picture of Diljit on her Instagram stories, Sonam wrote, "Congratulations my darling @abhilashatd you crushed it. @diljiddosanjh looked so handsome!"



Diljit's outfit for Met was inspired by Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, the erstwhile ruler of Patiala. The singer looked absolutely dashing in a white suit, with a white drape and an embellished turban. He acces-



sorized the outfit with a green and white stone necklace.

Giving a special touch to his ensemble, Diljit added the map of Punjab in the Gurmukhi script embroidered on his drape. Sharing some pictures of

himself on Insta, the 'Jatt & Juliet' actor wrote, "MAIN HOON Punjab #metgala... Inspired by The Theme of Black Dandyism, I Bring My Turban, My Culture & My Mother Tongue "Punjab" to The MET GALA. Thank You So Much..Dear @prabalgurung @theannawintour @cartier @golecha_jewels @abhilashatd."

Stylist Abhilasha Devnani, who is credited with Diljit's Met Gala look, revealed that they wished to pay tribute to Maharaja Bhupinder Singh by making the singer don one of the rare diamond necklaces that once belonged to the Maharaja.

Dharmendra meets his 'lovely co-star' Jaya Prada: 'Extremely happy to see them'



MUMBAI: Veteran actor Dharmendra met his 'lovely co-star' Jaya Prada, who came to see him along with a family friend of hers.

He posted two pictures posing with Jaya Prada on his Instagram handle, and wrote, "Jaya Prada, my lovely co-star came to see me today along with a loving family friend of her. I am extremely happy to see them all."

It must be noted that Dharmendra and Jaya Prada have delivered many blockbuster hits in the past. Starting with "Qayamat" in 1983, these two went on to work together in movies like "Insaaf Kaun Karega" in 1984, "Dharm Aur Qanoon" in 1984, "Ganga Tere Desh Mein" in 1988, "Mardon Wali Baat" in 1988, "Elaan-E-Jung" in 1989, "Shehzaade" in 1989, "Kanoon Ki Zanjeer" in 1990, "Farishtay" in 1991, "Kundan" in 1993, "Veer" in 1995, "Paapni Devataa" in 1995, "Maidan-E-Jung" in 1995, "Nyaydaata" in 1999, and "Loh Purush" in 1999.

On another note, Dharmendra and Hema Malini completed 45 years of marital bliss on May 2.

Wishing her parents on their special day, their actress daughter Esha Deol shared two pictures on her IG account. The first image showed Dharmendra and Hema from their younger days. This was followed by a family photograph featuring Dharmendra, Hema, Esha, and her sister Ahana.

"Happy anniversary mamma &&papa. You are my world. Love you @aapkad-haram @dreamgirlhemamalini #weddingday," Esha captioned the post.



Army personnel inspecting the missile shell that landed, a missile type explosive was found in the fields of Village Makhiwind, about 25 km from Amritsar on Thursday, May 8, 2025.

emoji) ... love you (infinity emojis)." Replying to this, Kapoor said, "Love you (red heart emojis)."

For the unversed, Sonam and Anand first met through a casual setup arranged by Sonam's friends. At the time, the actress was busy with the promotions of Prem Ratan Dhan Payo (2015) and wasn't in the mood to go out. However, her friends convinced her to visit a bar at the Taj, where she reluctantly agreed to go.

When she arrived, she realized that her friends had invited a few people she wasn't particularly interested in meeting, leaving her even more annoyed. It was then that Sonam noticed Anand and his friend. Little did Sonam know, this seemingly casual encounter would mark the start of their beautiful journey together.



journey, accompanied by a heartfelt message. Sonam had written, "To the love of my life. My everything , Happy Anniversary. Your unconditional love and support is my anchor and safe place. Getting married to you was the best decision of my life. We live in heaven. I love you more than I can express. #everydayphenomenal."

Anand commented on the actress' sweet post, "Sona ! This photo selection is not my most favorable! (teary-eyed laughter

Kareena Kapoor Khan is 'Grateful' to The Efforts of India's Armed Forces

MUMBAI: Bollywood actress Kareena Kapoor Khan expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the Indian armed forces, stating that she salutes their bravery and commitment to national security.

A day after the Indian Air Force targeted the terrorists' sites without crossing the Pakistan airspace, Kareena posted a picture of Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri alongside Indian Army Colonel Sofiya Qureshi and Indian Air Force Wing Commander Vyomika Singh.

She wrote: "Grateful to the efforts of our armed forces. I salute their bravery and commitments to national security. Let's stand united against terrorism. Jai Hind."

The Indian Air Force on Wednesday targeted the terrorists' sites without crossing the Pakistan airspace. The Pakistan armed forces were taken by complete surprise when the Indian strikes started around 1.44 a.m.

The terrorists' sites targeted by Indian strikes include Muridke near Lahore, Bahawalpur, Kotli and Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

The terrorist infrastructure was targeted from where the attacks against India have been planned and directed.



The Press Information Bureau (PIB) posted a press release saying nine sites have been targeted altogether during 'Operation Sindoor' by the Indian Armed Forces.

The 'Operation Sindoor', came 14 days after the terrorist attack in the tourist resort of Baisaran in Pahalgam, in which suspects are believed to have links with Pakistan. Muridke and Bhawalpur have Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) headquarters, and its chief commander, Masood Azhar, used to hide there along with top commanders of the outfit. Reports said multiple loud

explosions were heard in Muzaffarabad City in PoJK where a number of terrorist organisations have set up their training camps and launch pads. Muzaffarabad's power was blacked out after the explosions. Besides Muzaffarabad, Kotli also has terror infrastructure, including training camps and launch pads. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Wednesday said the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack was a calculated attempt to disrupt the return of normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir and to create an environment conducive to sustained cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan.

'Bhool Chuk Maaf' to now release digitally on May 16, makers say 'spirit of the nation comes first'



MUMBAI: The makers of "Bhool Chuk Maaf", which was initially slated to hit the screens on May 9, announced on Thursday that the film will now release digitally on Prime Video on May 16, in "light of recent events and the heightened security drills across the nation."

The news of the film's postponement, starring Rajkumar Rao and Wamiqa Gabbi came a day after the Indian Air Force targeted the terrorists' sites without crossing the Pakistan airspace.

Maddock Films on Thursday took to Instagram to make the announcement.

"In light of recent events and the heightened security drills across the nation, we at Maddock Films and Amazon MGM Studios have decided to bring our family entertainer, Bhool Chuk Maaf, directly to your homes on May 16-only on Prime Video, worldwide. While we were eagerly looking forward to celebrating this film with you in theaters, the spirit of the nation comes first. JAI HIND," the note read.

The caption read: "The spirit of the nation comes first! Watch Bhool Chuk Maaf directly on @prime-videoon, May 16 #BhoolChukMaafOnPrime."

The film is produced by Dinesh Vijan under the Maddock Films banner, with music by Tanishk Bagchi, lyrics by Irshad Kamil, and vocals by Tanishk Bagchi and Madhubanti Bagchi.

Talking about "Bhool Chuk Maaf", directed by Karan Sharma, the film revolves around Ranjan, a small-town romantic boy from Banaras, who lands a government job to marry Titli but forgets his vow to Lord Shiva-only to be trapped until he fulfills his promise. A hilarious tale of love, fate, and redemption unfolds.

Director Karan Sharma started his journey from Delhi and stepped into Mumbai in 2005. His short film christened Black Holi is internationally acclaimed as a best narrative short film.

The terrorists' sites targeted by Indian strikes during Operation Sindoor include Muridke near Lahore, Bahawalpur, Kotli and Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

The terrorist infrastructure was targeted from where the attacks against India have been planned and directed. The Press Information Bureau (PIB) posted a press release saying nine sites have been targeted altogether during 'Operation Sindoor' by the Indian Armed Forces. Muridke and Bhawalpur have Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) headquarters, and its chief commander, Masood Azhar, used to hide there along with top commanders of the outfit.



MET Gala 2025 featuring Shakira with Diljit Dosanjh