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CORPORATES & INDUSTRY

REGION



CHANDIGARH ADMINISTRATION ISSUES AIR WARNING ALERT, SOUNDS SIRENS



NITIN GADKARI CLLS FOR BIOFUEL REVOLUTION TO CUT IMPORTS, BOOST RURAL ECONOMY



DILJIT: 'I AM LEARNING ENGLISH' TO NICOLE SCHERZINGER IN BTS FROM MET GALA

serious injuries. Gurmeet

Singh and Rajvansh Singh

were admitted to a private

hospital in Amritsar, where they are currently receiving

Secretary Partap Singh

stated that the SGPC con-

siders it a duty to stand with

humanity in times of distress

and is completely fulfilling its

responsibility even under the

current circumstances. He

added that special arrange-

ments for shelter and meals

have been made at nearby

Gurdwaras for people dis-

placed from border areas. Ad-

ditionally, sacred saroops of Sri

Guru Granth Sahib are also

being safely relocated from

evacuated village Gurdwaras.

pealed to residents of border

areas to contact their near-

est historic Gurdwaras under

Secretary Partap Singh ap-

medical care.

Punjab Cabinet decides to deploy nine SGPC Officials Visit Injured anti-drone systems along Pak border Sikhs from Poonch Attack

CHANDIGARH: The Punjab Cabinet, presided over by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, on Friday decided to deploy nine anti-drone systems along the Pakistan border.

"We are ready to foil Pakistan's conspiracy as monitoring will be done through a high-tech system, " a statement issued by the Punjab government said.

It said the government's action "is a big step to break the back of terrorism". It said the government is in an action mode as the drug trade that funds terrorism will be ended.

The government will be deploying the anti-drone system for the first time to stop drug smuggling through drones, the statement read.

"Also, the border security will now be more robust, " it said, adding that the AAP government "shows political will".



tims and terror victims under on high alert. Ministers Lal the 'Farishte Yojana' to get free treatment.

ened tension, the AAP govshares a 532-km border with ministers in all six sensitive

dent from British rule.

\$3.88 trillion, which is more

stan's economy at a mere \$0.37

fourt

runpreet Sondh will look after arrangements in Fazilka. Amid heightened tension, Punjab has ordered the closure of all educational institutes and cancelled exams. The state government has

set up a control room for people's convenience. It can be reached at landline phone numbers 0172-2741803 and 0172-2749901.

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 leaves of all Punjab Police personnel were also can-



H

Jagmohan Singh Amritsa

SGPC officials visited the Sikhs who were injured in the recent attack in Poonch, met them in the hospital, and assured all possible assistance on behalf of the Sikh body. SGPC Secretary Partap

Singh and Darbar Sahib Manager Rajinder Singh Ruby expressed their sympathy after meeting Gurmeet Singh and

his son Rajvansh Singh, who are undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Amritsar.

Providing details, SGPC Secretary Partap Singh explained that amid the tense situation in the country, the victims were traveling from Poonch to Jammu when their vehicle convoy was attacked. As a result, one Sikh lost his life while Gurmeet Singh, his son Rajvansh Singh, and other family members sustained New Low Even for Pak: India hits out at Islamabad for Targetting **Religious Places**



NEWDELHI: As Pakistani troops continued resorting to heavy mortar shelling on the Indian side along the Line of Control (LoC), India on Friday slammed the rogue nation for specifically targetting religious places labelling it as a "new ow even for Pakistan".

"We have seen the Pakistani side targetting and shelling places of worship with a particular design, including gurdwaras, churches and temples. This is a new low even for Pakistan," Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said during a special media briefing on Operation Sindoor in New Delhi.

Misri not only highlighted Pakistani Army's attack on a Gurdwara in Poonch - which resulted in the death of some local members of the Sikh community, including the Ragi of the Gurdwara - but also the shelling on Christian schools, exposing Pakistan's false claims of not targetting any religious places. "We do have some information about this extremely regrettable and condemnable incident. During heavy shelling across the Line of Control in the early morning of 7th May, a shell fired from Pakistan landed just behind the Christ School run by the Carmelites of the Mary Immaculate Congregation in Poonch. Tragically, the shell fired from Pakistan hit the home of two students of the Christ School. Both students unfortunately lost their lives, and their parents were severely

injured," he said. Another Pakistani shell struck a Christian Convent of Nuns belonging to the Congregation c

mel, damaging water tanks and

destroying solar panel infra

Prayer for Peace in India Heading to Become 3rd Largest South Asia at Takht Economy, Pak on Brink of Collapse Sri Kesgarh Sahib



TANVIR KAUR Sri Anandpur Sahib

In view of the prevailing tense atmosphere in the South Asian region, a special Ardas (Sikh prayer) was offered on May 9 for peace and harmony, at the sacred Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib, Sri Anandpur Sahib, the holy place of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru (master)

trillion. Jathedar Giani Kuldeep ingl ne worl ing Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib and Jathedar of Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib, himself offered the Ardas before the Sri Guru Granth Sahib and Guru Gobind Singh for peace to prevail in South Asia and for the growing threats of war to be averted. The Ardas implored Guru Sahib to shower grace upon humanity and all living beings across the world, ensuring their protection and wellbeing. It emphasized the hope that mutual love, unity, and peace flourish in the South Asian region. Before the Ardas, recitation of Gurbani was held in front of Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib. Participating in the gathering were SGPC Executive Committee member Dr. Daliit Singh Bhinder, Head Granthi of Takht Kesgarh Sahib Giani Joginder Singh, Panj Piaras, Manager Malkit Singh, Additional Manager Hardev Singh, along with the entire staff and many members of the Sangat (congregation).

border districts -- Ferozpur, In another major decision, Gurdaspur and Tarn Taran -the Cabinet included war vic- that have already been placed



Singh Khudian, will reach Ferozepur, and Baljit Kaur and Ta-

ter independence, grew at the same pace as India's, backed by US aid and donations from the oil-rich Islamic nations.

However, while democratic India kept its focus on economic development and lifting its masses out of poverty, Pakistan has been rocked by bloody coups and military dictatorships, with the army Generals still calling the shots and fuelling hostility against its more prosperous neighbour. The training and financing of terrorism by Pakistan forms a

key element of this plot. Pakistan now faces an economic freefall - crippled by political chaos and the long-term cost of harbouring terrorism which has boomeranged at the country as well leading to

bloody violence in Balochistan and the North West Frontier Province.

Pakistan is confronted by a precarious situation on the economic front. The country was on the brink of sovereign default in 2023 and had to be bailed out by a \$3 billion IMF loan. The country is still critically dependent on this financial lifeline and is desperately trying to raise another \$1.3 billion climate resilience loan. Meanwhile, global ratings agency Moody's on Monday

said it sees India's macroeconomic conditions as remaining stable even if tensions with Pakistan rise after the horrific terror attack at Pahalgam in which 26 tourists were shot

PM Modi takes Stock of 'Operation Sindoor' in huddle with Doval, 3 Service Chiefs



NEWDELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Fridav met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, NSA Ajit Doval, infiltration and test India's CDS General Anil Chauhan and the three service chiefs in the backdrop of the ongoing 'Operation Sindoor'.

from discussing th

cluded former Air Force

Chiefs, Army Chiefs, and

Navy Chiefs, sources said.

Earlier, the Indian Armed

Forces briefed media per-

sons about the violation

of airspace by Pakistan on

SGPC management, if they require assistance.



intrusion was to attempt air defence system and collect intelligence," said Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, during a special press briefing by rv of Exter



economy in 2025, with the country's nominal GDP rising neighbours have been pursuing since they became indepento \$4.187 billion during the year to surpass Japan, according to the IMF's World Eco-India has emerged as the world's fastest-growing nomic Outlook report. India economy, with World Bank has a massive forex kitty of figures for 2024 showing that \$688 billion. the country's GDP is close to

Pakistan is on the verge of economic collapse and is than 10 times the size of Paki- surviving on IMF loans, with its forex reserves down to \$15 billion.

India is poised to become Interestingly, Pakistan's

India-Pakistan Conflict: Nadda Reviews **Emergency Health Systems Preparedness**



"All medical emergency re-**NEW DELHI:** In the wake of rising conflict between India sponse health systems must be and Pakistan, Union Health adequately equipped and func-Minister J P Nadda on Friday tional at all times," the Union chaired a high-level meeting Health Minister said. stating that the Health Ministry is to review emergency health systems preparedness to enclosely monitoring the situation. sure uninterrupted healthcare "Ensure that ground-level services

Nadda called for a "a 24×7 control and command centre to monitor ongoing efforts and support states in the present

During the meeting, senior officers of the Health Ministry updated Nadda about the current status of medical preparedness for handling emergency cases

The Union Minister was also apprised of the actions taken regarding deployment of ambulances; ensuring adequate availability of medical supplies including equipment, medicines, supply of blood vials and consumables; hospital readiness in terms of beds, ICU and HDU; deployment of BHISHM Cubes, advanced mobile trauma care units, etc," the Health Ministry said

linkages with all state govern-Further, the Ministry has advised hospitals and medical ments particularly at the district levels, especially border states, institutions "to ensure availability of essential drugs, adequate be effectively established to ensure immediate emergency supply of blood, oxygen, trauma healthcare, if required," he said. care kits, etc".

Control room established by **Punjab Government**



CHANDIGARH: In view of the current situation in the country, a control room has been set up by the Punjab Government.

forceful response given by According to the information given by the official the Indian side. spokesperson, for the convenience of people, the Finance said Pakistan's army fired around 300-400 drones Commissioner Revenue Disaster Management Control on the intervening nights Room has unveiled the landof May 8 and May 9 at about line phone numbers 0172-36 locations along the West-2741803 and 0172-2749901. ern border. The drones are In case of any emergency, the apparently Turkey-made. above numbers can be con-However, evidence to this tacted. effect is awaited.

future course, PM Modi is nal Affairs (MEA) on 'Operabelieved to have discussed tion Sindoor'. On Thursday night, Pakithe continuous violation of

stan targeted multiple cities, the ceasefire by Pakistan in the sectors along the Line including military installations, with a volley of drones of Control and the border. The PM's engagement and missile attacks, however, with military commanders all were repulsed by India's and strategists also involved robust air defence system, an extensive interaction with and this left the Pakistani Army flustered and panicky. veterans. Those who took part in the discussions in-

The women officers of the Indian Armed Forces informed that the forensic investigation of the wreckage of the drones is being done; however, "initial reports suggest that they are Turkish Asisguard Songar drones".

Thursday night and the Colonel Sofiya Qureshi said: "On the night of May 7 and 8, the Pakistani army Colonel Sofiya Qureshi violated Indian airspace several times over the entire western border with the intention of targeting military infrastructure. It also fired heavy-calibre weapons along the Line of Control. However, all their attempts were neutralised by us via kinetic and non-kinetic means."

structure. Several priests, nuns, school staff and local residents took refuge in an underground hall beneath the school during the shelling by Pakistan. The school was fortunately closed at that time otherwise more losses would have occurred, the Foreign Secretary detailed. The Indian Army on Thurs day strongly condemned the killing of innocent civilians in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, vowing that such attacks will be met with resolute

and punitive action. Pakistan's 'provocative and escalatory actions" continued on Thursday night as it targetted Indian cities and civilian infrastructure in addition to the military targets The official and blatantly farcical denial of these attacks carried out by Pakistan, made by the Pakistani state machinery, is yet another example of their duplicity and the new depths they are sinking to in their quest for disinformation," Misri mentioned on Friday.

US says its message to India and Pak is to de-escalate and talk All citizens are requested to

WASHINGTON: The US on the centre of this, in speaking Thursday said its message to India and Pakistan amid the current tensions following the Pahalgam terrorist attack has been two fold: de-escalate and keep talking.

Referring to the US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's calls to India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif earlier in the day, State Department Spokesperson Tammy Bruce said at the daily briefing that US has been focussed on "two things". "That it should not escalate, and communication was fundamentally key, that there should be talks, that there should not be silence, and that America, obviously was at

with a variety of leaders of both countries over the last two days, " Bruce said. She also said: "The message from the Secretary, and, I think, from the US as a whole in general, is that the violence should stop that military action, war, as we've seen in that region, certainly in the Middle East, has clearly, for generation, proven that it is not a solution, because it never ends. There has to be a change in that regard. So obviously, when it comes to solving a problem, this administration has made itself clear that war, the military, more violence is

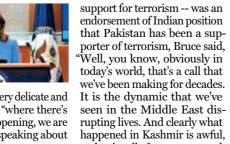
solution. Asked if Secretary Rubio has offered to mediate, Bruce said

not a solution. Diplomacy is a



the situation is "very delicate and dangerous" and "where there's negotiations happening, we are not going to be speaking about the details". She went on to say that "it's important to not put details in the middle of the media, the worldwide media, when the work is being done privately between leaders, and we need to really try to keep it that way". When asked if a statement in the readout of Secretary Rubio's call with Prime Minister Sharif

-- that called Pakistan to end any



today's world, that's a call that we've been making for decades. It is the dynamic that we've seen in the Middle East disrupting lives. And clearly what happened in Kashmir is awful, and we've all of course, we send our condolences. The world has rejected the nature of that kind of violence overall, of course, and certainly the President has and continues to but at this moment in time, there is, like one thing that has to stop, which is a back and forth and a continuation of this. And that is what we're focused on right now.'

"The Secretary expressed sorrow for the reported loss of civilian lives in the current conflict. He reiterated his calls for Paki- JAGMOHAN SINGH stan to take concrete steps to end any support for terrorist groups, Bruce had said earlier in a statement on Rubio's call with Sharif. The US has not hesitated to call out Pakistan on its support for terrorism. "The US has foolishly given Pakistan more than \$33 billion in aid over the last 15 years, and they have given us nothing but lies & amp; deceit, thinking of our leaders as fools, President Donald Trump had written in a post on X, in his first term in 2018, "They give safe haven to the terrorists we hunt in Afghanistan, with little help. No more!'

stay indoors- Administration Amritsar

The district administration on May 09 issued an advisory to all local inhabitants to remain inside their houses.

In a written statement issued by district administration through DPRO Amritsar stated, "All citizens are requested to stay indoors and away from the windows and keep lights turned off and window curtains drawn. There is no need to panic, a siren will blow now and we will pass the message again once it is clear. Please don't



worry, our armed forces are on the job and we need to support them by staying indoors. There is no need to

panic. Just stay indoors". At the same time the Administration said that there is no need to remain panicked.

REGION

ing up due to political thirst

itself. This government could

neither save water, nor trust,

nor constitutional dignity.

The people of Haryana will

soon give an answer to the

government which silently

bowed down before Punjab.

the strategy; gave instructions

MPs will march to Delhi to

provide water to Haryana.

Information reveals, former

Chief Minister Bhupendra

Singh Hooda and his MP son

Deepender Hooda have made

a strategy to instill enthusiasm

in Congress workers. Congress

MPs will march to Delhi and

put pressure on the central

government to get Haryana

its share of water. Deepender

Hooda will lead this move-

ment and also organize a

'Save Constitution' program

in which all the MLAs are

participating. Former Haryana Chief

Minister Bhupendra Singh

Hooda and MP Deepender

Hooda have intensified ef-

forts to instil enthusiasm

among party leaders and

workers who are disappointed

with the results of the assem-

bly elections. During a dinner

organised in Chandigarh on

Saturday night, Hooda and

Deepender met all the MLAs

and MPs of their party and

instructed them to enter the

field with renewed vigour. It

was decided that all Congress

MPs will gather in New Delhi

to protest against the Punjab

government refusing to give

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 further notice due to unforeseen timeline of 7.39 p.m., while the circumstances. The revised schedule for the drone attack began later. The

same was backed by the Deputy examinations will be announced Commissioner of Jalandhar. at least five days prior to the Amid heightened tension, new date of commencement, Punjab, which shares a 532it added. The state government km border with Pakistan, has set up a control room for the has ordered the closure of all convenience of people. It can educational institutes and be reached at landline phone numbers 0172-2741803 and cancelled exams. I.K. Gujral Punjab Technical University 0172-2749901. in Jalandhar on Friday said

Punjab Education Minister that with the approval of the Harjot Singh Bains said in view competent authority, the end of the evolving situation, "it is semester examinations being hereby ordered that all schools, held have been postponed until 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 politics on water is now dry-



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?

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 Haryana its share of water. It limited to speeches only,' is likely that on May 6, MPs Former minister and Ambala Deepender Singh Hooda, Jaiprakash JP, Varun Mulana city MLA Chaudhary Nirmal Singh took the BJP to task and Satpal Brahmachari may and said, the government meet the central government which is wasting Haryana's in this regard. A dharna can water at the feet of Punjab is also be organized at some now shedding crocodile tears place in New Delhi itself, so for Haryana's rights. Every that pressure can be created promise of BJP is limited to on the Central and Haryana

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

Deepender Hooda prepared 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 Gen-eral 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 he 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



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 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 Harvana 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



GULSHAN KUMAR Chandigarh

Lance Naik Dinesh Kumar Sharma, a valiant soldier from village Nagla Mohammadpur 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 Vinul Gov Minister the government 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 laving 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 loca-

tions 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



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 lights in the sky after 1.15 say that from where all that

explosions besides flashing found, yet it is difficult to 11, 2025 due to the prevailing situation

Taking the government to

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Amritsar has announced that all educational institutions in the district would remain shut till Mav

Two held by Amritsar Corrupt ministers, MLAs, officials are on the radar: Haryana CM Naib Saini grievances immediately in Rural Police for Sharing SATISH HANDA

Ministers, MLAs and officers in Harvana 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

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

is agency also l

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 CM Window, Family Ideneens an eve

Intelligence with Pak

governments to put pressure speeches only, there is nothing on the ground." He said saron Punjab to give Haryana castically, "The BJP which did its share of water.



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 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. Harvana

CM Saini has a suspicious eye hired an agency for this work on those ministers, MLAs and officers of his government state for the last several days who are either themselves reporting directly to Chief the system of resolving public



involved in corruption or are encouraging corruption through family members . The investigation of the work of identifying such officers, ministers and MLAs agency reporting directly to 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 Harvana state. Sources reveal, the Chief Minister has and has been working in the

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

tity 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



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 so far, which are also a part of station Ajnala, were in contact the BJP's election manifesto. 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.

village originally hailing from

Himachal Pradesh, who has

been arrested. The police con-

fiscated spirit, liquor labeled

under various brands, empty

bottles, packaging, and sealing

manufacturing unit was op-

erating 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.

Haryana govt approves the new excise policy for 2025-27 Fake liquor factory supplying liquor in Haryana-Punjab busted in Ambala district: 6 arrested SATISH HANDA the financial year 2024-25, the the new policy, if liquor shops or

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 not be directly visible from the Rs 14 thousand 64 crore for national and state highways and the financial year 2025–26. will not have direct connection According to information, in

of Rs 12,650 crore. In such a 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

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

Excise and Taxation Departtheir advertisements are found ment earned a revenue of Rs visible at a near distance from 12,700 crore against the target the national and state highways, then along with imposing a fine situation, the rates of liquor are 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 continue to operate as before. 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 Gurugram 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 with the highway. According to meter area

SATISH HANDA

Ambala Police got a big success in busting an illegal factory 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.

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 machines. The illegal liquor 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

Acting on a tip-off received late Wednesday night, a police team led by Shahzadpur police Station House Officer Jitender Dhillon raided a rented prop-erty 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.

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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

Haryana police in Ambala

only targeted terrorist camps from where attacks against

India have been planned and

The Army further clarified

that the operation was non-

escalatory in intent and ex-

ecution, aiming strictly at dis-

mantling terror infrastructure

while sparing civilian, military,

and economic structures in

"Justice is served. Jai Hind,"

Indian intelligence agencies

had earlier traced the Pahal-

gam attack to Pakistan-based

groups, with The Resistance

Front -- a Lashkar-e-Taiba

proxy -- claiming responsi-

In response, India had

vowed a decisive countermea-

sure, combining diplomatic

pressure with military pre-

Operation Sindoor marks

one of the most significant

cross-border actions taken by

India since the Balakot air-

the spokesperson added.

executed.'

Pakistan

bility.

paredness.

strikes in 2019

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 26/11co-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 ings, the Special Judge was court extended Rana's NIA informed by the NIA about custody by 12 more days to the alleged evasive technique allow investigators to question adopted by Rana during queshim. Special Judge Charan Jit tioning. The court had earlier Singh accepted Senior Advodirected the NIA to conduct a medical test of Rana every 24 cate Davan Krishnan's plea that the investigating agency hours and allow him to speak needed more time to uncover to his lawyers every second Rana's role in the Mumbai day. During his NIA remand, attack of 2008. Rana was also questioned by Rana was presented in court Mumbai Police officers. Dur-

for an extension of his NIA custody after his 18-day remand ended on April 28. During the court proceedchildhood friend and coaccused 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 recce missions across India, including in Mumbai, on behalf of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

He also claimed that his

attack

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 Mediing the interrogation, Rana cal Corps, was extradited to claimed that he had "no con-India from the US recently nection whatsoever" with the to stand trial in the Mumbai planning or execution of the

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

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 "inhouse" enquiry panel formed against the backdrop of the cash discovery allegations against the then Delhi High Court judge, Justice Yashwant Verma.

"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

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

the Allahabad HC, amid an in-

house probe, was cleared by the

Union government.

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.



privation and and ready. In light of recent Inworking 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

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



NEW DELHI: India's homegrown 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 **DEHRADUN**: Six tourists were killed on the spot and one inon a larger scale along forward areas. Both the Indian Army and jured as a helicopter, in which the Indian Air Ford

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 se-

nior leaders of the party. Briefing reporters after the meeting, Cong President



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 Kharge said the Congress is 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

against terrorism of all forms emanating from Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir. He said Congress has given

complete and full support to our soldiers to defend the country and preserve and safeguard its unity, integrity, and freedom. He made it categorically clear that "there are no differences on the issue, and we are united and together on this." Speaking on the occasion, Rahul Gandhi said, "Our full support to our forces, and our best wishes to them and much love to them." He said the CWC has reiterated complete support to the defence forces. Replying to a question about the invitation for the

All-Party Meeting, Gandhi said, "We have been invited... we got a call today."

Six Killed, 1 Injured as Helicopter Jamaat-e-Islami Hind **President Syed Sadatullah** Crashes Near Uttarakhand's Gangnani Husaini Voices Concern **Over Developments Post-**

Pahalgam

Desnite the

Rajasthan Border with Pakistan Sealed; Armed Forces on High Alert JAIPUR: After India's Op-

eration Sindoor, the 1,037 km-long border that Rajasthan shares with Pakistan has been sealed, and the security significantly tightened. The Border Security Force (BSF) and Indian Air Force (IAF) are on maximum alert, conducting round-the-clock surveillance and combat patrols amid escalating regional tensions.

All Western Sector airbases, including Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Nal, Phalodi, and Uttarlai, are on high alert. Fighter jets, including Sukhoi Su-30 MKIs armed with advanced weaponry, are patrolling the skies from Sri Ganganagar to the

Rann of Kutch. On the ground, the BSF has intensified patrolling near the zero line. Additional troops have been deployed to sensitive sectors to ensure a swift response to any suspicious movement. Soldiers have been granted the authority to engage immediately, even at the slightest provocation.

Anti-drone systems have been activated and are operating 24/7 to prevent any aerial intrusion from across the border.

major Western Sector bases. On Wednesday morning,

the roar of jets filled the skies, with multiple aircraft launching and landing throughout the day. These operations are part of a NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) issued for intensive aerial exercises over a 48-hour period. Air defence missile systems have been activated

in major Indian cities. In the event of an enemy aircraft entering Indian airspace, these systems are primed to intercept and neutralise aerial threats instantly. The Indian Army is also on full operational alert, with all border formations mobilised

> dian airstrikes on terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), the Bikaner district administration has taken emergency fuel management measures. According to an official order issued by District Magistrate and Colle both countries



rently 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.

v were trave 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 onboard 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



which the rescue operation was launched. The cause of the accident is vet 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 a 200-250 metre gorge, after

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.

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

along the Rajasthan border have not yet been evacuated. However, BSF Rajasthan Frontier Inspector General M.L. Garg has confirmed that

emergency evacuation plans are in place. Additional personnel have been withdrawn from barracks and are stationed strategically as part of preparedness protocols. In response to current threats, fighter aircraft have been conducting frequent sorties from

military presence, villages tor Namrata Vrishni, all petrol pumps in Bikaner are required to reserve 2,000 litres of petrol and 5,000 litres of diesel. This fuel stock will be prioritised for emergency response vehicles and essential services to ensure uninterrupted operations during a crisis. Further, there has been a significant mobilisation of Pakistani Army personnel in villages adjacent to the Rajasthan border, including regions from Khajuwala to Sri Ganganagar.

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.

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

Fund was cut short recently by

Addressing a press confer-

ence 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 cop-

ies of the book for a whopping

sum of Rs 7.25 crore. She said

Subramanian was removed

from his post at the IMF six

the government.



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 a cost of Rs 7.25 crore.

by K.V. Subramanian, a former Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India, whose tenure as the Executive Director

The senior Congress leader pointed out that Subramanian was the same person who repeatedly praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his policies, while shamelessly maligning previous governments. He appeared to be more interested in becoming a cheerleader for the government than serving as an Economic Adviser, she remarked.

Pointing out that it was a conflict of interest, she asked whether Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman knew about it, since Union Bank of India is a PSU bank under the control of the finance ministry.

Shrinate asked whether Union Bank of India had taken approval from its Board of Directors for such a massive purchase involving such a large amount of money. She said the regional and zonal offices which were assigned the task of promoting the sale of books were asked to show the expenses under the 'miscellaneous' category.

She pointed out that it was depositors' money and had not come from the BJP headquarters. She asserted that the Bank should not have done it.

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

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 ef-

fectively curbed.

of two lakh copies of a book "India @100: Envisioning Tomorrow's Economic Powerhouse" by the Union Bank of India, at

The book has been written 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 at the International Monetary he was removed.

Manufacturing push powers GST growth

he 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.

ABHIJIT SINGH ON WHY AN INCREASINGLY MILITARISED ARCTIC DEMANDS NEW THINKING

Arctic Policy Needs Revisiting

s 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 manoeuvering. 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 rap-

idly 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

EDITORIAL

COPINION

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

ndia'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 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.



investment (FDI) and global cooperation sharp downward trend. on trad

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

traction only since 2013, when 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 so strengthened e sector's 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.

LETTERBOX

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> Butterflies rest when it rains because it damages their wings. It's okay to rest during the storms of life. You will fly again when it's over.



THE FINANCIAL WORLD

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(*RESPONSIBLE FOR SELECTION OF NEWS UNDER THE PRB ACT)

Today, India prioritises foreign direct

BOOKS: REVIEW

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

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

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

New book explores grief, memory, and womanhood

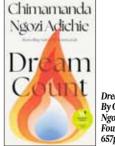
Adichie's Dream Count is not a novel with a conventional plot, nor does it attempt to be. Rather, it is a collection of interwoven voices, anchored by four women-Chiamaka (Chia), Zikora, Kadiatou and Omelogor-who carry the novel's emotional weight across a backdrop of im-migration, middle age, class, 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 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-

himamanda Ngozi and self-aware, reflecting on 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



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

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 collectivepersonal 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 progressive 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.

CORPORATE **GINDUSTRY**

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 Bioenergy 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,

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 delaved



through sustainable bioen-

tioned. The minister praised

Brazil for its success with avia-

India too has begun imple-

menting similar fuel alterna-

MUMBAI: The National Stock

Exchange (NSE) on Thurs-

day publicly denied media

Public Offering (IPO).

tives at its airports.

which he believes is achievable nomically viable technologies.

Addressing the issue of ergy initiatives," Gadkari menstubble burning in north India, Gadkari said it should not be seen as a problem but as an opportunity. "Rice straw tion biofuel and noted that from Punjab and Haryana can be converted into bio-CNG. ethanol, bio-bitumen, and even aviation fuel," he said.

'Sustainable aviation fuel is He pointed to Indian Oil's a huge market for the future," he said, emphasising the need Manpur project as a successfor quality research and ecoful 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.

NSE denies reports of Seeking Govt Intervention in IPO Deadlock required to proceed with the listing. According to the report, quests 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.

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 hy-

dropower in Bhutan". "Grateful to my friend Gautam Adani," Prime Minister Fobgay remarked. The partnership is strongly backed by both the Bhutan and Indian govern-

UK investors. This will further

strengthen India's position as a

preferred investment destina-

tion in the Indo-Pacific region,

The UK India Business Coun-

tment, promote sustain-

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

or 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

renewable energy player,

ing, 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 pre-

taking this partnership for-

ward with Adani and learn-

ing 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, mark-

ing significant progress in their

collaborative efforts to advance

Bhutan's hydropower sector.

leading infrastructure and

brings extensive expertise in

project development, financ-

The Adani Group, India's

mier 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 Rinzin. "We look forward to 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 @Petroleum-Min, 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 AIenabled platforms through the Rs 10,000-crore Fund of Funds eme. With more than 1.59

Captains of Trade and Industry Hail Landmark India-UK Free Trade Pact HPCL clocks 18 pc jump in Q4 net profit at Rs 3,355 crore, declares Rs 10.50 dividend market.

he added.

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 endlvenv



egorically refuted claims that it had reached out to the govquesting help in resolving regulatory hurdles holding up its ernment for assistance. "The story is denied by NSE," the long-awaited IPO. The report exchange stated in its clarificaalleged that the letter followed tion, adding that there has been the rejection of NSE's latest application to SEBI in March for a "no correspondence with the Government of India in the last 'No Objection Certificate' (NOC)

target of \$100 billion by 2030,

Federation of Indian Export

Organisations (FIEO) President

S.C. Ralhan said: "The India–

iminates or signifi

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 re-



(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.

cil (UKIBC) said the landmark The government-owned oil refining and marketing major's trade deal, when signed, will represent a major step forward total income during the fourth in strengthening the economic guarter came in at Rs 1.19 lakh and strategic partnership becrore. HPCL also announced a final dividend of Rs 10.50 per The agreement promises to equity share for the financial 31 2025 T ie record date to determine the eligibility of the shareholders set to receive the across industries, including payment has been set at Auplan for 2025 and beyond. The of the refinery.



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 reduce barriers to trade and year which ended on March meet growing local fuel demand.

HPCL recently expanded the

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.

Guided by the 2030 Road- cantly reduces tariffs on a wide map, the timely agreement will range of Indian goods, giving help advance a comprehensive our exporters preferential access strategic partnership between to one of the world's most afflu-India and the UK, steering bilat- ent and consumption-driven Agriculture & Processed Foods eral trade towards the ambitious markets. Key sectors poised to will get better access to the UK

Puri said.

gain through increased access to high-end UK retail markets. Besides, Gems & Jewellery Pharmaceuticals as well as

desh and Vietnam."

benefit include: Textiles & Ap-

parel as removal of tariffs will

enhance India's competitiveness

against countries like Bangla-

ability and innovation, and encourage closer cooperation technology, manufacturing, services, education, and healthcare.

tween the UK and India.

capacity of the Vizag refinery to 300, 000 barrels per day and is looking for a further increase. gust 14. HPCL has drawn up The company now has plans for a Rs 1.3 lakh crore investment another 20 per cent expansion

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.

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



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. recipro-U.S. manufacturing. Trump also blamed U.S. leadership for allowing U.S. pharmaceutical companies and others to move to Ireland.'

pharmaceutical exports from 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 grasps.' This was also relevant in the background that Chemicals & related products formed almost 75 per cent of Ireland in the Calendar Year (CY) 2023 (January - Decemby 5 per cent to touch 80.31 per cent in CY24. Export of Pharmaceuticals from Ireland up from €1.9 bn in February 2024 thereby reflecting 452 per cent growth YoY basis.

12, 2025,the US cal tariffs would help rebuild inent IT companies of the

Because of quantum of name a few. Ireland, Donald Trump, the ing nation in pharmaceuti-Total Imports by the USA from of pharma products rose by ber). This percentage went up cal products worth \$30.38 Bn

DR. ANIL KUMAR in the European Union (EU) in terms of per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of n March €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 km^2). Even with respect to India, Ireland is just 2.13 per cent of India's geographical size (32,87,263 km²). Prom-U.S.-origin have set up their European Headquarters in Ireland. The list comprises Apple, Google, Meta, Amazon, X, LinkedIn, Adobe to

Ireland has become a leadcal sector as well. Ireland's Central Statistics Office (CSO) data shows that overall 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 29.0%. In contrast to this. India exported pharmaceutiin FY25 out of which exports to the USA alone stood at \$10.51 Bn (34.61 per cent of

(\$11.8 bn) in February 2025, 2023, Ireland was 4th largest exporter of pharma products and the U.S. whereas India Ireland is ranked second was 11th largest exporter of factors behind their presence

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				
Irce: Global Innovation Index (GII) 2024							

in Ireland. Johnson & Johnson pharma products. It is interesting to observe is operating in Ireland since 1935. J&J employs more than the growth of pharmaceutical industry in Ireland. Ireland has 6,000 persons from Ireland. become an attractive destina-J&J operations span ten sites tion for pharma companies to set up their base. 10 of the world's largest pharmaceutical shared services, and commercompanies are based in Ireland. cial operations. Prominent pharmaceutical companies which have their operations in Ireland include Johnson & Johnson (J&J), Eli operations. The company has Lilly, Pfizer, Merck, Takeda, six sites in Ireland, and carry Sanofi, Novartis, Bristol Myout functions such as R&D, ers Squibb, Regeneron, Gilmanufacturing, shared services, ead, janssen, AbbVie, MSD, treasury and commercial opera-GE Healthcare, Baxter, Zoetis, tions thereby employing around to the US reached €10.5 bn the total pharma exports). In among others. Pharmaceuti-3.700 employees cal Companies consider skilled Merck Group has been workforce, regulatory enviactive in Ireland since 1977. Merck Group is represented after Germany, Switzerland, ronment, and pro-innovation government policies as major in Ireland by Merck Serono (Ireland) Ltd., Merck Mil-

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

	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 presacross Ireland, and operations ence in Ireland. MSD Ireland include R&D, manufacturing, established its first site - MSD Ballydine in Ireland in 1976. Now, the company has six sites Pfizer opened its first site in in Ireland. These sites cater Ireland in 1969. Since then, the to biologics-based medicines, global and national support company had invested \$8 bn in 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

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 opinvestment of €200 million September 12, 2024, Eli Lilly to build this vaccine plant. announced a \$1 bn expansion tax of 12.5 per cent is the key

production of biologic active Lilly in Limerick stood at \$2 bn. To ensure safe, reliable supply of medicines, and right-firsttime 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

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 erational in March 2023. On Innovation Index (GII), to name a few. Low Corporation

of its Limerick, Ireland, manu- attraction for companies to set facturing site for increasing up their operations in Ireland. The decision to introduce ingredients. With this invest- the rate of 12.5 per cent was ment, total investment of Eli 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 new \$800 mn facility expansion 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.

BANKING **S**FINANCE

peaking at Rs 3.15 lakh crore

The RBI's comprehensive

approach to addressing the

liquidity constraints has

shown positive results, with the banking system transi-

tioning to a surplus position

ity surpluses of approximately

Rs 1.5 lakh crore on Friday and

Rs 1.2 lakh crore on Monday.

the central bank implemented

various measures, including

cash reserve ratio (CRR) reduc-

tion, daily variable rate repo

(VRR) auctions, long-term

repo operations, forex swaps,

and strategic OMO purchases.

ble liquidity appears favourable

for the coming months, the

report cautions that banking

system liquidity may experi-

ence fluctuations depending on

While the outlook for dura-

To achieve this turnaround,

Recent data indicates liquid-

on January 11.

from April.

SBI, PNB other Banks say ATMs, Digital Services Operating Smoothly

NEW DELHI: India's top banks, including the State Bank of India and the Punjab National Bank, said that their ATMs and digital services were fully functional and all operations were normal.

The announcement by the banks came in response to fake social media reports claiming that ATMs are likely to be shut in the coming days amid rising tensions between India and Pakistan. "All our ATMs, CDMs/ADWMs and digital services are fully operational and available for public use, the State Bank of India said in a post on X. India's biggest bank also told its customers not to rely on unverified information. Punjab National Bank also said: "All our digital services too are operating smoothly, ensuring a seamless banking experience from the comfort of your home."

Similar messages have been buying-fuel and LPG is readposted by the Canara Bank,

held domestically: RBI

the Bank of India, the Bank ily available at all our outlets. of Baroda, and the Punjab and it said Sindh Bank. Union Finance "Help us serve you better

Minister Nirmala Sitharaman by staying calm and avoiding unnecessary rush. This will will hold a review meeting on cybersecurity preparedness of keep our supply lines running seamlessly and ensure uninbanks and financial instituterrupted fuel access for all," tions in the evening, the ministry said. Meanwhile, Indian the national oil giant said in Oil has said it has ample fuel statement

stocks across the country, and The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), which our supply lines are operating represents 90 million traders. also said on Friday that there There is no need for panic is no shortage of foodgrains

or other essential items in the country. All commodities are abundantly available in the markets, and the government has adequate reserves. Therefore, no citizen needs to hoard or stockpile goods. Just like during the Covid period, traders will not only maintain the supply chain but, if needed, also ensure delivery of essentials to people's doorsteps/

CAIT Secretary General and Member of Parliament from Delhi's Chandni Chowk Praveen Khandelwal, assured that traders will strictly follow all government advisories and will not allow any room for panic, rumours, or unrest under any circumstances.

"Just as our brave soldiers are guarding the borders, the traders of the nation are determined to act as soldiers on the economic front, ensuring that the country's supply chain remains uninterrupted under all circumstances," he added.

Overwhelming Response to RBI's Open Market Operation Signals Improved Liquidity Management ceeding Rs 3 lakh crore and



NEW DELHI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) witnessed exceptional demand in its latest open market operation (OMO) purchase, with bids from banks totalling over Rs 1.32 lakh crore against the notified amount of Rs 50,000 crore.

This robust response, more than twice the offered amount, underscores the banking sector's strong appetite for liquidity enhancement measures. The central bank has sched-

uled three additional OMO auctions, each valued at Rs

25,000 crore, to be conducted on May 9, May 15, and May 19. Since January 30, the RBI has injected Rs 3.24 lakh crore into the banking system through OMO purchases. These interventions were initiated to counter a severe liquidity crunch that developed in mid-January,

primarily resulting from the central bank's aggressive foreign exchange market operations.

The liquidity deficit had government spending patterns reached critical levels, exand implementation pace.

India's Space Economy **Records Strong Growth** with₹2,940 Cr Boost: Study



NEW DELHI: India's space sector is showing promising growth, despite its modest current contribution to the economy.

A new study reveals that in 2020-21, the space sector accounted for just 0.19 per cent of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, recent developments suggest an upward trend. The commercial arm of ISRO, New Space India Limited (NSIL), generated Rs 2,940 crore in revenue in 2022-23, with a projected annual growth rate of 24 per cent. The study, authored by experts from various Indian academic institutions, highlights the impact of policy reforms like the Space Activities Policy 2023 and the creation of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authori-

sation Centre (In-SPACe). India's space economy spans manufacturing, operations, and applications—ranging from launch vehicle production to satellite-based services. ISRO remains the core driver, employing over 17,000 people, while the broader space industry supports around 50,000 jobs. Notably, space startups have surged from just one in 2014 to 229 by mid-2024, employing about 2,500 people. Private investments in satellite manufacturing, launch services, and applications like telecom and agriculture are helping boost productivity across sectors. The study emphasizes India's growing role in deep space exploration, private sector participation, and international collaborations. Despite limited spending relative to GDP, the space sector's technological innovations and spillover benefits significantly impact national development. Satellite-based services are improving agriculture, disaster management, navigation, infrastructure planning, and more. The researchers conclude that India's space industry, though currently small in size, has immense potential

NSE portal back online after brief outage

and could become a major eco-

nomic driver in the years ahead.

Low Inflation May Prompt RBI to Rate Cuts: SBI Research India has 879.59 metric

SB

tonnes of gold, 511.99 MT line retail inflation is expected to fall below 3 percent in the April-June quarter, which will likely prompt the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to implement cumulative policy interest rate cuts of 125 basis points in the current financial year, according to a report released by SBI Research on Monday. "With multi-year low infla-

smoothly.

NEW DELHI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had 879.59 metric tonnes (MT) of gold at the end of March 2025, of which 511.99 metric tonnes were held domestically, the Central Bank informed on Monday

While 348.62 metric tonnes of gold were kept in safe custody with the Bank of England and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), 18.98 metric tonnes were held in the form of gold deposits. In value terms (USD), the share of gold in the total foreign exchange reserves increased from 9.32 per cent at end-September 2024 to about 11.70 per cent at end-March 2025, according to the RBI's 'Half Yearly Report on Management of Foreign Exchange Reserves'. During the half-year period under review, reserves decreased from \$705.78 billion in end-September 2024 to \$630.61 billion at end-January 2025, and were at \$668.33

cuts of 125 bps going forward," the SBI Research report stated. The RBI has already lowered policy interest rates by 25 basis points each in February and **NEW DELHI:** Asian Develop-

istry said on Monday.

ed that India focuses on private sector-led economic growth and has been consistently creating a conducive policy and regulatory ecosystem The Finance Minister is leading an Indian delegaof Economic Affairs of the Ministry to attend the 58th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the ADB in Italy's Milan from May 4 to 7. In a post on social media platform X, the ministry said



April, with the next bi-monthly meeting of the central bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) scheduled for June. SBI Research has suggested

tion in March and benign inflaa significant 50 basis points tion expectations going forward, rate cut in the upcoming MPC we expect rate cuts of 75 basis meeting, noting that jumbo cuts of 50 bps could be more effective points in June and August and another 50 bps cut in the second than secular 25 bps tranches spread over the horizon. half of the year i.e. cumulative

This recommendation comes as inflation has shown a sharp moderation, with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation dipping to a 67-month low

of 3.34 percent in March. The inflation data for April is scheduled to be released next week.

The report, authored by Soumya Kanti Ghosh, SBI Group Chief Economic Adviser and Member of the 16th Finance Commission, projects that average CPI headline forecast could stay below 4 percent till December 2025 and FY26 average may be 3.7-3.8 percent, unless there is any food price related shock.

retail inflation remains well the RBI to maintain.

of RBI monetary policy actions, SBI Research noted that banks have reduced their repo-linked external benchmark lending

rates (EBLRs) by a similar magnitude. Transmission to deposit rates is expected in the coming quarters, with the research team anticipating a 100 bps cut in bank deposit rates from current levels. While credit growth is expected to moderate at 11-12

tially widening the gap between credit-deposit momentum and adversely affecting banks' net

interest margins (NIMs). The research also suggests that the Indian rupee is likely to stabilise between 85 to 87 against the US dollar in 2025. adding that the domestic impact of tariffs on the dollar will be visible in 2025 which will support the rupee.

ister Narendra Modi's vision of

Viksit Bharat 2047," the min-

On the sidelines of the ADB's

58th annual meeting, Sithara-man will also hold bilateral

meetings with her counterparts

from Italy, Japan, and Bhutan,

in addition to meetings with

the President of the Interna-

tional Fund for Agricultural

istry added.

Opportunity to invest in India's long-term growth story is now: Morgan Stanley



age Morgan Stanley has reaffirmed its positive long-term outlook on Indian equities, highlighting that India is likely to outperform in a global bear market scenario.

According to a note by the brokerage, the opportunity to invest in India's long-term structural growth story is now, though it will require patience, given the potential. The global financial services major believes that while near-term volatility may persist, "the long-term reward outweighs short-term noise". The firm advises investors to stay focused on India's domestic growth story and selectively build exposure - particularly in domestically driven Development (IFAD), and the sectors -during periods of mar-Governor of the Japan Bank ket stress. The macroeconomic environment remains challeng-

stability, earnings growth, and a

reliable domestic demand base that positions it as a relative safe haven in a bear market. Morgan Stanley also favours domestic cyclicals over defensives and globally exposed sectors.

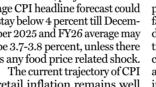
The firm holds an overweight view on financials, consumer discretionary and industrials, backed by improving credit growth, private investment recovery, and rising consumer demand. In its another report last month, Morgan Stanley said that India is one of their preferred equity markets where macro conditions are resilient or

sufficiently buffered by stimulus. The brokerage saw a relatively resilient outlook for financials earnings, with capital ratios and the asset quality outlook in a strong position across most of erage, "We particularly

ADB Fully Supports India's Development Priorities under PM Modi: Masato Kanda priorities, guided by Prime Min-ADB

ment Bank (ADB) President Masato Kanda, in his meeting with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, has expressed the Bank's full support to India's development priorities, guided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, the Finance Min-

FM Sitharaman also reiterat-



within the 2-6 percent band that the government has mandated

Regarding the transmission

percent for FY26, deposits may fall short of double-digit growth during the fiscal year, poten-

NEW DELHI: Global broker-

billion at end-Mar rh 2025 During the period between end-December 2023 and end-December 2024, the external assets increased by \$79.7 billion and external liabilities increased by \$76.1 billion. The foreign currency assets comprise multicurrency assets that are held in multi-asset portfolios as per the existing norms, which conform to the best international practices followed in this regard.

Kanda in Milan.

"The Union Finance Minister reiterated that India focuses on private sector-led tion from the Department economic growth and has been consistently creating a conducive policy and regulatory ecosystem through bold initiatives such as the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, Corporate Tax Rate Reduction and GST implementation,

National Infrastructure Pipeline, GatiShakti National Master Plan and Startup India, among others, for greater Ease of Doing Business," the Ministry said

Sitharaman also emphasised that India offers opportunities for ADB to pilot new, innovative financing products and models. "Kanda expressed ADB's full

support to India's development statement.

peration (JBIC).

The Finance Minister will also interact with the Indian diaspora in Milan, besides meeting global think-tanks, business leaders and CEOs, and partici-

Govt Moving ahead with IDBI Bank

Disinvestment Plan in Current Fiscal

pating in a Plenary Session of the 'NEXT Milan Forum' at the Bocconi University on "Balancing Economic and Climate Resilience", according to an official

ing worldwide, with risks such as decelerating global growth, central bank policy shifts, and geopolitical tensions casting a shadow.

Morgan Stanley states that these very conditions present a compelling case for India, "supported by its robust domestic fundamentals and relative insulation from global volatility". India offers a mix of macro

like Financials in Singapore, India, Chile and the UAE, as well as Japan, " it added.

flation at benign levels.

Key India-specific catalysts include continuing dovish actions from the RBI, stimulus through GST rate cuts and a trade deal with the US. Mor-**MUMBAI:** The National Stock gan Stanley also sees lower food inflation and lower oil prices, keeping food and non-food in-

Exchange (NSE) portal, which on Monday suffered a brief outage, has been restored.

Around 10.40 a.m., the exchange website did not show any data, and a white screen appeared while logging in. The website was restored within a few minutes. At 10.48 a.m., the NSE website was working again, and all the information and data on the portal were displaying as usual. After the brief outage, NSE shared on the social media platform 'X' handle, "the website is accessible now. Incase of any other query, please write to us at nsewebmaster@ nse.co.in".

NSE is counted as one of the world's largest exchanges. It began its operations in 1994. NSE has over 22 crore users. The number of unique registered investors stands at 11.3 crore (as of March 31, 2025). An investor may maintain accounts with different brokers, resulting in multiple client codes. Maharashtra leads with the highest number of investor accounts at 3.8 crore, followed by Uttar Pradesh (2.4 crore), Gujarat (1.9 crore), and Rajasthan and West Bengal at approximately 1.3 crore each. The market capitalisation of NSE-listed companies reached Rs 410.87 lakh crore (\$4.81 trillion) in FY25 (till March 31) from Rs 384.2 lakh crore (\$4.61 trillion) in FY24 - a growth of 6.94 per cent year-on-year, according to data released recently by the NSE. Sriram Krishnan, Chief Business Development Officer, NSE, said, "India's investor base continues to expand rapidly, with over 2 crore new accounts added in just six months - a clear reflection of strong investor confidence in India's growth trajectory despite

global economic headwinds."

FM Sitharaman to attend ADB meeting in Milan, hold bilateral meetings



NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will lead the Indian delegation of officials from the Department of Economic Affairs of the Ministry to attend the 58th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of Asian Development Bank (ADB), scheduled to take place in Italy's Milan from May 4 to 7, according to an official statement issued on Sunday. The meetings will be attended

by official delegations of the Board of Governors of ADB, official delegations of ADB members, and international financial institutions. The Finance Minister will participate in the Annual Meeting's focal events like the Governors' Business session, Governor's Plenary Session and as a panelist in the ADB Governors' Seminar

on "Cross-Border Collaboration for Future Resilience".

On the sidelines of the ADB's 58th Annual Meeting, Sitharaman will also hold bilateral meetings with her counterparts from Italy, Japan, and Bhutan, in addition to meetings with President of ADB, the President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Governor of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), the statement said. The Union Finance Minister will also interact with the Indian diaspora in Milan, besides meeting global think-tanks, business leaders and CEOs, and participating in a Plenary Session of the NEXT Milan Forum at the Bocconi University on "Balancing Economic and Cli-

mate Resilience", the statement added.

Cross-border collaboration is seen as crucial for building future resilience by enabling countries to share resources, information, and best practices to address challenges like pandemics, disasters, and economic instability. This cooperation strengthens borderland resilience, fosters mutual learning, and promotes sustainable development. The collaboration allows countries to learn from each other's experiences and implement ef-

fective strategies, fostering a more resilient and sustainable future. It promotes sustainable development by sharing best practices in areas like infrastructure, resource management, and environmental protection. Establishing mechanisms for sharing information, intelligence, and best practices can improve preparedness and response to crises. Sharing resources, infrastructure, and expertise can enhance the ability of countries to address shared challenges. Countries can also align their policies and regulations to facilitate cross-border cooperation in areas like trade, investment, and environmental protection.

NEW DELHI: The government's disinvestment plan for IDBI Bank, as part of the broader strategy to monetise assets through stake sales during the current financial year, is progressing in accordance with the normal schedule, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management Secretary Arunish Chawla has said.

"The focus remains on steady execution and longterm value creation, even as global economic conditions remain uncertain," Chawla told NDTV Profit in an exclusive interview.

The Centre and the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) plan to jointly offload a 60.72 per cent stake in IDBI Bank, which comprises 30.48 per cent held by the government and a 30.24 per cent share by the insurance giant.

Chawla said that the government aims to meet regulatory norms through structured divestments in public sector banks and central public sector enterprises.

He also said efforts to monetise land and infrastructure assets of MTNL were continuing and confirmed that a flexible approach was being adopted to meet minimum



public shareholding targets. Chawla said that asset sales will be carried out in a phased and market-sensitive manner. He noted that multiple bids have already come in for key transactions, including public sector bank stake sales, and that due diligence is progressing on the IDBI Bank transaction.

The government has also companies, that have been lined up for disinvestment, to comply with the Securities and Exchange Board of India's (SEBI) public float rules, he said.

the stake sale in IDBI Bank is proceeding as planned and is not affected by broader macroeconomic shocks. He described it as a strategic sale taking place through a multi-stage and multi-layered process.

"A data room has been set up, and due diligence has been completed. Negotiations on the share purchase agreement extended deadlines for some are currently underway," he said. On the issue of further stake dilution in LIC, Chawla said the government aims to meet the minimum public by the financial year ending

The DIPAM Secretary said March 2027, in line with the SEBI's norms. The government plans to conduct small but regular offers for sale, keeping liquidity and retail investors in mind, he said.

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 asshareholding requirement set monetisation target of Rs 47,000 crore.

INTERNATIONAL

India-Pakistan Conflict Is 'None of Our Pakistan Stock Markets Continue to Bleed, Business': US Vice-President Vance Down 14 Per Cent since Pahalgam Attack **Business': US Vice-President Vance**

WASHINGTON: US Vice-President J.D. Vance has said that the conflict between India and Pakistan is "fundamentally none of our business." though he and President Donald Trump are encouraging both the countries to de-escalate. "What we can do is try to

encourage these folks to deescalate a little bit, but we're not going to get involved in the middle of war that's fundamentally none of our business and has nothing to do with America's ability to control it. You know, America can't tell the Indians to lay down their arms. We can't tell the Pakistanis to lay down their arms. And so, we're going to continue to pursue this thing through diplomatic channels, Vance, who has been a proponent of US disengagement from international conflicts, said in an interview with Fox News.

"Our hope and our expectation is that this is not going to spiral into a broader regional

Vance came as Pakistan made a failed attempt to attack military establishment in Jammu, Pathankot and several other cities. India's air defence system intercepted and neutralised at least eight missiles launched by Islamabad



Earlier, US President Donwar or, God forbid, a nuclear conflict," Vance added. "Right ald Trump said he wants India now, we don't think that's goand Pakistan to "stop" what he ing to happen." The remarks by described as "tit for tat" actions. saying if he can do anything to "help", he will be there.

"Oh it's so terrible. My position is I get along with both. I know both very well and I want to see them work it out. I want to see them stop and hopefully they can stop now. They have gone tit for tat, so hopefully they can stop now. I know both, we get along with both the countries very well."

"Good relationships with both and I want to see it stop. And If I can do anything to help, I will be there," Trump said in response to a question on the "war" between India and Pakistan.

Trump's remarks came after the Indian military carried out strikes against terror targets in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Pakistan's Punjab province on Wednesday. Pakistan army carried out artillery and mortar shelling targeting forward villages along the Line Of Control in Jammu and Kashmir. India launched Operation Sindoor early Wednesday hitting nine terror targets in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Punjab province of Pakistan in retaliation for the April 22 terror attack that killed 26 people in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam

tack 26 people,

NEW DELHI: The stock mardropped to 1,03,060. kets in Pakistan further tanked Apart from this, another on Thursday, as trading was Pakistani stock index, KSE-30. has also fallen more than 14 halted at the Karachi Stock Exchange (KSE) amid rising per cent since April 22. Amid the grim state of the geopolitical tensions. stock markets, Pakistan has

Karachi Stock Exchange fell more than 6 per cent on only \$15 billion of foreign exchange reserves left and is on Thursday before the trading was halted. The stock exchange the verge of economic collapse. has been witnessing a continuous decline since the barbaric fresh loan worth \$1.3 billion

1338

1380

2125 388

2450

\$30

100

Pahalgam terror attack. from the International Mon-The main index, Karachi etary Fund (IMF) to run its Stock Exchange 100 Index economy. (KSE-100), has slipped by more than 13 per cent since initial years after indepen-

most of them tourists. On April 22. the KSE-100 index was at 1,18,430, which has now

The country is seeking a

April 22 when dence, grew at the same pace as India's, backed by US aid the terror atand donations from the oilhappened, killing rich Islamic nations.

However, while democratic India kept its focus on economic development and lifting its masses out of poverty, Pakistan has been rocked by bloody coups and military dictatorships, with the army Generals still calling the shots and fuelling hostility against its more prosperous neighbour.

Pakistan was on the brink of sovereign default in 2023 and had to be bailed out by a \$3 billion IMF loan.

The country is still critically dependent on this financial lifeline and is desperately trying to raise another \$1.3 billion climate resilience loan.

Overall, the neighbouring nation now faces an economic freefall – crippled by political chaos and the long-term cost Pakistan's economy, in the of harbouring terrorism.

robust cooperation developing

across a diverse range of sec-

tors. They stressed on the role

played by the vibrant Indian

origin diaspora in cementing

The two leaders also ex-

changed views on regional and

American Prelate Robert Prevost Elected New Pope



ROME: American prelate Robert Francis Prevost was elected the new Pope on Thursday.

The Chicago-born Prevost, 69, a member of the Augustinian order and who had served extensively in Peru, was Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops and President of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America since 2023. He was appointed to the posts by Pope Francis, who elevated him as a Cardinal. He will take the pontifical

name of Leo XIV. Significantly, he is the second successive Pope from the Americas after the Argentinian-born Pope Francis.

There was eager wait to find who was the new Pope would be, as trademark white smoke billowed out of the chimney high above St Peter's Square in the evening to signify the conclave of the Cardinals had selected the successor to Pope Francis, who passed away last month.

Joy erupted among the clergy and laity awaiting a decision, and all eves were on the balcony, awaiting the first appearance of the new head of the Roman Catholic Church.

Addressing the cheering crowd in Italian, the new Pope said: "Peace be with all of you."

"Brothers and sisters dearest. this is the first greeting of Christ resurrected. I would like to offer a greeting of peace to reach your families, all of you, wherever you are. May peace be with you," he said, the BBC reported.

The 133 cardinals making up this conclave, taking place in the Sistine Chapel, had reassembled after a lunch break following this morning's inconclusive ballots.

A new pope requires a twothirds majority – which translates to 89 votes in this conclave. The average length of time for the last few conclaves was three days and seven ballots, as per

Threat to national security: Trump imposes 100 pc tariff on films produced outside US

Relationship between Australia & India 'never been stronger', says Albanese after speaking with PM Modi Canadian PM says talks with Trump constructive despite no tariffs lifting

OTTAWA: Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said that he had wide-ranging and constructive discussions with **US** President Donald Trump in the White House, although the two leaders disagreed on tariffs lifting and the "51st state, according to the live broadcast of CBC News

Giving a post-meeting news conference in Washington, Carney said that he and Trump agreed to have further conversations in the coming weeks and meet again in person at the G7 summit in Kananaskis, Alberta

Xinhua news agency reported. Carney said he told Trump it's "not useful" to repeat the 51st state idea, adding that Trump is the president who is going to say whatever he wants. "He understands that we are having a negotiation between sovereign

nations, " said Carnev. Responding to the question if he is heading back to Ottawa with any tangible progress on ending the trade war, Carney said they had some very specific things to follow up on and build out from that.

"These are the discussions you have when you're looking to find solutions, "he said. game.

n un-

happy



While Trump made it clear that the tariffs, especially those on the auto sector, would stay in place, Carney said, "We'll see.'

Canadian workers and suppliers in auto plant towns are worried that the longer the tariff dispute goes on, the less likely those finished cars are to be sold reported CBC News

'If he (Trump) actually achieves shutting down production in Canada and Mexico, it doesn't mean he's going to get new production in the US, "Fla-

vio Volpe, president of Canada's Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association, was quoted as saving. Volpe said he hopes Carney

will announce further meetings with Trump: "I want to know that we've set a date for the next

Trump posted a statement on his Truth Social account minutes before Carney's arrival at the White House, denigrating the importance of Canada to the US economy.

"We don't need their Cars, we don't need their Energy, we don't need their Lumber, we don't need ANYTHING they have. They, on the other hand, need EVERYTHING from us!" wrote Trump.

Speaking to the media in the Oval Office earlier on Tuesday, Trump said the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is a "transitional step" that "terminates fairly shortly, "making no commitment to its renewal. Carney said the agreement

is the "basis for a broader negotiation, " adding that parts of it may change and other elements might be added during a potential renegotiation.

Trump repeated annexation threats toward Canada, which he said would be a "wonderful marriage" and called the border between the two countries "artificial" again. The president said it would be best for Canada as the "51st state" of the United States with a lot of advantage, tax cut and free military.

CANBERRA: Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Tuesday said that the relationship between Australia and India has never been stronger and said that he is looking forward to working with Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the coming years to build a prosperous future for the region.

Earlier in the day, PM Modi had dialled Albanese, congratulating him on his party's landslide victory in Saturday's General Election.

'Thank you for the call Prime Minister Narendra Modi and for your warm congratulations. The relationship between Australia and India has never been stron-

LOS ANGELES: The US

State Department has approved

an F-16 fighter jet training and

sustainment package worth

\$310 million for Ukraine, the

The package included aircraft

modifications, flight training,

maintenance support, spare

parts, ground handling equip-

ment, and specialised software

systems, according to the US

Newaz Sharif's decision to

let him have it and face the

consequences of his choice.

Newaz Sharif does want to

be seen with the warmongers,

according to Nawaz Sharif

the Pakistani army also, but it

the novel of Helper, who says

indicates that the failure to

resolve the dilemma created

by the person himself finally

hurts him. It is difficult to

predict whether Asim Munir

would be able to succeed like

his predecessors or he would

be facing the consequences his

predecessors, Zia and Mush-

sources.

Pentagon announced.

ger. I look forward to working with you over the coming years to build a prosperous future for our region, "Albanese said in a post on X During the telephone con-

versation, Prime Minister Modi congratulated Albanese on his historic re-election as the 32nd Prime Minister of Australia.

thony Albanese to personally

"Spoke with my friend An-

congratulate him on his party's historic victory. We agreed to work together with renewed vigour to advance the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and explore new areas of cooperation, PM Modi posted on X after

Prime Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) between the two countries. They noted that in its five years, the CSP has seen

According to the Ministry of

External Affairs (MEA), both

the phone call.

global matters of mutual interest and reiterated their commitment to working together in promoting a free, open, stable, rules-based and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

bilateral ties.

"Prime Minister invited PM Albanese to visit India including for the Annual Summit and the QUAD Summit to be hosted in India later in the year. The leaders agreed to remain in touch, "

the BBC.



Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA).

Lockheed Martin Aeronau-

States, said the DSCA. The support package followed an earlier \$266.4 million F-16 sustainment agreement approved in December 2024 2025.

US approves \$310 million F-16 training package for Ukraine

tics, BAE Systems and AAR under the administration of Joe Corporation are the deal's principal contractors. However, This package contained no actual aircraft, as the jets would be

provided by NATO allies rather than directly from the United

Biden, which provided mission planning systems and key maintenance equipment, Xinhua news agency reported.

ror attack, which was carried

out by four terrorists, two of

carrying several banners

that read "Justice for Sudeep

Neupane", raising slogans against Pakistan and beating

Pakistani Army General Asim

Munir's photo with shoes and

In the aftermath of the at-

tack, Prime Minister of Nepal

K P Sharma Oli also called PM

Narendra Modi to strongly

condemn the deadly terror at-

tack in Jammu and Kashmir's

Anantnag district and extend

his condolences on the loss of

attack in Jammu and Kash-

mir as "heinous" and spoke

in detail with Prime Minister

launched in the early hours

of Wednesday, and the tri-

services operation was con-

ducted jointly by the Indian

The operation targeted in-

The Indian government said

that it has exercised its right

to respond to dastardly acts

of terror emanating from the

Operation Sindoor marks

frastructure linked to terror

groups responsible for the

April 22 terror attack.

Army, Air Force, and Navy.

Operation Sindoor was

Oli then termed the terror

The protestors were seen

them from Pakistan.

slippers.

precious lives.

Modi on the issue.

Several NATO members, including the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Belgium, have collectively pledged 79 F-16s to Ukraine, with more deliveries expected throughout



PAK ARMY CHIEF'S EXTENSION

Asim Triggers Conflict with India, Martial Law Not Ruled Out



quietly moves to London, per- the army chief is ending later haps, in a bid to avoid the this year. It appears that he repetition of a Kargil-like has not only ignored the tacit situation, when the then understanding arrived at the Army Chief, Parvez Mush- time of his appointment, but arraf had triggered war with has also unleashed the conflict India, Nawaz Sharif had to with India. save the army's embarrassing defeat by seeking Washington's intervention. In spite of this, he was later dethroned ing at with a powerful poby Musharraf, Pakistan army's

Sharif was keen that he should not again be seen support- the present prime minister In spite of his manipulative brother, Newaz. role against Newaz Sharif, the erstwhile army chief Qamar Jawed Bajwa had quietly made a peace-deal with India. scale border clash in the wake the special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

in Uttar Pradesh.

In London, since his arrival, Nawaz Sharif has deliberately while keeping an eye on the the wishes of the former ISI aftermath of the Pahalgam chief Faiz Hamid. massacre. He, according to informed sources, has also Sharif, a three times prime disapproved of the anti-India minister and convicted rally held by a group of vol- by the country's Kangaroo unteers on 7 May believed to courts, has repeatedly stated be close to the ruling Pakistan he was of the firm view that Muslim League (Noon) in London.

the Pakistani General, Asim Munir, has been rejected. It is also guite known that he was told at the time of his appointment that he would be quitting

his position without seek-Nawaz Sharif ing extension. His term as

> Few were surprised in told to Asim even before he Pakistan that how could he really violate the understandlitical party leader such as

first Mohajir general, though Newaz Sharif. In spite of ISI he always undermined his manipulations, Newaz Sharif's roots in Azamgarh, a district PML-N, has emerged a powerful outfit. It appears that if Being once bitten and Asim suffers a setback in the cheated by Musharraf, Newaz ongoing conflict with India, he would blame Shahbaz Sharif.

ing the war against India. and a nominee of his elder It may be recalled that Asim Munir could have been superseded by his junior, Faiz Hamid, a former ISI It had prevented any large- chief, or he might have superannuated if the then army of New Delhi's decision to end chief Qamer Jawed Bajwa was given another extension, but it was the decision of Newaz not to give any extensions to Bajwa, and later he been avoiding the media, was elevated much against

It is believed that Nawaz in Pakistan like India, the chiefs should not be seeking

It appears that his advice extensions. According to the



brothers saved him from bewas being formally sworn-in. ing superseded, but his recent However, during the past actions indicate that he would several weeks Asim Munir be more assertive in coming

was seen making political weeks. statements. His recent statement highlighting the Hindu shift to London also indicates -Muslim differences had cauthat he would not like to be tioned a few seasoned political seen repeating the mistake analysts in Islamabad as well of endorsing the stupidity of as India that Asim Munir, General Pervez Musharraf, perhaps, is aspiring for a who had initiated Kargil war much bigger role in Pakistan. after the visit of the Indian It was soon followed by the Prime Minister Atal Bihari ISI's sponsored attack on un-Vajpayee to Islamabad. If armed tourists at Pahalgam. Asim Munir wants power,

It is to be seen whether he could be another incarnation of the army dictator, Zia-ul-Haq, who during his nearly a decade regime 1977 onwards had enforced Sharia laws. He had won the confidence of the US-led West by radicalization of Muslim youths to fight against the then USSR. Zia, earlier, had successfully conspired to dethrone Z A Bhutto, and later got him hanged by conducting a sham judicial trial. It might be recalled that Bhutto, who had believed that Zia would be loyal to him for elevating him to the position of army chief, but Zia ensured his elimination.

In the case of Asim Munir, however, he already was the

arraf had faced. Many believe that the Pato superannuate peacefully to insiders, the new policy was senior most general. Sharif halgam massacre is the out-

come of his recent anti -Hindu rhetoric. The government of India's decision to launch " operation Sindoor, also a big slap on the Pak army that it conspired to kill young grooms, who had been to the Pahalgam in the Kashmir valley.

India's Tough Stand

New Delhi has already asked for the handing over of the culprits of the Mumbai attack.

It is stated that the message for peace is being communicated to Islamabad through the top diplomat from Saudi Arabia. The recent unannounced visit of Adel Alijubeir to New Delhi is the first indication that Pakistan's friends in West Asia do not endorse it's policy of supporting terrorism as an instrument of the state.Adel, who is a Minister of state, perhaps would soon be returning to Riad before his country's policy is finally decided regarding the ongoing conflict.

It means that not much importance is being attached to the presence of Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi. He was in New Delhi to co-chair the 20th India-Iran It is a catch -22 situation for Joint Commission Meeting.

The high-level dialogue perhaps, refuses to learn from comes as the two nations mark the 75th anniversary of the that the situation catch-22 India-Iran Friendship Treaty. The situation continues

to be explosive, but much depends on the Pakistani generals.

Gopal Misra has been associated with national and international media. His books on journalism and geo-politics have been well-appreciated. Views are personal.

Nepal Expresses Concern on Escalating India-Pak Tensions

KATHMANDU: Nepal on Thursday expressed deep concerns about the escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, following the terrorist attack on innocent tourists in Pahalgam in which 26 innocent civilians, including a Nepali national named Sudeep Neupane, were killed.

The reaction followed after the Indian armed forces launched Operation Sindoor, targetting nine high-value terror locations in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in response to the dastardly April 22 terror attack.

"During this tragic period, Nepal and India stood in solidarity, united in shared grief and suffering. It may be recalled that Nepal had immediately and unequivocally condemned the barbaric terrorist attack, consistent with its resolute stance against all forms of terrorism," Nepal's foreign ministry said in a statement.

"Nepal stands together with all in the fight against terrorism. In line with its principled position, Nepal shall not allow any inimical forces to use its soil against its neighbouring countries. Nepal hopes for de-escalation of tension and affirms its commitment to lasting peace and stability in the region," the statement added.

Earlier, massive protests were held in Nepal, including outside the Pakistani Embassy in Kathmandu, condemning the Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in India following the heinous Pahalgam terror attack.

neighbouring nation. Several Nepali civil society organisations and party representatives, including one of India's most assertive Rastriya Prajatantra Party cross-border military responsleaders, participated in the es since the Balakot airstrikes march against the deadly ter- in 2019.



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Monday (Indian time) announced a new 100 per cent tariff on foreign films, stating that the movie industry in America is "dying a very fast death, "which, according to him, is posing a national security threat.

He accused other countries of offering all sorts of incentives and drawing filmmakers and studios away from the US.

"Industry in America is dying a very fast death. Other countries are offering all sorts of the movie incentives to draw our filmmakers and studios away from the United States. Hollywood and many other areas within the USA are being devastated. This is a concerted effort by other nations and, therefore, a national security threat, "he posted on his social media platform. Truth Social.

"It is, in addition to everything else, messaging and propaganda! Therefore, I am authorising the Department of Commerce and the United States Trade Representative to immediately begin the process of instituting a 100 per cent tariff on any and all movies coming into our country that are produced in foreign lands. We

want movies made in America again, " the post added. Addressing reporters at

the White House on Sunday, Trump had blamed California Governor Gavin Newsom for the decline in film production in Hollywood, specifically over the last several years. He said that other nations have been "stealing" the movies and moviemaking capabilities from the US. "If they're not willing to make a movie inside the United States, we should have a tariff when movies come in, Trump added.

POTPOURRI

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.

this time as a guest creator.

"Storytelling is not just en-

felt personal. This was valida-

n a buzzing Mumbai the audience at the 'WAVES lane nestled between Summit 2025' in Mumbai, a sandwich stall and a tailoring shop, Priya Prime Minister Narendra was busy recording her lat- Modi inaugurated the sumest story. Her voice carried the mit on the grand stage with calm confidence of someone a rousing speech, stating, who had found her calling, but it hadn't always been this tertainment. It is India's anway. Two years ago, she was a commerce graduate with tools, our creators are the new no clear path, scrolling end-lessly through job boards and world." As the crowd erupted rejection emails. She wasn't fluent in English, had no elite degree, and certainly didn't tion for her and millions of have connections. But she creators across India. 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, ment economy would 'triple and unlimited curiosity, Priya began uploading short video stories on Instagram and You-Tube - tales of chaiwalas with MBA dreams, grandmothers starting food channels at 65, and Gen Z garage musicians remixing Kabir dohas. Her Neal Mohan, who shared that 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.

India's Digital Storytelling Surge



nations. From villages in Bihar to metros like Delhi, the The summit was buzzing internet has become the new with energy and insights. In studio, and storytelling has ecome the latest startup. a visionary address, Mukesh

Ambani predicted that In-Priya, now managing a team of five, runs workshops dia's media and entertainon digital storytelling in government schools and uploads in the next decade'. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw subtitled content in Korean, added, "India has a treasure French, and Spanish. What began as an escape from trove of stories, and the world is now ready to listen." And monotony has turned into a then came a striking revmission. "It's not about going viral anymore," she says. "It's elation from YouTube CEO about going 'valuable'. If one story changes how someone creators in India had earned sees India, I've done my job." 'thousands of crores over the Points to Ponder: The oppast three years', with even

bigger investments on the portunities are immense as India's voice strengthens in It wasn't just words; numthe digital world. But success bers backed it. India now has doesn't come with a filter. Creators must focus on authentic, more than 95 crore smartphone users and is one of value-driven content that edu-Just days ago, Priya sat in the world's most connected cates, 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 pic-

tures from the gala featuring



Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Nick For the world's biggest fashion Jonas and Shakira on his Inevent, the actor-singer stayed true to his roots, donning a look stagram stories section. The Punjabi sensation looked every inch a Maharaja as he made his culture with regal elegance. debut at the MET Gala 2025.

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 in-

by Prabal Gurung. He wore an

ivory-hued ensemble, paired

spired 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.

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



PHOTO-PRABHJOT GILL

that beautifully blended Punjabi

Diljit wore an outfit designed

"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

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

Maddock Films on Thursdav 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 agerly 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 @primevideoin, May 16 #BhoolChuk-MaafOnPrime." 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.

Sonam Kapoor Is In Awe of Diljit Dosanjh's Met Gala Look: You Look So Handsome himself on Insta, the 'Jatt & Ju-

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. @diljitdosanjh looked so handsome!



horizon.

spired 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-

Diljit's outfit for Met was in- 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

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

MUMBAI: Veteran actor Dhar-

mendra met his 'lovely co-star'

Java Prada, who came to see

him along with a family friend

He posted two pictures pos-

ing with Jaya Prada on his Ins-

tagram 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."

mendra and Jaya Prada have

delivered many blockbuster

It must be noted that Dhar-

of hers.

golecha_jewels @abhilashatd."

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.

Stylist Abhilasha Devnani,

Kareena Kapoor Khan is 'Grateful' to The Efforts liet' actor wrote, "MAIN HOON Punjab #metgala...Inspired by The Theme of Black Dandyism, I Bring My Turban, My Culture of India's Armed Forces & My Mother Tongue "Punjab" to The MET GALA. Thank You So Much..Dear @prabalgurung @theannawintour @cartier @ 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

fforts of our armed force

MUMBAI: The makers of

across the nation."



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.

PHOTO-PRABHJOT GILL

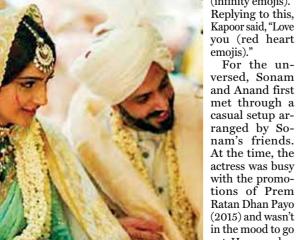
Sonam Kapoor Pens a Heartfelt Anniversary Note for 'Love of her Life' Anand Ahuja

MUMBAI: Actress Sonam Kapoor took to social media to share a heartfelt anniversary tribute to her husband, entrepreneur Anand Ahuja, as the couple celebrated their wedding anniversary on May 8.

Marking seven years of togetherness, Sonam expressed her deep love and admiration with a touching note that read, "Sonam Kapoor post -Absolutely no one compares to you. The love of my life. Always find me. @anandahuja eternity and beyond. #everydayphenomenal Happy Anniversary." The Neerja actress also shared a series of photos, including precious moments from their wedding day and heartwarming glimpses with their son, Vayu.

Sonam Kapoor and Anand Ahuja tied the knot on May 8, 2018, in a lavish ceremony in Mumbai, which was attended by several A-list celebrities, including Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan. The couple, who now reside in London. welcomed their first son, Vayu, on August 20, 2023.

Last year, the couple celebrated their sixth wedding anniversary by dropping unseen pictures from their marital



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

I love you more than I can express. #everydayphenomenal." actress' sweet post, "Sona ! This photo selection is not my most favorable! (teary-eyed laughter journey together.

emoji) ... love you (infinity emojis)."

hits in the past. Starting with "Qayamat" in 1983, these two went on to work together in Replying to this, Kapoor said, "Love movies like "Insaaf Kaun you (red heart Karega" in 1984, "Dharm Aur Qanoon" in 1984, "Ganga Tere For the un-

Desh Mein" in 1988, "Mardon versed, Sonam Wali Baat" in 1988, "Elaan-Eand Anand first Jung" in 1989, "Shehzaade" in 1989, "Kanoon Ki Zanjeer" met through a in 1990, "Farishtay" in 1991, "Kundan" in 1993, "Veer" in 1995, "Paappi 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 & amp; amp; papa . You are my world. Love you @aapkadharam @dreamgirlhemamalini #weddingday," Esha captioned the post.

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 Mu-

ridke 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



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.



MET Gala 2025 featuring Shakira with Diljit Dosanjh

nam'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 journey, accompanied by a 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 of my life. We live in heaven. more annoved. It was then that Sonam noticed Anand and his friend. Little did So-Anand commented on the nam know, this seemingly casual encounter would mark the start of their beautiful