

'Vikram Misri a decent, honest man working tirelessly for nation': Owaisi

Sanjay Kumar

New Delhi, May 11: AIMIM chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi, on Sunday, called foreign secretary Vikram Misri "a decent and an



honest, hard working" diplomat working tirelessly for the country. Foreign secretary Vikram Misri has become a household name with his daily appearances at the government press briefings he leads on Operation Sindo and the military action thereafter along with two women officers, Colonel Sofya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh. "Mr Vikram Misri is a decent and an Honest Hard working Diplomat

Delhi's IGI operating 'normally', 32 other airports remain shut

New Delhi, May 11: Amid rising tensions between India and Pakistan, 32 airports across Northern and Western India have been temporarily closed for operations. Despite the closures, Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport remains fully operational. Delhi airport authorities have issued a passenger advisory urging travelers to stay updated through airline notifications and to follow all safety and baggage guidelines closely due to "evolving airspace dynamics" and "enhanced security protocols." "Delhi Airport operations continue as normal. However, due to changing airspace dynamics and enhanced security protocols, some flight schedules and processing times at security checkpoints may be affected," the Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) said in a post on X. Meanwhile, around 100 flights were canceled at Delhi Airport on Sunday, including 52 domestic departures, 44 arrivals, and one international departure, according to news agency PTI's sources. The cancellations occurred between 5:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Earlier, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and other relevant aviation bodies issued a series of Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs), announcing the temporary suspension of civil flight operations at 32 airports in Northern and Western India.

working tirelessly for our Nation. Our Civil Servants work under the Executive this must be remembered & they shouldn't be blamed for the decisions taken by The Executive or any Political leadership running Watan E Aziz," Asaduddin Owaisi said in his post on X. Follow India-Pak news live updates. Foreign secretary Vikram Misri on Saturday announced that India and Pakistan reached a ceasefire 'understanding', with effect from 5 pm. In his evening briefing, Vikram Misri said, "Director General of Military Operations of Pakistan called the Director General of Military Operations of India at 1535 hours IST earlier today." It was agreed between them that both sides would stop all firing and military action on land and in the air and sea with effect from 1700 hours Indian Standard Time today," he said. Vikram Misri's press statement came shortly after US President Donald Trump broke the news of the ceasefire understanding through a post on Truth Social.

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Shashi Tharoor dismisses

1971 comparison by Congress amid ceasefire

Navdeep Singh Sahni

New Delhi, May 11: Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Saturday said that prolonging the conflict with Pakistan is not the biggest priority for India right now, while dismissing the comparisons between former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's actions in the 1971 war with those of the current escalation after Operation Sindo. Shashi Tharoor's remarks come as social media was abuzz with comparisons between Indira Gandhi and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with Congress leaders also joining in. "1971 was a great achievement. Indira Gandhi rewrote the map of the sub-continent, but the circumstances were different. Bangladesh was fighting a moral cause, and liberating Bangladesh was a clear objective. Just keeping on firing shells at Pakistan is not a clear objective," Tharoor was quoted by ANI news agency as saying. "Today's Pakistan is a different situation. Their military equip-

ment and the damage they can do are different. Bangladesh was fighting a moral cause to actually bring people to freedom

and liberation. That was a completely different story. This is a different story. We would have ended up with much longer, protracted conflicts with a lot of loss of lives on both sides. Is this the biggest priority for India today? No, it is not," he said. Shashi Tharoor's remarks came as

Congress leaders remembered Indira Gandhi amid the de-escalation of hostilities with Pakistan on Saturday. Pawan

Khera posted images of the former Prime Minister on social media platform X amid the announcement of the ceasefire understanding between the two nuclear-armed neighbours "India misses Indira," Khera posted, alluding to the 1971 war between New Delhi and Islamabad. Senior Congress leader Ashok Gehlot also posted old images of Indira Gandhi on Facebook, captioning, "Indira Ji, today the whole country is remembering you..." The 1971 Indo-Pakistani War, which resulted in the creation of Bangladesh, was a major event during Indira Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister of India. India provided crucial support to the independence movement in East Pakistan (later Bangladesh), and the war began after Pakistan launched airstrikes on Indian airbases.

'Ask Pakistanis about the power of BrahMos missile': Yogi Adityanath

Tejinder Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, May 11: Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said that the power of the BrahMos missile was "demonstrated during Operation Sindo," and those who missed it should ask Pakistanis. His remarks came as Rajnath Singh virtually inaugurated the BrahMos Aerospace Integration and Testing Facility in Uttar Pradesh's Lucknow. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday inaugurated the BrahMos Aerospace Integration and Testing Facility in Lucknow, with the event being virtually attended by defence minister Rajnath Singh. (PTI) "What is the BrahMos missile? You have seen a glimpse of the power of the BrahMos missile during Operation Sindo. And if the glimpse was not visible, then ask Pakistanis about the strength of the missile," he was quoted as saying. Follow live updates on India and Pakistan news. Referring to the Centre's firm stand against terrorism, Adityanath

noted that "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has declared that any incident of terror will be considered a war. And until we completely crush terrorism, there will be no solution to this problem. The time has come to crush it and for this, entire India, in one voice, has to unite under Modi's leadership." He stressed the need for a united front under PM Modi to decisively eliminate terrorism, calling the current moment the right time for such action. The BJP leader also likened terrorism to a persistent threat, saying, "Terrorism is a 'dog's tail' that can never be straightened." "Terrorism will not follow the language of love. We have to give a reply to it in our own language. And in this direction, India has given a message to the world through Operation Sindo," he added. Operation Sindo, carried out on May 7, was India's response to the April 22 terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, where 25 Indian nationals and

one Nepali national lost their lives in an attack on a popular meadow. The operation started with India hitting its intended targets—nine terror training camps located in

minister Rajnath Singh during a briefing with opposition leaders, according to sources who attended the meeting. The locations were chosen based on credible intelligence and the camps' involvement in past terror operations. After the strikes, tensions between India and Pakistan escalated, resulting in increased cross-border shelling. The Indian Armed Forces responded in kind, while security was tightened along the borders. Power blackouts were imposed in vulnerable areas during Pakistani attacks to ensure civilian safety. On Sunday, the Indian Air Force (IAF) stated that it had "successfully carried out its designated missions during Operation Sindo," meeting key strategic goals. The IAF also confirmed that operations are "still ongoing." This update comes a day after India and Pakistan arrived at a ceasefire "understanding" to halt all military action across land, sea, and air with immediate effect.

Rahul Gandhi writes to PM Modi urging Parliament Session on Operation Sindo, ceasefire

Naresh Malhotra

New Delhi, May 11: Congress MP and Leader of Opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday and reiterate the unanimous request of the Opposition to convene a special session of Parliament immediately over Pahalgam terror attack, Operation Sindo and ceasefire. In the letter, Rahul Gandhi noted "it is crucial for the people and their representatives to discuss" the above-mentioned issues. India Pakistan news live updates "Dear Prime Minister, I reiterate the unanimous request of the Opposition to convene a special session of Parliament immediately," the letter read. "It is crucial for the people and their representatives to discuss the Pahalgam terror attack, Operation Sindo and today's ceasefire, first announced by U.S. President Trump. This will also be an opportunity to demonstrate our collective resolve to meet the challenges ahead. I trust that you will consider this demand seriously and swiftly," it added. Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha and Congress MP Mallikarjun Kharge also

raised the request, and cited a letter dated April 28, 2025, to convene a special session of both Houses of Parliament "in wake of inhuman terror attack in Pahalgam." "In view of latest developments Leader of Opposition Lok Sabha has already written to you again conveying the unanimous request of all Opposition parties for a special session of Parliament to discuss the Pahalgam terror, Operation Sindo and the ceasefire announcements first

from Washington DC and later by the Governments of India and Pakistan," Mallikarjun Kharge's letter to the prime minister read. "As Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha I am writing in support of this request. I trust you will agree," he added. After over three days of intense exchange of fire, India and Pakistan on Saturday reached an 'understanding' to immediately stop all firing and military action on land, air and sea. The ceasefire, which was first announced by US President Donald Trump on Saturday, was violated by Pakistan hours later with drones being intercepted over parts of Jammu, Srinagar, Punjab and Rajasthan. The military confrontation erupted after Islamabad launched drones and missiles towards the Indian territory, responding to the Operation Sindo military strikes carried out by New Delhi on nine terror infrastructures in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on May 7. Operation Sindo was launched in retaliation to the April 22 terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam in which terrorists found to have links with Pakistan killed 26 civilians.

'No Kashmir mediation, only PoK return on table'

Nasir Uddin

New Delhi, May 11: India has rejected any mediation related to the dispute on Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan, reaffirming that Islamabad needs to return the territory occupied by it. The government stance comes after US President Donald Trump offered to be the mediator to settle the dispute between both the nations that has been going on since 1947.

"The only matter related to Kashmir to discuss is Pakistan returning territory to

under its illegal occupation," agency quoted government sources as saying. Sources familiar with the matter had government said there will be talks with Pakistan only through the director general of military operations (DGMO) channel and that there was nothing else to discuss. According to US Vice President JD Vance called PM Narendra Modi on Saturday to talk about de-escalation. The PM told him that if they (Pakistan) attacked, India would attack stronger. While the Trump administration is claiming that they mediated the ceasefire, foreign secretary Vikram Misri said that it was in fact the Pakistani DGMO who called his Indian counterpart to urge de-escalation. US President Donald Trump on Sunday morning hailed the ceasefire "understanding" between India and Pakistan after four days of intense hostilities over the Pahalgam terror attack, saying the aggression could have led to the deaths of millions.



Army chief holds review meet, grants commanders 'full authority' hit back at Pakistan's ceasefire violations

Simmi Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, May 11: The Indian Army on Sunday said that commanders have been granted full authority to respond to any ceasefire violation by Pakistan, referring to the understanding reached during the DGMO-level talks held on Saturday. The statement came after a review meeting of Chief of Air Staff General Upendra Dwivedi with the Army commanders. In a post on X, the Army said, "Consequent to the ceasefire and airspace violations on night of 10-11 May 2025, #GeneralUpendraDwivedi, #COAS reviewed the security situation with the Army Commanders of the Western Borders. The #COAS has granted full authority to the Army Commanders for counteraction in the kinetic domain to any violation of the understanding reached vide the DGMO talks of 10 May 2025." Government sources told Hindustan Times that after the May 7 strikes, "every Pakistani action was dealt with very firmly." Sources added that Operation Sindo has not ended and marks a shift in India's approach to cross-border terrorism, establishing a "new normal" in its response. India's

stance since the May 7 strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) is that any aggression from Pakistan will be

India is open to is Pakistan returning the areas under its illegal occupation. Further, the Indus Waters Treaty has been linked directly to terrorism concerns—India has decided the treaty will remain suspended as long as Pakistan supports cross-border terrorism. Officials added that the cost of such terrorism will be raised and Pakistan cannot continue terror activities while seeking selective cooperation with India. Operation Sindo, launched by Indian Armed Forces in the early hours of May 7, targeted nine terror bases in Pakistan and PoK. This was in retaliation for the April 22 terror attacks in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, which killed 26 civilians, including a Nepali national. After the operation, tensions escalated, with increased cross-border shelling from Pakistan and strong retaliatory action from India. Border areas were placed on high alert and experienced power blackouts during Pakistani attacks. A ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan was announced on May 10 after US President Donald Trump shared the development via Truth Social. However, just hours after the announcement, Pakistan violated the truce. India intercepted Pakistani drones during a blackout in Srinagar.

Indian Air Force says Operation Sindo 'still ongoing'

Sanjay Arora

New Delhi, May 11: The Indian Air Force (IAF) on Sunday announced that it has successfully carried out its designated missions during Operation Sindo, meeting strategic objectives with precision, and further confirmed that the operations are "still ongoing." The "Operation Sindo" was conducted on May 7 in retaliation for the April 22 terror attacks that targeted a scenic meadow in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, killing 25 Indian nationals and one Nepali national. The operation targeted nine terror facilities located in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), with the sites chosen based on credible intelligence and their established involvement in terrorist activities. All responses to Pakistani attacks were then conducted as part of Operation Sindo. "The Indian Air



Force (IAF) has successfully executed its assigned tasks in Operation Sindo, with precision and professionalism. Operations were conducted in a deliberate and discreet manner, aligned with National Objectives. Since the Operations are still ongoing, a detailed briefing will be conducted in due course. The IAF urges all to refrain from speculation and dissemination of unverified information," it said in an X post. The development comes a day after India and Pakistan reached a ceasefire "understanding" to stop all military actions on land, sea, and in the air with immediate effect. Following India's military operation, tensions between India and Pakistan intensified, leading to a surge in cross-border shelling from Pakistan and corresponding retaliatory strikes by the Indian Armed Forces. In response to the heightened conflict, border areas were placed on high alert, with power blackouts enforced during Pakistani attacks as a precautionary measure. However, both nations reached an agreement to halt hostilities, with a ceasefire taking effect on May 10. "Pakistan has used swarm drones to intrude into Indian airspace, but they have met with a proportionate and effective response from the Indian military, thanks to its robust air defence system," the IAF said. At a press briefing held on May 9, Wing Commander Vyomika Singh said that on the night of May 8-9, the Pakistan military violated Indian airspace multiple times across the western border, targeting military sites.



under its illegal occupation," agency quoted government sources as saying. Sources familiar with the matter had government said there will be talks with Pakistan only through the director general of military operations (DGMO) channel and that there was nothing else to discuss. According to US Vice President JD Vance called PM Narendra Modi on Saturday to talk about de-escalation. The PM told him that if they (Pakistan) attacked, India would attack stronger. While the Trump administration is claiming that they mediated the ceasefire, foreign secretary Vikram Misri said that it was in fact the Pakistani DGMO who called his Indian counterpart to urge de-escalation. US President Donald Trump on Sunday morning hailed the ceasefire "understanding" between India and Pakistan after four days of intense hostilities over the Pahalgam terror attack, saying the aggression could have led to the deaths of millions.

NEWS BOX

Malayali family flees Jammu amid Pakistan shelling, hopes for peaceful return

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. For an average Malayali sitting in his house, over 3,000 km away from the scene of conflict, Pakistan's heavy shelling in Jammu and other areas may be a visual effect to be watched on TV screens. But ask Jini, a Malayali housewife who had been living in Jammu for one-and-a-half years. She has seen the ferocity of life-threatening attacks from across the border towards innocent human beings. Jini was living with Simon, a flight engineer at the Air Force station quarters in Jammu till Friday, five-year-old daughter Jewel, and Simon's mother Jenova. "The Pakistan military started heavy shelling on Thursday night from across the border," Jini told over the phone from New Delhi.

"From around 7.30 pm on Thursday we could see heavy gunfire over our quarters. It was repeated twice in intervals of 10 minutes. It lasted for around two hours. And we were all panicked. Hence, we decided to return to Kerala till normalcy returns to the valley," she said. Their daughter Jewel is studying in kindergarten. "There was a complete blackout in Jammu region because of Pakistan shelling," she added.

Jini, her daughter and mother-in-law, along with other family members, boarded a train to New Delhi and reached Kerala House where the state government had opened a control room to help stranded families, students and tourists. The family will board a train to Alappuzha, their native place, on Monday night hoping that everlasting peace will prevail in the valley and Jammu.

Telangana Bhavan emerges a sanctuary for the stranded

HYDERABAD. The Telangana Bhavan in New Delhi has emerged as a safe haven for the hundreds of Telangana-origin people who are presently in regions within range of Pakistani missiles. On the directions of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, the Telangana Bhavan was designated as the nodal centre for coordination and relief operations for citizens stranded or returning from the affected areas. A 24x7 control room was established to receive distress calls and coordinate rescue and support efforts. On Saturday, Telangana Bhavan was sheltering 30 citizens, including students from Lovely Professional University (LPU), Jalandhar, and other individuals from Jammu, while five have safely returned to their home towns. The Bhavan has arranged accommodation, food and transportation for them.

Resident Commissioner Gaurav Uppal has been proactive, interacting with the evacuees and collecting their details to further facilitate support. In addition, a medical camp has been set up at Telangana Bhavan to ensure immediate health check-ups and necessary care. Uppal stated that close liaison is being maintained with district administrations in the border regions from where distress calls are being received. Requesting anonymity, a scholar from IIT Jammu described the recent drone attacks to as "horrible". "I was on the terrace talking to my mother when I saw lights in the sky. Within minutes, there was a loud sound and then blackout," he recalled.

Yellow sewing machines are financed by me, says Minister Lokesh



VIJAYAWADA. Minister for HRD and IT Nara Lokesh on Saturday refuted allegations by YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and his party's social media handles regarding the distribution of yellow-painted sewing machines to women in Mangalagiri constituency. Lokesh clarified that the machines were distributed using his personal funds before he became an MLA.

Taking to 'X', Lokesh accused Jagan of neglecting the public during his tenure as Chief Minister, focusing solely on amassing wealth instead of welfare. He asserted that the sewing machines were part of his 'Stree Shakti' initiative, aimed at empowering women, weavers, goldsmiths, and petty vendors in Mangalagiri through self-employment.

"I was not an MLA then. Being a TDP leader, I took the initiative to empower the people, using my personal funds to support women aspiring for self-reliance. Every rupee spent came from my pocket, not from the public exchequer," Lokesh said. After inaugurating the Mangalagiri Stree Shakti Centre on June 20, 2022, as many as 3,508 women received training and sewing machines free of cost, he said. Lokesh emphasised that the yellow colour was chosen as a symbol of good fortune and not as a party marker.

Lokesh slammed Jagan for allegedly misusing public funds to promote party symbols and colours. "Unlike you, we have no intention of painting government schemes with party colours," he said, dismissing the allegations as false propaganda. "Your lies are temporary, but our truth is permanent," Lokesh remarked, urging the public to see through the false narrative propagated by the YSRCP.

Death in the woods: 10 years of sorrow and silence for kin of Seshachalam encounter victims

TIRUVANNAMALAI. Tucked away in the dry, dusty corners of Tiruvannamalai district lies Kannamangalam village — the abode of 12 Tamil families whose lives were thrown into disarray on April 7, 2015. No banners hang from its walls, no angry slogans tear through its air; just silence — thick and stubborn — clinging onto the women who have spent 10 years waiting, not for their slain husbands to walk back in, but for someone, anyone, to finally say out loud that what had happened to them was wrong! This year, too, the 7th of April passed by unremarkably. Barring calls for justice by a few human rights organisations, the 10th anniversary of the mass "encounter" killing of 20 Tamil men in the Seshachalam forest area of Andhra Pradesh by a special task force of AP police for allegedly trying to smuggle red sanders lay buried in memories.

Though public outrage was persistent in the immediate aftermath, and independent fact-finding by various organisations highlighted glaring loopholes in the theory propagated by the AP police, not a single officer was made accountable, and the case continues to remain dormant. While the mainstream society availed of the convenience of moving on, such a



privilege is beyond access for the families of the victims, of whom 12 hailed from Tiruvannamalai, seven from Dharmapuri and one from Salem. Tracing six of the families residing in Tiruvannamalai, embarked on a mission to find out how their lives changed in the absence of sole breadwinners and their fight for justice amid the dearth of resources. Their lives — shaped by poverty, interrupted education, and long-forgotten promises — remain frozen.

Lives left to endure

On April 6, 2015, P Selvi's husband, Perumal K, left their home for masonry — a work that thousands of men from Tiruvannamalai's Jawadhu Hills take up to support their families. The next day, the news of his death reached

home. "The punishment for a mistake they didn't commit was cruel. But the suffering they have made us endure is even worse," says Selvi, whose voice carries the weight of a decade spent mourning her husband.

The AP Special Task Force claimed the group that Perumal was part of was engaged in red sandalwood smuggling and had attacked forest personnel with axes and stones, leaving them with no option but to open fire. This account, however, never sat right with the families.

"After his death, I had no one," says Selvi,

who had to marry off her daughters early.

"He would've made sure they studied. Now, I work to raise my grandchildren. Every morning I ask myself how I'll keep the family going," she laments. Selvi's story resonates with the other five families living in the district as well. Their earnings, often limited to MGNREGA wages, cumbersome work in farmland and/or low-income government jobs like noon meal cooking, rarely exceed Rs 6,000-7,000 a month. Sitting in the quiet of a small house at Murugapadi in Andhra Pradesh in Tiruvannamalai, Pachaiammal recalls the last conversation she had with her husband, Moorthy G. "He said he would be back in two days. But what returned was his body, with injuries I still can't forget."

Wild tusker roaming farmlands in Erode under constant watch

A villager was killed in a wild elephant in the area a week ago. However, the forest officials say that this elephant was not behind that incident.

ERODE. Forest officials are actively monitoring through a hi-tech drone the movement of a male wild elephant threatening villagers within the Chennampatti forest range near Anthiyur in the Erode district. Though it was driven back into the forest on Thursday, the forest department is maintaining a vigil in response to the public demand.

Sources say a male wild elephant that came out from the Chennampatti forest had been roaming the farmlands and boundaries of villages there for over a week. On Thursday, unlike usual, the elephant entered the Mothangalpudur village. Shocked by this, the villagers alerted the forest department. A team of forest officials from the Chennampatti range rushed to the village and tried to drive the elephant back into the forest. However, the elephant roamed around in different parts of the village, giving endless



work to the forest department personnel for a long time. After a long struggle, the forest department chased the elephant back into the forest on Thursday.

However, the villagers have requested the forest officials to prevent the elephant from entering the farmlands adjacent to the villages again. Subsequently, a team of forest officials started monitoring the elephant.

AI graduate from Andhra Pradesh empowers tribal farmers with eco-friendly innovations

PARTHIPURAM MANYAM. Gembali Gowtham, a 30-year-old Data Science and Artificial Intelligence graduate from Parvathipuram-Manyam district, is transforming agriculture through innovation.

Despite hailing from a middle-class family in one of the State's most underdeveloped regions, Gowtham has emerged as an inventor and entrepreneur, designed eco-friendly electric devices meant to ease the burden of small and marginal farmers and tribal communities. After completing his post-graduation from GITAM University and a master's in AI in Mumbai, Gowtham initially pursued a career in software. However, his passion for practical solutions led him to leave his job and join Wassaan India, a non-governmental organisation that focuses on sustainable agriculture in rainfed areas. At Wassaan, he worked as a Research and Development Engineer, developing affordable agricultural tools aimed at empowering rural farmers.

One of his key inventions is a mini solar water pump, designed specifically for tribal farmers in hilltop villages prone to wild elephant attacks. Gowtham's innovation ensures that farmers have reliable access to water without incurring high costs.

Another notable invention is the mini millet dehuller, particularly for tribal farmers. Resembling a mixer but functioning as a mill, it reduces the physical strain of manual dehulling and is priced to be affordable for small farmers. Additionally, the mini portable sprayer is designed to ease the workload for women farmers, weighing just 2 kg and capable of spraying up to 400 litres through a 200-foot hose with a single charge. Beyond agriculture, Gowtham's passion for engineering has also led to innovations in electric mobility. He has developed 13 e-bike models, including India's first steering-less car, a solar e-bike, and a rocket bike that earned him a Guinness World Record for building it in just 15 hours.

Use Op Sindoos to speed up R&D in drone tech: Experts

BENGALURU. As drones are being used extensively in Operation Sindoos, experts point out that this war-like situation should be used to learn and scale up the pace of R&D in counter-drone technologies, and indigenous development of micro-controls and lethal technologies.

While most of the drones being used in Op Sindoos were made in Bengaluru, Pune and Gurugram-Noida circuit, microchips, microprocessors and micro controllers are being imported, including from Taiwan. A DRDO official, seeking anonymity, said the work on improving drones and other technological interventions is being taken up by the organisation in partnership with private firms and experts. Prof Abhishek, Department of Aerospace, IIT-Kanpur, said that a lot of research has been done in the drone sector since 2018 and now, the work on counter-drone technologies is being strengthened. These include

early detection, radio frequency jamming and laser technology to neutralise drones.

Experts said this should be done faster as the drone industry is growing at a rapid pace, especially over the last five years. They pointed out that drones are a Rs

drones, and India is lagging behind other countries. The defence sector should use

INDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence) platform to place orders with startups to strengthen drone manufacturing and come up with innovative ideas, they added.

Chief Research Scientist, Department of Aerospace Engineering, IISc, SB Omkar, said there is a lot of potential for growth in the drone industry but technological advances come with a cost, which the government should now support. Omkar, who is also chairperson for drone standardisation in India, said that volumes can be attained with economics and spreading drone usage across the country. Yusuf Unjhawala, Adjunct Scholar, Takshila University, Bengaluru, said that the use of drones in warfare heightened after the Ukraine war.

Now, work needs to be done based on imagination and anticipating demand. Technological advances are being worked out to make drones more lethal, compact, cheaper, long-ranging, faster and with more sensors.



1,500 crore market, much lesser than what it could have been by 2025. The country has over 1,000 registered drone companies, but only 10-15 have partnered with government agencies and are seriously working on design and development. Experts pointed out that work is also being done in improving beyond-the-line-of-sight technology in

Amid ceasefire, Mysuru Palace plays host to 'Op Abhyas'



experts and 110 home guards rushed to the spot. While CISF cordoned off the entire area, the health staff shifted the injured to a temporary health facility near Jayarama and Balarama Gates, while fire service personnel doused the fire. The mock drill was held for nearly an hour which was witnessed by hundreds of tourists who were at the palace to see the illumination. After successfully conducting the drill, DC G Lakshminatha Reddy said, "As directed by the home ministry and state government, a mock drill was held for emergency preparedness. We have formed 12 teams with personnel from the police, fire service, health and other departments. They have been deployed at important installations like Mysuru Palace, RBI, Kabin and Nugu dams. The drill was to convey to citizens that the district administration is prepared to handle any emergency and they should not panic in such situations," he said.

Mysuru City Police Commissioner Seema Latkar said the mock drill was to show the preparedness and coordination between various departments during emergencies at various vital installations in Mysuru. "We have increased security at Chamundeshwari Temple atop Chamundi Hills, RBI and other sensitive places and crowded places like Mysuru Palace.

Kerala excise dept battling severe resource crunch amid anti-drug operations

KOCHI. In the face of extensive operations to curb drug abuse and narcotics trafficking in the state, the excise department, the nodal agency handling such cases, is grappling with severe shortage of manpower and other resources. Even when it receives tip-offs on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) activities, the department often relies on other law enforcement agencies, including the police, to track suspects and gather crucial data.

"We carry out numerous raids and operations to tackle drug-related offences. But in most cases, we rely heavily on police and other agencies to trace suspects and gather vital data due to outdated technology and limited resources," an excise officer said on condition of anonymity. At times, other agencies carry out seizures and apprehensions based on those tip-offs, he said.

For instance, when the department needs a suspect's call records or digital footprint, it must send a formal request to the superintendent of police or approach the cyber cell. This process often takes up to 24 hours, during which time the accused may flee the state. By contrast, the police force can access the same information within 5-10 minutes, the officer added.

Ernakulam assistant excise commissioner Suresh M said, "Although we are actively participating in Operation Clean Slate, the state initiative against drug trafficking, the department continues to struggle due to inadequate technology and workforce." He highlighted the acute shortage of drivers for night-time patrols. Still, our officers carry out their responsibilities with sincerity, and the results speak for themselves, he added. Addressing the burden of workload, Suresh pointed out that while officers are entitled to 20 casual leaves annually, in addition to weekly offs and public holidays, staff shortage often makes it impossible to avail leave. On a positive note, he emphasised that there is no shortage of vehicles in the department, as new two- and four-wheelers are added each year.

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Panic stations at NCR condos—one turns basement into bunker, another advises residents to turn off phone's location

Noida. Panic over India-Pakistan tensions, with the northern and western borders becoming a theatre of conflict since India struck terror bases inside Pakistan on May 7, has led to at least one housing society in NCR converting a part of its basement into a 'bunker', complete with beds and oxygen cylinders. The society, Lotus 100, said it had done so at the behest of residents. Another society in Indirapuram issued an advisory to its residents to turn off their phone locations so that "enemy drones" can't track them, not just falling for a bogus message circulating widely on social media that asked people to do so, but also perpetrating it on the official society group. One more announced another blackout drill. With society managements overstepping their lines and ending up stoking more panic in the process among residents, the administration had earlier called a meeting of all RWA representatives to read out dos, and specifically don'ts, to them. Bhawan Chaturvedi, President of

the Lotus 300 AOA, told TOI they have placed eight beds in the basement of six towers in our society as a precautionary measure. "We have also stocked up essential medicines and oxygen cylinders after residents wanted the AOA to take some security measures in view of the increased tensions," he said. A message circulated by the condominium's AOA on the Noida Federation of AOA WhatsApp group read, "As a precautionary measure for emergencies, evacuation and safe zones have been established in the lower basements of each tower, located just outside the lift lobby in the parking area. These zones are equipped with beds, chairs, water, fans, meds/first aid box, and support staff." Soon after, Rajiva Singh, president of the Noida Federation of AOAs, asked Lotus 300's AOA to consult local authorities before making such arrangements. "More so, because during a meeting with the DM on Friday, security agencies told us that basements are not considered safe in case of air raids," he



said. On May 7, some societies had also gone beyond the official order and conducted unsupervised drills, with measures ranging from asking residents to assemble in basements, turning power off centrally, and deactivating lifts as well. Subsequently, Noida DM on Friday held a meeting with RWA and AOA representatives, urging them not to fall for misinformation. "We ask residents to remain calm as there is no reason to panic," Atul Kumar, ADM (finance and

revenue), told TOI. Meanwhile, in Ghaziabad, an Indirapuram society has issued an advisory to its residents to turn off their phone locations so that "enemy drones" couldn't track them. The society also asked all residents to assemble in the basement of their towers for a blackout drill on Saturday. Yet another AOA put up metal detectors at their society's pedestrian entry and exit points. "We have also decided to switch off all lights in the society's common area after 10 pm," KV Tyagi of Vasundhara's Olive County told TOI. The society had also planned a blackout drill on Saturday, but cancelled it after India and Pakistan on Saturday agreed to an immediate ceasefire. Ghaziabad DM Deepak Meena met with several RWA representatives on Saturday and directed them not to organise drills on their own. "We have also asked residents not to forward unverified messages or news reports.

Curbs across Ghaziabad, no-fly zone in parts

Ghaziabad. Curbs under Section 163 of BNSS were imposed on Saturday in parts of Ghaziabad after border tension and Pakistani drones targeting India's air bases. The section empowers a district magistrate, sub-divisional magistrate or executive magistrate to issue orders in urgent cases of nuisance or apprehended danger. A no-fly zone was also notified over nine police station areas in the NCR district, where Hindon air base is located.

Ghaziabad police also deemed it necessary to regulate operation of drones, paragliders, hot-air balloons and UAVs. Police placed Kotwali, Kav Nagar, Link Road, Sahibabad, Tilak Nagar, Tronica City, Loni, Modinagar and Muradnagar under the no-fly zone, prohibiting all such objects for any kind of event. Media organisations must obtain permission from DCP of the area if they plan to use drones. Police said any violation of the orders will lead to destruction of these flying objects. Cops also heightened security around the Hindon IAF base which was declared a no-fly zone. A senior officer told TOI that police increased patrolling near the air base, with 50 cops deployed in its periphery. He also said police will take out route marches and dog squads will be deployed at identified areas. Security measures have been tightened at public places, including malls and metro stations. Police heightened security at public spaces, including malls and metro stations. They placed sensitive areas, where many tenants come from outside the district, under extra surveillance. Police are verifying the identity of people who arrived in the city recently from other places.

Police formed 30 quick response teams (QRTs) at various stations to handle threats as and when they arise. Fire tenders were also put on alert for assistance when needed. The district administration set up a control room in the collectorate, with personnel

GMDA plans to set up Rs 97.6cr sewage station in Gurgaon

Gurgaon. To address the problem of sewage backflow in residential areas, GMDA plans to increase the capacity of its main pumping station in Sector 9A to 665.5 MLD. The project, estimated at Rs 97.6 crore, will be completed in two years after construction starts. At present, the Dhanwarpur sewage network is handling over 215 MLD from sectors 1 to 23, sectors 33 to 37, and several villages, operating close to its maximum capacity of 218 MLD. The existing pumping station, with 68 MLD and 100 MLD sewage treatment plants (STPs) constructed in 2000 and 2015, respectively, has suffered deterioration over time, leading to pump failures, sewage backflow, and overflows in nearby colonies. A separate 50 MLD STP, commissioned in 2019 by the municipal corporation, also depends on the same pumping station. This interconnected

nature of sewer lines means if one pump in any main pumping station fails, there will be backflow of sewage in nearby colonies. "We have decided to increase the capacity of



the existing main pumping station to 650 MLD," said a senior GMDA official, adding that the authority had already

invited tenders for the same. "The new pumping station will include six coarse screens (four mechanical and two manual), three sewage sumps, an odour control unit, an operating gallery for valves and transformers, and diesel generator sets," he added. Meanwhile, there have been recurrent complaints from residents of the affected areas about sewage overflow and foul odour due to failures in the pumping station motors. Recurring faults in the motors at the pumping station result in sewage backflow into the sector that spills onto roads, parks, and vacant plots. This increases the risk of vector-borne diseases. The existing pumping station proves insufficient during times of heavy rainfall. We hope GMDA will expedite the process of building the new station," said Suraj Bholia, general secretary of Sector 9A.

Amaltas to Gulmohar, thematic trees to line up roads in Greater Noida soon

Noida. Like the Cherry Blossoms of Japan, Cherokee roses of the USA and Amaltas of Lutyens' Delhi, Greater Noida Authority now plans to have thematic trees and plants across different green spaces, open areas, roadsides and central verges. It has also called upon RWAs, NGOs, entrepreneurs' associations and civil society groups to adopt green belts this monsoon as a part of its broader plan to transform Greater Noida into a 'city of flowers and fountains'. The adoptee, officials said, will collaborate with the Authority in plantation activities and for the long-term upkeep of the green belts. Officer on special duty (horticulture) Abhishek Pathak said the Authority's plan is to have "one street, one tree variety". "Under it, a single variety of tree—Amaltas, Gulmohar or Palash—will be planted along a stretch to create a unique visual identity and aesthetic appeal for the area. For instance, on a 100-metre stretch,

trees (Cassia fistula Linn) along the road from Depot metro station towards Sector Mu and renamed the stretch as Amaltas Road after the flora. Kachnar (Bauhinia variegata) saplings were also planted from Amritpuram roundabout to Rampur



roundabout, and the route was renamed Kachnar Marg. Alok Singh, a resident of

where gardens are practically a bunch of flowerpots on balconies. "People interested in gardening will be eager to support this drive. But the Authority should provide tools for gardening and fencing, if needed," he said. Residents' associations, however, urged the Greater Noida Authority not to lose sight of the several green belts and parks that are drying up across the city. A resident of Sector Beta 1, who did not wish to be named, said that each year, Authority plants thousands of saplings, but they die due to a lack of maintenance. "The initiative will need more than just residents' participation to succeed. Coordination will be key," he said. This year, UP has proposed to plant 35 crore saplings to boost the state's green cover. Noida alone is to plant around 10 lakh saplings. To

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I, Renu Ajay Kumar Gupta, W/O Gupta, Renu Kumar Bhimeson R/O 902, Grand Ajnara Heritage, Sector-75, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201301 Have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as KIRAN.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as Ajay Mittal S/o Ishwar Mittal R/o H-224, Deepali Enclave, Pimprija, Shakur Basti, North West Delhi, Delhi-110034 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Ajay Kumar Mittal.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as D Ramakrishnan S/o K R Doraiswamy R/o C-251, Cityview Apartments, Plot No. 119, Sector 35, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Sector 35, Uttar Pradesh-201301 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Ramakrishnan Doraiswamy.

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NEWS BOX

Rubio dials Pakistan army chief, Indian External Affairs Minister, urges de-escalation

Washington US President Donald Trump added a new art piece to the Oval Office—a statue depicting the aftermath of the July 2024 assassination attempt against him in Butler, Pennsylvania.

The sculpture was spotted sitting on a side table next to Trump's Resolute Desk on Friday as he signed several executive orders in front of reporters.

In a post on X, the White House said, "FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT! Spotted in the Oval Office."

The statue depicts Trump defiantly raising his fist in the air moments after being hit in the ear by one of would-be assassin Thomas Matthew Crooks' bullets on July 13. "Fight Fight! Fight!" Trump shouted at rallygoers at the Butler Farm Show Grounds, in the iconic moment captured by the artist. Three Secret Service agents, including the current director of the agency Sean Curran, can also be seen in the art piece trying to usher Trump offstage.

The Oval Office statue isn't the only piece of art related to the Butler assassination attempt on display at the White House. The painting depicts Trump moments after a bullet grazed his ear during a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, last July. Trump is shown defiantly raising his fist in the air with blood splattered across his face and the American flag in the background. Special Assistant to the President and White House Principal Deputy Press Secretary Harrison Fields clarified in a post on X that "Obama remains in the Entrance Hall of the White House State Floor." The portrait is displayed in the Grand Foyer of the East Wing, while former President Barack Obama's portrait has been relocated to the Entrance Hall of the White House State Floor.

Fields' post shows that the Obama painting is still hanging in a prime spot, overlooking former President Franklin D Roosevelt's Steinway grand piano, as reported by the New York Post.

Iran Will Not Back Down From Nuclear Rights, Foreign Minister Says

Dubai Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Saturday that if the United States' goal is to deprive Iran of its "nuclear rights", Tehran will never back down over those rights.

Araghchi was speaking in Doha a day ahead of another round of planned nuclear talks between Iran and the US in Oman. "If the goal of the negotiations is to deprive Iran of its nuclear rights, I state clearly that Iran will not back down from any of its rights," state media quoted Araghchi as saying. Iran has repeatedly said its right to enrich uranium is non-negotiable and has ruled out a "zero enrichment" demand by some US officials. But US President Donald Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, said in an interview on Friday that Iran's "enrichment facilities have to be dismantled" under any accord with the United States.

Trump, who withdrew Washington from a 2015 deal between Tehran and world powers meant to curb its nuclear activity, has threatened to bomb Iran if no new deal is reached to resolve the long unresolved dispute. Western countries say Iran's nuclear programme, which Tehran accelerated after the US walkout from the now moribund 2015 accord, is geared toward producing weapons, whereas Iran insists it is purely for civilian purposes. In its indirect talks with the United States, Iran emphasizes its right to peaceful use of nuclear energy and clearly declares that it is not seeking nuclear weapons," Araghchi said. "Iran continues negotiations in good faith, and if the goal of these talks is to ensure the non-acquisition of nuclear weapons, an agreement is possible. However, if the aim is to limit Iran's nuclear rights, Iran will never retreat from its rights."

Chicago White Sox celebrate Pope Leo XIV as a longtime supporter

UPDATED In an unexpected win for Chicago's South Side, the struggling White Sox have found a new and perhaps divine supporter: Pope Leo XIV. The newly elected pontiff, born Robert Prevost, made history this week as the first-ever Pope from the United States—and it didn't take long for his Chicago sports roots to come to light. Amid initial reports that he might be a Cubs fan, the White Sox quickly set the record straight after Pope Leo's brother, John Prevost, confirmed in an interview with WGN-TV that the pontiff has always been loyal to the Sox. "He was always a Sox fan," John said, clearing up the confusion caused by a viral Cubs post that congratulated the Pope with a doctored Wrigley Field marquee. The White Sox embraced the revelation with pride, posting a video of the interview and updating the scoreboard at Guaranteed Rate Field to read: "HEY CHICAGO, HE'S A SOX FAN!" That message was still on display during batting practice Friday, ahead of the team's game against Miami. White Sox manager Will Venable welcomed the news, calling it a "proud moment for Chicago." Smiling, he added: "We'll take it. It's great to have him on our side, for sure."

The team also sent a jersey and cap to the Vatican, commemorating their most high-profile fan at a time when reasons to celebrate have been few. The White Sox currently sit at the bottom of the AL Central, coming off a historically poor 41-121 season in 2024—the worst in modern MLB history. But Pope Leo XIV's fandom appears to go deeper than most imagined. Social media users unearthed footage of him attending Game 1 of the 2005 World Series at the US Cellular Field, cheering on the Sox as they clinched a 5-3 win over the Houston Astros. The Sox would go on to sweep the series—their first championship since 1917.

His sports loyalty extends beyond baseball. Rev. Robert P. Hagan, a friend of Pope Leo and chaplain at Villanova University—the Pope's alma mater—told The Athletic that Leo also keeps a close eye on the New York Knicks due to their strong core of former Villanova stars.

Pakistan admits to role in Pulwama terror attack amid Pahalgam heat



world In a moment of showmanship amid the heat of tensions, Pakistan's military brass admitted to its role in the killing of 40 paramilitary personnel in Pulwama in 2019. The rare admission that the Pulwama terror attack was "a tactical brilliance" of the Pakistani military came after years of denial and in front of dozens of media personnel, including foreign correspondents. "We tried to tell them with our tactical brilliance in Pulwama..." said Air Vice Marshal Aurangzeb Ahmed during a press conference on Friday. He is the Director General Public Relations for the Pakistan Air Force (PAF). With this, Aurangzeb has not only destroyed the fig leaf that Pakistan was using over the Pulwama attack, but also the April 22 Pahalgam attack. The rare admission runs counter to Pakistan's claim of innocence in the Pahalgam terrorist attack, and the pretence of seeking evidence from India over its involvement. Lt Gen Chaudhry is the son of nuclear scientist Sultan

Bashiruddin Mahmood, who met al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden and tried to hand over nuclear weapons technology to terrorists. He features on the UN Security Council's al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee list of terrorists. Pakistan has consistently denied involvement in the Pulwama attack, where a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) suicide

bomber killed 40 CRPF personnel. Pakistan's then-Prime Minister Imran Khan called the attack a "matter of grave concern" but rejected the involvement of its army establishment's role in the attack. Pakistan demanded evidence and denied India's charges, despite the JeM claiming responsibility. Pakistan's denial

persisted despite India's dossier linking the attacker, Adil Ahmad Dar, to the JeM, whose headquarters in Bawalpur, Subhan Allah camp, was turned to rubble by Indian strikes during Operation Sindo. In relation to the Pulwama attack, India conducted airstrikes on a JeM terror camp in Balakot, POK. The operation on terror hideouts involved 12 Mirage 2000 jets targeting JeM's largest training camp. Pakistan's response led to an aerial dogfight and the capture of Indian fighter pilot Abhinandan Varthaman. However, the air force officer was released by Pakistan days later, amid heightened tensions between both countries. While Pakistan's government has never officially accepted its involvement in the Pulwama attack, Aurangzeb's moment of bravado, delivered in front of the glare of cameras, managed to do what years of pressure couldn't.

Sheikh Hasina's Awami League Banned By Bangladesh's Yunus Government

Dhaka Bangladesh's interim government on Saturday banned the Awami League, the political party of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, pending the outcome of a trial over its crackdown on mass protests that prompted her ouster last year. According to the United Nations, up to 1,400 protesters died in July 2024 when Hasina's government launched a brutal campaign to silence the opposition. Hasina remains in self-imposed exile in India and has defied an arrest warrant from Dhaka over charges of crimes against humanity.

"It has been decided to ban the activities—including in cyberspace—of the Awami League under the Anti-Terrorism Act until the trial of the Awami League and its leaders ends,"



Asif Nazrul, a government advisor on law and justice, told reporters. Bangladesh's interim leader, Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, has led an interim government since Hasina was overthrown. Nazrul said the decision was taken to ensure the country's "sovereignty and security" and "the security of the protesters" along with safeguarding "the plaintiffs and the witnesses of the

tribunal." Yunus's administration also simultaneously approved an amendment to the country's International Crimes Tribunal Act, allowing authorities to prosecute political parties and their affiliated bodies. The Awami League rejected the administration's move, calling it "illegitimate." The ban comes a day after thousands of people rallied outside Yunus's residence, demanding a ban on Hasina's party. On Thursday, former Awami League leader Abdul Hamid—also under investigation—successfully left the country. At least three police officers responsible for overseeing airport arrivals and departures have been dismissed for negligence in the wake of Hamid's departure, officials said.

Nebraska authorities investigate murder-suicide involving Koch family in Cozad



world The quiet city of Cozad is reeling after a devastating tragedy involving one of its most well-known families. Authorities say four members of the Koch family were found dead in their home near Johnson Lake on Saturday in what appears to be a triple murder-suicide. The incident has sent shockwaves through the community. According to several media reports, Jeremy Koch, 42, is believed to have fatally stabbed his wife Bailey Koch, 41, and their sons, Hudson, 18, and Asher, 16, before taking his own life.

Dawson County deputies responded to the scene around 9:45 a.m., where a weapon was recovered. The Nebraska State Patrol is currently leading the investigation, and autopsies have been ordered. The Nebraska State Patrol also assured that there is no danger to the public. The Kochs were known across central Nebraska for their advocacy on mental health. Jeremy had long battled severe depression, and the couple had openly documented their journey through social media and a program they co-founded, "Anchoring Hope for

Mental Health." Created by Bailey, the GoFundMe campaign shared that Jeremy Koch had been diagnosed with severe depression in 2009. "For years, we lived in the shadows, keeping our struggles hidden. It wasn't until 2015 that we started opening up, after Jeremy survived at least four suicide attempts. The most severe was in 2012 when he crashed into a semi-truck on the highway. He suffered a broken leg, a punctured lung, a fractured pancreas, a complete colon reconstruction, and a brain bleed—and yet, the depression remained. When he regained consciousness, I felt both awe and relief, realizing that his attempt had failed," the fundraiser description explains. The campaign raised over USD 20,300 in support.

Just days before the incident, Bailey shared that Jeremy had recently been discharged from the hospital but was struggling with a new medication. "He's only been on it for three nights, and his reaction has been negative," she wrote.

Putin proposes direct talks with Ukraine on May 15 to end war after three years

Moscow Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday proposed direct talks with Ukraine on May 15 in Istanbul that he said should be aimed at achieving a durable peace and eliminating the root causes of the war. Putin sent thousands of troops into Ukraine in February 2022, triggering the gravest confrontation between Russia and the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

He said that Russia was proposing direct talks with Ukraine in Istanbul in an attempt to "eliminate the root causes of the conflict" and "to achieve the restoration of a long-term, lasting peace." It was not Russia that broke off negotiations in 2022. It was Kyiv. Nevertheless, we are proposing that Kyiv resume direct



negotiations without any preconditions," Putin said, referring to failed talks shortly after the Russian invasion of 2022. "We offer the Kyiv authorities to resume negotiations already on Thursday, in Istanbul," Putin said. "Our proposal, as they say, is on the table, the decision is now up to the Ukrainian authorities and their curators, who are guided, it seems, by their personal political ambitions, and not by the interests of their peoples." Major European powers threw their weight behind an unconditional 30-day Ukraine ceasefire on Saturday, with the backing of US President Donald Trump, and threatened Putin with "massive" new sanctions if he did not accept within days.

Trump, who says he wants to be remembered as a peacemaker, has repeatedly said he wants to end the "bloodbath" of the Ukraine war which his administration casts as a proxy war between the United States and Russia. Former US President Joe Biden, Western European leaders and Ukraine cast the invasion as an imperial-style land grab and repeatedly vowed to defeat Russian forces. Putin casts the war as a watershed moment in Moscow's relations with the West, which he says humiliated Russia after the Soviet Union fell in 1991 by enlarging NATO and encroaching on what he considers Moscow's sphere of influence, including Ukraine.

Donald Trump's "Total Reset" Remark After Marathon US-China Tariff Talks

Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng met for about eight hours with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer in their first face-to-face meeting.

Washington US President Donald Trump hailed talks with China in Switzerland on Saturday, saying the two sides had negotiated "a total reset ... in a friendly, but constructive, manner." "A very good meeting today with China, in Switzerland. Many things discussed, much agreed to," Trump posted on his Truth Social platform. Trump added: "We

want to see, for the good of both China and the US, an opening up of China to American business. GREAT PROGRESS MADE!!!" He did not elaborate on the progress. Earlier, top US and Chinese officials wrapped up the first day of talks in Geneva aimed at defusing a trade war that threatens to hammer the global economy and planned to resume negotiations on Sunday, a source close to the discussions said.

Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng met for about eight hours with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer in their first face-to-face meeting since the world's two largest economies heaped tariffs well above 100% on each other's goods. Neither side made any statements afterwards about the substance of the discussions nor signaled any specific progress towards reducing crushing

tariffs as meetings at the residence of Switzerland's ambassador to the UN concluded at about 8 pm local time (1800 GMT). Bessent, Greer and He were meeting in Geneva after weeks of growing tensions prompted by Trump's tariff blitz starting in February and retaliation from Beijing that has brought nearly \$600 billion in annual bilateral trade to a virtual standstill. The trade dispute, combined with Trump's decision



last month to impose duties on dozens of other countries, has disrupted supply chains, unsettled financial markets and stoked fears of a sharp global downturn. Undisclosed location The location of the talks in the Swiss diplomatic hub was never made public. However, witnesses saw both delegations returning after a lunch break to the gated UN ambassador's villa, which has its own private park overlooking Lake Geneva in the leafy suburb of Cologny. Earlier, US officials including Bessent and Greer smiled as they left their hotel on the way to the talks, wearing red ties and American flags on their lapels. Bessent declined to speak to reporters. At the same time, Mercedes vans with tinted windows were seen leaving a hotel where the Chinese delegation was staying on the lakeside as runners preparing for a weekend marathon warmed up in the sunshine.

NEWS BOX

Early onset? Monsoon likely to reach Kerala on May 27



THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. Kerala looks all set to experience the earliest onset of monsoon since 2009. Going by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the southwest monsoon is likely to reach the state on May 27 this year — earlier than the usual date of June 1. Normally, southwest monsoon sets in over Kerala on June 1 with a standard deviation of about seven days.

According to IMD officials, the monsoon had arrived in the state on May 23 in 2009. In 2011, 2018 and 2022, it reached on May 29. The arrival of the main rain-bearing system over the Indian mainland is marked by the onset of southwest monsoon over Kerala. It's a significant indicator that shows transition from the hot season to the rainy season.

The IMD issues operational forecasts for monsoon onset using an indigenously developed statistical system with a model error of ± 4 days. The monsoon onset is predicted based on six factors — minimum temperatures over north-west India; pre-monsoon rainfall peak over south peninsula; mean sea level pressure over subtropical Pacific Ocean; outgoing long wave radiation over south China Sea; lower tropospheric zonal wind over northeast Indian Ocean and upper tropospheric zonal wind over Indonesia region.

Now 'Mission NoDropOut' to tackle low SSLC pass rates in Karnataka

BENGALURU. The Active Bengaluru Foundation (ABF) has launched the 'Mission NoDropOut' initiative to tackle the low SSLC pass rates across Karnataka. With a failure rate of 33.86%, students from underprivileged backgrounds, such as those in the 2B category, have recorded some of the lowest pass percentages, 57.27 among Scheduled Tribe (ST) students and 58.4 overall.

The Mission NoDropOut is a non-commercial campaign aimed at supporting students appearing for the SSLC supplementary exams starting May 26. Currently, 22 coaching centres across Bengaluru are participating in the initiative, reaching over 1,000 students, particularly those from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, urban slums, government schools, and those facing socio-economic challenges. The daily classes, conducted with the assistance of teachers and school administrators, focus on subjects like Kannada, science, and mathematics, in which most students have struggled.

"We started the initiative for students from economically and socially backward communities, who are often neglected. If they fail again, their education might come to a halt," said Syed Tousif Mazood, a founding member of ABF. "We urge more schools to join the initiative, so these last-minute efforts can help secure the future of these children," he added.

Martyred Jawan's body reaches Andhra Pradesh's Sathya Sai village

ANANTAPUR. The mortal remains of Army Jawan M Murali Naik were brought to his native village Kalli Thanda in Gorantla mandal of Sri Sathya Sai district at 10 pm on Saturday. The last rites of the Jawan martyred during 'Operation Sindo' in Kashmir, will be performed with official honours on Sunday morning. Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, HRD and IT Minister Nara Lokesh, Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha and several other Ministers will visit Kalli Thanda on Sunday to pay homage to Murali Naik. The body reached Bangalore airport around 2 pm, and from there it was taken to his native place by road in a procession. A large number of people participated in the procession. People also congregated at road junctions in large numbers to offer tributes to the martyred Jawan, and it took several hours to reach his native village Kalli Thanda. BC Welfare Minister S Savitha took part in the procession from Bengaluru to his residence. Several people's representatives from the erstwhile combined Anantapur district also joined the procession from Kodikonda check post to Murali Naik's native village.

Since Saturday morning, many public representatives, and leaders from various political parties visited the house of Murali Naik to console his parents Sriram Naik and Jyotibai. Maharashtra Industries Minister Uday Samant visited Kalli Thanda, and consoled the bereaved parents.

He assured Murali Naik's parents that he would stand by them and extend all support.

Singer Mangli from Gooty in Anantapur district also consoled them.

Murali Naik's relatives, friends and schoolmates visited the house. They recalled their childhood memories with Murali Naik. All arrangements have been made for the conduct of Murali Naik's last rites in Kalli Thanda. People will pay their homage to the martyred Jawan from 6 to 8 am on Sunday. After the Army officials pay their last respects, public representatives and higher officials will pay their homage. The funeral procession will begin at 10 am.

Kerala's Covid death data among most accurate, CRS figures show

KOCHI. Amid persistent allegations that Kerala under-reported its Covid-19 death toll, new data from the Civil Registration System (CRS) has reinforced the state's pandemic-reporting credibility. Figures reveal that Kerala had one of the smallest discrepancies between officially reported Covid deaths and actual excess fatalities. According to the CRS, Kerala recorded 68,981 excess deaths during the pandemic, while the state officially reported 44,235 deaths — a difference far narrower than in several other states. In contrast, Gujarat recorded 2,63,253 excess deaths against an official toll of just 5,816. Similarly, Madhya Pradesh has also posted a significant gap.

"The report shows the fact that our state has not reported pandemic-related deaths other than the excess deaths caused by direct infection. The report also tells the world that ours is one of the societies that has most effectively dealt with the Covid pandemic," Health and Family Welfare Minister Veena George wrote on Facebook. Kerala had been criticised for its high caseload and death figures during the pandemic, with some states accusing it of inflating numbers. However, the new data suggests that rather than over-reporting,



Kerala's figures were closer to the actual toll — due in part to a more transparent and robust surveillance system. The minister added that the state was criticised by the opposition, which alleged that deaths are not being recorded accurately and that its systems have failed. "There was a resolution moved by the opposition and an investigation carried out by a team from the Centre," she added. Health experts say that a variety of factors contributed to the discrepancy between official Covid death count and excess deaths across states, including limitations in data collection mechanisms. "There are always excess deaths during epidemics, and they may not all be directly reported as Covid-related," said Dr B Ekbal, a public health expert and former member of the Kerala State

Planning Board. He said Kerala's relative success lay in its ability to manage serious Covid cases in public hospitals, offering ICU care, ventilator support, and access to expensive medication — all free of cost. "Kerala has a high elderly population and a high morbidity rate. Yet, we were able to reduce mortality through reverse quarantine and effective hospital management," Dr Ekbal added. Dr Roji M John, another public health expert, pointed out that Kerala's stronger health infrastructure and better surveillance systems meant the state was more capable of accurately recording both cases and deaths. "We can't directly compare Kerala to other states. Health infrastructure and data accessibility are not uniform across the country," he said. Both experts agreed that under-reporting in other states may stem from weaker data systems and differences in recording practices. Dr Ekbal also noted that international comparisons should be handled cautiously.

"India and other Asian countries had relatively lower death rates than the west — possibly due to genetic factors or existing immunity from other diseases. But what matters now is improving the accuracy of health data across all states," he said.

TVK functionaries told to enrol members, bolster party from booth level

COIMBATORE. The TVK's district-level functionaries have been instructed to strengthen the party at the booth level within a month by increasing membership and identifying major local issues similar to the custodial death in Sathankulam that occurred in 2020. The recent arrival of actor-politician Vijay in Coimbatore, which marked his first official political visit here, sparked political tension as he aimed to build the foundational structure of his party, focusing on booth-level committee meetings. Accompanying Vijay were key party functionaries, including the election campaign management general secretary Aadvah Arjuna, deputy general secretary for the IT and social media unit CTR Nirmal Kumar, propaganda secretary A Rajmohan and several others. They participated in a two-day training session exclusively for booth agents and district-level



functionaries. A district-level functionary who attended the session said that they received instructions to establish party presence at every booth across the state within a month. "Various tasks have been assigned to booth agents and functionaries to strengthen the party by creating a harmonious environment with voters at the booth level, addressing basic issues faced by the voters and bringing the

issues to light proactively. They were also encouraged to connect with voters through modern social media, and the old method 'thimmai pracharam' (verandah or portico campaigns), and street meetings ('therumunai pracharam')." He said. "As an actor, Vijay is a well-known figure, and his ideologies are well-received. But we need to convey his image and perspective to the voters by meeting them in person. We have established separate wings for women, youth, lawyers and social media. Each team is expected to gather at least 10 members within a month and hold its first meeting to strategize on reaching the maximum number of people in their field." Every booth contains between 250 to 1,300 votes, with many being first-time voters familiar with the TVK. Through these voters, we aim to connect with the general public, he noted.

Private school bus inspection ahead of reopening in TN's Krishnagiri

KRISHNAGIRI. Krishnagiri Collector C Dinesh Kumar inspected safety measures in private school buses at Government Arts College for Men premises at Kattinayanapalli on Saturday.

According to officials, as part of the annual school vehicle inspection, out of 1,029 buses and vehicles of 48 private schools under the Krishnagiri Regional Transport Office limits, 893 buses and vehicles owned by 105 schools under the Hosur Regional Transport Office were inspected by the collector. He urged school authorities to maintain the vehicles with fitness certificates and fire extinguishers, install panic buttons, keep license and insurance of the vehicle, display emergency contact numbers, ensure emergency exits are in working condition and drive within the speed limit. "In case of any issues in the vehicles, it should be immediately informed to the school management and rectified. If the



management failed to do so, it can be informed to the concerned RTO limit officer. The license of drivers will be cancelled and legal action can be initiated if the driver was found driving after consuming any banned tobacco products or liquor," Dinesh Kumar said. Following this, fire and rescue services team demonstrated how to put off fires inside the bus. The '108' ambulance team demonstrated how to save children and administer first aid after an accident. Hosur Regional Transport Officer P Prabahar told, "Out of 1,922 buses and vehicles, 421 buses were inspected on Saturday and the remaining will be inspected within a week. During inspection, minor negligence like dysfunctional CCTVs and emergency doors, poor tire maintenance and other issues were found in 58 vehicles.

Carnivore DNA at hunt site important to ascertain identity, reveals NCBS study

BENGALURU. Forensic evidence is important to not just understand the crime scene and gather information about criminals, but it is also crucial in wildlife to ascertain the number of carnivores in an area and identify the individuals.

A recent study by researchers from the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bengaluru, showed that tracing the DNA left behind by large carnivores at the livestock kill site helps as a reliable source of information to identify the predators. Prof Uma Ramakrishna, coauthor of the report — Trace DNA from kill sites identifies individual predators — said this approach helps as an effective tool in managing man-animal conflicts, understanding predator behaviour and the ecology. The researchers studied 198 livestock kills in Kanha and Bandhavgarh tiger reserves. They collected 342 saliva, 33 scat and 395 shed hair samples. Based on the study, the individuals were classified as true predators at 72 sites and circumstantial predators at 34 sites. Also uncertain predators were noted at 49 sites. In communities that live in proximity to large carnivores, livestock predation can cause conservation

challenges. Systematic understanding of individuals involved in conflict is a critical first step towards a solution, Uma said.

Researchers noted that traces of DNA of the predator left at the kill site in the form of saliva, shed hair, urine, scat etc can be used as the only evidence for conclusive predator identification. These methods help along with the conventional methods including camera traps at kill sites which can often be unreliable in identification of the individual predator. Identification of individual predators becomes difficult when predators lack unique natural marks for identification.

They also noted that around the world, managing human-wildlife conflict often involves relocating or removing the suspected predator. Typically, forest departments rely on field signs like pug marks, scat or claw marks to identify the animal involved. However, these signs can be ambiguous and removing the non-target individual may disturb carnivore populations and sometimes further intensify conflict situations. More reliable and robust genetic identification will be effective for conflict resolution.

Integrated command, control centre to beef up security watch in Bhubaneswar

BHUBANESWAR. As Odisha remains alert over India's ongoing tension with Pakistan, the Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL) has integrated its command and control centre (CCC) with police surveillance to make the capital's security watch smarter and more effective. A 24-hour control room, accessible via the helpline number 1929, has already been established by the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) at the centre as part of the civil defence mock drill to address public queries and coordinate emergency responses.

BSCL officials said the integrated command and control centre, a state-of-the-art facility designed to monitor and manage urban services of Bhubaneswar effectively, is now helping the city administration and police in seamless coordination and preparedness for any kind of emergency.

"With over 900 CCTV cameras installed in different parts of the city, the CCC offers a robust monitoring mechanism from a single corner," said a BSCL official. He said the CCC proves to be of huge help in monitoring the movement of vehicles on arterial roads and major junctions which makes it even more useful in tracking any kind of notorious activity. Considering the current situation, the CCC could also be used to divert traffic of a particular location or create a green corridor in the event of any emergency, he said. The integration of display boards, installed at different locations in the city, with the CCC will also prove handy for the authorities in using the facility to disseminate any message to public or raise awareness among them on something.

Officials said the central command and control centre has already proven its usefulness in enhancing surveillance and service delivery through coordination among different departments during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas conclave in

January. BSCL officials said apart from a dedicated control unit of the Commissionerate Police, they also made

the CCC accessible from the City DCP office to make the surveillance and service delivery mechanism even more effective.



Two government aqua labs in Andhra's Nellore district remain underutilised



NELLORE. Two government-established aqua labs in the Nellore district, intended to assist aqua farmers with essential water, soil, feed, and disease testing, are underutilised due to widespread lack of awareness.

Despite being set up to reduce farmers' reliance on expensive private labs, many continue to use private services, resulting in financial losses and substandard reports. The district is home to over 60,000 acres dedicated to prawn and fish farming spread across nine coastal mandals. In an effort to support these farmers, the government established two aqua laboratories — one at the District Fisheries office and the other in Kavali. The district office lab, set up in 1997 with a Rs 30 lakh investment, functioned well initially but stopped operations due to departmental negligence. It was only revived in 2023. The Kavali lab, established in 2020 with Rs 27 lakh, remains underutilised.

"There are over 16 private aqua labs in the district, and we have no choice but to rely on them," said K Raju, a farmer from Kovur. He expressed frustration over the lack of communication from officials regarding the existence of the government labs, forcing farmers to pay exorbitant fees. From 2020 to the present, the Nellore lab has conducted only 12,926 tests, while the Kavali lab has conducted just 155 tests. Farmers allege that the Fisheries Department has failed to inform them about these facilities, leading to their continued dependence on costly private labs.

An official from the Fisheries Department assured that plans are underway to increase outreach, including direct visits by officials to collect samples from farmers. "We will take special initiatives to improve service delivery," said the official.

How to stay calm under a sky of threats

As borders blur and skies grow uncertain, the notion of war as something distant is vanishing. For civilians in India's border states—Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan—the fear of drone or missile attacks is no longer abstract. It's becoming a part of daily life. But while the Indian military stays alert with radar systems and interceptors, civilians, too, must prepare—not with panic or paranoia—but with awareness, emotional readiness and community strength. Here's how to stay grounded when the air above feels unstable: Recognise the threat—but keep it in perspective! It's natural to feel afraid of airborne threats. Drones and missiles are fast, hard to track and terrifying. But fear must be informed by fact. Take Israel's Iron Dome, which has intercepted over 10,000 rockets. Civilian casualties remain low, not just because of technology, but because people trust official alerts and follow simple, practised protocols. India, too, has strong air defence systems. The chance of civilian harm—especially outside immediate conflict zones—is low. Stay cautious, but not consumed. Prepare your space—not a bunker, just a plan. You don't need a war room—just a safer room. In Ukraine, people instinctively move to stairwells or basements when sirens sound. It's not panic, it's habit. In India, take similar steps: Identify the safest part of your home—central, windowless if possible. Pack a "grab bag": flashlight, water, dry food, medicine, IDs, phone charger. Never run to the roof to record what's happening. Let curiosity wait. Safety comes first. Calm the mind—it's your strongest shelter. During the Syrian conflict, researchers found that those who practiced daily breathing or prayer experienced less trauma, even in high-risk areas. India has deep traditions of inner calm. Use them:

Try box breathing: Inhale, hold, exhale, hold—for four seconds each. Repeat. Chant, meditate, pray—anything that recents your mind. Check the news just twice a day. Constant scrolling feeds fear. Resilience isn't being fearless. It's acting wisely, even when you're scared. Learn from the world's war-tested civilians. Conflict zones teach us: Preparedness is power. In South Korea, regular civil defence drills are common—even schoolchildren know where to go. Yet, life continues. In Japan, early-warning texts guide people during missile threats. Their calm isn't magic—it's muscle memory. India can adopt this spirit through: Verified WhatsApp groups run by officials—not rumour factories. Stay connected—community is your lifeline.

War isolates. Don't let it. Talk to neighbors. Form check-in circles, especially for the elderly.

Make a family plan: who takes what, where to meet, who to call. Trust your local SHO, not social media gossip. In Gaza, mothers read stories in shelters. In Donetsks, teens play chess underground. Even in fear, people create life. Clean up your info-diet—don't spread panic. Drones carry payloads. So does disinformation. Don't forward videos or rumours—especially those without clear sources. You could unknowingly spread enemy propaganda. Skip draining debates. Your energy is precious. Instead, share verified tips, hopeful messages, calming practices. Think of it as emotional self-defense. Acceptance, not surrender—a lesson from the East. Borrowing from Zen and Wabi-Sabi, we must accept imperfection and chaos—but not let it consume us. "You cannot stop the storm, but you can find stillness in the eye of it." And when it feels too much... Call someone. Talk it out. Try grounding: name five things you see, four you touch, three you hear, two you smell, one you taste. Reserve an hour for something joyful: drawing, music, gardening, laughter.

That hour is resistance. The sky may tremble, but we don't have to. India has faced invasions, insurrections, even coordinated terror—but it has never broken. Today, threats may fly in, not march in. But we are not defenseless. Our weapon is not panic, but preparation. Not rage, but resilience.

Civilians are not trained for war, but you are certainly built for solidarity. For care. For survival.

Free speech in crisis as questions are silenced

Notably, all journalists arrested this year are associated with independent YouTube media channels.

In the charged atmosphere of today's India, many questions seem like invitations for punishment, for which the penalty can be severe. The killing of journalists and their arrests and detentions for posts on social media and attacks, threats and censorship of content are among the staggering range of free speech violations reported in the first four months of 2025. The spate of takedowns and the blocking of websites like The Wire and social media accounts on 'X', including that of Kashmir Times editor Anuradha Basin, website Maktoob Media and various YouTube channels, in the wake of the Indian government's air strikes against certain locations in Pakistan and PoK have only worsened the climate of censorship. On May 6, barely three days after World Press Freedom Day and hours before the launch of the air strikes, senior journalist and former editor of The Kashmir Reader, Hilal Mir, was detained in Srinagar. A press statement from the Counter-Intelligence Kashmir (CIK) described him as "one Radical Social Media user" who allegedly promoted "disaffection and secessionist ideology." Similar charges were used against satirists and social media influencers, including Bhojpuri singer Neha Singh Rathore and Madri Kakoti, aka Dr Medusa, and Shamita Yadav, aka The Ranting Gola. Rathore got some relief as a civil court in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, dismissed a complaint against her. The charge of endangering national security was made against YouTube news channel 4PM News. Its owner and editor-in-chief Sanjay Sharma was just informed, via an email from YouTube, that the channel had been closed as per "government's directions." All of them had raised trenchant questions about security lapses in the wake of the Pahalgam attack. The lack of legal redress or even the fig leaf of self-regulatory processes in a time of conflict, when disinformation is given a free rein, add to the information black hole. The chilling effect of such actions cannot be understated. The 330 instances of free speech violations in the Free Speech Collective's (FSC) Tracker reveal the extreme intolerance—that permeates every level of society—towards voices of dissent. Vandalism indulged in and criminal complaints lodged by politically motivated sections of society show the targeting of academics, students, stand-up comics, satirists, actors and film-makers alike. Violence is the default mode for the outrage factory—whether it was in

the case of the airing of 'Naya Bharat', a show by stand-up comic Kunal Kamra, or the screening of the film Chhavaa or the attack on Dalit journalist Sanjay Ambedkar while he was seeking audience reviews of the film Phule in Prayagraj for his YouTube channel Bheemraj Dastak.

Meanwhile, impunity continued, as the killings of journalists Mukesh Chandrakar and Raghvendra Bajpai reveal. In both cases, the police initially dismissed the killings as unrelated to their journalism.

Journalists first reported the disappearance of Chandrakar on January 1 at Bastar in Chhattisgarh. Three days later, his body was found in the septic tank of a road contractor, Suresh Chandrakar, who is also Mukesh's cousin. He was reportedly angry that Mukesh was part of a report on poor

news outlet The CrossCurrent, was arrested on March 25 in Guwahati for reporting on a protest about financial irregularities in the state-run Assam Cooperative Apex Bank. YouTube commentator and journalist Tushar Abaji Kharai was arrested on March 9 in Mumbai for airing allegedly defamatory content about the state's Rural Development Minister, Jaykumar Gore.

Interestingly, the chief ministers of the states in which the journalists were arrested—Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis and Telangana CM Revanth Reddy—have denied any violation of press freedom. Rather, they have questioned the credentials of journalists working for independent and online news portals. While Sarma took to 'X' to "clarify

that the Assam police has not arrested any journalist in recent times", Fadnavis said the journalist was indulging in "extortion." Reddy went a step further, threatening "so-called journalists" in a speech on the floor of the state Assembly and calling for them to be stripped and beaten in public. Meanwhile, government regulations detrimental to media freedom continue. The Maharashtra government is intent on pushing its draconian Maharashtra Public Security Bill. This is despite protests from journalists and civil society organisations that its broad definitions for unlawful activity were liable for misuse against legitimate journalistic work and criminalise journalists.

At the same time, film censorship, pushed through by both the authorities and vigilante groups, has continued. The enforced self-censorship of films like Empuraan and Phule, with crucial scenes and dialogues cut on the eve of, or after the film's release, make a mockery of the certification awarded by the Central

Board of Film Certification (CBFC). The multiple cuts suggested for Punjab 95, cuts on foreign films screened for Indian audiences on OTT platforms and the denial of CBFC certification for award-winning films like Santosh are other signals of excessive regulation. In the face of this rampant censorship and clamping down on inconvenient truths that do not fit the official narrative, there is a pushback by civil rights organisations, journalists' unions and associations. The constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of speech and expression must be preserved, failing which the information war will be won by falsehood and silence.



road conditions which was aired on a prominent news channel on December 25, 2024. Bajpai was allegedly killed by hired shooters on March 8 at Sitapur in Uttar Pradesh to reportedly silence him from publishing a report on the alleged sexual assault of a minor by a temple priest. Notably, all journalists arrested this year are associated with independent YouTube media channels. Pogadanda Revathi, managing director of online news channel Pulse News, and Thanyi Yadav, a reporter with the channel, were arrested at 5 am on March 12 in Hyderabad for broadcasting allegedly abusive content against Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. Dilwar Hussain Mozumder, a reporter with independent

Sticking to facts

Don't fall for misinformation



amplifying false claims and imagery. The dissemination and consumption of information responsibly are no easy tasks. These demand

application of mind and a patient reading of what's being offered. Both seem to be in short supply as videos generated through artificial intelligence and misleading messaging are being lapped up. Confusion and hysteria are the byproducts. The Indian government has asked microblogging website X (formerly Twitter) to block over 8,000 accounts. In the wide web world, there is still ample scope of playing truant and exploiting vulnerabilities. That's why it becomes incumbent upon every information provider and of course its consumer to exercise restraint and not be taken in by anything and everything that comes their way.

The joint press conference of the Foreign Secretary and two women military officers has set a benchmark of sorts—detailed, precise information on what the country, and indeed the world, needs to know. Let's stick to the facts.

Will Asim Munir fall in line this weekend

THE GREAT GAME: Pakistan army chief has no alternative but to pay heed to the Saudi message

THIS weekend, as Russia celebrated the 80th anniversary of the culmination of the Great Patriotic War, which it basically helped the Allies win back in 1945 but allowed Churchill to take credit for, the world got a bit more curious.

Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping pumped each other's hands over a red carpet in Moscow, but each represented unusual friendships—China's intimate tie with Pakistan is well-known, as is Russia's defence relationship with India, especially via the S-400 air defence system that has helped shield a number of India's towns from Pakistani missiles and drones in the current standoff with its western neighbour. In the US, meanwhile, US Vice-President JD Vance's comment that it is "fundamentally none of our business" to get involved in the India-Pakistan imbroglio raised several eyebrows. What did Vance mean by that, anyway? One view is that the US is washing its hands of a messy entanglement that natives occasionally indulge in—unfortunately, both have largish nuclear weapons arsenals. Another is that Trump is inclined to leave South Asia to the charms of Narendra Modi, primarily because he believes India's 1.4-billion population is a large market for American goods and a good, potential replacement for his current mortal enemy, China. But a third player has recently insinuated itself into this India-Pakistan bilateral and converted it into a trilateral—Saudi Arabia. If Pakistan's most powerful man, army chief Gen Asim Munir believes that India and Pakistan must forever be guided by the "two-nation theory"—and who is widely believed to have motivated, if not orchestrated, the heinous attack in Pahalgam—according to which Hindus and



against India to being a frontline partner in supporting Taliban-ruled Afghanistan in giving Osama bin Laden shelter—and later turning a blind eye when Osama moved to Pakistan. In return for the largesse, Pakistani generals trained the Saudi military for decades. In fact, the very special and intimate Pakistan-Saudi relationship was so special that the Balochistan desert was for decades especially thrown open to Arab sheikhs who sought the thrill of hunting the endangered houbara bustard—such a delicate bird that no self-respecting Pakistani was allowed within shouting distance. It bears thinking that Pakistan's Hafiz-e-Quran army

chief, a man who can recite the Holy Quran by heart, has no alternative but to pay heed to the message brought by Saudi junior foreign minister Adel al-Jubeir, who landed in Islamabad on Friday evening after a day-long trip to New Delhi. Certainly, Asim Munir must make some tough choices this weekend. Is Kashmir the jannat that he craves, once and forever eloquently described by Amir Khurasani, or is he in hock to the home of the Holy Ka'aba? Moreover, the Saudis are still rolling in oil wealth—they have rolled over a \$3-billion loan to Pakistan from a year ago, plus \$1.2 billion in oil imports. Pakistan, whose economy is deteriorating every day, is hoping to extract another \$5 billion from the Saudis this year. And then there's the IMF review meeting on Pakistan in DC that has been called to discuss its \$7-billion bailout programme, plus a \$1.3-billion dole under a climate resilience loan programme—if all goes well, Pakistan will immediately receive \$2 billion.

The question is, will the US, the most powerful country with 16 per cent voting stakes in the IMF, listen to India, which has openly stated that the IMF shouldn't give any money to Pakistan because the money doesn't reach Pakistan's poor, which it is intended to do, but finds its way into the pockets of the Pakistan army? Or will it lightly reprimand Pakistan for its bad management of IMF money, but essentially let it have its way? India will invoke its own history, perhaps. How, back in 1991, it borrowed \$5 billion from the IMF to fix its own broke economy, but returned the money much before it even needed to. And how Pakistan has frittered away billions over the years because the Pakistan army, not its civilian government, controls all decision-making. If the IMF lets Pakistan have

its way, it would mean the US is largely disinterested in taking sides in the messy India-Pakistan affair, as both Trump and Vance have indicated. Perhaps the Americans need the IMF money as leverage over Pakistan? Perhaps, they don't want the Chinese to have full sway over Asim Munir? That, then, is where the India-Pakistan standoff stands this weekend. Will it escalate, as some fear, before it gets better, or will there be a Saudi-brokered compromise? Most importantly, will Asim Munir fall in line? Will he be persuaded by the hard facts on the ground—which is that India's GDP is 11 times larger than that of Pakistan, its purchasing power parity is 70 per cent larger at \$10,200 compared to Pakistan's \$6,000 and that the market cap of its richest private company, Reliance Industries, at \$225 billion is more than four times larger than that of the Karachi Stock Exchange?

Will Asim Munir understand that it's all very well to keep Muslims and Hindus separate—and if the sullen resentment of the Kashmiris in the wake of the Pahalgam massacre is to be believed, they aren't really interested in joining Pakistan—he has to keep his country at least, more or less, solvent? That a war with India will only take the needle in exactly the opposite direction? As the sounds of sirens mix with birdsong this weekend morning in Chandigarh, or as the drones are repulsed in Ferozepur the night before, or as mortar shells pound Poonch, or as tracers colour the sky over Jammu and loud explosions are heard all over the city again, the questions seem far away.

In Moscow and in Washington, the big powers may be playing big games, but here on the India-Pakistan battlefield, for the moment, it only seems as if all bets are off.



Risk-taking and planning can go Hand in hand

Managing work-life balance

Based on my personal experiences, I firmly believe it is necessary to take out time for things other than work. I actively take out time to pursue my passions and be with my family. This allows me to excel in my work and home.

Being a fit man

I go for some form of exercise every morning; be it a gym workout, swimming or equestrian sport.

Energy high and happiness

Being able to help others gives me a great sense of satisfaction and happiness. It can be charities or helping out friends and family. I also feel the same way when I am learning something new or travelling to new cities, picking up a new skill or discussing an

innovative idea with my team.

Risk-taker or micro-planner

Risk-taking and micro-planning aren't mutually exclusive. They can go very well together as traits in an individual. I am more of a micro-planner but risk-taking is also an inherent part of life. I think I will be always looking to increase my appetite for risk.

Spiritual diet

I try to meditate daily, though it doesn't always happen. I find it useful in keeping myself centred. I also enjoy taking time to travel to centres of spirituality. Being physically present in such places always rekindles some kind of desire to progress spiritually in life.

Handling failure/success

Handling failure is something that I will always

be working on. I feel that the outcome is a result of the effort put in. Any kind of success or failure only reflects the amount of work gone into the project. I also think that successes and failures inevitably have to be faced in life, but it's very important to remain grounded and learn from your mistakes. I try to derive the major learnings from any kind of success or failure.

Crisis management

This is tricky. During a crisis, it is most important to be level-headed and understand the core problem. The solution will present itself eventually. I try to get good counsel from my advisers or well-wishers too. A few times, I've found very inspiring solutions from the most unlikely of sources.

Juggling work Why you should avoid

Are you one of those who loves to do many things at the same time? Chatting on the phone, cradling baby and cooking in the kitchen — all at the same time. Or maybe, texting while crossing a busy road, checking emails during meetings. If you feel you are being extra efficient doing all this and more, think again.

Research says that while multitasking is an admirable quality, it can have an adverse effect on your health. Here are some reasons that might want you to go easy on it...

It takes longer to get work done

Multitasking doesn't exactly save time, but might just slow you down. It prevents you from meeting your deadlines as you go about trying to complete all tasks at the same time. Every task requires a different mindset and specifics to get the work done. So, it is much better to focus on one task, and finish it before going on to the next one.

Scatters your attention in all directions

Come to think of it, multitasking may result in a waste of time. This happens when your attention is divided into more than one activity at the same time, thus affecting productivity. You are just not able to give any task your complete attention.

You may tend to make more errors

Switching between two or more tasks also

cause a person to make unnecessary mistakes. This is more obvious when the task at hand involves critical thinking and analysis. The more the tasks you attempt at the same time, the more the number of mistakes you are bound to make.

Causes an increase in stress

Juggling two tasks at hand is bound to cause stress and an increase in the heart rate. The physical impact is more obvious when you see the results of what you finished doing. This in turn can lead to lower self-confidence and depression.

It could turn out to be dangerous

If you are busy on the phone while keeping an eye on what's cooking on the gas, or texting or talking on a cell phone, while driving it is dangerous. It can lead to accidents and put lives, other than yours, at risk. Crossing the road while talking on the cellphone or even listening to music with your ear phones on, these are dangerous habits that can be avoided in your bid to multitask.

Causes you to overeat

Take the example of watching television and reading a book while eating, it causes a

confusion in your brain and send misleading signals. This leads to overeating. Instead eat and pay attention to what you have on your plate and the portion, and chew on food and enjoy the meal.

There is no room for creativity

Constant multitasking may also hamper your creativity as it tends to use up temporary brain storage memory entirely. There is too much pressure to perform the tasks at hand and finish them faster too, thus making it difficult to think creatively when it comes to problem solving.

Results in bad memory

If you have the tendency to watch television and read a book at the same time, it means you have to constantly shift your focus from a moving image to a still one, forcing your brain to adapt to the fast and slow impacts of the same. Constantly doing that will result in you not being able to remember details of either of them.

Those around you may feel ignored

When you have your family, friends, kids and loved ones around you, trying to give attention to things other than them might affect your relationship with them. They may not like your behaviour, which may lead to friction in your interaction. Paying attention to those around you makes a big difference to bonding, as they feel loved and respected.



Tips to cultivate a Happy workplace



Swooshing deadlines. Office politics. Disappointing appraisals. Disagreements with boss. Workplace can indeed be a very tough place. But it is important to not get caught up in worries, but work towards making things work. Agree or not, a happy workplace is a crucial component for a happy you. If you are happy, you are bound to attract happy people and happy emotions.

Dr Rupa Batra, an International celebrity consultant of corporate vaastu, Feng shui and numerology explains, "Office is a high energy area, so we need to keep ourselves safe and away from such energies."

Go green: Get plants that need less maintenance and place them in your cabin. Plants are excellent in absorbing carbon dioxide and keeping the environment cool. Avoid flowery plants as flowers may wither off if not take care of. Milky plants should be avoided too. In case you have a small cubicle, then you can consider bonsai. They are designed for smaller areas only.

Clear the mess: Take time out and clear the mess from your table. Clutter takes away all good energies. Not only will it impart negativity but will leave a poor impression.

Invest in a motivating piece of art: Motivation is the key in any

profession. If your office doesn't have enough motivational paintings or photo frames, buy yourself one and keep it close to you.

Feng shui tortoise and coin: Place a Feng shui tortoise on your desk as it is considered lucky for professionals. Tortoise has been given lot of importance in spirituality due to its ability to sense danger. Secondly, placing Feng shui coins in your cash box is good for business people. Feng shui coins are an age old medium to add extra luck to the cash flow. But if you are working, you can use the Feng shui coins in your drawer. It will help maintain the cash reserves.

Keep a diary: Keep a mini diary in your office bag. This diary should have your to-do list, which you should maintain daily. It should also have reminders about brisk walk during lunch break or in the evening. This is known as sharpening of the axe. When we forget to sharpen our axe, we render no result even if we put in lots of efforts.

Alarm clock for your desk: This is an extremely efficient tool in reminding you that you need to put in quality work. People remember how well you did a job, rather than how quickly you did it. Remind yourself with these alarms that your work quality can actually suffer if you submit a project in rush.

"Successfully Executed Assigned Tasks In Operation Sindoor": Air Force

Operation Sindoor was launched on May 7 to strike terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir following a deadly attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam.

Op Sindoor still ongoing, briefing soon: Air Force after India-Pak ceasefire



NEW DELHI. The Indian Air Force (IAF) on Sunday stated that Operation Sindoor -- launched as a counter-offensive against the dastardly attack by Pakistan-backed terrorists in Pahalgam -- is still in progress, a day after US President Donald Trump announced a ceasefire between New Delhi and Islamabad. "Since the Operations are still ongoing, a detailed briefing will be conducted in due course. The IAF urges all to refrain from speculation and dissemination of unverified information," the IAF declared on its official handle in X. "The Indian Air Force (IAF) has successfully executed its assigned tasks in Operation Sindoor, with precision and professionalism. Operations were conducted in a deliberate and discreet manner, aligned with National Objectives," the tweet further read.

The IAF's revelation comes barely a day after the US claimed to have brokered a peace deal between the two nuclear-armed nations. However, the fragile ceasefire seemed to last only for a few hours before Pakistan started heavy shelling along the International Border in the Rajouri sector and Srinagar.

60 domestic flights to and from IGI airport cancelled, security up



NEW DELHI. At least 60 domestic flights to and from the Delhi airport were cancelled on Saturday in view of the evolving military crisis between India and Pakistan, officials said. Security measures have been reinforced, and at least 32 airports in northern and western parts of the country have been temporarily shut amid the military conflict.

Meanwhile, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Saturday said it has extended an additional security cover to temporarily supervise cargo operations and in-line hold baggage screening system at 69 civil airports of the country under its counter-terrorist cover. Sources privy to the developments said 30 domestic departures and 30 arrivals were cancelled at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport in the capital between 5 am and 2.30 pm.

On Friday, 138 flights to and from the Delhi airport were cancelled by various airline operators. In the last few days, there have been multiple flight cancellations at the IGI Airport.

In a post on X on Saturday, the Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) which operates the IGI Airport, said airport operations continue as normal.

"However, due to evolving airspace conditions and enhanced security measures as directed by the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, some flight schedules may be impacted and security processing times may take longer," it said. Passengers have also been advised to arrive early to accommodate potential delays at security checks.

Further, the airport authority has requested passengers to cooperate with airline and security staff for smooth facilitation. According to officials, the cancelled flights include four international arrivals, five international departures, 63 domestic arrivals and 66 domestic departures.

New Delhi. The Indian Air Force on Sunday said it has "successfully executed its assigned tasks" in Operation Sindoor, a day after India and Pakistan agreed to a ceasefire following days of intense military exchanges. Operation Sindoor was launched on May 7 to strike multiple terror sites in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir after a deadly attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam last month. In a post on X, the Air Force said the operations were conducted "in a deliberate and discreet manner, aligned with National Objectives". "The Indian Air Force (IAF) has successfully executed its assigned tasks in Operation Sindoor, with precision and professionalism. Operations were conducted in a deliberate and discreet manner, aligned with National Objectives. Since the Operations are still ongoing, a detailed briefing will be conducted in due course. The IAF urges all to refrain from speculation and dissemination of unverified information," it wrote.

The Air Force's post came a day after India and



Pakistan reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, with immediate effect. However, after drones were sighted and intercepted in various locations in Jammu and Kashmir, including Srinagar, and parts of Gujarat on Saturday evening, India said that Pakistan violated the ceasefire and its armed forces responded appropriately. "Over the last few hours, there have been repeated violations of the understanding arrived at earlier this evening

between the Directors General of Military Operations of India and Pakistan. This is a breach of the understanding arrived at earlier today. The armed forces are giving an adequate and appropriate response to these violations, and we take very, very serious notice of these violations," Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri told reporters around 11:20 pm. He called upon Pakistan to take "appropriate steps" to address the violations and deal with the situation with "seriousness and responsibility". "The armed forces are maintaining a strong vigil on the situation. They have been given instructions to deal strongly with any instances of repetition of the violations along the International Border as well as the Line of Control," Mr Misri added. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has on Sunday afternoon chaired yet another high-level meeting at his residence with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan, and the tri-services chiefs.

Summer break: Schools directed to discontinue guest teachers' services

NEW DELHI. The Directorate of Education (DoE) has directed all heads of schools (HOS) to discontinue the services of guest teachers during the upcoming summer vacation from May 11 to June 30. According to a circular, this step is part of the routine summer schedule and guest teachers in government and taken-over schools will not work during this period.

However, the HOS have been authorised to engage them for essential tasks such as admissions and examinations. Guest teachers may also be appointed for summer activities or remedial classes if required, and payment must be made as per existing norms. Prior approval from the deputy director of education of the concerned district is mandatory for such engagements. The directive is aimed at

ensuring efficient deployment of guest teachers without affecting essential academic and administrative functions during the break. Despite the directive, Delhi government schools continue to face a significant teacher shortage. Recently, school heads were asked to submit proposals for engaging guest teachers against short-term vacancies within seven days. Additionally, they must identify a

vacant post for salary adjustment and disbursement while submitting these proposals. As per sources, Delhi has around 13,000 guest teachers, with nearly half assigned to non-teaching duties. Guest teachers have repeatedly written to the Lieutenant Governor, seeking a salary revision, citing that the current pay structure is "regrettably insufficient."

Government School Teachers' Association secretary Ajay Veer Yadav said, "Guest teachers are integral to the effective functioning of schools, often filling the gaps due to the chronic shortage of regular teaching staff in the Directorate of Education. Their hard work ensures academic processes continue uninterrupted, thereby contributing significantly to the quality of education provided to our students."

We worked round-the-clock to finalise their tickets, food, and ensure they reached home safely."

"We had got over 300 distress calls from students who wanted to reach home at the earliest. Meanwhile, the evacuation continues, with efforts underway to locate and assist others still stuck in the conflict zone. However the situation is better now and the students will hopefully face no problem in returning once the trains and flights resume," he added. SFI national president VP Sahu said, "SFI's helpline has aided hundreds of stranded students in border regions. We've arranged accommodations for them in Delhi."

Student outfit arranges accommodation

For the students who arrived onboard the special train on Friday night, the Students Federation of India (SFI) made arrangements for the makeshift accommodations in office spaces and apartments in Delhi, with more than 200 students temporarily housed in coordination with the members of the student organisation.

Speaking to this newspaper, SFI Delhi president Sooraj Elamon said, "All the 200 students were accommodated. We have arranged food for them as well. The major concern was to arrange their travel back home. We got in touch with railway officials and Rajya Sabha MPs to get them reservations at the earliest.

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Special train from Jammu brings stranded to Delhi



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How India Forced Pakistan To Plead For Ceasefire After Islamabad's Nuclear Attack Rhetoric

New Delhi. India's stunningly effective and precisely coordinated military operation left Pakistan isolated, exposed and pleading for a ceasefire within hours. Codenamed 'Operation Sindoor', the Indian armed forces launched a 90-minute precision air offensive in the early hours of May 10, targeting 11 key bases of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) deep inside the country's airspace. The strikes crippled Pakistan's combat readiness and forced its leadership to scramble for diplomatic intervention. What began as an attempt by Islamabad to brandish its nuclear posture as a deterrent against growing Indian assertiveness quickly spiraled into an operational and psychological disaster. Following weeks of heightened tensions and provocative statements from Pakistani officials suggesting readiness for nuclear escalation, India launched an audacious preemptive strike aimed not just at neutralising threats but dismantling Pakistan's ability to sustain or even contemplate a military response.

Between 3:00-4:30 a.m., Indian Air Force

fighter jets armed with long-range precision weapons struck Pakistan's vital operational architecture. These included Nur Khan Airbase in Chaklala, Rafiqi in Shorkot, Murid, Sukkur, Sialkot, Pasrur, Chunian, Sargodha, Skardu, Bholari and Jacobabad -- an array of strategically spread-out installations that formed the backbone of Pakistan's aerial warfare and logistics capabilities. The most audacious and symbolic of these strikes was the obliteration of Nur Khan Airbase, located right next to Islamabad. A key military logistics artery often used for high-level VIP and military transport, its neutralisation effectively severed top-tier coordination between Pakistan's political and defense leadership. The blow was not only operational but deeply psychological. It sent shockwaves through Rawalpindi's military command structure. The strikes on Sukkur and Jacobabad cut off southern and western mobility corridors, isolating troop movements and disrupting internal logistics. Sialkot, situated close to

BrahMos Blitz Leaves Pakistan Reeling: Inside the Strikes That Forced a Ceasefire



New Delhi. India, in a historic first, deployed its BrahMos supersonic cruise missile in active combat as part of a coordinated but measured precision strike against key Pakistani military infrastructure early on May 10. Known for its speed, accuracy and versatility, the use of the BrahMos highlighted India's ability to project overwhelming firepower with technological superiority while maintaining strategic restraint. Conducted in response to a series of Pakistani provocations, the strikes targeted important air bases and radar sites deep within enemy territory, crippling Pakistan's forward-operating capabilities. India's air offensive, according to sources, relied on an array of advanced weaponry, including HAMMER precision-guided munitions, SCALP cruise missiles and loitering munitions. But it was the combat debut of the Indo-Russian BrahMos missile that marked a turning point in the operational doctrine of the Indian military. With pinpoint accuracy and rapid execution, the strikes systematically dismantled Pakistan's ability to coordinate air operations or launch credible retaliatory strikes.

The chosen targets, airbases at Rafiqi (Shorkot), Murid (Chaklala), Nur Khan (Chaklala), Rahim Yar Khan, Sukkur, Chunian (Kasur), Skardu, Bholari, Jacobabad and Sargodha as well as radar stations at Pasrur and Sialkot, were not only vital military assets but symbols of Pakistan's strategic depth. The attack effectively blinded Pakistan's air defense grid and fractured its command-and-control network at a critical moment.

The Indian military's choice of targets reflected strategic precision. Nur Khan Airbase, located near Islamabad, was hit to sever Pakistan's air mobility command, crippling logistical coordination. Home to frontline PAF fighter squadrons, Rafiqi was struck at the height of its operational alertness. Murid, which houses Pakistan's unmanned aerial vehicles and combat drones, was also a primary objective. Meanwhile, Skardu and Bholari, vital for northern and southern air operations, were neutralised to limit Pakistan's geographic reach and rapid deployment capability.

Notably, officials made it clear that their objective was not escalation but deterrence. Speaking at a special joint press briefing by the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of External Affairs, Colonel Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, flanked by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, emphasised India's intent to contain the conflict.

"Actions have been effectively countered and responded to appropriately," said Colonel Qureshi, adding, "The Indian armed forces reiterate their commitment to non-escalation -- provided it is reciprocated." The counteroffensive came after Pakistan launched over 26 air intrusion attempts across a wide front stretching from Srinagar to Nalia, employing drones, loitering munitions and long-range weapons. These attempts were successfully intercepted, but not before Pakistan's attacks caused limited damage to Indian Air Force stations in Udhampur, Pathankot, Adampur, and Bhuj.

Wing Commander Singh also condemned Pakistani missile attacks post 1:40 a.m., describing them as a "deplorable and cowardly act" targeting medical and educational facilities. Indian officials also rejected Pakistan's claims of having destroyed several Indian air installations as falsehoods meant to fuel a misinformation campaign. Time-stamped images of Adampur, Sirsa, and the BrahMos base at Nagrota were shared with the press to refute the allegations.



the Indian border, and Pasrur, used for dispersal and emergency operations, were among the first to be hit. Their destruction left the eastern front exposed and denied Pakistan any forward-operating flexibility. Meanwhile, India's strikes on Chunian, a vital radar and communications site, and Skardu, a launch pad for high-altitude surveillance and operations in Gilgit-Baltistan, created critical surveillance gaps, particularly in the northern sector, further tilting strategic advantage in India's favor. However, the most consequential blow came with the decimation of Sargodha airbase (Mushaf Base) -- which was long regarded as the nerve center of Pakistan's air operations and nuclear delivery platforms. As home to the elite Combat Commanders School and key command-and-control functions, Sargodha's destruction left the PAF disoriented, blind and incapable of mounting a coordinated response.

She has just been placed in a small manufacturing firm, as an associate manager-production. On her first day at the office, the first thought that strikes her is: "Is manufacturing really my cup of tea?" With labourers operating their machines around her and a production manager sitting right across her to explain the plan of operation and the schedule of production, she feels ambivalent. Not that she lacks interest, but she knows somewhere that male-dominated industries pose serious challenges for a woman's career progression. She suddenly remembers those peppy words by Marilyn Monroe: "I don't mind living in a man's world as long as I can be a woman in it."

According to research by Catalyst, an NGO focusing on expanding business opportunities for women, talent management systems are often susceptible to pro-male

biases that expectedly result in smaller and less varied employee pools. The lesser the diversity (read the lesser the females), the more stereotypical it gets. This is the reason why women may find progressing and outpacing in these industries can be riddled with hurdles. It is not very hard to enter a male-dominated profession, but it's tougher to survive in there. Among other obstacles, many women struggle with pre-set notions that certain jobs demand skillsets that are linked to masculinity. To inject some positivity here, let's take a look at 5 ways that women can come into their own in any profession.

Self-analysis

Career development is a continuous process that starts with self-assessment. This critical first step is the foundation step for personal and professional personality development. A routine self-assessment helps keeps an individual informed about her strengths and weaknesses at varied stages of life. A comprehensive self-analysis would include doing the SWIPE test, which helps you analyse four core elements of your personality— strengths, weakness, interests, potential development and emotional quotient. Examining these four areas will help you understand your personality in distinct spheres, so you know which parts of your life need further development and which attributes play to your strengths.

Networking

According to Adam Small, CEO of Strategic Business Network, "Networking is the single most powerful marketing tactic to accelerate and sustain success for any individual or organization." It is a powerful tool if you do it the right



Tips to crack your job Interview

The most important task before preparing for a job interview is to start with a self assessment of whether you suit the position and organization in question.

Here are a few tips on how you can sail through your first job interview. The foremost issue all organizations face is that candidates do not match up to the needs of the job. Many job aspirants look at their careers from a myopic view of brands and fancy designations coupled with fat salaries. The first five years of one's professional life are formative, which is why this period should be utilized to gather profound professional experience. This is not the time to hunt for a cozy post.

The most important task before preparing for a job interview is to start with a self-assessment of whether you suit the position and organization in question. Visualise yourself as a part of the organization:

How confident do you feel about being there? Is the work in line with your interest and natural abilities? The inner call, backed up by research, is crucial before you choose to go for the

interview. There is a job for everyone; they just need to home in on the right place.

- A lot of engineers may actually do well in creative positions than technical roles. If technical expertise is your area of interest and prowess, go for it. Evaluate which subject or activity you are best at. It shows your interest and natural inclination. If the inner call says, 'choose an alternative career,' please do so. Do not succumb to social pressure. It is better to succeed than to 'ape' and remain mediocre.

- The interviewer has been entrusted with the task of hiring the best in a competitive environment. It is thus your responsibility to convince him/her of your capabilities.

Data and facts always help, so converge on tangible information rather than abstract points. However, the statistics must be focused on

competencies.

- Provide information on your strengths with evidence of its practical application in real life.
- Talk about your extracurricular activities and the difficult choices you made in life; it shows leadership attributes and job-fit skill sets.
- Talk about facts that show you make your choices and are not led by others alone. Highlight team activities you have undertaken - it shows your ability to collaborate.

- Elaborate on situations that make you feel proud - it shows confidence and self-motivation.

- Discuss instances when you have helped others - it is a sign of empathy. Finally, in a positive way, share instances of personal challenges that brought you where you are today - it exhibits strength of character.

- Speak about your career vision. When you know how the job fits in the grand picture of your career, the interviewer is most likely to choose you because it creates certainty. This is rare because many engineering graduates are disillusioned and openly talk about being explorers. Be clear where you wish to go. Employers would not like to waste time, money and effort on individuals who are continually exploring. If that is the case, go for career advice or seek other professional help before interviews.

In the case of engineers, interviewers' expectations are going to be specific. They look for thought leadership, precision in all you do, the ability to comprehend a problem

and create solutions, an innovative mindset and critical thinking. As an engineer, your ability to lead a team will carry tremendous weight.

Above all, one must "look and feel" like an engineer and not a casual person from nowhere.

Lastly, understand that rejection has nothing to do with you personally. It is about an understanding that your abilities do not suit the job. So, gear up for the next opening.



5 ways to succeed in a male-dominated Workplace

Rina, 23, has just completed her MBA in production management, and dreams of a corporate career.

way and with the right people in your industry. However, according to a study published in the Harvard Business Review women are often unable to exploit the power of their connections despite their sociability. For women to benefit through networking, they need to engage in interactions that include exchanges about their skills, talents, and potential development. When looking for groups to network with, give preference to those whose members are well-connected over groups that are simply large or well-publicised. Collaboration is the key.

Promote your own self

Be your own "man"! Speak for yourself. Got a new idea or a cost-saving suggestion? Put it on the table. Women have a tendency to underestimate their own performance, especially when they find themselves in a minority, but confidence is a must. So, pave that track with blazing confidence and remember that it's perfectly alright to be wrong or fail sometimes. Just don't dwell on it.

Also acknowledge the fact that people around you will, whether intentionally or unknowingly, underestimate you.

There will be times when you will be your only cheerleader. Manage what you can, work hard, follow your gut, stay true at heart and be rational, and things will fall in place.

Research bears out that women who are more aggressive and assertive when the situation calls for it are more likely to be promoted.

Beware of stereotypes

"It's not done that way", "You are new in this field so you probably you don't know".... No! Do not let these kind of statements give you an inferiority complex. Be prepared to assert yourself at all times. This does not mean being rude or uncooperative, but having the confidence to stand your ground and defend your convictions. Success has traditionally been considered acceptable for women only if it's in a field that is judged as appropriate for them and is viewed as off-limits in fields that are male-dominated. You need to fight those conventions.

Find a mentor

Many women must have walked the same path as you and have figured out how to overcome the obstacles along the way. Instead of simply winging it and risking more mistakes, approach them for their guidance. Connect with one or two women you admire and seek their advice when needed. If you do not know of someone directly, use social websites to connect with people in similar fields.

Just remember that there are many successful women out there and most of them are proof that being hardworking, resolute, smart and thick-skinned in the face of critical reviews at their work; have enabled them to rise to the top, with or without familial support. Go on girl! You can be a shero too!

Here's why prioritizing Work is important

A broad categorization of all tasks is essential to bring prioritization in motion. Srinivas Ghanagam, head HR, Freudenberg India, explains, "Being able to distinguish between 'urgent' and 'important' tasks is one of the best known ways of dealing with a flood of emails, projects and presentations, the former being less critical than the latter. The focus should, therefore, be placed on 'important' work, which is usually more strategic in nature; losing focus of the same can be the undoing of an up and coming executive."

Manuel D'Souza, director - HR, Serco Global Services, tells us how such measures also allow work-life balance, "Time spent on planning activities saves sufficient time in execution. On a regular basis, prioritizing not only makes a person more efficient at daily work-related activities, but also gives them the latitude to focus on their personal goals. It helps strike the right balance to handle both, their professional and personal life."

How is prioritizing of workload necessary at all? Abhijit Nitmgaoarkar, India capability & expertise centre head and office managing principal (Delhi), ZS, answers, "The classic situation faced by employees today is simultaneous urgent requests from multiple stakeholders. In the context of a global marketplace (different time zones), increasing compensation (higher expectations), many communication channels (request reach and immediacy), prioritising daily, weekly, monthly tasks is key to effective responsibility management. Working faster is not the solution; instead, working on the right tasks is essential."

- Make a work list:

Pen down every possible thing you can do in a day;

- Categorize urgent vs important:

See if you have any tasks that need immediate attention and if not completed soon, will have serious negative impact on business and people;

- Evaluate value importance:

Scan the list and identify highest value-adding tasks. Determine the amount of efforts expected to be invested on each activity and set the order accordingly;

- Be compliant and flexible:

Don't forget that change is certain and be prepared for work that will come above your set order of priorities;

- Cut the cord:

You probably can't get to everything on your list. Focus on the priorities that you know you must and can complete for the day.

Mehul Shah, MD, Collabora, describes the Pareto principle in the context of prioritization of workload, "The Pareto principle states that of the things you do during your day, only 20 per cent produce 80 per cent of your results. It emphasizes on putting more energy in prioritizing your tasks in the first hour at work and focus on the 20 per cent that matters. When the fire drills of the day begin to sap your time and something in the schedule has to slip, make sure it's not part of that 20 per cent."

Prioritization also enables employees to maintain clarity on the ultimate goals of the organization. Sailesh Shetty, VP human resources & services, Toyota Kirloskar Motor, explains, "Organisations should make every employee understand the role he or she is playing in solving the issues important for the organisation. Employees should have clarity on what is expected from them; this enables them to prioritise better. When the employer engages employees every day in analysing and solving problems, they feel highly motivated."

Thus, prioritisation can make a lot of difference in employee efficiency and productivity.



Kudos To Govt's Efforts Under PM Modi Leadership For Ensuring Peace, Stability: NSE CEO

New Delhi. The Managing Director (MD) and CEO of the National Stock Exchange (NSE), Ashish Kumar Chauhan, on Saturday expressed his appreciation for the Government's unwavering efforts to bring peace and stability to the country. Chauhan lauded the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, acknowledging his strong support for the Indian Armed Forces in ensuring the security and safety of the nation. "@nseindia heartily welcomes the decision by India and Pakistan to cease hostilities immediately," Chauhan wrote on the social media platform X-Kudos to the Indian Government's efforts under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his unwavering support to our brave Armed Forces for ensuring peace and stability for our country," he added. The commendation comes on the heels of the announcement of an immediate ceasefire between India and Pakistan, marking a significant moment in the ongoing efforts to de-escalate tensions in the region. This decision was made following a productive conversation between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMO) of both countries, leading to an agreement to stop all firings and military actions across land, air, and sea, effective from 5 p.m. on May 10. The ceasefire, agreed upon by both India and Pakistan, marks a pivotal moment in diplomatic relations between the two nations. The international community has also welcomed this development, as it reflects a mutual commitment to reducing tensions and building a foundation for peace in the region. Meanwhile, last month, the NSE pledged Rs 1 crore to the next of kin of the victims of the deadly terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam. Chauhan stated last month that the organisation stood in solidarity with the families of the victims during this difficult time.

Govt to hold pre-emption right over oil, gas in national emergency: Draft rules

New Delhi: The government will hold pre-emption rights over all oil and natural gas produced in the country in any event of national emergency, according to draft rules being framed under a revamped oilfields legislation.

A pre-emption right (or preemptive right) is the legal right of a party – often a government or existing shareholder – to purchase or claim a product, asset, or resource before it is offered to others.

The inclusion of such rights over crude oil – extracted from underground or beneath the seabed and refined into fuels like petrol and diesel – as well as natural gas, which is used for power generation, fertilizer production, CNG for vehicles, and piped cooking gas, is intended to help the government prioritize national interests and ensure public welfare during emergencies. The producer of oil and natural gas will be paid a "fair market price prevailing at the time of pre-emption", the draft rules said.

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has invited comments on draft rules after Parliament earlier this year passed the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Bill which replaced outdated provisions from the 1948 Act, to boost domestic production, attract investment, and support the country's energy transition goals. "In the case of a national emergency in respect of petroleum products or mineral oil, Government of India shall, at all times, during such emergency, have the right of pre-emption of the mineral oils, refined petroleum or petroleum or mineral oil products produced from the crude oil or natural gas extracted from the leased area, or of the crude oil or natural gas where the lessee is permitted to sell, export or dispose of without it being refined within India," the rules stated. This right will be exercised by providing a "fair market price prevailing at the time of pre-emption to the lessee by Government of India, for the petroleum or petroleum or mineral oil products or the crude oil or natural gas taken in pre-emption." The rules however did not define what would constitute a national emergency.

Mother's Day 2025: Here are a few financial gifts to consider for your mom

Kolkata: History has it that Mother's Day was first observed in the US in 1907 by Anna Jarvis, who was inspired by her mother's service as a community health advocate. This year Mother's Day will be observed on Sunday, May 11 and you can consider a financial gift to your mother, which will also increase her financial security. Every year, Mother's Day is celebrated on the second Sunday of the month of May. The financial instruments that you can consider for gifting can be a health insurance policy, Public Provident Fund (PPF), Fixed Deposit (FD) and even lumpsums and SIP in mutual fund schemes. Let us have a close look at each of these.

Possible Mother's Day gifts

Health insurance: The importance of a health insurance policy cannot be overestimated as the Covid 19 pandemic has spectacularly shown. Even if you mom has a health insurance policy, another one will only bolster her security. Even if the cover provided by the first insurance policy falls short, the second one can beef up her security.

Fixed deposit: There is hardly a senior citizen in this country who does not care about Fixed Deposit (FD). You can gift your mom an FD with any amount that you are comfortable with. Most banks still offer a decent rate of interest (above 7%) on FDs for senior citizens. Though the interest income is taxable, the new TDS limits could allow her a relief.

Public Provident Fund: The PPF, or Public Provident Fund is a long-term tax-efficient instrument in the EEE category where one can invest any amount each year between Rs 500 and Rs 1.5 lakh. Currently, it offers 7.1% interest with maximum possible safety of capital.

Geopolitical Tensions, Macroeconomic Data, And Earnings To Drive Indian Stock Markets Next Week: Experts

Following a period of consolidation, Indian equity benchmarks experienced a sharp correction amid escalating geopolitical tensions between India and Pakistan, which fueled market volatility and triggered a shift toward risk-off sentiment.

New Delhi. Indian stock markets, in the upcoming week starting from Monday, will be Geopolitical developments, particularly the ongoing tensions with Pakistan, macroeconomic data and the corporate earnings of the companies. The market experts say that the week of May 13 to 16, 2025, brings a slate of crucial economic data releases across India, the United States, and China, which will

guide investor sentiment and central bank expectations. "The upcoming week will be pivotal, marked by several key domestic triggers. Geopolitical developments, particularly the ongoing tensions with Pakistan, will continue to remain in focus," said Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd. As per Mishra, on the macroeconomic front, investors will closely monitor the release of key data points including the Consumer Price Index (CPI), Wholesale Price Index (WPI), and trade figures for exports and imports. Additionally, he added that the corporate earnings season will gather pace, with several major companies – such as PVR INOX, Tata Steel, Bharti Airtel, Cipla, GAIL, Hero MotoCorp, Tata Motors, Lupin, Godrej Industries, and BHEL – scheduled to announce their quarterly results. In India, inflation will be in focus with the release of CPI YoY data on May 13, providing clarity on consumer price trends and their implications for the Reserve Bank of India's monetary policy. Additionally,

Exports YoY data on May 15 will shed light on the health of India's external trade amid global uncertainties," the team of Bajaj Broking Research added in a note. Following a period of consolidation, Indian equity benchmarks



experienced a sharp correction amid escalating geopolitical tensions between India and Pakistan, which fueled market volatility and triggered a shift toward risk-off sentiment. The Nifty 50 closed the week at 24,008.00, marking a decline of 1.39 per cent, while the BSE Sensex ended at 79,454.47, down 1.30 per cent.

'Treasure hunt': Tourists boost sales at Don Quijote stores in Japan

TOKYO. Business is booming at Japanese discount chain Don Quijote, which sells everything from nostril-hair wax to compact gadgets and colourful party costumes, thanks to its cult status among tourists but also inflation at home. At a large Don Quijote store in Tokyo's bustling Shibuya district, hundreds of tourists rush to fill their baskets with snacks and souvenirs from its heaving narrow aisles. "I was pretty overwhelmed at first, just because there's so many options, everything's in a different language," 27-year-old Garrett Bryan from the United States told AFP. But "I feel like I bought a lot and it was only like \$70" including "a coffee cup for my mom, a fan, some Godzilla chopsticks, just a couple toys".

The chaotic cut-price shops nicknamed "Donki" were founded in the 1980s by Takao Yasuda, who named them after his business inspiration: the idealistic protagonist of the classic Spanish novel, "Don Quixote". He wanted to shake up Japan's staid retail industry with new tactics including late-night opening hours as well as more varied prices and product lines. Now a record influx of visitors to Japan, fuelled by a weak yen, is boosting sales nationwide. Revenues at Don Quijote in Japan are "around 1.7 higher than before the pandemic", said Motoki Hara, a manager at the retailer. Last year its parent firm Pan Pacific International Holdings (PPIH) saw revenue rise around 12 percent year-on-year for its discount chains including Donki, while tax-free sales beat internal forecasts. Shopping at Don Quijote is like a "treasure hunt" -- a fun experience that foreign visitors love, Hara told AFP. "Customers end up buying something different than what they came in for," he said beside rows of cherry-blossom flavour KitKats, a popular exclusive product. Jungle-like Don Quijote and its sister brands have 501 stores in Japan, where 24 new ones opened during the past financial year. PPIH Group also runs 110 stores abroad, in the United States and across Asia from Taiwan to Thailand. California is one place being targeted by the company for expansion, according to analyst Paul Kraft, founder of Tokyo-based consultancy firm JapanIQ. But that plan could be complicated by US President Donald Trump's trade tariffs -- including levies of 24 percent on Japan, which have been paused until July. Even so, "I wouldn't bet against them, even in this entire high-tariff environment", Kraft said. "Nobody adjusts as fast as Don Quijote in retail in Japan -- even faster than convenience stores, because they give so much autonomy to their stores."

India-UK FTA welcome move; not much bearing on car prices: Mercedes-Benz, BMW

NEW DELHI. Mercedes-Benz and BMW have termed the India-UK free trade agreement (FTA) a positive development while noting that it would not have much bearing on the prices of luxury cars in the country. Last week, India and the UK sealed a landmark FTA that will lower tariffs on 99 per cent of Indian exports and would make it easier for British firms to export whisky, cars and other products to India, besides boosting the overall trade basket. The aim is to double two-way commerce by 2030 from the present USD 60 billion. India has included adequate safeguards in the agreement to protect its sensitive sectors and in the automobile segment, the import duty will be reduced over 10-15 years.

Mercedes-Benz, BMW logos
UK FTA a boost for most sectors, worry for a few. The duty concession on imports of petrol and diesel engine vehicles from the UK is limited to a pre-defined quota. "Fundamentally, we have always advocated free trade as a multinational company, because we

feel that free trade helps in better growth... So I think for us, definitely it's a real welcome move, because it helps," Mercedes-Benz India MD and CEO Santosh Iyer told PTI. He noted that there is an expectation of price cuts for cars due to the India-UK pact and



also because of the under-discussion India-EU FTA. "Around 95 per cent of the cars we (industry) sell in India are all CKDs. Which means hardly 15-16 per cent duty even today. So to expect a huge price correction, I don't think it

would happen even with an FTA," Iyer said. The second critical factor is the quota-based system for imported cars, he added. BMW Group India President and CEO Vikram Pawah said the automaker supports free market access and reduction of trade barriers as it's a win-win situation for overall economic growth and benefits the consumers.

"India-UK FTA seems to be a landmark deal covering various aspects of mutual trade in goods, services, and mobility and will contribute to the greater vision of Vitsit Bharat," he added.

Pawah, however, noted that the impact on the Indian luxury segment will become clearer once there is more information regarding the finer details.

"At the same time, BMW Group India has very strong local production and localisation in the India market and remains committed towards that," he stated.

India's Top 10 Companies: Significant Losses Across Banking and IT Sectors

Last week's 1.30% BSE Sensex decline resulted in a combined market valuation erosion of Rs 1,60,314.48 crore for eight of India's top ten most valued companies. Reliance Industries suffered the largest loss (Rs 59,799.34 crore), followed by ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank. However, Hindustan Unilever and Infosys saw market cap increases.

New Delhi. With BSE Sensex declining 1.30 percent last week, the combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued firms of India eroded by Rs 1,60,314.48 crore. As the stock market got adversely affected due to the tensions between India and Pakistan, Reliance Industries was hit the hardest, in line with a sluggish trend in equities. Of the top 10 companies, Reliance Industries, Bajaj Finance,

Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, ITC, HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), and State Bank of India (SBI)



faced erosion from their market valuation. The market valuation of Hindustan Unilever and Infosys went up. Reliance Industries recorded its market value decreasing by Rs 59,799.34 crore to Rs 18,64,436.42 crore. Country's second largest private sector bank ICICI Bank witnessed its market valuation drop Rs 30,185.36 crore to Rs 9,90,015.33 crore. HDFC Bank, country's top private bank's

market cap decreased Rs 27,062.52 crore to Rs 14,46,294.43 crore. India's largest public sector bank, State Bank of India, recorded losses of Rs 18,429.34 crore to Rs 6,95,584.89 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Bajaj Finance declined Rs 13,798.85 crore to Rs 5,36,927.95 crore. The valuation of ITC decreased Rs 8,321.89 crore to Rs 5,29,972.97 crore, while TCS went down by Rs 578.89 crore to Rs 12,45,418.09 crore. Telecom operator Bharti Airtel's market capitalisation declined Rs 2,138.29 crore to Rs 10,53,891.62 crore. The mcap of Hindustan Unilever Ltd gained Rs 2,537.56 crore to Rs 5,48,382.85 crore. Infosys added Rs 415.33 crore, taking its market valuation to Rs 6,26,083.70 crore. The BSE benchmark dropped 1,047.52 points last week. Meanwhile, data showed that Foreign investors continued with sustained buying.

Government to hold pre-emption right over oil, gas in event of national emergency: Draft rules

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has invited comments on draft rules after Parliament earlier this year passed the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Bill.

NEW DELHI. The government will hold pre-emption rights over all oil and natural gas produced in the country in any event of national emergency, according to draft rules being framed under a revamped oilfields legislation. A pre-emption right (or preemptive right) is the legal right of a party – often a government or existing shareholder – to purchase or claim a product, asset, or resource before it is offered to others. The inclusion of such rights over crude oil – extracted from underground or beneath the seabed and refined into fuels like petrol and diesel – as well as natural gas, which is used for



power generation, fertilizer production, CNG for vehicles, and piped cooking gas, is intended to help the government prioritize national interests and ensure public welfare during emergencies. The producer of oil and natural gas will be paid a "fair market price prevailing at the time of pre-emption", the draft rules said. Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has invited comments on draft rules after Parliament earlier this year passed the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Bill which replaced

outdated provisions from the 1948 Act, to boost domestic production, attract investment, and support the country's energy transition goals.

"In the case of a national emergency in respect of petroleum products or mineral oil, Government of India shall, at all times, during such emergency, have the right of pre-emption of the mineral oils, refined petroleum or petroleum or mineral oil products produced from the crude oil or natural gas extracted from the leased area, or of the crude oil or natural gas where the lessee is permitted to sell, export or dispose of without it being refined within India," the rules stated. This right will be exercised by providing a "fair market price prevailing at the time of pre-emption to the lessee by Government of India, for the petroleum or petroleum or mineral oil products or the crude oil or natural gas taken in pre-emption." The rules however did not define what would constitute a national emergency. Industry sources said war or war-like situations -- like the one that the country faced in the military standoff with Pakistan -- or natural disasters could constitute a national emergency. "Government of India shall be the sole judge as to what constitutes a national emergency in respect of mineral oils, and its decision in this respect shall be final," the rules said. The draft rules also provide for oil and gas operators being exempt from their obligations under the Act in force majeure conditions. Force majeure includes an act of God, war, insurrection, riot, civil commotion, tide, storm, tidal wave, flood, lightning, explosion, fire, earthquake, pandemic, and any other happening which the lessee could not reasonably prevent or control, the rules added.

NEWS BOX

Virat Kohli please don't retire: Cricketers urge India star to extend Test stay

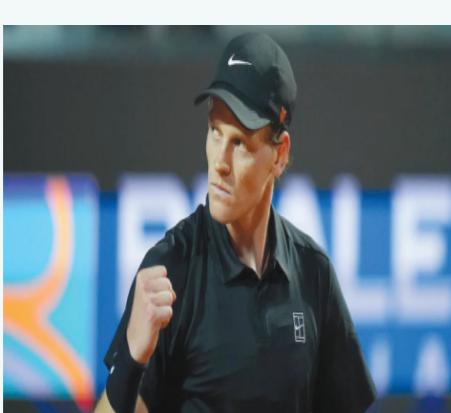
New Delhi. The Indian cricket fraternity has been rocked by reports of Virat Kohli considering retirement from Test cricket ahead of the high-stakes England tour. As India prepares for the start of a new World Test Championship cycle, sources have confirmed that Kohli has communicated his intent to the BCCI. The development comes just days after Rohit Sharma announced his retirement from red-ball cricket, leaving India on the brink of losing two of its most experienced Test players at once. In light of this, the BCCI has reportedly urged Kohli to reconsider his decision. Meanwhile, several former cricketers — both Indian and international — have come forward to stress how vital Kohli's presence still is in the longest format. Former teammate Ambati Rayudu has urged Kohli to stay on, stating that India needs his experience and passion now more than ever. "Virat Kohli please don't retire.. The Indian team needs you more than ever. You have so much more in the tank. Test cricket will not be the same without you walking out to bat it out for



Team India.. Please reconsider," Rayudu wrote. Navjot Singh Sidhu believes the timing of Kohli's exit would be ill-suited, especially with a tough overseas challenge ahead and a relatively inexperienced batting core. "Virat Kohli's decision — that he wants to retire — has created a stir across the cricketing world. His intention is right, his motive is noble — that "the old order must change, yielding place to the new." But the timing and occasion are not appropriate, because the pride and prestige of India are on the line," Sidhu said. West Indies legend Brian Lara has expressed that Test cricket still needs figures like Kohli, whose influence transcends national boundaries. "Test cricket needs Virat!! He is going to be persuaded. He is NOT going to retire from Test cricket."

After 104 days, Jannik Sinner makes strong comeback with thumping win in Italian Open

New Delhi. World No.1 Jannik Sinner made a stunning return to tennis after beating Argentina's Mariano Navone in straight sets in the Italian Open 2025. On Saturday, May 10, Sinner took an hour and 38 minutes to win the match 6-3, 6-4 on Centre Court. Returning after 104 days following his doping ban after winning the Australian Open, Sinner didn't take much time to find his feet. Sinner looked a tad out of sorts as he faced a break point very early in the opening set, but he managed to hold his serve after saving it. He upped his game to go 3-1 up and then extended the lead to 4-1. After the initial stutter, it took Sinner only 43 minutes to win the opening set. Yet again in the second set, Navone had a chance to break, but Sinner showed nerves of steel to make it 2-2 after holding his serve. Later in the set, Sinner



earned himself his second break point of the match to go 4-3 up. From there on, he didn't look back and went past the finish line comfortably. "Amazing feeling. I've waited quite a long for this moment. I'm very happy to be back. I was saying in Italian it's very difficult to have the right feedback when you don't have any matches. But that's exactly what I need," Sinner said in the on-court interview after the match. "The best practice is the match itself. Happy about that. Happy about the win today. It's been very difficult," Sinner added. Sinner outplayed his opponent on second serves, winning 68 per cent of points (17 out of 25) from them. He made 24 unforced errors, but made up for them with 21 winners, 11 more than Navone. In the Round of 32, Sinner will lock horns with Jesper de Jong of the Netherlands, who defeated Spain's Alejandro Davidovic Fokina 6-0, 6-2.

All shine, no spine: Why Indian football is built for business, not growth

The glitzy Indian Super League may shine on the surface, but beneath the fireworks and packed stadiums lies a deeper issue: a league built more for profit than for nurturing talent and creating a sustainable football ecosystem.

New Delhi. On a humid April evening in Kolkata, Mohun Bagan Super Giant clinched the 2024-25 Indian Super League (ISL) trophy amid fireworks and a roaring home crowd. It was the perfect narrative: India's oldest footballing institution now crowned as modern champions. But beyond the stadium lights and polished camera angles lies a deeper, messier truth about Indian football: it's built not for

sporting development, but for profit. A decade since its inception, the ISL has created a league with top-class production, glitzy signings, and stable franchises. But at what cost? The domestic game has become a closed circuit-shiny on the outside but hollow within. The problem, say stakeholders, isn't a lack of money. It's the absence of a roadmap. "There is no grassroots. It's just a league that's been made to make money," says Ranjit Bajaj, former owner of Minerva Punjab, told India Today in an exclusive interview. No Climb, No Competition At the heart of Indian football's stagnation lies its franchise-based model, a structure that effectively slams the door on promotion and relegation—the very lifeblood of competitive football across the globe. In most countries, performance dictates progress. In India, it's the size of the cheque that matters. Clubs like Dempo FC, one of the most decorated football teams in Indian history, and even the current I-League champions, Churchill Brothers, who once rose to the top through

merit, now find themselves locked out of the top tier, regardless of how well they perform. The Indian Super League, now the top tier of football in the country, offers no path upward for those outside its closed gates, only a pay-to-play option. Ranjit



Bajaj, whose Minerva Academy has long focused on grassroots and youth development, articulates the frustration shared by many: "You're telling me that I have to spend Rs 100 crore, and even if I win everything, I still can't go to the ISL? Why would I waste that money?" It's not just rhetorical—it's the reality faced by clubs

operating outside the ISL bubble. With the promotion and demotion system gone, how does a team play top-tier football (ISL) in India? The case of Mohomedan Sporting Club illustrates this broken model. After years of rebuilding and on-field success, the iconic Kolkata club finally entered the ISL in the 2024-25 season. But they didn't earn their place—they bought it, paying a franchise fee of Rs 12 crore. When you factor in the inflated player salaries, infrastructure investments, and staff costs, the financial burden becomes daunting for clubs that are not corporate-owned. And still, there's no guarantee of sustainability or return.

In Europe, the story unfolds very differently. Leeds United, upon promotion to the Premier League, reportedly earned over Rs 1,000 crore in broadcast revenue alone. Just qualifying for the UEFA Champions League guarantees clubs Rs 170 crore or more. This is not just prize money—it's fuel for reinvestment in talent, infrastructure, and long-term planning.

Bob Cowper, first to score triple century on Australian soil, passes away at 84

MELBOURNE. Bob Cowper, who scored test cricket's first triple century on Australian soil, has died at the age of 84 due to an undisclosed illness, Cricket Australia said Sunday. Cowper played 27 test matches for Australia between 1964 and 1968, with a record of 2,061 runs at an average of 46.84, including five centuries, while also taking 36 wickets with his part-time off-spin.

The left-hander was renowned for both his stroke-play and steadiness, particularly during his most famous innings, a 12-hour, 589-ball 307 against England at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in February 1966. The innings was the only test triple century made in Australia in the 20th century, and just the 10th ever scored at that time. It came after he was recalled on his home ground, having been the 12th man in the previous test in Adelaide. Cowper was a force on home soil, and his batting average of 75.78 runs in Australia remains the second-highest of all time behind only Donald Bradman. He retired in 1968 and became a stockbroker and later became an ICC match referee. In 2023, he was awarded the Medal



of the Order of Australia in recognition for his service to cricket. "We are deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Bob Cowper, who was a hugely respected figure in Australian cricket. Bob was a wonderful batter who will always be remembered for his famous triple century at the MCG, as well as his strong influence in the Australian and Victorian (state) teams of the 1960s," Cricket Australia chairman Mike Baird said. Cricket Australia said Cowper was survived by his wife Dale and daughters Olivia and Sera.

Mohammed Afsal breaks 800m national record in UAE Athletics Grand Prix

The Allianz Arena erupted in tribute as Müller lifted the Bundesliga trophy one last time at home, closing a legendary chapter with Bayern Munich while fans and teammates honoured his unmatched legacy.

New Delhi. In what was an emotionally charged evening at the Allianz Arena, Thomas Müller received a hero's farewell in his final home game for Bayern Munich, as the Bundesliga giants capped off their season with a 2-0 win over Borussia Mönchengladbach. The result sealed the club's record-extending 34th Bundesliga

title, but the spotlight was firmly on Müller — Bayern's longest-serving player — who was visibly moved throughout the celebrations. Having spent his entire professional career at Bayern, Müller was serenaded by the Bayern home crowd that



chanted his name and waved banners in tribute to his remarkable journey. From a teenage debutant under Louis van Gaal to becoming the club's heartbeat, Müller has defined an era with his intelligence, selflessness, and iconic 'Raumdeuter' role. With 248 goals in all competitions and over 650 appearances for the club, Müller is one

of the most decorated and influential players in German football history. Describing himself as a "modern gladiator," Müller was deeply emotional post-match as he waved to the crowd and embraced teammates, including long-time ally Manuel Neuer. During the celebrations, Neuer handed Müller the Bundesliga shield to officially kick off the championship festivities. The ceremony that followed the final whistle saw Müller hold the Bundesliga trophy high, a fitting moment for a player whose legacy is intertwined with the club's modern success. Manager Vincent Kompany and captain Manuel Neuer lauded Müller's leadership and enduring spirit, praising his unwavering commitment to the team's cause. While his future beyond Bayern remains uncertain, the night was a celebration of Müller's incredible contributions to the club. As Bayern look ahead, Müller's influence — both on and off the pitch — will continue to be a defining part of the club's identity. The Allianz Arena, and indeed the Bundesliga, bade farewell to one of its greats.

Nikhat may headline key meet in Hyderabad next month

CHENNAI. Though there have been a few noteworthy events — domestic and international — here and there, the sport of boxing in the country has largely been subdued so far this season. With some key competitions including the World Championships on the horizon, that could change. Even star boxer Nikhat Zareen could possibly return to competitive action soon. The World Boxing-led Interim Committee is looking to organise the Elite Women Boxing Tournament in Hyderabad next month. The committee has requested the Telangana Boxing Federation (TBF) to conduct the tournament. If things go as per committee's proposal, the event could witness some elite boxers fighting for a spot in the national camp. "The tournament will feature participation from the Top 12 ranked State/Board teams of 8th Elite Women Nationals, 1 SAI NCOE Combined Team, and the Host team, making it a highly competitive and significant tournament in

the national boxing calendar. This tournament serves as a separate pathway to provide opportunities for boxers to enter in



national coaching camp," the Interim Committee, in a letter addressed to TBF, said. A copy of this letter (dated May 8) is with The New Indian Express. However, the

event comes with an asterisk. Given the ongoing cloud surrounding the sport due to delay in conduct of elections and subsequent recognition issue with the sports ministry, it remains to be seen if the event will go smoothly as per plan. The TBF has to respond within mid-June. As per the letter, the event is scheduled to be conducted from June 23 to June 27.

If things fall in place, this upcoming event is quite significant ahead of some key international events, including the World Championships that is scheduled to be held in England in September. Going by the selection policy in place, even Lovlina Borgohain could take part in the Telangana meet. However, that is far from certain due to the current climate in the BFI. Due to division within the governing body of the sport in the country, several top boxers including Lovlina had missed the women's national championship in Greater Noida earlier this year in March.

England's 2027 World Cup qualification in danger after ODI rankings update

The England cricket team are in danger of not earning direct qualification for the ODI World Cup 2027 as they slipped to the eighth position after the annual rankings update by the ICC.

New Delhi. England's qualification to the 2027 ODI World Cup is in danger after the annual update to the ODI rankings by the ICC (International Cricket Council). The 2019 World Cup winners have slipped below Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Afghanistan to be at the eighth position with 84 ratings to their



name. England won just three out of 14 ODIs between May 4, 2024 – May 5, 2025, having a win/loss ratio of 0.272, only better than Nepal (0.200) and Bangladesh (0.142). Hence, their World Cup qualification chances have taken a massive hit. The 2027

ODI World Cup will be contested among 14 teams with Zimbabwe and South Africa having already qualified for the tournament, being the co-hosts. Namibia won't be able to earn an automatic qualification despite being the co-hosts of the event as it's only limited to ICC Full Members. Apart from them, the top

eight teams of the ICC ODI rankings will further seal their spots in the tournament, which will be decided on the cut-off date of March 31, 2027. Hence, with England currently on eighth position in the rankings, they are just one point above West Indies (83 ratings), who're on ninth. The two teams are set to lock horns in a three-match ODI series beginning from May 29. If West Indies are able to spring a surprise and defeat the Three Lions, they will slip to the ninth spot, further adding hurdles in their road to the world cup. If England miss the direct qualification through rankings, they will have to participate in the World Cup Qualifiers for the first time in their history.

In 2023, West Indies played in the World Cup qualifiers but failed to qualify for the main event for the first time in their history. Hence, things can go wrong for the England if they're not able to make a massive turn around in the ODI performances under the leadership of their new captain Harry Brook.

DYK Shanaya Kapoor

Wasn't The First Choice For Aankhon Ki Gustakhiyan?

Shanaya Kapoor, daughter of actor Sanjay Kapoor, is all set to mark her Bollywood debut soon with the upcoming romantic drama, *Aankhon Ki Gustakhiyan*. Co-starring Vikrant Massey, the film is slated to hit the big screens in July this year. Recently, during an interview, Santosh Singh, the director, revealed that Shanaya Kapoor was not the first choice for the role, instead, the makers initially decided to cast Tara Sutaria and Pratibha Ranta. "The film had its journey of finding the female lead. We initially considered Tara Sutaria and Pratibha Ranta for this role, but their schedules did not work out. Later on, we tested Shanaya and she passed with flying colours," he said, as quoted by *Bollywood Hungama*.

Shanaya secured her spot through a proper audition process and then engaged herself in months of intense training. "We did four months of workshops



with her; she also worked with an acting coach. By the time we started shooting, she knew the script by heart," he shared. *Aankhon Ki Gustakhiyan* is based on Ruskin Bond's short story *The Eyes Have It* and is touted to be a musical drama. According to reports, Shanaya will portray a theatre artist, and Vikrant will play a blind musician in the film. The plot is expected to explore the intricacies of human connection, such as compassion, resilience, independence, desire and self-belief.

Recently, the makers unveiled the motion poster of the film on Instagram and wrote, "This monsoon, don't just fall, but feel the love. #AankhonKiGustakhiyan. In cinemas near you on 11th July 2025."

Scheduled to release on July 11 this year, the film will be facing a big Bollywood clash with Rajkummar Rao's upcoming gangster drama film, *Maalik*. Shanaya will also star in Bejoy Nambiar's upcoming survival thriller *Tu Yaa Main*, opposite Adarsh Gourav. Backed by Anand L Rai and Himanshu Sharma, and penned by Abhishek Bandekar, the film is set to release in theatres on Valentine's Day 2026. She will also reportedly be seen in a double role in Karan Johar's *Student of the Year 3* web series. As per a previous *MidDay* report, the show will be helmed by debutant Reema Maya and will consist of six episodes.



Raveena Tandon Reacts As India, Pakistan Reach Ceasefire Agreement: 'If This Is True...'

On Saturday, the External Affairs Ministry said that India and Pakistan have agreed to a ceasefire and that military action has been paused as of 5pm IST. Soon after the ceasefire was announced, Bollywood actress Raveena Tandon took to Instagram to share her views about it. She cautiously welcomed the India-Pakistan ceasefire, warning that any future 'state-sponsored terrorism' against India will be seen as an act of war. She also reacted to Pakistan's IMF loan approval, and strongly stated that India must never suffer such attacks again.

Reacting to the news of India-Pakistan ceasefire, Raveena Tandon wrote, "If this is true, then it's a welcome decision. #ceasefire. But make no mistake, the day India bleeds again #statesponsoredterrorism it will be an act of war and then there will be hell to pay."

The #IMF had better keep track of where their money goes, the big powers may have sanctioned this loans to get their earlier loans paid back or so that there is more ammunition bought or whatever. But now AND never should Bharat Bleed Again."

In her caption, Raveena wrote, "#ceasefire But few things are pretty clear. I will support my country in ways that as a citizen I can. #mycountrymylife #bharatforever This has shown us who are friends and not. My country's enemy is mine. The world must act against terrorism and fast."

Meanwhile, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri held a very brief press conference in New Delhi on Saturday where he made the announcement of India-Pakistan ceasefire.

"The Director General of Military Operations of Pakistan called the Director General of Military Operations of India at 1535 hours IST earlier

today. It was agreed between them that both sides would stop all firing and military action on land and in the air and sea with effect from 1700 hours Indian Standard Time today. Instructions have been given on both sides to give effect to the understanding. The Director Generals of Military Operations will talk again on the 12th of May at 1200 hours," Misri said in a very brief statement to the media.

Meanwhile, 3 days ago, amid India-Pakistan tensions, Raveena Tandon had shared on Instagram, "Bharat has always stood for peace and righteousness.

Yet, for decades, we have endured a proxy war sponsored by hostile forces- costing countless innocent lives. Despite offering peace through many initiatives and talks. The world must now act against terror factories.

India's actions are well thought of, defensive, focused solely on eliminating terror threats-not civilians. Our soldiers and our people have shown immense patience and courage. I stand firmly with my nation, our armed forces, our leadership and our people. May Shri Ram guide us to destroy evil, never the innocent. Jai Bhawani, Parvati Pataye Har Har Mahadev! Jai Hind. India first."



Anushka Sharma Was 11 When Her Dad Fought In The Kargil War: 'Was Scared Seeing My Mother'



Anushka Sharma recently took to her Instagram to thank the Indian Armed Forces and their families for their sacrifices to ensure the nation's security amid rising India-Pakistan tensions. Anushka Sharma is the daughter of Colonel (retired) Ajay Kumar Sharma, who has served in every war since 1982, including Operation Bluestar and the Kargil War. Anushka Sharma was only 11 years old when her father fought against Pakistan in the Kargil War in 1999. In a conversation with ETimes in 2012, Anushka recalled how she was too young to understand the gravity of the situation. When her father would call their home, she spoke to him about boyfriends and school, not realising that he was in a warzone. The actress said, "Kargil was a tough one. I was too young at that time, but I was scared of seeing my mother. She would always have the news channel switched on throughout the day and would get upset when casualties were announced." Anushka said, "When my dad called, he could not say much, but I would go on talking about my school, boyfriends and everything else without realising that he was fighting a war." She added, "I take pride in saying that I am an army officer's daughter even more than being an actor." Anushka Sharma mentioned that she shares an extremely close bond with her father. After India intercepted Pakistan's missiles on May 8, Anushka Sharma took to her Instagram Stories and wrote, "Eternally grateful to our Indian Armed Forces for protecting us through these times like the heroes that they are. Heartfelt gratitude to the sacrifices they and their families have made. Jai Hind."

Meanwhile, on the work front, Anushka Sharma is seemingly on a break from Bollywood. She was last seen in *Zero* in 2018 with Shah Rukh Khan and Katrina Kaif. Although she has shot for *Chakda Xpress*, the film's release has yet to be announced.

Anupamaa: Manish Goel Quits Show After Fight With Rupali Ganguly? Know Here



Rupali Ganguly starrer *Anupamaa* is one of the top television shows. While it has been ruling the TRP charts, it often makes headlines for some controversial reasons too. Now, a report of Manish Goel allegedly planning to leave the show has grabbed everyone's attention. Recently, a report by India Forums claimed that Manish Goel, who plays Raghav in *Anupamaa*, is planning to quit the show due to differences with the co-star Rupali Ganguly. "Manish and Rupali had differences, which is why



he will be quitting the show and the show will take another leap then," a source cited by the news portal claimed.

However, Manish has denied rumours of his fallout with Rupali Ganguly. The actor laughed at the speculation and said, "It is completely false. Rupali aur meri pehchaan aaj ki nahi hai. I have known her since I have landed in Mumbai. This is the fourth time I am working with her. Usually, there is no fire without spark but in this case, there is neither spark nor fire, I do not know why do people spread such things. This is false."

Talking about his alleged exit from *Anupamaa*, Manish added, "As for quitting, I have 6 scenes today and I have already done 4 scenes."

However, Manish also revealed that his character Raghav had always been planned as a cameo in the show, which was planned for around four months. "Out of which, I have completed 3 months. When a cameo of an actor is extended, it works excellently for them and if it is not, then also fine, you were already informed about the same in advance. So yeah, that's about it. Not quitting as of now, no information on the leap too," he concluded.

Previously, there were rumours that Rupali Ganguly was also not on talking terms with her *Anupamaa* co-star Sudhanshu Pandey. The latter quit the show in 2024.