

## Cabinet takes major decisions

# JVC formation to execute 13HEPs, restructuring APCs



**KIBITHU May 13:** Chief Minister Pema Khandu inked history on Tuesday by holding his Cabinet meeting here on Tuesday, the last outpost along Indo-China (Tibet) border in Anjaw district that took several key decisions for accelerating development process.

Formation of M/s NEEPCO-Arunachal Hydro Power Corporation Limited, joint venture company (JVC) between the GoAP and NEEPCO for executing five hydro electric projects (HEPs-Tato I, Heo, Tato II, Naying and Hirong in Shi-Yomi district) was approved. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given approval to Tato I and Heo HEPs, whose works are likely to begin soon.

Formation of the JVC marks a significant step towards commissioning of 13 large HEPs which were rejuvenated by the GoAP by signing MoAs with CPSUs in 2023.

Acknowledging significance of hydropower in economic growth of the state, modifications in the State Hydro Power Policy, 2008 and Local Area Development Fund (LADF) Guidelines, 2022 were also approved for contribution of 1% of free power by power producers, including PSUs, on behalf of the GoAP to Local Area Development Funds for welfare of project affected area people. These modifica-

tions will enable higher and timely contributions to the LADF for greater welfare of project affected families with no additional cost to the state exchequer.

Restoration of 144-MW Gongri HEP to SPV M/s Dirang Energy Private Limited under Arunachal Pradesh Restoration of Terminated Large Hydro-power Policy under Special Circumstances, 2025 was approved to be the first project under this innovative policy.

Restructuring of Hydro Power Development Department, including zonal, circle and division levels by allocating works to chief engineers and their subordinates in basin-wise manner was approved. It would enable seamless coordination with PSUs and Independent power producers and help promote timely commissioning of all HEPs.

Eighty-four technical and 12 non-technical posts were also approved in line with earlier announcement of 'Decade of Hydropower' to bolster hydropower sector. Hydropower with this decision is expected to be the largest contributor to the state economy in achieving goal of Vikshit Arunachal Pradesh.

Replacing the Teachers' Transfer and Posting Policy, 2019-20 with revised Teachers' Transfer and Posting Policy, 2025 for all regular teachers and administrative cadres (non-

ministerial) for equitable and rational distribution of teachers and non-ministerial employees in all GoAP schools approved.

The teachers and non-ministerial employees transfer and posting henceforth will be implemented through Teachers Registry Portal - an application through a fully automated, logical and transparent system - for rationalization, transfer and posting of all categories of teachers and administrative cadre (non-ministerial). This was approved to ensure timely, transparent, rationale and accountable deployment of teachers which will directly impact quality of education.

Creation of 32 teaching and non-teaching posts - deputy registrar, librarian, assistant librarian, associate Prof, assistant Prof, section officer, personal secretary, assistant and lab assistant for Arunachal Pradesh University was approved.

Framing of marking scheme for direct recruitment to the posts of PGTs and TGTs, Rules, 2025 in par with curriculum and eligibility framework of National Council of Teachers' Education was approved to maintain the requisite teaching-learning standard. This would pave way for immediate recruitment of subject teachers to fill the gap in the school.

In another major development, creation of 200

posts of home guard was approved for strengthening internal security, law enforcement, and disaster response mechanism. This initiative aims at bridging the gap in manpower shortage in police force for enhancing community policing.

Two hundred home guard volunteer posts sanctioned in tune with Arunachal Pradesh Home Guards Rules, 2023. They would be deployed strategically in various districts to support police operations and provide additional security at key locations, like highways, public service centers, and as emergency response units.

Proposal of amendment/framing of recruitment rules to DLRSO, surveyor, kanungo, mandal and field assistant posts was approved to augment capacity of Land Management Department of under the department. It would cover educational qualification/skill, age and other service positions as per the 7th CPC recommendation and other guidelines issued by the GoAP from time to time.

Restructuring the APCs to boost governance was approved by increasing post of secretary from three to eight and additional secretaries from eight to 13. Personnel Department would examine encadrement and other issues of APCs cadre within two months. The EAC has

been re-designated to assistant commissioner.

Signing tripartite agreement with GoI and Capacity Building Commission under Mission Karmayogi was approved to facilitate need based training of all GoAP employees and equip them to face evolving challenges of governance and service delivery.

Empowering the DCs to suspend erring district officials under specific circumstances was approved to streamline district level administration and Mukhya Mantri Viksit Arunachal District Fellowship Program with 35 fellows and 65 assistant fellows to strengthen the institution of DC. They would be deployed in all districts to assist DCs to further Viksit Arunachal goals.

The AP Boilers (Inquiry adjudication and appeal) Rules, 2025 for smooth adjudication of issues related to boilers was approved and status of Niglok Industrial Growth Centre reviewed to boost industrialization.

The Sunrise Festival in Anjaw district was also approved in principle as the Sun rises at Dong first in India. It aims to have a curated festival managed by experienced experts as a self-sustained model. The GoAP shall provide infrastructures, dates to coincide with the New Year and should continue for at least five days. (CMO)

## Arunachal journalists take part in Sikkim Golden Jubilee Conclave



**GANGTOK, May 13:** Arunachal Press Club Secretary Tagu Ningee and Arunachal 365 Digital Media Sandeep Kumar Thakur besides journalists of NE states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Sikkim joined a day-long conclave here to celebrate 50 years of Sikkim's statehood.

The event, titled Sikkim@50 Golden Jubilee Celebration, was organised by Press Club of Sikkim (PCS) in collaboration with state's Information and Public Relations Department.

Sikkim Governor Om Prakash Mathur, speaking as chief guest, highlighted how Act East Policy facilitated development of NE region besides many other GoI schemes, like Vibrant Village Programme.

Speaking about Sikkim's 50 years' journey and the need for new ideas to ensure future progress, he advocated investments in eco-tourism, organic farming, green energy, and creative industries to boost local economy while protecting nature and culture.

The first session of the conclave focused on how Sikkim has integrated with the national mainstream while keeping its unique identity. Speakers Prof. Mahendra P Lama, Kunal Sengupta and Karma Paljor discussed growth, media development and cultural preservation. It was moderated by senior journalist Pema Wangchuk.

State ministers, advisors, officials, and PCS members attended the conclave, which show a vibrant cultural performance by Flickers Dance Academy.

## Doctor surrenders gun

**PASIGHAT, May 13:** TRIHMS oral and maxillo-facial surgeon Dr Tagu Taggu, a permanent resident of Bilat village under East Siang district, surrendered his one 12 bore SBBL gun with license to DC Tayi Taggu, in presence of EAC Sanjay Taram and labour officer Tore Ete here on Tuesday.



After surrounding his gun, Dr. Taggu said that motivated to protect wild-

life and discourage wild life killing besides inspire others to follow suit to protect the nature. (DIPRO)

## HOWS felicitates 6 retired officers



**ITANAGAR, May 10:** Six retired officers of Hija community were felicitated by Hija Officers' Welfare Society (HOWS) during 2nd edition of its annual event here recently to honour their contributions.

HOWS general secretary Pura Baku, in his address, said that felicitation serves as a reminder to the younger generation about values of public service with dedication and integrity.

Those retired were state legislative assembly secretary Kago Habung, textiles and handicrafts department director Hajo Dodung, IAS officer Kime Aya and DIGP-cum-hydro power development CE Pura Tupe, agriculture director Dani Yubbe and DySP Kime Halyang.

According to the biennial report, the NGO initiated several developmental projects and social interventions, including construction of a new water treatment plant at Pakho-Putu, development of a new entry gate along NH-13 leading into Hija village, installation of CCTV cameras across the village during Myoko Festival, instituted Academic Excellence Awards and worked closely with youth and community-based organisations to tackle urgent issues, like clean water supply and public welfare.

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## India thanked for eliminating terrorist Abdul Rauf Azhar

**WASHINGTON DC, May 13:** Operation Sindoor, India's recent counter-terror offensive targeting nine high-value terror sites in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), has also delivered long-awaited justice to the family and friends of American-Jewish journalist Daniel Pearl.

According to reports, Abdul Rauf Azhar, an Islamist terrorist, co-conspirator in 2002 abduction and beheading of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl, and mastermind of the IC-814 hijacking, was among dozens of terrorists eliminated in the operation.

India destroyed Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terror headquarters and training camp - Markaz Subhan Allah -, in Pakistan's Bahawalpur during the offensive on Wednesday last.

The American-Jewish community, human rights activists, and international voices from across the world have taken to social media to thank India for eliminating Azhar, the brother of UN-designated terrorist and JeM chief Masood Azhar.

"India delivered justice

for the brutal murder of American-Jewish journalist Daniel Pearl by eliminating Abdul Rauf Azhar, the JeM commander and key conspirator behind Pearl's kidnapping, torture, and beheading," American activist Amy Mek posted on X.

"Abdul Rauf Azhar wasn't just a terrorist; he was the brother of JeM's founder Masood Azhar and a mastermind behind some of the most heinous Islamic attacks," she added. "Operation Sindoor struck at the heart of terror, hitting JeM strongholds and sending a clear message: India will not stand by while radicals slaughter non-Muslims. To India, we say thank you—for standing strong against Islamic terror and taking the fight directly to the jihadis."

Former US Special Envoy Ellie Cohanin also expressed her gratitude: "For too long, we did not see justice for the evil beheading of Daniel Pearl. Personally grateful to the GoI. Daniel Pearl is forever memorialized by his last words echoing thousands of years of Jewish history and persecution: 'My father is Jewish, my mother is Jew-



ish, I am Jewish.'" Prominent voices including American author Pamela Geller, international human rights lawyer Arsen Ostrovsky and Israeli journalist Emily Schrader also thanked India for the strike.

"India kills Muslim terrorist who beheaded Jewish-American Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl. THANK YOU, INDIA!" Geller wrote.

"Thank you to our Indian friends for eliminating one of the key terrorists behind the 2002 execution of Danny Pearl. The Jewish and Indian people are two very proud nations, both fighting against the forces of Islamic terror," Ostrovsky wrote on X.

"Justice. Thank you India, for eliminating the monsters who beheaded Daniel Pearl," Schrader posted.

The Bahawalpur site,

long believed to be a major base for JeM's terrorist operations, was reduced to rubble in the strike. JeM chief Masood Azhar, one of India's most wanted terrorists, is accused of orchestrating multiple deadly attacks, including the 2019 Pulwama bombing that killed 40 CRPF personnel. (Agency)

PIB adds from New Delhi: Indian Army's Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) Lieutenant General Rajiv Ghai, has said that strikes across nine terror hubs in Pakistan and PoK under Operation Sindoor killed over 100 terrorists.

Briefing media in New Delhi on Sunday evening, he said they include high-value targets, like Yusuf Azhar, Abdul Malik Rauf and Mudasir Ahmed, who were involved in hijack of IC814 and Pulwama blast. Operation Sindoor was conceptualised with a clear military aim to punish the perpetrators and planners of terror and to destroy their terror infrastructure.

Operation Sindoor set into motion a very diligent and meticulous scanning of the terror landscape across the borders and the

identification of terror camps and training sites.

The DGMO said he spoke to his Pak counterpart Saturday afternoon, who proposed cessation of hostilities. He added that this resulted in cessation of cross-border firing and air intrusions by either side. He, however, expressed disappointment that it took only a couple of hours for the Pakistan Army to violate these arrangements by cross-border and across Line of Control firing, followed by drone intrusions. He said another hotline message has been sent to his counterpart, highlighting that if there are violations of the understanding tonight or later, these will be responded to fiercely and punitively.

The DGMO stressed that the Chief of Army Staff, General Upendra Dwivedi, has granted full authority to the army commanders for counteraction in case of any violation by Pakistan. The DGMO also paid tributes to the five martyrs from the Armed Forces and civilians who lost their lives in Operation Sindoor. (Agency)

## Over 350 illegal religious structures removed along Nepal border

**LUCKNOW May 12:** more than 350 unauthorised religious sites, including madrasas, mosques, mazars and eidgahs, have been identified and subjected to sealing or demolition in recent days, Uttar Pradesh Govt in an official statement said here.

Acting on Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's clear directive that no religious encroachment will be tolerated, the in districts such as Pilibhit, Shravasti, Balrampur, Bahraich, Siddharthnagar and Maharajganj district administrations have launched a sweeping campaign, it said.

The authorities have systematically identified illegal structures and taken strict action, continuing operations even on Sunday.

The CM has made it clear that encroachment in the name of any religion will not be allowed and all violators, espe-

cially those running unrecognised religious institutions, will face legal consequences, the statement said.

On May 10 and 11, 104 madrasas, one mosque, five mazars and two eidgahs built illegally on public and private land were identified in Shravasti. All were issued notices and sealed, it said.

One illegal madrasa on public land was demolished and two unrecognized madrasas on private land were sealed, the statement said. In Bahraich, officials identified 13 madrasas, eight mosques, two mazars and one eidgah illegally built on Govt land. After issuing notices, five were sealed and 11 were demolished, including eight madrasas, two mosques and one mazar, the statement said.

In Siddharthnagar, the authorities identified illegally built four mosques

and 18 madrasas and one madrasa. Notices were issued to these structures. Five madrasas were sealed and nine were demolished. Action was taken against total 23 illegal structures in the district, it said.

In Maharajganj's Nautanva tehsil, Parsamalik village, an unrecognized madrasa operating on Maktab land was shut down based on a report submitted by district minority welfare officer.

The building's keys were handed over to the local police station OC. So far, 29 madrasas and five mazars built through encroachment on public and private land have been demolished in the district.

In Lakhimpur Kheri, two mosques, one eidgah on public land along with eight madrasas on private land were found to be illegally built.

# The Arun Khabar

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## Chinese checkers in a failed state of false leaders

*The Trump tariff agenda for China, unravelling in Switzerland this weekend, threatens its domination in global trade.*

Shankkar Aiyar

Pakistan has never won a war against India, nor have its terror tactics delivered. Yet, it persists doing the same things over and over again. What Einstein defined as insanity is also the desperation of a state failed by its politicians, theologians and army. The tragic irony is riveting. Nations have an army, whereas in Pakistan the nation is hostage to the army.

Pakistan has been in delusion and denial for seven decades. In October 1947, it said “tribesmen” invaded Kashmir, only to be exposed by Sheikh Abdullah at the UN Security Council. In 1999, in Kargil it said the intruders were “insurgents”, a claim only to be pulpulated. The confessions of the Pak army chief validate its role. It denied its role in 26/11 Mumbai attacks till Ajmal Kasab was captured. It is unsurprising that Pakistan denies any role in the dastardly attack on 25 tourists and a Kashmiri pony handler who fought valiantly on April 22 in Pahalgam.

The question is why did Pakistan do what it did, and why now? The answer lies in the repositioning of India in the emerging global alliance being crafted by Donald J Trump’s three-pronged approach to reset geopolitics. America’s pivot to India has triggered concern in China. The response to the promise of MEGA, proposed by Narendra Modi during his meeting with Trump, is manifest—for instance, Apple’s ramp-up of production and shifting of output for US markets from China into India.

The Trump tariff agenda for China, unravelling in Switzerland this weekend, threatens its domination in global trade. On Thursday, Trump suggested that he saw an 80 percent tariff on China as appropriate. America is moving moving economic activity away from the world’s largest ex-

porter. China’s objective is to stall India—the momentum of growth and global interest. The attack in Pahalgam is littered with Chinese fingerprints and digital footprint. The terrorists used a Chinese Huawei satellite phone, navigation systems based on BeiDou, a Chinese satellite system owned by CNSA. They communicated with their handlers using encrypted Chinese apps. It is not the first time—investigations of earlier encounters show foreign terrorists were using Chinese equipment such as ‘Ultra Set’.

The question is why Pakistan is doing China’s bidding. The answer is illuminated by history. Pakistan has been a failed state and, ergo, a client state for decades now. In the 1970s, it arranged the détente between the US and China for favours. In April 1971, even as East Pakistan was being butchered, Richard Nixon told Henry Kissinger in an infamous message, “Don’t squeeze Yahya.” It was a client state for the US then, and is now a client state for China.

The state of Pakistan’s economy—with over 25 trips in 35 years to the IMF for bailouts—underlines the client status. It has a credit rating of Caa2, signifying poor standing among lenders. GDP growth is 2.6 percent; inflation is at 23 percent. The debt of \$130 billion accounts for 352 percent of its exports. China is currently the biggest lender, at \$29 billion, followed by the World Bank, ADB and Saudi Arabia. Consider this: Bangladesh, separated from Pakistan in 1971, has a GDP of \$437 billion and per capita income of \$2,600, while Pakistan is at \$337 billion and a per capita income of \$1,500. The cause of penury is the state of Pakistan’s politics. The Pak army, which has had a role in mentoring and minding terror outfits, has ruled Pakistan directly for over 31 years, and by proxy for much of the past 70+ years, is deeply unpopular.

The leader of the party that won the most seats is in jail, some terrorists are under house arrest, and the coalition of six parties dubbed ‘mandate thieves’, led by Shehbaz Sharif, is tottering. The terror attack is seen as an instrument of distraction and rekindling rapidly-depleting national pride. Pakistan’s use of terror as an instrument of state policy is vividly captured by images of state funerals accorded to terrorists. That it has been a harbour for terrorists was highlighted when Osama bin Laden was taken out yards from a military encampment. Its notoriety is chronicled in the UNSC 1267 list of terrorists and terror outfits. It has been on the ‘grey list’ of the Financial Action Task Force for 9 years in the past two decades.

The rogue state has its supporters. Pakistan is an instrument in China’s aim of global domination—useful for proxy battles and critical for its expansionism, be it the Belt and Road Initiative or the economic corridor through Pakistan. Naturally, China has consistently blocked India’s attempts to designate Pakistani terrorists under the UNSC sanctions—Masood Azhar of Jaish-e-Mohammed in 2009, his deputy Abdul Rahman Makki, Abdul Rauf Azhar responsible for the Pathankot attack, Sajid Mir accused for 26/11, Talha Saeed, son of Hafiz Saeed and designated by the US Treasury department, and Shahid Mehmood, deputy chief of Lashkar-e-Toiba. Most recently, China blocked India’s move to designate LeT affiliate TRF, who claimed responsibility for Pahalgam, and backed Pakistan in blocking Baloch groups.

On Friday, the IMF granted Pakistan more money. India abstained, but the others who voted for it must reflect. How long will they and the world accommodate, even sanctify, Pakistan’s brazen conduct? The acquiescence questions their sincerity on tackling terrorism. As for India, it must divine answers to the question posed by China.

Makarand R Paranjape

There is a famous and oft-cited quotation from Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar that might be relevant to our times: “There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.” India, by picking up the gauntlet, has done exactly that. It has significantly raised the price of terrorism for Pakistan, thus raising the level of our deterrence. Even more significantly, India may, without boasting, have fundamentally altered the balance of power in the region.

Not being a warmonger, I certainly welcome the so-called ceasefire. Whether brokered by the ‘big brother’—US President Donald J Trump—or not is less important. Neither Pakistan nor India can afford a long-drawn war. The cost, to India alone, is reportedly over \$80 billion for just four days of what was not even a full-blown war. But we have proved that we are a fighting force that simply cannot be ignored or overlooked. We have shown the world that we can be an important part of the new world order, capable of putting boots on the ground if needed. Not just boots on the ground, but missiles, drones, and much else in the air, beside conventional

air, navy, and ground forces.

Which brings us to the crucial question—what next? I am sure that the Indian Prime Minister’s Office and strategic teams must have already war-gamed the post Operation Sindoor options. I am tempted, almost, to say ‘post Pakistan’ instead of ‘post Operation Sindoor’. Pakistan, on the verge of bankruptcy, would arguably have been on the brink of collapse had we pushed on for a few more days.

To game an India-positive and terror-negative scenario, let us play scrabble with the letters in our adversary’s name. The common belief is that P is for Punjab, A for Afghanistan (the northwestern province), K for Kashmir, I for Indus, and S for Sindh. We will notice that B is entirely absent. For us, on the other side of the border, it should be obvious that if Bangladesh did not belong with Pakistan at partition, neither did Balochistan.

Let’s dive into history a bit. What is now Balochistan is one of British India’s minor provinces by that name merged with what used to be the larger entity called the Balochistan Agency. A conglomeration of semi-autonomous princely states, the accession of the latter and its subsequent integration into Pakistan were nei-

ther smooth nor seamless. As in the erstwhile East Pakistan, there is a widespread perception that the Baloch have received a raw deal from the Pakistan state and have never been happy with their subordinate position.

Unrest in Balochistan has been endemic. The spectacular hijacking of the Jaffar Express on March 11, with some 380 passengers on board, is only a recent example. Credit for which was claimed by the Balochistan Liberation Army and blame assigned to India by the Pakistan military establishment. Indeed, the Pahalgam terrorist attack was widely perceived as Pakistan’s revenge for the Jaffar Express incident.

The liberation of Balochistan, at first, may not seem as a practical or achievable goal for India. For one, Balochistan does not share a boundary with India. Yet, Baloch independence may not require the scale or cost of operations required in the creation of Bangladesh 54 years ago. In this regard, the authority I shall invoke here is the real hero of this great campaign. No, it is not Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw or even Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora.

Instead, I refer to Lt Gen Jack Farj Rafael Jacob, who, as Chief of Staff of the Eastern Command, led the assault on Dhaka. His record

of how India won the 1971 Indo-Pak war and helped liberate Bangladesh can be found in Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation (1977) and An Odyssey in War and Peace (2011), his autobiography. In a short piece such as this, it is impossible to summarise the many insights and teachings contained in these two books.

Suffice it to say that there are two kinds of generals—politicos and soldiers. The former curry favour with their civilian masters, the latter do the difficult and dirty work of fighting and winning wars. Unfortunately, the politicos often obtain promotions at the expense of the soldiers. To offer one famous reminder, Gen Brij Mohan Kaul, largely responsible for India’s debacle in the Indo-Chinese war of 1962, was promoted by the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru as the army chief against the recommendations of his predecessor, Gen K S Thimayya.

Manekshaw, who had seen little action, was also much more of a manager than a soldier. Luckily for India, he was not as bad as Gen Kaul. Jacob’s book shows how both he and Gen Aurora were wrong on many occasions. That we won the war was largely in spite of their errors and

misdirections.

Generally speaking, public relation experts, credit-hoggers and sycophants rise in our system at the expense of truly competent and upright soldiers or bureaucrats. This must not be repeated in the current fight with Pakistan. India’s national or strategic interests, we must recognise, may not be identical to those of political leaders or parties.

In the present case, however, if Prime Minister Narendra Modi succeeds in breaking off another part of Pakistan—something never seriously contemplated, let alone attempted, in the last 50 years—he would change the course of both history and geography of the subcontinent. And those who understand Modi would have us believe that he cares for little more at this stage of his illustrious career than permanently securing his legacy for posterity.

Is it time, to borrow a phrase from ‘Jihadi General’ Asim Munir’s playbook, to go for the enemy’s jugular? Certainly, India must carefully weigh such an option. We don’t need shrill war cries, but cold, calculated and calibrated actions that will produce lasting results. If A was linked to Operation Sindoor, B for Balochistan may well be on the scrabble board in the future.

## Carpe diem: A time for post-op meds?

*Lessons from 1971 tell us that India’s strategic interests may not be identical to those of politicians. It’s not a time for war cries, but for cold calculations*

## What the region's first drone warfare taught us

*The first drone fights in the neighbourhood highlighted the prowess of India’s indigenous weapons programme. It also pointed to a few other inductions that might help in the future. The focus needs to be on atmanirbharta*

Group Capt K Narang, VM (retd)

India-Pakistan military engagement came to a pause at 5 pm on May 10 following a telephonic talk between the directors general of military operations of the two countries, with a plan for the next round of talks. However, Pakistan violated the truce barely a few hours later when it launched artillery and drone strikes on the night between May 10 and 11.

Operation Sindoor, launched on May 7 in response to the April 22 Pakistan-backed terror attack on civilians in Pahalgam, has not been formally called off yet, but efforts are on to restore peace. Indian combat aircraft, long-range stand-off weapons, missiles, drones and counter-drone systems played a key role in the operation. However, drones had a unique place due to their disruptive and asymmetric capabilities.

India kicked off Operation Sindoor by striking nine terrorist sites in Pakistan in the early hours of May 7. To prevent escalation, no Pakistani military or civilian installations were targeted. Sindoor (or vermillion) is traditionally worn by married women on the head or forehead, and is wiped when they become widows. This code name was chosen to honour the women who had lost their husbands at Pahalgam.

Pakistan, however, struck Indian military and civilian sites on the night of May 7 using armed unmanned aerial vehicles



(UAVs), loitering and other drones en masse, moving up the escalation ladder that India had tried to avoid. The Pakistan Air Force tried to engage the Indian Air Force in aerial battle; in response, the IAF struck deep and neutralised airfields, radars, command and control centres, air defence systems, military installations, and other critical targets and war-waging potential of the PAF.

Pakistan predominantly employed five low-cost options: drones, missiles, artillery guns, terrorism and propaganda. Out of these, the scope and extent of employing four elements—missiles, artillery, terrorism and propaganda—are reasonably well known. However, it is the use of drones that is changing the dynamics of military engagement between the two countries. It remained below the threshold of conventional war despite some initial concerns about nuclear blackmail by Pakistan.

Pakistan’s inventory primarily comprised Akinci drones from Turkey, CH-3 and CH-4 from China, manu-

factured under licence from Italy’s FALCO, Luna-2000 from Germany, indigenous Shahpur-2, Shahpur-3, Sarfirosh kamikaze munitions, GM-500 Turah stealth drones, Uqab-II drones, and small drones developed by the country’s private entities. Turkey offered not only solidarity to Pakistan, but also supplies of Assignard Sonagar armed drones and Byker Yika III loitering drones.

Pakistan employed drones en masse for probing and striking at military and civilian targets, and saturating air defences. It also unsuccessfully tried to use drone strikes to create religious disharmony by aiming at religious sites and spreading rumours about similar strikes by India. Its periodic and large-scale employment of drones was effectively countered by Indian integrated air defence and counter-drone systems, and inflicted high attrition on Pakistan.

India deployed a number of missiles, stand-off weapons, drones, and counter-drone and air defence systems for defensive and offen-

sive operations. Its indigenous systems emerged as bright sparks in this aerial contest. The Akash missiles, radars, loitering drones, drone swarms, D4 (drone detect, deter and destroy) systems, drone jammers, other unmanned systems and Akashteer network were at the forefront. Light combat aircraft and helicopters were ready to take on contingencies. These systems, developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation, public sector units, startups and Indian innovators played varying roles in this short contest. Its upgraded L-70 and ZSU-23 guns were in action in blunting Pakistan’s drone strikes.

The battle experience provided an opportunity to test and validate capabilities, and the limitations and challenges of the indigenous systems. The lessons learnt would help in instituting design improvements, raising quality standards and planning of future upgrades with the end result being better products that are likely to be more robust and could have greater global acceptability

in the global market.

The unexpected attack, India’s graded response and phased escalation would have given Ministry, users, finance, and other stakeholders an opportunity to analyse challenges that could be leveraged for fine tuning policies, structures and mechanisms for stimulating indigenous research, innovations, spiral development, facilitating smooth procurement of indigenous equipment and their operationalisation.

The aerial contest may have been halted for now, but the threat of rogue and hostile drones and drone swarms may increase in future. The early induction of indigenous quick-reaction surface-to-air missiles or QRSAMs and fire control radars; launching the development of advanced indigenous autonomous anti-aircraft cum anti-drone guns, and using stealth wing flying test bed or SWIFT as armed precision-strike platforms are areas for introspection.

Operation Sindoor is a proof of the salience of thoughtful employment of air power in less-than-war scenarios and the benefits of indigenous technologies. The significant contributions of indigenous drones, counter-drones, missiles, integrated air defence and other systems in defending the country were the result of India’s push for atmanirbharta and innovation initiatives comprising indigenous design, development and manufacturing, innovation for defence excellence or iDEX, and the Mehar Baba unmanned aerial system swarm competitions.

### HELP US TO HELP YOU

The members of Arunachal Pradesh Union of Working Journalists (APUWJ) and the Arunachal Press Club (APC) have unanimously taken the following decisions applicable for newspapers published from Arunachal Pradesh:

In view of too many appointment orders, formation of unions and forums beginning from colony, village level to state level, congratulatory and thank you notes clogging up various newspapers offices published from the state, the APC and APUWJ unanimously deem it fit to set a standard for accepting such releases for printing.

Henceforth, releases pertaining to appointments and resignation of various office bearers of any organisation, formation of organisations, **congratulatory and thank you notes** and intimation of programme would not be entertained.

Press releases containing demands not addressed to the state government/ authorities concerned; bandh announcements not addressed to the Deputy Commissioner/ District Magistrate; demands made to the state government but not addressed to the Chief Minister, the Chief Secretary or the Minister concerned; and payment demands addressed to the editor instead of the HoDs concerned will not be entertained under any circumstances from any quarter.

In light of the constant menace of bandh calls given by various organisations/ unions etc and its subsequent withdrawals which has become a public nuisance, it will be mandatory for such bodies to convene a press conference in Itanagar to address media persons before declaring any bandh at Capital Complex. Failure to do so will result in non-publication of their ‘news’.

**Condolences** will not be entertained anymore unless the person in question was a prominent personality **at the state level**. Anything else can go as obituary/paid news.

**NOTE:** Unsolicited telephonic or personal enquiries shall not be entertained. Any attempt to influence the above rules shall tantamount to interference and may invite legal actions. Therefore, the newspapers request all sections of society to co-operate for independent functioning of the media in the state in their own interest.

# Pakistan declares an Indian diplomat 'persona non grata', asks to leave within 24 hours

ISLAMABAD, May 13 (PTI) Pakistan on Tuesday declared a staff member of the Indian High Commission here "persona non grata" for engaging in activities what it called "incompatible" with his privileged status.

A statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also said that the concerned official has been directed to leave Pakistan within 24 hours.

"The Government of Pakistan has declared a staff member of the Indian High Commission, Islamabad, as persona non grata for engaging in activities incompatible with his privileged status," it said.

It added that the Indian Charge d' Affaires was called to the Ministry of



Foreign Affairs on Tuesday for a démarche, conveying this decision.

Earlier, India expelled a Pakistani official working at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi for alleg-

edly indulging in espionage.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the official was indulging in activities not in keeping with his official status in India and that he had been given

24 hours to leave the country.

The move comes amid tensions between the two neighbours following a four-day military confrontation.

# Funerals held in Myanmar for pupils, teachers killed in airstrike on school

BANGKOK, May 13 (AP) Funerals have been held in Myanmar for almost two dozen students and teachers alleged to have been killed in an airstrike on a local school by a ruling military jet fighter.

Local resistance groups and independent media said Tuesday that 20 pupils and 2 teachers died in the attack on Ohe Htein Twin village, in Sagaing region's township of Tabayin, also known as Depayin. Their reports said that as many as 100 people were wounded.

The dead students were from grades 2 to 11, with the youngest seven years old, according to the shadow National Unity Government, which serves as an umbrella organization for opponents of military rule.

A member of a local resistance group fighting against army rule told The Associated Press that another student, who was severely injured in Monday's bombing, died Tuesday afternoon while undergoing medical treatment.

The resistance fighter, who requested that neither he nor his group be named for fear of arrest by the military, said the incident occurred while more than 100 students were studying in a school in the village, which has about 500 houses. He denied that any resistance fighters were sta-

tioned in the village that was attacked.

Sagaing has been a stronghold of armed resistance to army rule in Myanmar, and the military in recent years has stepped up airstrikes in their fight against resistance forces, which include the armed People's Defense Forces. The resistance has no effective defense against air attacks, which many reports say hit non-military targets.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the army's 2021 takeover ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, which led to nationwide peaceful protests that escalated into a durable armed resistance denying the army control of much of the country.

A report Tuesday in the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper denied the army had carried out the airstrike, saying malicious media outlets were intentionally spreading fake information. The military's tight control over the media and the relative remoteness of many such incidents makes independent confirmation of what occurred difficult.

The bodies of 18 of the victims, most of them under the age of 10 were buried Monday in two village cemeteries after hastily arranged funerals just a few hours after the bombing in-

cident, the unidentified resistance fighter said.

About 100 wounded people, both students and teachers, were being treated in regional hospitals as the village's clinic lacked adequate facilities. At least two victims have had to have limbs amputated, he added.

A member of another resistance group, the White Depeyin People's Defence Force, also speaking on condition of anonymity, told the AP that the funerals concluded on Tuesday.

A report on Tuesday by the Human Rights Ministry of the National Unity Government said the jet fighter took off from an airbase in Meiktila township in the central region of Mandalay on Monday morning and deliberately attacked the school with two cluster bombs while students were preparing to sit for their exams.

"All individuals implicated in the commanding, execution, or collusion of deliberate air strikes against innocent children, students, and educators shall be subject to stringent judicial repercussions," the group said in a separate statement. "No avenue for impunity shall be permitted. Every responsible party will be pursued without respite, unequivocally identified, held accountable and sub-

jected to stringent punitive measures under the full force of the law."

The military has increasingly used airstrikes to counter the widespread armed struggle against its rule. More than 6,600 civilians are estimated to have been killed by security forces since the army's 2021 takeover, according to figures compiled by nongovernmental organizations.

Airstrikes in Myanmar garnered increased attention recently when numerous reports deemed credible by the United Nations and human rights groups said that they continued to be carried out in the wake of Myanmar's devastating March 28 earthquake, after which the military and resistance groups declared ceasefires to facilitate relief efforts.

"We are horrified by reports of a Myanmar regime airstrike on a school in an earthquake-affected area at a time when a ceasefire has been announced. Schools are meant to be a place of safety and opportunity, not collateral in a conflict," Britain's Minister for Indo-Pacific Catherine West said in a statement.

"We repeat our call to all parties, particularly the Myanmar military, to refrain from airstrikes, safeguard civilians, and protect civilian infrastructure."

# Global aviation council finds Russia responsible for downing MH17 over Ukraine in 2014

MELBOURNE, May 13 (AP) The Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation on Tuesday found Russia responsible for shooting down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 over Ukraine with the loss of 298 lives more than a decade ago, in a ruling that raises the prospect of victims' families being paid compensation.

Russia has rejected the findings.

A Dutch-led international investigation concluded in 2016 that the Amsterdam-Kuala Lumpur airliner was shot down on July 17, 2014, from Ukrainian territory held by separatist rebels using a Buk missile system delivered from Russia. Moscow denies any involvement in the MH17 tragedy.

The Netherlands and Australian governments brought the case against Moscow before the Montreal-based global aviation agency in 2022, and on Tuesday welcomed the verdict.

Council finds that Russia violated the Chicago Convention

The council found that Russia had violated the Convention on International Civil Aviation, known as the Chicago Convention, which requires that states "refrain from resorting to the use of weapons against civil aircraft in flight."

It's the first time that the council, which represents 193 member states, has decided a dispute between governments.



Dutch Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp said that the council would consider the question of reparations within weeks.

"In that context, the Netherlands and Australia are requesting that the ICAO Council order the Russian Federation to enter into negotiations with the Netherlands and Australia, and that the Council facilitate this process," Veldkamp said in a statement.

"The latter is important in order to ensure that the negotiations are conducted in good faith and according to specific timelines, and that they will yield actual results," he added.

Dutch father Thomas Schansman, who lost his son in the disaster, said the ICAO decision makes it

clear Russia was responsible for the tragedy and could lead to compensation, but that he and other relatives mostly want the country to acknowledge its culpability.

"Money cannot buy anything back," he told The Associated Press.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong urged the council to move swiftly to "determine remedies."

"We call on Russia to finally face up to its responsibility for its horrific act of violence and make reparations for its egregious conduct, as required under international law," Wong said in a statement.

Russia rejects the council's findings

Speaking to journalists Tuesday, the Kremlin rejected the investigation's results as "biased."

"Russia did not take part in the investigation of this incident and therefore we will not accept these biased conclusions," said Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov.

Australian National University international law expert Don Rothwell said that the council had yet to publish the reasons for its decisions.

"One of the consequences for this process will be that the council will probably make some recommendations that Russia pay what are called reparations, which is an international term for damages, as a result of its violation of international law," Rothwell said.

"So we have to wait and see exactly what the council finds on that particular point," Rothwell added.

# Trump in Saudi speech urges Iran toward 'new and better path' as he pushes for nuclear deal

RIYADH, May 13 (AP) President Donald Trump in a speech in Saudi Arabia urged Iran to take a "new and a better path" as he pushes Tehran for a new nuclear deal, but he also warned "massive maximum pressure" if it doesn't come around.

Trump said at the US-Saudi investment conference he wants to avoid conflict with Tehran but warned that time is running out as Iran makes rapid progress with its nuclear programme.

"As I have shown repeatedly, I am willing to end past conflicts and forge new partnerships for a better and more stable world, even if our differences may be profound," Trump said.

But he added, "If Iran's leadership rejects this olive branch ... we will have no choice but to inflict massive maximum pressure, drive Iranian oil exports to zero."

The comments came as Trump kicked off a four-day visit to the Middle East on Tuesday with his visit to Saudi capital. The latest entreaty to Tehran comes days after Trump dispatched his special envoy Steve Witkoff to meet with Iranian officials for a fourth round of talks aimed at persuading Iran to abandon its nuclear programme.

Trump in the speech also said he hopes Saudi Arabia will soon join the Abraham Accords and recognise Israel "in your own time."

Saudi Arabia long has maintained that recognition of Israel is tied to the establishment of a Palestinian state along the lines of Israel's 1967 borders. Under the Biden administration, there was a push for Saudi Arabia to recognise Israel as part of a major diplomatic deal. However, the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel upended those plans and sent the region into one of the worst period of faces it has faced.

In a separate development, Trump announced he was lifting US sanctions on Syria. The White House also announced that Trump

will meet Wednesday in Saudi Arabia with Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa, the onetime insurgent who last year led the overthrow of former leader Bashar Assad.

The US has been weighing how to handle al-Sharaa since he took power in December. Gulf leaders, have rallied behind the new government in Damascus and will want Trump to follow, believing it is a bulwark against Iran's return to influence in Syria, where it had helped prop up Assad's government during a decade-long civil war.

Trump also signed a host of economic and bilateral cooperation agreements with Saudi Arabia on Tuesday to kick off a four-day Middle East trip with a focus on dealmaking with a key Mideast ally.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi de facto ruler, warmly greeted Trump as he stepped off Air Force One at King Khalid International Airport.

The two leaders then retreated to a grand hall at the Riyadh airport, where Trump and his aides were served traditional Arabic coffee by waiting attendants wearing ceremonial gun belts.

"I really believe we like each other a lot," Trump said during a brief appearance with the crown prince at the start of a bilateral meeting.

The leaders signed more than a dozen agreements to increase cooperation between their governments' militaries, justice departments and cultural institutions.

Prince Mohammed has already committed to some USD 600 billion in new Saudi investment in the US, but Trump teased USD 1 trillion would be even better.

Fighter jet escort The pomp began before Trump even landed. Royal Saudi Air Force F-15s provided an honorary escort for Air Force One as it approached the kingdom's capital — an exceptionally

rare sight. Trump and Prince Mohammed also took part in a formal greeting and lunch at the Royal Court at Al Yamamah Palace, gathering with guests and aides in an ornate room with blue and gold accents and massive crystal chandeliers.

As he greeted business titans with Trump by his side, Prince Mohammed was animated and smiling.

It was a stark contrast to his awkward fist bump with then-President Joe Biden, who looked to avoid being seen on camera shaking hands with the prince during a 2022 visit to the kingdom.

Biden had decided to pay a visit to Saudi Arabia as he looked to alleviate soaring prices at the pump for motorists at home and around the globe. At the time, Prince Mohammed's reputation had been badly damaged by a US intelligence determination that found he had ordered the 2018 killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

But that dark moment appeared to be distant memory for the prince as he rubbed elbows with high-profile business executives — including Blackstone Group CEO Stephen Schwarzman, BlackRock CEO Larry Fink and Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk — in front of the cameras and with Trump by his side.

Later, the crown prince will fete Trump with an intimate state dinner at Ad-Diryah, a UNESCO heritage site that is the birthplace of the first Saudi state and the site of a major development project championed by the crown prince.

Qatar and UAE next Trump picked the kingdom for his first stop, because it has pledged to make big investments in the US, but he ended up travelling to Italy last month for Pope Francis' funeral. Riyadh was the first overseas stop of his first term.

The three countries on Trump's itinerary — Saudi

Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates — are places where the Trump Organization, run by Trump's two oldest sons, is developing major real estate projects. They include a high-rise tower in Jeddah, a luxury hotel in Dubai and a golf course and villa complex in Qatar.

He'll announce deals at all three stops during Mideast swing, initiatives that will touch on artificial intelligence, expanding energy cooperation and perhaps new arms sales to Saudi Arabia. The administration this month announced initial approval to sell USD 3.5 billion worth of air-to-air missiles for Saudi Arabia's fighter jets.

His diplomatic blitz in the Gulf also comes at a time of some strain in the US-Israel relationship.

Before the trip, Trump announced Washington was halting a nearly two-month US airstrike campaign against Yemen's Houthis, saying the Iranian-backed rebels have pledged to stop attacking ships along a vital global trade route.

The administration didn't notify Israel — which the Houthis continue to target — of the agreement before Trump publicly announced it. It was the latest example of Trump leaving the Israelis in the dark about his administration's negotiations with common adversaries.

In March, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wasn't notified by the administration until after talks began with Hamas about the war in Gaza. And Netanyahu found out about the ongoing US nuclear talks with Iran only when Trump announced them during an Oval Office visit by the Israeli leader last month.

"Israel will defend itself by itself," Netanyahu said last week following Trump's Houthi truce announcement. "If others join us — our American friends — all the better."

# In Saudi Arabia, Trump reiterates his administration 'brokered historic ceasefire' between India and Pak

NEW YORK, May 13 (PTI) US President Donald Trump on Tuesday once again claimed that his administration "successfully brokered a historic ceasefire" to stop the escalating violence between India and Pakistan.

"As I said in my inaugural address, my greatest hope is to be a peacemaker and to be a unifier. I don't like war. We have the greatest military, by the way, in the history of the world," Trump said while speaking at a Saudi-US investment forum in the Saudi capital.

"Just days ago, my administration successfully brokered a historic ceasefire to stop the escalating violence between India and Pakistan," claimed Trump, who is in Saudi on the first leg of his four-day trip to the Gulf region.

"And I used trade to a large extent to do it. And I said, 'Fellows, come on. Let's make a deal. Let's do some

trading," Trump said to applause from the high-level audience, which included billionaire Elon Musk.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman also applauded.

"Let's not trade nuclear missiles. Let's trade the things that you make so beautifully. And they both have very powerful leaders, very strong leaders, good leaders, smart leaders. And it all stopped. Hopefully, it'll remain that way, but it all stopped," Trump said.

Trump added that he was very proud of Secretary of State Marco Rubio and all of the people who worked so hard.

"Marco stand up. What a great job you did on that. Thank you. Vice President JD Vance, Marco, the whole group worked with you, but there's a great, great job, and think they're actually getting along.

"Maybe we can even get

them together a little bit, Marco, where they go out and have a nice dinner together. Wouldn't that be nice? But we've, we've come a long way, and that's could be, you know, millions of people could have died from that conflict, that started off small and was getting bigger and bigger and bigger by the day."

A day earlier, Trump reiterated his claim that his administration stopped a "nuclear conflict" between India and Pakistan, telling the South Asian neighbours that America will do a "lot of trade" with them if they end hostilities.

India and Pakistan reached an understanding on Saturday to end the conflict after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes.

Indian government sources in New Delhi have been maintaining that the Director Generals of Military Operations

(DGMOs) of India and Pakistan reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, with immediate effect. They said no third party was involved.

On Saturday, Trump announced that India and Pakistan had agreed to a "full and immediate ceasefire" after a "long night of talks mediated by the United States."

Later, in a post on Truth Social, Trump offered to work with India and Pakistan for a "solution" on Kashmir, while crediting Washington for helping the two nations arrive at the "historic and heroic decision" of stopping the conflict. India has always maintained that the Kashmir issue is a bilateral matter and there is no space for any third party. India asserts that the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh are and always will be integral and inalienable parts of it.

# Escalation in tensions between Indo-Pak impacts students in Punjab's border districts

**FEROZEPUR/HOSHIARPUR, May 13:** Educational institutions in some districts of Punjab remained shut as a precautionary measure though there has been a semblance of normalcy in the some border areas of the state in the past two days.

India and Pakistan reached an understanding on May 10 to cease all firing and military actions on land, air, and sea with immediate effect following four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes that brought the two countries to the brink of full-scale war.

Schools in five border districts of Punjab -- Amritsar, Pathankot, Fazilka, Ferozepur and Tarn Taran -- remained closed on Tuesday as a precautionary measure, said officials.

However, schools in Gurdaspur, which is Punjab's sixth border district, and Sangrur and Barnala reopened on Tuesday and classes will begin in

schools in Amritsar and Tarn Taran Wednesday.

In Pathankot and Amritsar, colleges and universities also remain shut on Tuesday, the officials said. However, authorities in Amritsar said universities and colleges can take classes online.

Schools in Ferozepur, Fazilka, Pathankot, Amritsar, Tarn Taran and Gurdaspur districts, that lie on the border with Pakistan, remained shut on Monday as well.

A student from Ferozepur said he appreciated the government's decisive action during Operation Sindoor.

The 18-year-old student, who is preparing for admission test in an engineering college, however, said, "The tension which escalated between the two countries does have an impact on our normal studies as educational institutions were shut for past few days."

Another student Arsh-

preet Singh (21), a Hoshiarpur resident and final-year B.Tech (CSE) student at a private university, also said that while he supports the government's action taken in the national interest, the shutdown of educational institutions at many places in Punjab had adversely affected students.

Although his syllabus has been completed, Arshpreet noted that his external viva examination was still pending. His final-year exams, scheduled to begin on May 19, have been postponed, and the university where he studies is yet to announce new dates.

Most students staying in hostels have returned to their homes following the university's closure.

"To keep up with my studies, I've been using platforms like YouTube and ChatGPT to clarify doubts and revise topics," he said.

A private university in Mohali is holding online classes for students after suspending regular classes

for a few days.

A Mohali-based 20-year-old, who is pursuing B.Com course at the university, praised the Indian security forces for razing terror targets to dust in recent missile strikes and said Pakistan must have come to its senses and now will think twice before indulging in any misadventure against India.

However, he said though the university has suspended regular classes as a precautionary measure, students have to sit for hours in front of a computer for classes, which sometimes affect attentiveness in studies while sitting at home.

It also reminds him of the COVID-19 period when online classes used to take place, he said.

He said he is keenly waiting for regular classes at the university campus to resume.

In Kapurthala, Pushkar Walia (20), a local resident studying in fourth semes-

ter in BBA course, said some exams, which he had to appear in, to be conducted by Punjab Technical University, had been postponed last week amid heightened tensions between India and Pakistan.

Now the university has announced new dates for holding these exams, he said.

"We must salute our forces for protecting our lives from nefarious designs of Pakistan," he, however, said at the same time.

Similarly his friend Bander (20), who is also studying in same class, shared the same experience and saluted the Indian armed forces for giving befitting reply to Pakistan sponsored terrorists.

Last week, Panjab University, Chandigarh, had said exams scheduled for May 9, 10 and 12 have been postponed.

Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU), Amritsar, had also announced postponement of some exams recently (PTI)

# Cong demands special PM package for rehabilitation of shelling-hit people in J-K

**JAMMU, May 13:** Jammu and Kashmir Congress on Tuesday condemned the Pakistan Army for targeting the civilian population in the recent clashes and demanded a special prime minister's package for proper rehabilitation of the affected population.

Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president Tariq Hameed Karra made the demand after conducting an extensive tour of different affected areas of Poonch district.

As many as 20 persons lost their lives and over 50 others injured in indiscriminate shelling by the Pakistan Army in the worst-hit Poonch district.

Accompanied by senior party leaders, including working president Raman Bhalla,

Karra visited Baila village in Mandi area and offered condolences to the family of an Islamic scholar Mohammed Iqbal, regretting that the martyr was labelled as a terrorist by a section of national media.

"This is highly condemnable and demands appropriate legal action. This has hurt the shattered family and all right-thinking people in the society besides harming his image," he said expressing solidarity with the deceased's family.

The Congress team also visited the houses of several other civilians killed in Pakistani shelling besides the famous Shri Buddha Amarnath temple and Dera Nangaali Sahib and offered prayers for peace, harmony and brother-

hood.

They later visited Bagyal Masjid Zia ul aloom, Poonch city, Gita Bhawan, and Gurudwara Singh Sabha Mohalla, which have also suffered damages.

The Congress team also visited the hospital to inquire about the injured.

A party spokesman said that people demanded compensation for the loss of lives, property, crops and livestock without any delay.

Talking to reporters, Karra condemned Pakistan for targeting the civilian population and said Poonch district is the worst affected in the whole country, regretting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not mention the district in his speech on Monday evening. (PTI)

# Cessation of military actions between India and Pakistan agreed under US pressure, says SP MP:

**HATHRAS (UP), May 13:** Samajwadi Party MP Ramji Lal Suman on Tuesday claimed the cessation of military actions between India and Pakistan was agreed under US pressure, as he slammed the Centre for lacking principles and bowing to foreign influence.

Speaking to reporters at the residence of Deshraj Singh, the Mursan Nagar Panchayat chairman, he also took aim at the government's handling of national security.

Suman said, "This government has no principles. The ceasefire happened directly under American pressure. No one is ready to believe what this government says."

Taking aim at the Centre over its handling of national security, the Rajya Sabha MP said, "When Ar-

icle 370 was scrapped and demonetisation carried out, the prime minister claimed that terrorism had been crushed. If that is true, why did this latest incident occur? Who will take responsibility?"

India and Pakistan reached an agreement to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea on May 10 after four days of cross-border strikes that triggered fears of a wider conflict.

The decision by India and Pakistan was first made public by US President Donald Trump in a social media post while claiming that the talks between the two sides were mediated by his administration.

Suman, who courted controversy earlier this year by calling Rajput king Rana Sangha a "traitor", drawing sharp reactions from the Kshatriya

community, also said he would raise his voice wherever Dalits were insulted.

Asked about protests organised against him by the Karni Sena over his remarks, the Samajwadi Party leader said, "They can try to stop me but they can't stop my resolve. As long as there's breath in my body, I will raise my voice wherever Dalits are insulted."

"I have taken a pledge ... wherever atrocities are committed against Dalits and the oppressed, I will go there and stand by them," he added.

Earlier in the day, Suman visited the home of Rajpal Singh, whose seven-year-old son was found dead in a field in Mursan on May 10.

Addressing reporters after meeting members of the bereaved family, the Rajya Sabha MP alleged the

state government's soft stance on criminals had led to law and order deteriorating in the state.

"The state is in a terrible condition because the government is not tough on crime," he said. (PTI)

## PUBLIC UTILITIES

# + HOSPITALS +

**General Hospital, Naharlagun**  
0360-2246677 (Casualty Wing) / 0360-2244293 (O)  
CMO 0360-2244156 (O) Med. Supdt. / Ambulance General Hospital 0360-2244479

**R.K. Mission Hospital, Itanagar:**  
Enquiry: (8:00 am to 8:00 pm) : 9774068893 & 2212263  
Emergency: (8:00 pm to 8:00 am): 9774068893 & 2291626  
Dialysis unit : 9856000167, Ambulance Service: 2291626

**Heema Hospital, Itanagar :** 2291094

**NIBA HOSPITAL, PAPUNALLAH, NAHARLAGUN:**  
0360-2244574, 2351200

**Raj Bhawan Dispensary:**  
0360-22122402

**Hospitals in Guwahati:**  
GNRC Hospital - 0361-2227701, 2227702, 2227703  
Down Town Hospital - 9864101111, 9864102222  
GMC Hospital - 0361-2528417, 2529457  
International Hospital - 0361-2347700, 2347701  
B. Barooah Cancer Institute - 0361-2472364

**POWER HOUSE ENQUIRY**  
**ITANAGAR:** C Sector- 2212241, Central Power House- 2212251, MOWB-II- 2212260, RK Mission- 2212269, Chandra Nagar- 2290409

**NAHARLAGUN**  
Power House- 2244173, 22440038, Nirjuli- 2257577, 2257546, Banderdewa- 2266246, Doimukh- 2277243

**CHILDLINE 1098 Day & Night**

**FIRE SERVICE**  
Itanagar- 0360-2212640 | Naharlagun- 0360-2244399

**POLICE STATION**  
Itanagar- 0360-2212233 | Naharlagun- 0360-2244329  
Banderdewa- 0360-2266236 | Nirjuli (OP)- 0360-2257220  
Doimukh- 0360-2277220

APST BUS SERVICE	
From Itanagar	
Itanagar Counter- 9774034571 / 8729868842	
Naharlagun Counter - 03602351490	
<b>A. NIGHT SERVICES</b>	<b>DEPARTURE</b>
1. Itanagar-Shillong (Daily)	:4:00 pm
2. Ita/Nig-Daporijo (Daily)	:12 noon
3. Itanagar-Khonsa (Monday & Thursday)	:1:00 pm
4. Itanagar-Namsai (Daily)	:1:00 pm
5. Itanagar-Bomdila (Daily)	:4:30 pm
6. Itanagar-Aalo (Daily)	:2:30 pm
7. Itanagar-Dimapur (Daily)	:3:00 pm
8. Itanagar-Liromoba/Kamba (Daily)	:1:00 pm
<b>B. DAY SERVICE</b>	
1. Itanagar-Guwahati (Daily)	:6:00 am
2. Itanagar-Pasighat (Daily)	:6:00 am
3. Itanagar-Pasighat (Daily)	:11:00 am
4. Itanagar-Aalo (Daily)	:6:00 am
5. Itanagar-Liabarri (Daily except Sunday)	:3:30 pm
6. Itanagar-Bomdila (Alternate day Except Thursday)	:6:00 am
7. Itanagar-Jote (Daily except Sunday)	:6:00am & 12:00noon
8. Naharlagun-Leporiong (Alternate day Except Sunday)	:7:00 am
9. Nig-Pakke-Kessang Alternate day (Except Sunday)	:6:00 am
10. Naharlagun-Sonajuli (Daily Except Sunday)	:11:00 am
11. Naharlagun-Balijan (Daily Except Sunday)	:1:00 pm
12. Naharlagun-Hawa camp Daily (Except Saturday)	:12 Noon
13. Naharlagun-Kakoi Daily (Except Sunday)	:1:00 pm
14. Naharlagun-Gohamukh (Daily Except Friday)	:1:00 pm
15. Itanagar-Roing (Sumo) (Daily)	:6:00 am
16. Itanagar-Kolioriang (Sumo) (Daily)	:6:00 am

# Centre must answer people's question on ceasefire: Manish Sisodia

**CHANDIGARH, May 13:** Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Manish Sisodia on Tuesday demanded the government clarify what transpired behind the "sudden ceasefire decision."

The former Delhi deputy chief minister, however, praised the armed forces for hitting out at terror targets under Operation Sindoor as he wondered why an armistice was announced when people stood behind the government.

"Our army was responding strongly to Pakistan's misadventure after Operation Sindoor. India's forces were at an advanced stage. All parties were standing united with our government. Suddenly, a ceasefire was announced. At this juncture, many questions arose. Many questions and doubts arose in people's minds.

"When the PM addressed the nation yesterday, the country was hoping that on the sudden



ceasefire announcement he will throw some light on this..." Sisodia told reporters here.

"When you (govt) agree Pakistan is a terrorist state, why was the ceasefire suddenly announced? We had a strategic advancement... Pakistan pleaded and wanted a ceasefire and we agreed," said the AAP's Punjab in-charge.

India and Pakistan reached an "understanding" on May 10 to cease all firing and military actions on land, air, and sea with immediate effect following four days of intense cross-

border drone and missile strikes that brought the two countries to the brink of full-scale war.

Sisodia said, "If Pakistan was unable to counter our airstrikes and was begging to end the tensions, why did the government not demand that the terrorists responsible for the Pahalgam attack be handed over to India?"

"...Another question is, how did US President Donald Trump announce the ceasefire half an hour before Indian officials made the announcement?" he said. (PTI)

# Operation Sindoor showcased India's national resolve, says Haryana CM Saini

**CHANDIGARH, May 13:** Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Tuesday said the success of Operation Sindoor showcased India's national resolve, the bravery of its soldiers, and the firm leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the global stage.

Saini extended his congratulations to the nation on Operation Sindoor, calling it a symbol of the country's dignity, valour and self-respect.

"The historic success of Operation Sindoor showcased India's national resolve, bravery of its soldiers and the firm leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the global stage," he said.

Saini was addressing a gathering before the commencement of a Tiranga Yatra in Panchkula.

Led by the chief minister, the yatra began at Yavanika Town Park in Sector 5, with patriotic slogans such as "Bharat Mata ki Jai" and "Vande Mataram", and concluded at Major Sandeep Shankla Memorial.

Hundreds of people, including children and women, participated in the yatra, paying homage to the country's brave soldiers.

Saini and other ministers paid floral tribute to martyrs at the Major Sandeep Shankla Memorial, sa-



luting the soldiers' valour and courage, according to a statement.

The BJP will spearhead an 11-day Tiranga Yatra across the country, beginning on Tuesday, following the success of Operation Sindoor, as part of its outreach around the Modi government's determined leadership and the valour of the armed forces.

In his address, Saini said India's soldiers had taught a tough lesson to those who threaten the nation.

He explained that the yatra was not just a celebration of Mother India's pride but a tribute to the nation's self-respect and valour.

It is an expression of national unity, consciousness and pride. The yatra is dedicated to the warriors who responded to the enemy in their own language and continues to inspire to embrace patriotism in every moment, he said.

He said the courage, loyalty and discipline with which the brave soldiers carried out Operation Sindoor under the leadership of Modi had become a symbol of India's national dignity.

The clear message from the prime minister that India would go to any extent to protect its citizens resonated across the globe. This reflects the self-confidence of a 'new India' and the identity of a developed nation, he said.

Saini said Operation Sindoor stood as a unique example of India's military strategy, showcasing the skilled leadership of the prime minister and the bravery of the country's soldiers.

"The operation led to the destruction of numerous terrorist bases and sent a clear message to Pakistan: the price of attacking India's sovereignty is extremely high. When it

comes to the nation's security, India does not compromise," he said.

He added that India also took strong non-military measures following the terror attack in Pahalgam.

The Indus Waters Treaty was suspended and all exchanges were halted. Pakistani citizens were sent back, the border was sealed, terrorist networks were exposed and Pakistan was isolated from the global community, he said.

This was not just a military strike -- it was a statement of the new India's resolve and strength, Saini said. "Our forces did not merely launch missiles; they delivered a message so powerful that it resonated even in the US and China. This is the new India, the strong India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi."

Referring to last month's Pahalgam attack, he said, "The 'sindoor (vermillion)' of sisters and daughters was destroyed and that is why the operation was named 'Sindoor'."

Saini said the terrorists, after killing their husbands, told the women survivors of the attack to "go and tell Modi".

Prime Minister Modi responded and the terrorists hiding in Pakistan were eliminated, he said.

The prime minister has also made it clear to the

world that India stood firmly against terrorism. This stance proves that India is not in favour of war but India will not remain silent as long as peace is seen as a weakness. This combination of bravery and restraint is what makes India a truly great nation, he added.

Modi guided the vision and determination of this new India. Under his leadership, decisive actions are being taken against terrorism, the military has been strengthened, and India's global standing has risen, Saini said.

The chief minister expressed gratitude to Modi on behalf of the people of Haryana for making the country self-reliant and instilling a sense of national pride.

"The self-confidence of our nation is embodied in our armed forces. While we sleep peacefully, our soldiers sacrifice their rest on the borders... As we take part in the Tiranga Yatra, they give their lives, holding the Tricolour close to their hearts. Their bravery and valour are India's true assets," he said.

Saini also saluted the families who dedicated their sons, brothers and husbands in the service of the nation and extended his thanks to the citizens whose unity and discipline kept the nation united during this time of crisis. (PTI)

# PM Modi lauds military's valour, sends message of 'Lakshman Rekha' to Pak from border IAF base

**NEW DELHI, May 13:** With an S-400 missile defence system in the backdrop, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent a firm message Tuesday from Adampur Air Base to Pakistan: Not only have you failed to harm any of India's military installations but you will be annihilated if terrorism continues from your soil.

In his first speech to the armed forces since Operation Sindoor, Modi lauded the military for humbling Pakistan in the four-day engagement that resulted in the destruction of nine terror sites, killing of over 100 terrorists and damage to its eight military installations.

"Aatank ke viruddh Bharat ki Lakshman Rekha ekdam spast hai. Ab phir koi terror attack hua to Bharat jawab dega, pakka jawab dega. (India's Lakshman Rekha against terrorism is now crystal clear. India will respond and definitely respond if hit by a terror attack)," he said, in an over 27-minute speech which echoed the message of his address to the nation on Monday night.

But the significance of the speech was immense. It was delivered from the Adampur base, merely 100 km from the Pakistan border, which Pakistan claimed to have destroyed along with the S-400 missile defence system. India had rubbished the claims and TV cameras following Modi corroborated that.

Reiterating that Operation Sindoor is India's new normal, he praised the soldiers, saying what they have achieved is unprecedented, unimaginable and amazing, making every Indian proud and indebted.

Earlier in the day, the passenger arrived in Kolkata by an Indigo flight and was supposed to take another flight of the same airline to Mumbai. Out of the total of 186 passengers who were supposed to take the flight to Mumbai from Kolkata, 179 had already boarded, the official said.

The flight was scheduled to depart for Mumbai at 1.30 pm. In a statement, the airline said, "IndiGo flight 6E 5227 operating from Kolkata to Mumbai received a bomb threat prior to departure. In accordance with security protocols, the aircraft was moved to an isolation bay at Kolkata airport. All necessary checks were conducted, and the standard operating procedures were followed." (PTI)



Modi toured the base and greeted uniformed personnel who shouted 'Bharat Mata ki jai' after he arrived there unannounced early Tuesday morning.

After interacting with the soldiers, he delivered the speech with an S-400 system in the backdrop, wearing a Western Air Command cap with its trademark trishul embroidered on it.

He asked them to remain on guard and asserted, "This is the new India, this India seeks peace. But if humanity is attacked, it also knows how to crush the enemy on the battlefield."

He said Operation Sindoor is no ordinary campaign but a trinity of India's policy, intent and decisive capability, affirming that the country is the land of Buddha, the messenger of peace, as well as Guru Gobind Singh, who had galvanised the Sikh army against enemies.

His speech interspersed with enthusiastic soldiers raising the slogan of 'Bharat Mata ki jai', Modi said it is an Indian tradition to take up arms to establish 'dharma' (righteousness). "When the sindoor of our sisters and daughters was wiped away, we crushed terrorists in their hideouts."

He said, "Patrons of terrorism have realised that casting an evil eye on India will have only one consequence: destruction. There will be only one consequence of killing innocents: destruction, total annihilation."

He said terrorists thought they had the protection of the Pakistani armed forces. The Indian Air Force, Army and Navy humbled the Pakistani forces and conveyed to them that there is no place in Pakistan where terrorists can feel safe.

Modi said, "We will kill them in their hideouts and give no opportunity to escape." The prime minister also praised the central armed police forces like the BSF, which is deployed at the International Border with Pakistan, and said they have made every Indian proud.

"I have come to you in the early morning for your 'darshan'," Modi said, praising the air warriors. He said they and their colleagues will be the most important chapter in any discussion on India's valour even after several decades.

"You all have become an inspiration for not only the present but the future generations," he said, saluting them. (PTI)

# Bomb scare at Kolkata airport, flight leaves for Mumbai four hours late

**KOLKATA, May 13:** An IndiGo airlines flight, which was sent to the isolation bay at the Kolkata airport following a bomb scare, left for Mumbai after a delay of four hours, officials said.

The bomb scare was prompted by a remark of a passenger during the step ladder point check, a secondary-level security procedure under which airline staff frisk passengers and their hand luggage just before boarding, an official said.

The 26-year-old passenger from Manipur, who had told an airline security personnel that he was carrying a bomb, was detained, initially by the CISF which later handed him over to the police.

The IndiGo plane was taken to the isolation bay on Tuesday afternoon for

a thorough security check following the passenger's claim, an Airports Authority of India (AAI) official said.

Nothing, however, was found after thorough checking, and the plane was allowed to leave for Mumbai without the passenger concerned.

The passenger was travelling to the western city from Imphal with a stopover in Kolkata.

"His claim was declared specific, security was beefed up, and standard operating procedure (SOP) implemented," the AAI official said.

The passenger was on his way to Mumbai to look for a job.

The passenger's mother, who is a retired school teacher, was shaken after hearing that her son was detained for claiming he was

carrying a bomb. "I am very worried about what will happen to him," she told PTI over phone from Imphal.

She also said that she was clueless about what to do or who to approach for help.

The woman said her son was going to Mumbai to appear for an examination. She, however, could not provide details.

Meanwhile, after the Bomb Threat Assessment Committee (BTAC) completed all formalities, emergency was withdrawn at 4.11 pm and the IndiGo aircraft at isolation bay was towed to the parking bay number.

The plane departed from Kolkata for Mumbai at 5.43 pm, after a delay of more than 4 hours.

The passenger was lat-

er handed over to the airport police station for further action.

The Deputy Commissioner of Police, Airport, Aishwarya Sagar, said that the passenger is being interrogated.

A CISF official said that during interrogation, the passenger claimed that he had jokingly said that he was carrying a bomb in his hand baggage. The man did not have any registered baggage.

The official said he repented for making such a loose comment at a high-security zone.

Security has been strengthened at all airports in the country following the India-Pakistan military conflict.

"We treated the young man very well, provided him food and water," the official said.

Earlier in the day, the passenger arrived in Kolkata by an Indigo flight and was supposed to take another flight of the same airline to Mumbai.

Out of the total of 186 passengers who were supposed to take the flight to Mumbai from Kolkata, 179 had already boarded, the official said.

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# SC stays demolition of homes, commercial property in Chandni Chowk

**NEW DELHI, May 13:** The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed the demolition of residential and commercial properties at Fatehpuri area of Chandni Chowk in the capital as it pulled up the MCD for ineptness.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh examined the photographs of the area filed by an intervenor and reprimanded the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) for being unable to stop the construction of commercial complexes.

The MCD was directed to file a status report with all details failing which the court warned it of contempt action or drawing an infer-

ence that they were in cahoots with the builders.

"Meanwhile, demolition of residential buildings and construction and conversion of commercial complexes are stayed," the bench ordered.

The MCD counsel said that in compliance with a court order, a team visited the area and inspected the entire premises and nearby areas and submitted a report.

He said the report was not placed on record due to holidays and assured that all illegal constructions were removed.

The top court was hearing a plea of a petitioner-in-person who claimed illegal

construction was ongoing in the area allegedly in collusion with the civic authorities.

The bench asked her to suggest some names of independent architects and civil engineers who could visit the site for inspection and submit a report to the court.

"We want independent inspection of the site as we are not able to rely upon the report of the MCD officials," the bench said and posted the matter on May 23.

On February 17, the top court mulled ordering a CBI probe into alleged illegal constructions in the busy Chandni Chowk area of



Delhi and failure of the MCD to check it.

It expressed its concern and blamed the inaction of officials of MCD to check the unauthorised constructions in the commercial hub of the city.

The MCD claimed the alleged unauthorised construction was removed pursuant to the orders of the

Delhi High Court, where matter is still pending. The petitioner challenged two orders of the Delhi High Court including one over the removal of unauthorised construction at Bagh Dewar, Fatehpuri in Chandni Chowk which was disposed of on assurances of the MCD. (PTI)

# Haryana intensifies crackdown on illegal abortions; 17 FIRs filed, 13 centres sealed in a week

**CHANDIGARH, May 13:** The State Task Force's weekly meeting for improving sex ratio in Haryana was held here on Tuesday which focused on intensifying efforts to curb illegal abortions, said an official statement.

The meeting, held under the chairmanship of Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, Sudhir Rajpal, focused on intensifying efforts to curb illegal abortions and further improve the state's sex ratio under the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' campaign, it said.

The officials informed during the meeting that 19 raids had been conducted across the state in the past week (May 6 to 12) over the illegal sale of MTP (medical termination of pregnancy) kits and 17 FIRs were registered.

In addition, 13 shops had been sealed for illegal practices and 145 MTP kits were seized. Legal action under the Drugs and Cos-

metics Act, 1940 shall be launched against the offenders, the statement said.

After the formation of the State Task Force (STF), 43 FIRs have been registered, 21 shops have been sealed and 6200 MTP kits have been seized in Haryana.

The additional chief secretary during the meeting emphasized a zero-tolerance approach towards illegal abortion practices and directed officials to enhance monitoring and supervision at all levels.

Rajpal warned that strict action would be taken against any official found negligent in enforcing the law.

He said that doctors found involved in illegal abortion practices will have their cases referred to the Medical Council of India for cancellation of their licences.

The departments were directed to follow up vigorously on all registered cases and coordinate closely

with the police authorities to track and trace the persons involved in illegal practice and take these cases to their logical conclusion.

The additional chief secretary also stressed on intensified inspections at the MTP centers to prevent unlawful terminations.

To regulate MTP kit sales, the officials were directed to ensure that no MTP kit is sold without Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) identification number.

To ensure better accuracy in birth registration figures, the officials were told to visit slum areas every week and organise birth registration camps to ensure that no newborn is left unregistered in the state.

The meeting was informed by officials that the number of abortions at 12 weeks or more dropped from 425 to 226 within a week, marking a major step forward in the fight against female foeticide. (PTI)

# India expels Pakistani official at Pak mission

**NEW DELHI, May 13:** India on Tuesday expelled a Pakistani official working at the Pakistan high commission for indulging in activities not in keeping with his official status.

The external affairs ministry said the official has been given 24 hours to leave India.

The action came amid heightened tension between the two countries

following their four-day military confrontation.

India also issued a demarche to Pakistani Charge d' Affaires in New Delhi on the activities of the official. (PTI)

# Global aviation council finds Russia responsible for downing MH17 over Ukraine in 2014

**MELBOURNE, May 13:** The Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation on Tuesday found Russia responsible for shooting down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 over Ukraine with the loss of 298 lives more than a decade ago, in a ruling that raises the prospect of victims' families being paid compensation.

Russia has rejected the findings.

A Dutch-led international investigation concluded in 2016 that the Amsterdam-to-Kuala Lumpur airliner was shot down on July 17, 2014, from Ukrainian territory held by separatist rebels using a Buk missile system delivered from Russia. Moscow denies any involvement in the MH17 tragedy.

The Netherlands and Australian governments brought the case against Moscow before the Montreal-based global aviation agency in 2022, and on Tuesday welcomed the verdict.

Council finds that Russia violated the Chicago Convention

The council found that Russia had violated the Convention on International Civil Aviation, known as the Chicago Convention, which requires that states "refrain from resorting to the use of weapons against civil aircraft in flight."

It's the first time that the council, which represents 193 member states, has decided a dispute between governments.

Dutch Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp said that

the council would consider the question of reparations within weeks.

"In that context, the Netherlands and Australia are requesting that the ICAO Council order the Russian Federation to enter into negotiations with the Netherlands and Australia, and that the Council facilitate this process," Veldkamp said in a statement.

"The latter is important in order to ensure that the negotiations are conducted in good faith and according to specific timelines, and that they will yield actual results," he added.

Dutch father Thomas Schansman, who lost his son in the disaster, said the ICAO decision makes it clear Russia was responsible for the tragedy and

could lead to compensation, but that he and other relatives mostly want the country to acknowledge its culpability.

"Money cannot buy anything back," he told The Associated Press.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong urged the council to move swiftly to "determine remedies."

"We call on Russia to finally face up to its responsibility for its horrific act of violence and make reparations for its egregious conduct, as required under international law," Wong said in a statement.

Russia rejects the council's findings

Speaking to journalists Tuesday, the Kremlin rejected the investigation's results as "biased."

"Russia did not take

part in the investigation of this incident and therefore we will not accept these biased conclusions," said Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov.

Australian National University international law expert Don Rothwell said that the council had yet to publish the reasons for its decisions.

"One of the consequences for this process will be that the council will probably make some recommendations that Russia pay what are called reparations, which is an international term for damages, as a result of its violation of international law," Rothwell said.

"So we have to wait and see exactly what the council finds on that particular point," Rothwell added. (AP)

## Trump in Saudi speech urges Iran toward 'new and better path' as he pushes for nuclear deal

**RIYADH, May 13:** President Donald Trump in a speech in Saudi Arabia urged Iran to take a "new and a better path" as he pushes Tehran for a new nuclear deal, but he also warned "massive maximum pressure" if it doesn't come around.

Trump said at the US-Saudi investment conference he wants to avoid conflict with Tehran but warned that time is running out as Iran makes rapid progress with its nuclear programme.

"As I have shown repeatedly, I am willing to end past conflicts and forge new partnerships for a better and more stable world, even if our differences may be profound," Trump said.

But he added, "If Iran's leadership rejects this olive branch ... we will have no choice but to inflict massive maximum pressure, drive Iranian oil exports to zero."

The comments came as Trump kicked off a four-day visit to the Middle East on Tuesday with his visit to Saudi capital. The latest entreaty to Tehran comes days after Trump dispatched his special envoy Steve Witkoff to meet with Iranian officials for a fourth round of talks aimed at persuading Iran to abandon its nuclear programme.

Trump in the speech also said he hopes Saudi Arabia will soon join the Abraham Accords and recognise Israel "in your own time."

Saudi Arabia long has maintained that recognition of Israel is tied to the establishment of a Palestinian state along the lines of Israel's 1967 borders. Under the Biden administration, there was a push for Saudi Arabia to recognise Israel as part of a major diplomatic deal. However, the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel upended those plans and sent the region into one of the worst periods of faces it has faced.

In a separate development, Trump announced he was lifting US sanctions on Syria. The White House also announced that Trump will meet Wednesday in Saudi Arabia with Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa, the onetime insurgent who last year led the overthrow of former leader Bashar Assad.

The US has been weighing how to handle al-Sharaa since he took power in December. Gulf leaders, have rallied behind the new government in Damascus and will want Trump to follow, believing it is a bulwark against Iran's return to influence in Syria, where it had helped prop up Assad's government during a decade-long civil war.

Trump also signed a host of economic and bilateral cooperation agreements with Saudi Arabia on Tuesday to kick off a four-day Middle East trip with a focus on dealmaking with a key Mideast ally.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi de facto ruler, warmly greeted Trump as he stepped off Air Force One at King Khalid International Airport.

The two leaders then retreated to a grand hall at the Riyadh airport, where Trump and his aides were served traditional Arabic coffee by waiting attendants wearing ceremonial gun belts.

"I really believe we like each other a lot," Trump said during a brief appearance with the crown prince at the start of a bilateral meeting.

The leaders signed more than a dozen agreements to increase cooperation between their governments' militaries, justice departments and cultural institutions.

Prince Mohammed has already committed to some USD 600 billion in new Saudi investment in the US, but Trump teased USD 1 trillion would be even better.

Fighter jet escort

The pomp began before Trump even landed. Royal Saudi Air Force F-15s provided an honorary escort for Air Force One as it approached the kingdom's capital — an exceptionally rare sight.

Trump and Prince Mohammed also took part in formal greeting and lunch at the Royal Court at Al Yamamah Palace, gathering with guests and aides in an ornate room with blue and gold accents and massive crystal chandeliers.

As he greeted business titans with Trump by his side, Prince Mohammed was animated and smiling.

It was a stark contrast to his awkward fist bump with then-President Joe Biden, who looked to avoid being seen on camera shaking hands with the prince during a 2022 visit to the kingdom.

Biden had decided to pay a visit to Saudi Arabia as he looked to alleviate soaring prices at the pump for motorists at home and around the globe. At the time, Prince Mohammed's reputation had been badly damaged by a US intelligence determination that found he had ordered the 2018 killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

But that dark moment appeared to be distant memory for the prince as he rubbed elbows with high-profile business executives — including Blackstone Group CEO Stephen Schwarzman, BlackRock CEO Larry Fink and Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk — in front of the cameras and with Trump by his side.

Later, the crown prince will fete Trump with an intimate state dinner at Ad-Diriyah, a UNESCO heritage site that is the birthplace of the first Saudi state and the site of a major development project championed by the crown prince. (AP)

## Netanyahu says there is 'no way' Israel halts war in Gaza until Hamas is defeated

**TELAVIV, May 13:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says there is "no way" Israel will halt its war in Gaza, even if a deal is reached to release more hostages.

His comments are likely to complicate talks on a new ceasefire that had seemed to gain momentum after Hamas released the last living American hostage on Monday in a gesture to US President Donald Trump, who is visiting the region but skipping Israel.

They pointed to a potentially widening rift between Netanyahu and Trump, who had expressed hope that Monday's release of Israeli-American soldier Edan Alexander would be a step toward ending the 19-month war.

In comments released by his office Tuesday from a visit to wounded soldiers the previous day, Netanyahu said Israeli forces were just days away from a promised escalation of force and would enter Gaza "with great strength to complete the mission. ... It means destroying Hamas."

Any ceasefire deal reached would be temporary, the prime minister said. If Hamas were to say they would release more hostages, "we'll take them, and then we'll go in. But there will be no way we will stop

the war," Netanyahu said. "We can make a ceasefire for a certain period of time, but we're going to the end."

Hamas has said it will only release the remaining hostages in return for more Palestinian prisoners, a lasting ceasefire and an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. The dispute over whether to end the conflict has been the main obstacle in negotiations going back more than a year.

Israel says 58 hostages remain in captivity, with as many as 23 of them said to be alive, although authorities have expressed concern about the condition of three of them.

Many of the 250 hostages taken by Hamas-led militants in the Oct. 7, 2023 attack that started the war were freed in ceasefire deals.

Comments come after hostage release

Monday's release of 21-year-old Alexander resulted from negotiations between Hamas and the Trump administration that appeared to have largely bypassed Israel, which made no concessions for his release.

Alexander, who was 19 years old when he was taken from an Israeli army base during the 2023 attack, was the first hostage released since Israel shattered an eight-week ceasefire with Hamas in March and un-

leashed fierce strikes on Gaza that have killed hundreds of Palestinians.

"This was a step taken in good faith towards the United States and the efforts of the mediators — Qatar and Egypt — to put an end to this very brutal war and return ALL living hostages and remains to their loved ones," Trump said on his social media platform Truth Social on Sunday evening.

"Hopefully this is the first of those final steps necessary to end this brutal conflict. I look very much forward to that day of celebration!"

Israel has promised to intensify its offensive, including by seizing Gaza and displacing much of the territory's population again. Days before the ceasefire ended in March, Israel blocked all imports from entering the Palestinian enclave, deepening a humanitarian crisis and sparking warnings about the risk of famine if the blockade isn't lifted. Israel says the steps are meant to pressure Hamas to accept a ceasefire agreement on Israel's terms.

The World Health Organisation said Tuesday that according to Gaza's Health Ministry, 57 children had died from the effects of malnutrition since the blockade began on March

2. Netanyahu faces criticism

Alexander's release created a backlash against Netanyahu, who critics accuse of putting the lives of the hostages in danger by continuing the war. Netanyahu says he is committed to returning all the hostages, destroying Hamas and resettling much of Gaza's population through what he refers to as "voluntary emigration."

During a nearly two-hour meeting in Tel Aviv with the families of hostages on Tuesday, the United States' special envoy for the Middle East, Steve Witkoff, and Adam Bohler, the Trump administration's envoy for hostage affairs, said they would do what was needed to bring the remaining hostages home.

Witkoff said everyone would prefer a diplomatic solution and that most hostages had been released through diplomacy. The officials were heading to Doha, Qatar, after their meeting to join President Donald Trump who's visiting the region. Qatar has been a key mediator between Israel and Hamas.

Witkoff said they wouldn't be traveling to Qatar if they didn't think there was a genuine chance for progress in negotiations.

## Pakistan's Balochistan appoints first Hindu woman Assistant Commissioner

**KARACHI, May 13:** Kashish Chaudhary, a 25-year-old Pakistani Hindu woman, has made history by becoming the first female from the minority community in Balochistan to be appointed as Assistant Commissioner in the restive province.



ment of the province.

Kashish, who hails from the remote town of Noshki in district Chagai in the province, qualified Balochistan Public Service Commission (BPSC) examination.

On Monday, Kashish, accompanied by her father Girdhari Lal, met Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti in Quetta and told him that she would work for the empowerment of women and minorities, and the overall develop-

due to their hard work and effort.

"Kashish is a symbol of pride for the nation and Balochistan," he said.

In recent years, women from the Hindu community have achieved notable success in generally male-dominated fields in Pakistan, overcoming many cultural, religious and social hurdles to get to important positions.

In July 2022, Manesh Ropeta became the first Hindu woman to be appointed as Superintendent of Police in Karachi, where she is still fulfilling her duties.

Pushpa Kumari Kohli, a 35-year-old police sub-inspector in Karachi, said Hindu women have the tenacity and intelligence to reach

the top.

"I also passed the Sindh police Public Services Examination. There are many more Hindu girls out there waiting to educate themselves and become something," said Kohli, who belongs to a scheduled caste.

Suman Pawan Bodani is still serving as a civil judge in Hyderabad after first being appointed as a civil judge in her hometown of Shahdadkot in Sindh province in 2019.

Ramesh Kumar Vankwani, a politician in Sindh province, believes that young Hindu girls, who are supported by their families, have shown more inclination and initiative to gain education and pursue higher studies.

"Our young women are

doing us proud. We have doctors, civil servants, police officers, etc in Sindh," he said.

He said that despite being notorious for its problem of underage and young Hindu girls being abducted and converted by Muslim men, Sindh required more educational facilities for the Hindu community to counter such menaces.

Hindus form the biggest minority community in Pakistan. According to official estimates, 75 lakh Hindus live in Pakistan. However, according to the community, over 90 lakh Hindus are living in the country.

The majority of Pakistan's Hindu population is settled in Sindh province. (PTI)

## Russia responsible for downing MH17 over Ukraine in 2014, global aviation agency's council finds

**MELBOURNE, May 13:** The Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation on Tuesday found Russia responsible for shooting down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 over Ukraine with the loss of 298 lives more than a decade ago, in a ruling that raises the prospect of victims' families being paid compensation.

A Dutch-led international investigation concluded in 2016 that the Amsterdam-to-Kuala Lumpur airliner was shot down on July 17, 2014 from Ukrainian territory held by separatist rebels using a Buk missile system delivered from Russia.

Moscow denies any involvement in the MH17 tragedy.

The Netherlands and Australian governments brought the case against Moscow before the Montreal-based global aviation agency in 2022, and on Tuesday welcomed the verdict.

The International Court of Justice wasn't an option, because Russia doesn't recognise The Hague, Netherlands-based court's

jurisdiction.

Council finds that Russia violated the Chicago Convention

The council found that Russia had violated the Convention on International Civil Aviation, known as the Chicago Convention, which requires that states "refrain from resorting to the use of weapons against civil aircraft in flight."

It's the first time that the council, which represents 193 member states, has decided a dispute between governments.

Dutch Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp said that the council would consider the question of reparations within weeks.

"In that context, the Netherlands and Australia are requesting that the ICAO Council order the Russian Federation to enter into negotiations with the Netherlands and Australia, and that the Council facilitate this process," Veldkamp said in a statement.

"The latter is important in order to ensure that the negotiations are conducted in good faith and according

to specific timelines, and that they will yield actual results," he added.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong urged the council to move swiftly to "determine remedies."

"We call on Russia to finally face up to its responsibility for its horrific act of violence and make reparations for its egregious conduct, as required under international law," Wong said in a statement.

Russian Embassy doesn't respond

The Russian Embassy in Australia didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Tuesday.

Australian National University international law expert Don Rothwell said that the council had yet to publish the reasons for its decisions.

"One of the consequences for this process will be that the council will probably make some recommendations that Russia pay what are called reparations, which is an international term for damages, as a result of its violation of international law," Rothwell said. (AP)

# Chhorii 2 Review: A Horror Film That Forgets To Be Horrifying

In the cobwebbed attic of Indian horror cinema, where ghosts often moonlight as comedians and jump scares are telegraphed with the subtlety of a foghorn, there occasionally emerges a film with loftier ambitions.

Chhorii 2 positions itself as such an elevated specimen - a horror film that yearns to be a grim social commentator first and a spine-tingler second. Unfortunately, much like a flashlight with dying batteries in a haunted house, its noble intentions flicker promisingly before leaving viewers stumbling in the dark.

Seven years after the events of the first film, we reunite with Sakshi (Nushratt Bharuccha), now living a seemingly peaceful existence as a schoolteacher raising her daughter Ishani (Hardika Sharma).

The seven-year-old suffers from a peculiar condition that renders her painfully vulnerable to sunlight, confining her to darkness and shadow.

With the protective support of police inspector Samar (Gashmeer Mahajani), mother and daughter have carved out a semblance of normalcy - until one night, when a spectral figure lures Ishani away.

This abduction catapults Sakshi back to the very village and sugarcane fields she once fled, now descending into an elaborate underground labyrinth.

Here she discovers a horrifying truth: her daughter has been chosen for "samarpan" (sacrifice) to an ancient entity referred to as Pradhan or Adimanav - a cave-dwelling creature sustained by ritualistic offerings of young girls.

Orchestrating this macabre tradition is Daasi Maa (Soha Ali Khan), a mysterious black-veiled woman who serves as the creature's high priestess and gatekeeper.

What unfolds is Sakshi's desperate race against a

three-day countdown, navigating maze-like tunnels populated by vengeful spirits, misogynistic villagers and the revenants of her own troubled past.

The film attempts to weave its horror through the exploration of child marriage, blind faith and patriarchal oppression - positioning these social evils as the true monsters lurking in plain sight.

Director Vishal Furia, who helmed both the original Marathi film Lapachhapi and its Hindi remake Chhorii, demonstrates occasional visual flair.

The underground setting - with its winding passageways and flickering torch-lit chambers - provides atmospheric potential.

Anshul Chobey's cinematography captures this claustrophobic world with a foreboding palette, while the sound design occasionally strikes the right eerie notes. The production design of the subterranean lair deserves particular credit for creating a credible physical manifestation of social imprisonment.

Where Chhorii 2 falters is in its execution. At over two hours, the film is a test of endurance rather than nerves. The pacing plods when it should sprint, with scenes stretching far beyond their effective break-point.

The horror elements - from the ghoulish apparitions to the ancient cave-dwelling entity - quickly lose their ability to frighten, becoming repetitive intrusions rather than escalating threats. Jump scares are sparse and ineffective, while the psychological dread never fully materialises despite the promising setup.

Performance-wise, Bharuccha commits admirably to her role as the determined mother, throwing herself physically and emotionally into Sakshi's

ordeal. She conveys both vulnerability and fierce resolve, though the screenplay rarely challenges her beyond the standard maternal protection archetype established in the first film.

Soha Ali Khan brings an enigmatic presence to Daasi Maa, her whispery tone and measured movements hinting at untold depths to her character.

Young Hardika Sharma impresses as Ishani, though her dialogue delivery occasionally veers into an unconvincing sing-song pattern.

Gashmeer Mahajani's Samar remains disappointingly one-dimensional, his character serving mostly as a plot convenience rather than a fully realised ally.

The film's most intriguing dynamic - the complex relationship between Sakshi and Daasi Maa, representing contrasting female responses to patriarchal control - shows glimpses of genuine substance but ultimately gets buried under the film's heavy-handed messaging.

A particularly striking scene shows both women feeding soup to Ishani - one nurturing, one manipulating - a visual metaphor for competing maternal influences that the film could have explored with greater nuance.

Chhorii 2 suffers from its transparent agenda. While addressing social evils like child marriage and female subjugation is commendable, the film bludgeons viewers with its messaging rather than integrating these themes organically into its horror framework.

Characters frequently engage in on-the-nose exposition about patriarchal structures and female empowerment that feels more appropriate for a social studies lecture than a supernatural thriller. By prioritising its message over its medium, the film sacrifices genuine terror and narrative tension.

The screenplay's structure also raises questions. The supernatural rules governing this world remain frustratingly inconsistent - sometimes ghosts help, sometimes they haunt; sometimes Sakshi gains unexplained powers, sometimes she's helplessly human.

The villain's backstory and powers are equally nebulous, reducing what could be a compelling antagonist to a generic boogeyman. Most disappointingly, the film ends with a transparent sequel setup, suggesting that commercial considerations may have trumped storytelling integrity.

In its better moments, Chhorii 2 achieves a fleeting visual potency, particularly in a sequence where Sakshi becomes disoriented in the underground maze, the camera work effectively conveying her mounting panic. A chilling scene featuring young boys objectifying a girl they've glimpsed for the first time offers a disturbing glimpse into the cycle of misogyny's early indoctrination. These moments hint at the more psychologically complex film that might have been.

Ultimately, Chhorii 2 is a frustrating experience - a horror film that forgets to be horrifying while it's busy being righteous. It's worthwhile social commentary on gender inequality and harmful traditions deserves a more skillfully crafted vehicle.

What we're left with is a well-intentioned but tedious exercise that neither terrifies nor illuminates with the power it clearly aspires to. Like its underground setting, the film traps its audience in a maze that offers plenty of dead ends but precious few rewarding exits.

Cast  
Nushratt Bharuccha, Soha Ali Khan, Gashmeer Mahajani, Hardika Sharma  
Director  
Vishal Furia

# The Pitt Review: The Expertly Crafted Series Is Both Entertaining And Substantive

In the ER waiting room of my memory, there's a special seat reserved for Noah Wyle. Long before he became the grizzled, bearded Dr. Robby, he was the wide-eyed medical student John Carter, navigating the chaos of Chicago's County General Hospital.

Now, decades later, time has seasoned both actor and audience alike, bringing us to Pittsburgh's trauma centre where fluorescent lights never dim and the waiting room never empties.

It's a strange nostalgia-like returning to a familiar neighbourhood only to find it transformed, yet somehow exactly as you remember it.

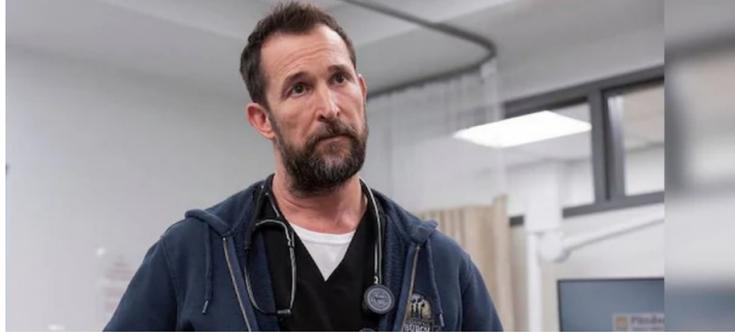
The Pitt, Max's breakout medical drama, unfolds over a single, hellish 15-hour shift at Pittsburgh Medical Trauma Hospital's emergency department. Each episode covers roughly one hour in real time, creating a "24"-esque urgency that transforms viewers into honorary residents shadowing the department's tireless staff.

At the centre stands Dr Michael "Robby" Robinavitch (Noah Wyle), an attending physician who carries the weight of the department on his shoulders with a mixture of calm competence and barely concealed exhaustion.

The show's distinctive real-time format creates an immersive experience unlike anything else on television. Where other medical dramas might skip ahead to the next interesting case, The Pitt forces us to witness every excruciating minute - the overflow of patients in hallways, endless wait times, and the physical toll on healthcare workers who barely have time to use the bathroom, let alone process their emotions.

It's uncomfortably authentic, capturing the frenetic choreography of a department perpetually on the brink of collapse.

This realism extends beyond the pacing. The ER itself is decidedly



unglamorous, with harsh lighting, cluttered corridors and a visual palette that emphasises functionality over beauty.

Gone are the glossy hallways and moody lighting of Grey's Anatomy. Instead, we get a space that feels lived-in, overused and stretched beyond capacity. The medical procedures themselves are shown with unflinching detail, from intubations to the treatment of a degloved foot (a moment that had this reviewer reaching for the remote).

The ensemble cast is expansive yet remarkably distinct. Katherine LaNasa shines as charge nurse Dana Evans, whose soft Pittsburgh accent and military precision make her the department's beating heart.

Dr. McKay (Fiona Douf), a recovering addict with an ankle monitor, brings rare insight to patients others might dismiss. Dr. King (Taylor Dearden) navigates the ER while on the spectrum, her unique perspective making her exceptionally empathetic toward patients with similar experiences.

Then there's the cocky Dr. Santos (Isa Briones), who gradually learns humility, and the perpetually flustered student doctor Whitaker (Gerran Howell), whose running gag about scrubs provides rare moments of levity.

The Pitt excels at weaving an extraordinary tapestry of human crises. In a single shift, the staff confronts everything from routine stitches to life-threatening emergencies, while also serving as the last line

of defence for society's most vulnerable. They feed the hungry, shelter those abandoned by nursing homes, identify victims of sex trafficking and intervene in potential school shootings.

By the season's climactic mass shooting at "PittFest," which dominates the final episodes, the department's role as society's safety net of last resort becomes painfully clear.

The show doesn't shy away from politics, but it approaches hot-button issues through the prism of individual patient stories rather than soapbox speeches.

When an anti-masker punches another patient, Dr. Langdon's sarcastic retort about surgical masks perfectly encapsulates the show's perspective without breaking character. Similarly, when a teenager from Tennessee arrives seeking an abortion, the focus remains on her immediate medical needs rather than abstract political debates.

What elevates The Pitt above mere medical procedural is its exploration of the human cost of healthcare. Robby, haunted by his mentor's death during COVID, compartmentalises his grief to function.

Dr. Langdon's brilliance masks a growing substance abuse problem. Dana questions whether she can endure another day at age 57. These personal struggles mirror the institutional failures they confront daily - underfunding, understaffing and the re-

lentless pressure to improve "patient satisfaction scores" while lives hang in the balance.

Noah Wyle deserves special recognition for his portrayal of Dr. Robby. He brings such authenticity to the role that you might genuinely consider scheduling an appointment with him, forgetting momentarily that he's not actually a physician. His character's journey from controlled composure to cathartic breakdown provides the emotional core of the season.

The Pitt isn't flawless - the sheer number of socially relevant cases stretches credulity, and occasionally the dialogue veers into didacticism. The mass shooting storyline, while powerful, feels almost unnecessary given how compelling the everyday emergencies already were.

But these are minor complaints in a show that so effectively captures the Sisyphean nature of emergency medicine, where the rock always rolls back down the hill, the waiting room always refills, and staff return day after day despite knowing they can never truly "win."

In an era where streaming services increasingly chase novelty over quality, The Pitt demonstrates that sometimes the old formulas still work best. It's a throwback to when television could be both entertaining and substantive, when character development didn't require convoluted mythologies, and when weekly episodes built anticipation rather than binge fatigue.

# Cannes 2025 opening: Payal Kapadia makes red carpet appearance as part of jury panel



NEWDELHI, May 13 (PTI) Indian filmmaker Payal Kapadia on Tuesday walked the red carpet at the opening ceremony of the 78th Cannes Film Festival as part of the prestigious gala's jury panel.

This marks her return to Cannes a year after she charted history as the first Indian director to win the Grand Prix for her debut feature film "All We Imagine As Light", a joint India and France production. The Malayalam-Hindi movie became the first film from India to be part of Cannes Competition after a 30-year gap.

The director appeared alongside Cannes jury

president and French cinema star Juliette Binoche, American actor and filmmaker Halle Berry, Italian actor Alba Rohrwacher, French-Moroccan writer Leila Slimani, Congolese director-producer Dieudo Hamadi, Korean director and screenwriter Hong Sangsoo, Mexican filmmaker Carlos Reygadas and American actor Jeremy Strong.

For her red carpet attire, Kapadia opted for an oversized striped grey pants suit with a printed black shirt.

Earlier for the jury photocall ahead of the festival's opening ceremony, Kapadia chose a blue blouse and a red asym-

metrical skirt ensemble by designer Payal Khandwala, who also dressed the acclaimed filmmaker for her appearance on the red carpet of the Golden Globes 2025 ceremony earlier this year.

The Cannes jury panel will award its top prize, the Palme d'or, to one of the 21 films in Competition. Winners will be announced on May 24 at the closing ceremony of the festival.

In the past, Indian film personalities such as Mrinal Sen, Mira Nair, Shekhar Kapur, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Nandita Das, Sharmila Tagore, Vidya Balan, and Deepika Padukone have served on the Cannes jury.

**FRAZZ** **JEF MALLETT**

**BIG NATE** *By Lincoln Peirce*

**DON BRUTUS** *By Chip Sansom*



# Sprinter Aditya Pisal, 400m runner Kadir Khan set KIYG records

**PATNA, May 13 (PTI)** Sprinter Aditya Pisal emerged the fastest athlete, clocking a record time, as Maharashtra continued to lead the medal tally at the Khelo India Youth Games here on Tuesday.

On another sweltering day, Pisal clocked 10.62 seconds in 100m to erase the previous meet record of 10.63 seconds set by Sadanand Kumar in Panchkula in 2022.

Uttar Pradesh's Kadir Khan broke the 400m record twice inside 24 hours as KIYG saw a spate of good performances at the Patliputra Sports Complex.

Pisal ran a blistering race to win the showpiece event with Bihar's Prince Kumar, who timed 10.64 seconds to finish a close second while Maharashtra's Rudra Sachin Shini (10.78 sec-

onds) won the bronze.

In his maiden KIYG, Kadir improved upon his 400m record of 47.67 seconds set on Monday on his way to winning gold in 47.34 seconds. Bihar's Piyush Raj (47.43) won the silver while Karnataka's Sayed Saabeer (47.50) took the bronze.

"I did not expect I would run so well. This was my first Khelo India Youth Games. Now my effort will be to improve upon my record in the next edition of the Games. I am happy that I achieved my personal best here," said Kadir.

In the boys' 1500m event, UP's Bablu Kumar won the gold in 3:56.36 seconds.

In the weightlifting competition in Rajgir, Uttar Pradesh's Tushar Chaudhary broke both the clean & jerk and total lift records held by Goldi Khan

of Himachal Pradesh set during the National Championships in Nagercoil in 2023.

Despite stiff competition from Tamil Nadu's R Kishore, who improved the snatch record twice and the overall lift record once, Chaudhary remained unperturbed and produced a superb performance to clinch gold.

Chaudhary lifted 126kg in snatch and 163kg in clean & jerk, which was a 10kg improvement in his weight category. It was 7kg more than Goldi's overall total.

In girls' hockey, Odisha defeated Jharkhand 3-1 in shootout to win the gold after the match had ended in a 1-1 stalemate. Madhya Pradesh won the bronze medal.

In the men's hockey final, Haryana beat Uttar Pradesh

1-0. Punjab won the bronze medal.

Rajasthan cyclists won five of the six medals on offer in the 30km boys and 20km girls Time Trial.

Ramavtar Chhimpa from Nokha, Bikaner, who trains at the National Centre of Excellence Patiala, and Manju Choudhary, a farmer's daughter who moved from Barmer to Bikaner to pursue cycling, won the boys' and girls' gold medals, respectively.

In badminton, Uttarakhand's Anish Negi beat teammate Nishchal Chandan 21-10, 17-21, 21-16 for the boys' singles gold. The girls' singles gold went to Tanoo Chandra of Chhattisgarh.

Tanoo defeated Rishika Nandi of Delhi 21-17, 21-9. The boys' doubles gold went to Charan Ram

Tippanna and Hari Krishan of Andhra Pradesh, while the girls' doubles title went to Gayatri Rawat and Mansa Rawat of Uttarakhand.

Haryana dominated the wrestling competitions in both U-17 boys and girls' categories winning four of the seven gold medals on offer on Tuesday. Naina successfully defending her 49kg KIYG crown. Her compatriots Rovind (65kg Greco-Roman), Harsh (51kg) and Arjun Ruhil (92kg) took home the yellow metal.

Uttar Pradesh's Shilpi and Aditya Gupta took home the gold in the girls' 61kg and boys' 55kg Greco-Roman categories, respectively. Maharashtra's Param Laxman emerged champion in the boys' 80kg Greco-Roman category.

# Aditya Pisal sizzles with twin gold at KIYG

**PATNA, May 13 (PTI)** Aditya Paisal stole the limelight with his sprinting prowess by winning two gold medals in the athletics competition at the Khelo India Youth Games here on Tuesday.

He won the boys 100m in 10.62 seconds and then ran the third leg on the curve to help Maharashtra boys' 4x100m relay team to gold in 4:55 seconds, both times being new meet records.

This would have come as a balm for him after he was disqualified for an early start in the 100m in the National Youth Championships here a couple of months ago.

Aditya emerged as the star performer on a day when five meet marks were established, including by Sadhana Ravi (Tamil Nadu) in the girls triple jump and Riddhi (Haryana) in the girls discus throw and when Bihar's athletes claimed three silver and a bronze.

Aditya surprised the field in the short sprint. Known more as a 200m runner, he made his maiden 100m race on the domestic circuit a memorable one. But he had to overcome a rather sluggish start, to catch up with the leader Prince Kumar (Bihar) and then lunging

forward to claim victory with the meet record to boot.

He returned to the track and played a key role in setting up Maharashtra boys' 4x100m victory with a new meet record time of 4:55 seconds. Teaming up with Arjun Deshpande, 110m hurdles gold medalist Saif Chapekar and Rudra Shinde, he scripted the fastest time in the event's history.

With a better start, he could have challenged the national youth record of 10.55 seconds held by Amit Kumar Shah since 2002 and realised his dream of becoming the fastest Indian U18 runner ever.

Earlier, Bihar's Piyush Raj, who missed the National Youth Championships on home turf and the opportunity to be a part of the Indian relay team in last month's Asian Youth Championships in Saudi Arabia, marked his return to the track with a well-earned silver.

Edwina Jason clocked a sub-56-second time to win the women's quarter-mile gold in 55.90 seconds. Drawn on the outermost lane, she knew she would have little idea about how her competitors was faring until the home straight.

She focused on finding the power to leave no one in doubt that she had got the measure of Haryana's Deepika.

Prisha Mishra emerged the fastest girl of KIYG 2025, clocking 11.85 seconds for her maiden sub-12 second time. She would have been hoping for a second medal in the 4x100m relay but despite having two of the fastest sprinters in the quartet, Haryana finished outside the podium.

Shourya Ambure (Maharashtra) who picked up her second medal, a silver in the sprint to add to the gold in 100m hurdles she won on Monday, clocked 12.02 seconds, also a personal best time, as she edged out national youth champion Aarti. Later she anchored Maharashtra to a facile win in the girls 4x100m relay.

The other gold medal winners on Tuesday were Uttar Pradesh's Bablu Kumar (boys 1500m), Jharkhand's Himanshu Kumar (boys high jump), Rajasthan's Ansh (boys hammer throw), Maharashtra's Janhavi Dnyaneshwar Hirudkar, who narrowly missed setting a meet mark in girls 1500m.

# BCCI ramps up pressure on foreign boards for player availability, Cummins likely to return but Buttler doubtful

**NEW DELHI, May 13 (PTI)** The BCCI and IPL franchises have ramped up pressure on foreign boards to ensure that their players return for the league's resumption on May 17 despite some lingering safety concerns in the wake of India-Pakistan military hostilities.

The BCCI top brass has instructed IPL COO Hemang Amin to individually speak to the likes of Cricket Australia (CA) and England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) to allay the concerns that the players may have about returning to India.

All the 10 teams are involved in a lot of back and forth with their overseas recruits over their arrival plans in India a day after the IPL announced the revised schedule following necessary security clearances from the government.

The world's biggest T20 league was suspended on May 9 due to an India-Pakistan military showdown, triggered by the April 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam, south Kashmir. A day after its suspension, a ceasefire between the two countries was announced, paving the way for IPL's resumption.

"We have been speaking to the foreign boards individually while teams are directly dealing with their players. We expect majority of them to return," a BCCI official told PTI on Tuesday.

CA has left it on the players to decide on their participation and in matters like these, the players' association has a role to play as well.

Team officials, on the other hand, told PTI that some of the foreign players remain anxious to return but majority of them should come back before the tournament resumes.

"The revised schedule was announced last night. We have just started contacting our foreign players over their availability. We



will have a clearer picture by tomorrow morning. Anyway our game is on May 20. We have enough time," said CSK CEO Kasi Viswanathan.

CSK's foreign players include Devon Conway, Rachin Ravindra, Sam Curran, Jamie Overton, Noor Ahmad and Matheesha Pathirana.

Afghanistan's Ahmad and Pathirana from Sri Lanka are set to join the team while there are doubts over the availability of their New Zealand players.

Cummins, Head set to return; Buttler caught in IPL vs country conundrum

Jos Buttler, who has contributed immensely to Gujarat Titans' campaign at number three this season, will now need to choose between IPL and his England commitments after being named in the ODI squad for the series against West Indies beginning at home on May 29.

England players had been given NOCs for the entirety of the IPL but now with the tournament extended till June 3 instead of the final originally scheduled for May 25, those need to be

reviewed.

As per the revised IPL schedule, the league stage ends on May 27.

Also included in the England ODI squad are Jacob Bethell and Will Jacks, who are part of RCB and Mumbai Indians respectively. Like GT, both RCB and Mumbai Indians are in race for the play-offs.

"We're keen to support the IPL and the BCCI in getting the schedule up and running, and to facilitate players' return should they choose to go back," an ECB spokesperson told PTI on Tuesday.

"No Objection Certificates have been granted based on the original IPL dates, so we'll need to review any potential extensions, particularly in relation to any clash with the final white-ball squad," the spokesperson added.

Stoinis unlikely to fly back to India

At Punjab Kings, Australian all-rounder Marcus Stoinis and compatriot Josh Inglis may not return to India, though head coach Ricky Ponting is trying his best to convince them.

Fellow Aussies Xavier

Bartlett and Aaron Hardie along with Afghanistan's Azmatullah Omarzai and South African Marco Jansen are expected to return.

The team is on course to reach its first play-offs since 2014.

Ponting has already walked the talk by de-boarding from a home-bound plane after the ceasefire announcement last week. The team's support staff, including Brad Haddin and James Hopes, never left India.

The players of Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals made a rather anxious road and train journey from Dharamsala to Delhi after the May 8 game in the picturesque town was called off midway due to the air raid alerts in neighbouring border areas.

"The foreign players were scared at that time and understandably so. The BCCI showed the safety of the players is paramount by ensuring they all got back home safely.

"Now the situation has got better, the players should return. However, some of them still remain on the edge," said an IPL official.

cial.

Like CSK, SunRisers Hyderabad are also eliminated from the competition but the franchise is expecting captain Pat Cummins and batter Travis Head to return for the remaining three league games.

"We are confident that majority of foreign players will return including the captain," said a team official.

delhi Capitals, who remain in contention for a top-four spot, contacted their overseas players on Tuesday morning and are waiting to hear back from them. Australian pacer Mitchell Starc is among DC's key players.

"We hope that all of them return. We will know more by tomorrow," said a team official.

The IPL final originally scheduled for May 25 has been pushed back to June 3. The World Test Championship (WTC) final between Australia and South Africa is scheduled from June 11 at the Lord's, leaving very little turnaround time for their players who decide to take part in the IPL play-offs.

# How Virat Kohli touched batting heights after a two-week camp with his U19 coach Rajput

**BENGALURU, May 13 (PTI)** Virat Kohli had nothing to boast of as he returned from a forgettable tour of England in 2014 with his pride dented by James Anderson.

Desperate to assert himself on the big stage, Kohli dialled his Under-19 coach Lalchand Rajput. Sachin Tendulkar too had offered some tips, but a two-week training camp in Mumbai with Rajput was the real turning point in Kohli's career.

Kohli's desperation was justified as the numbers — 134 runs from 5 Tests at 13 and 54 runs from 4 ODIs at 18 — reflected his struggles in the seam-friendly English conditions.

"I had known him from Under-19 days and we had a good rapport because I could understand him. I had spent a good amount of time with him — from 2006 to 2007 with India U19. So, it was good to get a call from him after that England tour in 2014, where he never had a good series," Rajput told PTI from Netherlands.

So, what were the areas he worked in Kohli's batting?

"We had a two-week camp in Mumbai. By then, he had already improved a lot as a batter from his U19 days, and it was clear that he was on his way to become a great player. It was a matter of working on a few areas closely.

"His head was falling a little bit and his footwork was a little indecisive. So, we worked on those areas a bit. He has always been receptive and adaptive as a batter, and he did that here too as he quickly made the changes before going to Australia," said Rajput.

Those two weeks of rigours did not fail Kohli as the Delhi man firmly established himself as a premier batter during the tour to Australia from November 2014.

Kohli hammered twin tons in Adelaide followed



by masterly hundreds in Melbourne and Sydney, aggregating 692 runs from four Tests at an average of 86.50 with four centuries.

It started Kohli's climb to peaks rarely touched by any other batters of his time, making 5347 runs from 55 matches at an average of 63.65 with 21 hundreds.

Rajput was not entirely surprised either.

"He just believes in excellence. He doesn't want to be number 2, he always wants to be number 1. That is his hunger and pride for what he plays for," he said.

However, the former India batter was a bit surprised by Kohli's sudden departure from Test cricket, a format to which he gave his heart and effort.

"I would always say that he is so fit, he could have played a couple of seasons more. He is so fit and passionate that I feel that he has plenty of cricket left in him.

"We would love to see him, but again it is his personal decision and he must have thought about it a lot before taking it and we have to respect it," he added.

Now that Kohli has retired from Test cricket, Rajput feels that the cricketing community will miss his supercharged presence.

"He really liked Test cricket and he has always advocated it. He always believed that Test cricket should be taken very seriously and he showed it by the way he used to go about in Test cricket. I

think Test cricket has been very alive because of him.

"I don't know what the future holds, but definitely Test cricket will miss him. The cricket community overall will miss him," he noted.

Rajput said the next generation players will find it tough, at least initially, to replace titans like Kohli and Rohit Sharma, who had also retired from Tests a few days back.

"These shoes will be tough to fill, and there will be a lot of pressure on them. But since India has got a lot of players, I am sure somebody will raise his hand. England will be a tough tour without these two, but we have done well in the past.

"So there will be somebody who can raise his hand and say, yes, I am here on this tour and grab that opportunity with both hands," he explained.

Who should lead India in the five-match tour of England since Rohit has vacated the leadership role?

"I know everyone is talking about Shubman Gill. We are thinking of him to be the future captain. But I still feel that Jasprit Bumrah should be the captain because whenever Rohit was not there, he has stepped in as a captain, and he had done well in that one Test at Perth (vs Australia)," he said.

However, Rajput said the selectors will be mulling over the fitness of Bumrah as he had to pull out of the Sydney Test against the Aussies with a back niggle.

# BCCI ramps up pressure on foreign boards for player availability, Cummins likely to return but Buttler doubtful

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