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## Modi tells forces to respond harder to Pak actions: Sources



**NEW DELHI, May 11:** There is a new normal in India's response to cross-border terrorism, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi instructing the armed forces that the country's response to every action by Pakistan should be more forceful, government sources said on Sunday.

Following Operation Sindoor, Prime Minister Modi told the armed forces that bullets must be responded to by artillery (Wahan se goli chalegi, toh yahan se gola chahlega), the sources said.

They said Operation Sindoor is

not concluded and there is a new normal in India's response to cross-border terrorism. The cost of cross-border terrorism will be raised, and Pakistan can't continue with terrorism while expecting cooperation in areas of its choosing.

They also said that India will never accept mediation in the Kashmir issue and the only matter to discuss is Pakistan returning the territory which is under its illegal occupation.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Saturday evening announced that India (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Panchayat polls: BJP ahead in counting of votes

**A clear picture to emerge today: Poll panel**

**GUWAHATI, May 11:** The BJP is leading in the Assam panchayat polls' counting, which is underway across the state since Sunday morning amid tight security, officials said.

Panchayat elections took place in two phases on May 2 and May 7 in 27 districts for the first time after the delimitation of constituencies. The counting of votes for both phases is being held simultaneously since 8 am.

According to Assam State Election Commission (ASEC) data, the BJP has won six members of Anchalik Panchayat constituencies in Majuli district.

"We have not got any other trends or results yet from the districts. Counting of panchayat votes is a very complex job with three ballot papers for each panchayat. It will continue till tomorrow night," ASEC Commissioner Alok Kumar told PTI.



The total seats include 21,920 Gram Panchayat (GP) members with 10,883 seats reserved for women. Voting also happened for 2,192 Anchalik Panchayat (AP) members with 1,124 reserved for women and 397 Zilla Parishad (ZP) members with 199 seats reserved for women.

Sources said the BJP is leading

in 355 AP seats and its ally AGP in 42 seats, while the Congress is ahead in 21 AP constituencies.

In the case of ZP, the saffron party is marching ahead in 35 and AGP in two. Congress is not leading in any ZP seat yet.

The GP members were not allowed to contest on party tickets and they were all independents.

As many as 2,912 candidates have won uncontested - 34 ZP members, 311 AP members and 2,567 GP ward members.

"The counting of ballot papers began in all the 39 centres across the state. The counting agents of candidates reached early in the morning for the exercise," a senior official said.

In view of stray violence and disruptions during voting, the administration has arranged adequate security measures in all the counting centres to avoid any such situations, he said.

"There are thousands of seats in the election. We will try to complete the counting as soon as possible. However, we believe that it is likely to stretch till tomorrow," the official said.

A total electorate of 1,80,36,682, comprising 90,71,264 men, 89,65,010 women and 408 others, were eligible (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 10-yr boy killed by mother's lover in Guwahati

**GUWAHATI, May 11:** A 10-year-old boy was murdered, his body stuffed into a suitcase and thrown in a bush by his mother's lover here, police said on Sunday.

Deputy Commissioner (East) of Guwahati Police Mrinal Deka told PTI that the mother of the child filed a missing complaint on Saturday, stating that her kid had not returned home from tuition.

"We initiated an investigation and found a suitcase in a bush near Basistha temple. The boy was killed, stuffed inside the luggage and thereafter thrown there," he added.

Deka said during interrogation, the mother's lover confessed and led police to the location of the suitcase. "We have arrested the man. Police have also detained the mother (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)"

## 2 more persons arrested in Assam for 'defending' Pak: CM

**GUWAHATI, May 11:** Two more persons were arrested in Assam for allegedly "defending" Pakistan, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Saturday.

With this, a total of 50 such arrests have been made since the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people, he said.

Those arrested were identified as Jobbur Islam of Biswanath and Ruhul Amin of Morigaon, Sarma posted on X.

"Update on Crackdown against traitors. Total of 50 anti-nationals are now enjoying prison hospitality. We will continue to hunt these traitors," he said. Among those arrested were AIUDF MLA Aminul Islam, who (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Indira 'mishandled' situation post-B'desh creation: Himanta

**GUWAHATI, May 11:** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday criticised former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi for her "mishandling" of the situation following the creation of Bangladesh after India's historic 1971 win against Pakistan.

In a post on X, Sarma alleged that due to failure of the political leadership of that period, creation of Bangladesh was a "historic opportunity lost".

The CM's long post comes in the wake of Congress leaders' criticism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi after US President Donald Trump on Saturday claimed that India and Pakistan have agreed to a "full and immediate" ceasefire after US mediation.

India and Pakistan on Saturday reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, with immediate effect.

Sarma titled his post as 'The Myth of Bangladesh's Creation: A Strategic Triumph, A Diplomatic Folly'.

"India's 1971 military victory was decisive and historic. It broke Pakistan in two and gave birth to Bangladesh. But while our soldiers delivered a stunning battlefield success, India's political leadership failed to secure lasting strategic gains," he said.

The creation of Bangladesh is often hailed as a diplomatic triumph, but history tells a different story, he claimed.

"India's military triumph in 1971 was not matched by strategic foresight. What could have been a new regional order was reduced to a one-sided act of generosity. Had Mrs. Indira Gandhi been alive today, the nation would have questioned her for mishandling the decisive victory won by our armed forces. "The creation of Bangladesh was not a bargain — it was a (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Peace, harmony, development, key achievements during last four years: Himanta



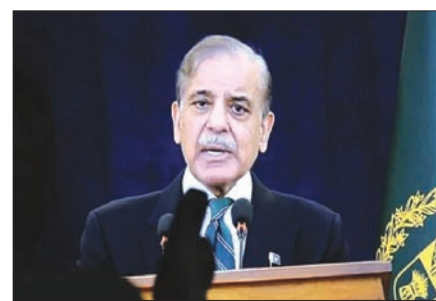
**GUWAHATI, May 11:** Peace, harmony between different communities and development are the three macro achievements during the last four years of the BJP government in the state, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Saturday.

"Assam was once seen as a region beset by challenges,

but now it has emerged as a beacon of opportunity, resilience and innovation for the Northeast and the nation", the chief minister said at a press conference to mark the completion of four years of his government in the state.

Peace has returned to the state, and during the last four years, "the state enjoyed an incident-free situation, and after decades, we can say Assam today enjoys complete peace," he said. Harmony between the different communities, particularly the mainstreaming of the tea community and bridging the gap between the Barak-Brahmaputra Valley, is another (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Pakistan 'committed' to faithful implementation of ceasefire: Foreign Office



**ISLAMABAD, May 11:** Pakistan on Sunday said it was "committed" to faithful implementation of the ceasefire with India, asserting that its forces are handling the situation with "responsibility and restraint".

India and Pakistan on Saturday reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, with immediate effect.

Hours later, the arrangement came under severe pressure with New Delhi blaming Islamabad for breaching it.

In a media briefing close to midnight, India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri called upon Pakistan to take "appropriate steps" to address these violations and deal with the situation with "seriousness and responsibility".

"Pakistan remains committed to faithful implementation of the ceasefire between Pakistan and India," the Foreign Office spokesperson here said in a statement while responding to the media queries regarding the statement made by Misri.

Pakistan's "forces are handling the situation with responsibility and restraint," the spokesperson claimed.

"We believe that any issues in smooth implementation of the ceasefire should be addressed through communication at appropriate levels. The troops on ground should also exercise restraint," he added. Tensions between India and Pakistan soared after the Indian Armed Forces hit terror launchpads in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) last week in response to the Pahalgam terror attack. (PTI)

## 'It was not possible to run the household with this income'

## Women who are left behind: Another side of Assam floods

**DHEMAJI, May 11:** "Will our house still be standing when we return some day? What about the land?"

Lakhisekhi Bara's ears ring with these questions from her husband every day. Questions to which she has no answer.

Bara (52) moved to Assam's Dhemaji from a neighbouring district with her daughter-in-law when the 2023 floods rendered them homeless while the men of the family migrated to Chennai to work as construction labourers.

The two women are among several to have been left behind in the district by the men in their families who moved to other states due to climate-induced income loss.

"We used to work the farm-



land but agriculture has become unpredictable while daily wage work is not regularly available. It was not possible to run the household with this income. As a result, my husband and our son moved to Chennai two years ago. We

moved to Dhemaji because other women from our extended family live here and we can be there for each other in times of need," she tells PTI.

"Whenever my husband calls, he wonders if our land will be safe to resume agricul-

ture some day. What if it is completely washed away? That is our only asset," she says.

Among the country's 250 most backward districts, Dhemaji is severely flood-prone. Official estimates suggest more than 23 lakh people in 28 districts of Assam in India's northeast have been affected by floods.

The unpredictable Brahmaputra river -- originating in the Tibetan Plateau and flowing through Arunachal Pradesh and Assam before emptying into the Bay of Bengal -- shapes the state's flood landscape.

During a visit to Bara's village, this PTI correspondent could barely spot a working-age (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

# বুদ্ধ পূর্ণিমা

১২ মে' ২০২৫

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(DIPR/D/HLT/14/12-May-25)



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

**NEW DELHI, May 11:** The government will hold pre-emption rights over all oil and natural gas produced in the country in any event of national emergency, according to draft rules being framed under a revamped oilfields legislation.

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

The inclusion of such rights over crude oil - extracted from underground or beneath the seabed and refined into fuels like petrol and diesel - as well as natural gas, which is used for power generation, fertilizer production, CNG for vehicles, and piped cooking gas, is intended to help the government prioritize national interests and ensure public welfare during emergencies.

The producer of oil and natural gas will be paid a "fair market price prevailing at the time of pre-emption", the draft rules said.

Ministry of Petroleum and Nat-



ural Gas has invited comments on draft rules after Parliament earlier this year passed the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Bill which replaced outdated provisions from the 1948 Act, to boost domestic production, attract investment, and support the country's energy transition goals.

"In the case of a national emergency in respect of petroleum products or mineral oil, Government of India shall, at all times, during such emergency, have the

right of preemption of the mineral oils, refined petroleum or petroleum or mineral oil products produced from the crude oil or natural gas extracted from the leased area, or of the crude oil or natural gas where the lessee is permitted to sell, export or dispose of without it being refined within India," the rules stated.

This right will be exercised by providing a "fair market price prevailing at the time of pre-emption to the lessee by Government of

India, for the petroleum or petroleum or mineral oil products or the crude oil or natural gas taken in pre-emption."

The rules however did not define what would constitute a national emergency. Industry sources said war or war-like situations - like the one that the country faced in the military standoff with Pakistan - or natural disasters could constitute a national emergency.

"Government of India shall be the sole judge as to what constitutes a national emergency in respect of mineral oils, and its decision in this respect shall be final," the rules said.

The draft rules also provide for oil and gas operators being exempt from their obligations under the Act in force majeure conditions.

Force majeure includes an act of God, war, insurrection, riot, civil commotion, tide, storm, tidal wave, flood, lightning, explosion, fire, earthquake, pandemic and any other happening which the lessee could not reasonably prevent or control, the rules added. (PTI)

## DCM Shriram's arm Fenesta buys 53% stake in DNV Global for ₹44 crore

**NEW DELHI, May 11:** DCM Shriram group firm Fenesta, which is into uPVC and aluminium windows and doors, has acquired 53 per cent equity stake in DNV Global for ₹44 crore to expand its business.

The deal is expected to be completed in next 2 months.

The acquisition of DNV Global will help Fenesta in backward integration and opportunity to create new line of business (hardware).

"This strategic investment marks a significant step in Fenesta's vision to enhance customer experience, deepen vertical integration, enhance product reliability, achieve accelerated growth in scale and unlock operational synergies across its supply chain," DCM Shriram said in a statement on Sunday.

The total acquisition cost is ₹44 crore, which includes ₹31 crore by subscribing to fresh equity share capital of DNV Global and ₹13 crore by purchase of equity shares from the existing promoters/shareholders.

Saket Jain, Business Head, Fenesta Building Systems, said, "The acquisition...is a natural extension of our long-term growth strategy. Hardware plays a critical role in defining both the performance and user experience of our window and door systems." "With this move, we not only deepen our supply chain capabilities but also gain the ability to innovate and expand our hardware offerings across new home improvement segments," he added.

This integration will accelerate Fenesta's ability to deliver smarter, more durable, a better product range and holistic solutions, he said.

Fenesta, a division of DCM Shriram Ltd, is one of the leading brands for uPVC and aluminium windows and doors, solid panel doors, and facades.

Established in 2013, DNV Global turnover in the last fiscal stood at ₹60 crore.

DCM Shriram is into sugar, fertilizers, chemicals businesses apart from Fenesta. (PTI)

## JSL serious on ₹40,000-cr investment in Maharashtra: MD Abhyuday Jindal

**NEW DELHI, May 11:** Jindal Stainless is "serious about Maharashtra" and is engaged in discussions with the state government to acquire a land parcel for its proposed ₹40,000-crore stainless steel manufacturing facility, its MD Abhyuday Jindal said.

At present, Jindal Stainless has a capacity of 3 million tonnes per annum at its two plants in Hissar (Haryana) and Jajpur (Odisha). The company is in the process of ramping up capacity to 4.2 MT by FY27.

In an interview to PTI, Jindal said, "We are very serious about the investment. Currently, we are in discussions with the state government for acquisition of land." He made the remarks in reply to a question seeking an update on the agreement signed with the Maharashtra government in March this year.

On the capex for FY26, Jindal said it has been fixed at ₹2,700 crore, which includes ₹1,000 crore spillover of FY25. In FY25, the company's capex guidance was ₹5,500 crore but it translated into ₹4,500 crore. So the remaining has been added to FY26.

On the India-UK FTA, he said it may not have a direct impact but can indirectly impact growth of the company through its customers.

Jindal further said as of now, JSL is not looking for new markets and will continue to focus on the US and Europe for exports.

He said during the March quarter, the export demand began to rise once more, which was fulfilled by ramping up capacity utilisation. This is projected to continue improving in the short and mid-term, especially in quality-conscious markets like the US and the EU, as "the old customers have started to return".

On imports, the MD said, Chinese and Vietnamese imports continued to challenge India's stainless steel industry, accounting for over 70 per cent of total imports in this fiscal year, with low-priced stainless steel often rerouted through ASEAN countries, including Vietnam.

As per company information, JSL's investment proposal has also been approved in a meeting of the state cabinet subcommittee. The project, with an estimated investment of ₹40,000 crore, is scheduled to be developed over the next 10 years, which is expected to create more than 15,000 jobs.

The proposed stainless steel facility will have a total melting capacity of 4 million tonnes per annum and will be constructed in phases, with the first phase expected to be operational in the next four years.

JSL will also produce specialised grades for critical applications in emerging sectors such as hydrogen, nuclear energy, defence, mobility, infrastructure, and process industries.

The government of Maharashtra will support the proposed investment by expediting the necessary permissions, registrations, approvals, clearances, and fiscal incentives from the relevant state departments, according to information provided by the company.

Jindal Stainless Ltd (JSL) is India's largest stainless-steel manufacturer and posted an annual turnover of ₹40,182 crore in FY25. It is ramping up facilities to reach 4.2 million tonnes of annual melt capacity by FY27. The company has 16 stainless steel manufacturing and processing facilities in India and abroad, including in Spain and Indonesia, and a worldwide network in 12 countries, as of March 2025. (PTI)

## Former ICAR member demands CBI probe into Padma Shri awardee Ayyappan's death

**NEW DELHI, May 11:** A former member of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) on Sunday demanded a court-monitored CBI investigation into the "untimely and mysterious" death of former ICAR Director General and Padma Shri awardee Subbanna Ayyappan.

Venugopal Badaravada, previously on ICAR's Governing Body, said: "The conditions surrounding his untimely death are deeply troubling. His scooter was found abandoned, and the cause of his death remains unclear. These circumstances demand a court-monitored CBI investigation".

In separate letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, Badaravada alleged that the tragic event reveals "deep-rooted corruption, irregular

appointments, and abuse of power within ICAR, ASRB (Agricultural Scientists Recruitment Board), and affiliated institutions".

"Ayyappan ji's death might be a consequence of institutional vendetta or administrative collapse, as the scientific and farming communities are now alleging," he added. Ayyappan (70) was found dead in the Cauvery River near Srirangapatna, Karnataka, on Saturday. His two-wheeler was discovered on the riverbank, with local police suspecting he may have jumped into the river. His body was recovered three days after he went missing under suspicious circumstances.

Badaravada also criticised ICAR for "unlawfully" removing him from the governing body on May 5 through "a one-sided office

order without conducting a serious inquiry".

"This unlawful removal reflects a dangerous trend within ICAR, silencing whistleblowers while shielding entrenched corruption," he claimed.

Ayyappan, who resided in Vishweshwara Nagar Industrial Area of Mysuru, was reported missing on May 7 when his family filed a complaint with the Vidyaranyapuram Police Station. Police noted that he often meditated at the Saibaba ashram, located on the Cauvery River banks in Srirangapatna. The deceased scientist was the first non-crop specialist to head ICAR and was credited with playing a significant role in India's 'Blue Revolution'.

He is survived by his wife and two daughters. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## Women who are left

man. Most of the men still left in the village were either senior citizens or children. Roopa Baruah (32) lives in a 'chang ghar' -- a temporary home built on bamboo stilts -- with her two children, aged four and six, while their pucca house built under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna lies abandoned.

Her husband works in a Bengaluru rubber factory and hasn't been back for two years.

"The pucca house is located in a far-flung spot in the village. If it gets submerged, I cannot rush out on my own with the children. So I live in a 'chang ghar' here with other women nearby. Sometimes, if my children are ill, it is easier to get help here," she tells PTI. "My husband sends money. He asks if we will be able to live together in our house some day. The children miss their father but what can we do when there are no income sources here? If we also migrate, it will be expensive and our house here may be gone forever," she says.

The majority of Dhemaji's residents live in 'chang ghars', with their livestock kept below. During floods, however, the animals have to be accommodated inside to save them from being washed away.

When living at home becomes perilous, they move away from the embankment and return after the waters recede. A working-age man, Bokul moved back to Dhemaji four months ago after losing an arm in a factory accident in Kerala. He now lives with the women of the family.

"Most of the men have left the village to make a living in other states. It is mostly the elderly or those with disabilities, like me, who live here since we cannot go out to earn. I help my wife and my brother's wife, who lives here with her three-year-old son. Nobody wants to migrate but there is no choice," the 26-year-old says.

Rebuilding homes, collecting firewood, fishing, stitching and weaving for pinnates, besides helping children and livestock adjust to a new place as floods render them homeless every year are among the changing roles women in the district perform due to the migration of men that has increased their vulnerability and workload.

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati, researchers studying the climate-induced migration from the district believe Dhemaji serves as a compelling case due to its extreme vulnerability to environmental changes, particularly flooding. The study is being funded by the Indian Institute for Human Settlements and Population Council.

According to IIT, Guwahati, professor Anamika Baruah, who is leading the study, recurrent floods lead to displacement, erosion, prolonged waterlogging and the destruction of livelihood -- especially agriculture, the district's economic backbone. "Climate change further intensifies these challenges, increasing the frequency and the severity of floods, resulting in both seasonal and permanent displacement. Beyond the environmental impact, the socio-economic consequences in Dhemaji are substantial," she says.

Debarchana Biswas, a postdoctoral scholar at IIT, Guwahati, says most workers from Assam, particularly districts such as Dhemaji, are not happy migrating to other parts of the country despite recognising its economic benefits. "For many, migration is seen as a positive step toward improving their financial situation but, deep down, leaving behind their families, homes and familiar surroundings is emotionally challenging. Migration, while providing better wages, comes with the emotional and logistical burden of maintaining two households," she says, citing the study. "This dual responsibility is financially and emotionally draining. Moreover, during emergencies, their inability to quickly return home exacerbates their sense of helplessness," she says.

The 2021 Climate Vulnerability Index ranked Assam as India's most climate-vulnerable state. The expansive Brahmaputra and Barak river basins, Assam's fast-dwindling green cover and northeast India's overall geological fragility are a few reasons behind the vulnerability. Improved plans and programmes are being implemented for disaster risk reduction in hazard-prone areas compared to previous years, says environmental scientist Partha Jyoti Das. He says, "High-vulnerability groups like women, the elderly and marginalised communities should get more attention in disaster risk reduction policies. Although we have many policies and programmes on paper to address such concerns, the vulnerable people somehow do not get the desired benefit of such interventions to the expected extent -- indicating execution deficit and lack of monitoring of government projects and welfare schemes." Das, who heads the Water, Climate and Hazard division at Aranyak -- a research organisation -- notes outwards migration of youngsters from rural areas is usually considered a useful strategy to cope with the negative impact of climate-induced hazards. The remittances they send back is also crucial for survival and sustenance of their families in a hazard-prone environment.

"However, labour out-migration also has some negative impacts. We have seen wives and girls bearing more burden of family responsibilities such as looking after parents, in-laws and children. The women must also take care of family vocations such as farming, livestock rearing and other such means of income generation," he adds. Luit Goswami, executive director at Rural Volunteers Centre -- a non-profit working in the region -- says Dhemaji is extremely vulnerable to climate change due to its proximity to the confluence of the Brahmaputra and many of its tributaries. "However, like most developing regions, climate change issues have received less importance here and efforts are more focused on recovery than creation of adaptive capacity," he says.

"The forced displacement due to climate extremes leads to distress migration, which has largely been accepted as an adaptation strategy by the families and the communities affected," he adds.

The responsibilities of women seem to be soaring they ensure the rights of children such as survival (food and nutrition, health care), development (education) and protection (early marriage, child labour, child-trafficking, drug abuse), he says. "All these lead to physical and mental health deterioration." (PTI)

## Indira 'mishandled' situation

historic opportunity lost," Sarma said. Presenting a set of six explanations in support of his allegation, the CM said creation of Bangladesh was a secular promise but it has become an "Islamic reality".

"India supported a secular Bangladesh. Yet by 1988, Islam was declared the state religion. Today, political Islam thrives in Dhaka, undermining the very values India fought to protect," he added.

Talking about alleged persecution of Hindus in the neighbouring nation, Sarma said the minority community was once constituted 20 per cent of Bangladesh's population, but it has now dwindled to under 8 per cent on account of "systematic discrimination and violence", which continued and became a "shameful reality that India has largely ignored". "The Chicken's Neck Left Exposed... Despite military dominance, India failed to resolve the vulnerability of the Siliguri Corridor. A secure land corridor through northern Bangladesh could have integrated the Northeast -- but no such arrangement was ever pursued," he added.

Referring to the perennial immigration issue, the Assam CM pointed out that no agreement was reached for mandated return of illegal Bangladeshi migrants. "As a result, Assam, Bengal, and the Northeast face unchecked demographic change, sparking social unrest and political instability," he added. Sarma also claimed that India did not secure access to the strategic Chittagong Port and even after five decades, the Northeast remains landlocked. He also alleged that insurgents found a refuge in Bangladesh and for several decades, the neighbouring country served as a base for anti-India militant groups and exploited the vacuum India failed to close in 1971. "Conclusion: A Victory Undone by Silence," Sarma said. (PTI)

## 10-yr boy killed

has been charged with sedition for allegedly "defending" Pakistan and its complicity in the terror attack of April 22. (PTI)

## Peace, harmony, development, key

milestone achieved during the last four years, he said. Development has also received a major boost in the state with economic growth, capital formation, semiconductor facility being set up, more bridges over the Brahmaputra coming up, minimum support prices to agriculture produce, among others, have ensured "we have become an emergent state", Sarma said.

"At a time when our armed forces are providing us security and protecting the nation, I do not want to highlight the achievements of the government during the last four years. Therefore, I have just highlighted the three macro factors", he said. Sarma thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for declaring Assamese as a classical language, taking Bihu and Jhumur to both national and international level, giving the 'Gamosa' a position of prominence by using it regularly and spending a night at the Kaziranga National Park, which gave a fillip to tourism in the state.

He said that the completion of nine years of the BJP-led alliance in the state was indeed "a unique landmark and Assam today is a completely different state from before". "The progress of the state during the last four years is a collective achievement of the government, civil society and the people of Assam, whose blessings we seek, so that we can continue to serve them", he added. Sarma had assumed office of CM of Assam on May 10, 2021, succeeding Sarbananda Sonowal, who is now a Union Minister. (PTI)

## Modi tells forces to respond

and Pakistan reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, with immediate effect, after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes.

The development was first announced by US President Donald Trump, who claimed that the two countries had agreed to a "full and immediate ceasefire" after US mediation.

In a statement, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said he was "pleased to announce the Governments of India and Pakistan have agreed to an immediate ceasefire and to start talks on a broad set of issues at a neutral site". The only matter related to Kashmir to discuss is Pakistan returning territory under its illegal occupation, Government sources asserted on Sunday. They made it clear that the Indus Waters Treaty will be in abeyance as long as terrorism sponsored by Pakistan against India continues. Only talks with Pakistan will be through the Director General of Military Operations (DGMOs). There is no other issue to discuss, the sources said.

India's position after the May 7 strikes on terror infrastructure was that if Pakistan fires, India will respond more forcefully, they said, adding it was the Pakistani DGMO who reached out to the Indian DGMO on May 10 to de-escalate situation. After the Pahalgam attack, India had told countries that reached out to New Delhi it would hit terror infrastructure in Pakistan territories.

After the May 7 strikes, every Pakistani action was dealt with very firmly, the sources said. (PTI)

## Panchayat polls: BJP ahead

to exercise their franchise in 25,007 polling stations. According to official data, 74.71 per cent of the eligible voters exercised their franchise during the panchayat polls. (PTI)

## 10-yr boy killed by mother's

and interrogated her for the possible role in the murder," he added. The DCP said a forensic team and CID sleuths visited the site and collected evidence. "We have sent the body for post mortem examination, which will be conducted on Monday. Further investigation is underway," he added. (PTI)

## Oppn demands special Parl

representatives to discuss the Pahalgam terror attack, Operation Sindoor and the ceasefire, first announced by US President Trump. This will also be an opportunity to demonstrate our collective resolve to meet the challenges ahead," Rahul Gandhi said in his letter. "I trust that you will consider this demand seriously and swiftly," he added. Kharge recalled the letters written by him and Rahul Gandhi on April 28, requesting the prime minister to convene a special session of Parliament in the wake of terror attack in Pahalgam that killed 26 people, primarily tourists, on April 22. "In view of the latest developments, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha has already written to you again conveying the unanimous request of all opposition parties for a special session of Parliament to discuss the Pahalgam attack, Operation Sindoor, and the ceasefire announcements, first from Washington DC and later by the governments of India and Pakistan," Kharge said in his letter. (PTI)

## Godrej Properties to launch projects worth ₹40K cr in FY26: Chairman

**NEW DELHI, May 11:** Godrej Properties plans to launch housing projects worth ₹40,000 crore, as the company aims to increase market share and retain its position as the top listed real estate firm in terms of sales bookings.

In an interview with PTI, Godrej Properties Executive Chairperson Pirojsha Godrej noted that the housing demand continues to be strong despite global economic uncertainties, and cited the company's performance in the last fiscal, where it achieved record sales bookings of ₹29,444 crore, the highest among listed entities.

"So, overall, I am very happy with the company's performance in FY25, and I think, key is now to maintain this momentum in the current financial year," Pirojsha told PTI.

He said the company would continue to invest in land acquisition and development works to expand its business and increase market share. "We raised ₹6,000 crore in October last year through QIP (Qualified Institutional Placement). That ₹6,000 crore plus ₹7,500 crore operating cash flow creates a pretty good war chest to ensure further investments and maintain this kind of strong growth rate," Pirojsha said.

Talking about the targets for the 2025-26 fiscal, he said, "We have guided for ₹32,500 crore worth of sales booking value for this fiscal, which is 20 per cent higher than our guidance

of last year and 10 per cent higher than the actuals we delivered. Hopefully, if market support again, we can outperform the guidance".

"We have a good lineup of projects. We have guided for launches of 40,000 crore worth of projects. There is good visibility across the region," he added.

In the last fiscal, Pirojsha said, the company had given guidance of launching ₹30,000 crore worth of projects, but it ended up launching properties valuing ₹36,600 crore.

According to an investor's presentation, Godrej Properties launched 34 projects, either a new one or a new phase in existing projects, last fiscal with 292 lakh square feet of area and an estimated sales bookings value of ₹36,600 crore. Pirojsha said the company would launch a project in Worli, Mumbai, in the first half of this fiscal and also hoped to launch its big-ticket project at Ashok Vihar in Delhi by March 2026.

These new launches and sales from ongoing projects would help the company to meet the targeted sales bookings of ₹32,500 crore for this fiscal.

During the 2024-25 fiscal, Godrej Properties sales bookings rose 31 per cent to a record ₹29,444 crore from ₹22,527 crore in the preceding year.

Pirojsha noted that these sales bookings were distributed across various regions and said it is

a good sign that the company is not "overly reliant on any one region and one or two projects". Pirojsha said the company's collections of funds from customers rose sharply to a record ₹17,047 crore last fiscal from ₹11,436 crore in the preceding year.

Strong collections helped in generating healthy operating cash flow for the company, he pointed out. Pirojsha also mentioned that the company's market share increased to 4.3 per cent last fiscal.

In the presentation, the company cited PropEquity data, estimating the total market size of tier-1 residential markets at ₹6.9 lakh crore in the last fiscal.

Based on PropEquity data, Godrej Properties' share was 4.3 per cent as it clocked sales bookings of ₹29,444 crore during 2024-25.

On financial performance, Godrej Properties recently reported that its consolidated net profit rose 93 per cent to ₹1,399.89 crore during 2024-25 from ₹725.27 crore in the preceding fiscal. Its total income grew to ₹6,967.05 crore last fiscal compared to ₹4,334.22 crore in the 2023-24 fiscal.

The board also approved a proposal to raise up to ₹2,000 crore by issuing non-convertible debentures, bonds, and/or other debt securities on a private placement basis, in one or more tranches. (PTI)



*BJP sweeps Margherita, make big gains Sivasagar, Jorhat*

# Counting of Panchayat polls and ZPC polls under way

**HT Correspondent**

**DHUBRI, May 11:** Vote counting for the Panchayat elections in Dhubri district began at 8:00 AM on Sunday and is progressing steadily across multiple designated centers.

With a record voter turnout of 88.63%, authorities are working around the clock to ensure a smooth and transparent counting process.

Dhubri Deputy Commissioner Dibakar Nath, speaking to the media, confirmed that the counting is being conducted in shifts to efficiently manage the high volume of ballots.

"The counting is being done shift-wise. We are hopeful that we can wrap up the counting by 12th evening," he stated.

The phased approach is aimed at maintaining order and accuracy throughout the process.

To facilitate smooth operations, specific venues have been designated for different regions.

For the 12 Zilla Parishad constituencies under Dhubri Sadar, counting is being held at BN College, while the Bilasipara CDC area, which comprises 4 Zilla Parishad constituencies, is conducting its count at the Bilasipara CDC office.

Similarly, Chilarai College has been assigned as the counting center for 4 Zilla Parishad constituencies under the Golaganj CDC.

Tight security arrangements are in place at all centers to prevent any disruption.

Election officials, support staff, and agents representing contesting candidates are stationed at the venues, closely monitoring the tallying of votes.

The Panchayat elections in Dhubri are among the largest local electoral exercises in the state, encompassing 20 Zilla Parishad constituencies, 10 Anchalik Panchayat segments, and 128 Gaon Panchayats.

Voters also elected 1,280 Gaon Panchayat Members (Ward Members), mak-

ing the exercise a cornerstone of grassroots democracy in the region. Dhubri Sadar remains a key focus area, accounting for 12 Zilla Parishad, 6 Anchalik Panchayats, and 88 Gaon Panchayats.

In terms of candidature, 69 candidates are contesting for the Zilla Parishad seats, 417 candidates for Anchalik Panchayat seats, and a massive 3,999 candidates are vying for positions across the Gaon Panchayats—highlighting the competitive nature of the polls.

As of the time this report was filed, the counting was proceeding without any reported irregularities. With the final results expected by May 12 evening, all eyes remain on the outcome that will define the leadership and governance framework across Dhubri's rural landscape for the upcoming term.

**Our Margherita correspondent adds:** BJP-supported candidates have secured a clean sweep in all 13 gaon panchayats and four ZPC seats under the 83rd Margherita Assembly constituency.

The counting of votes, which began this morning, concluded with a decisive victory for the BJP alliance across all the contested panchayats.

In the Borgolai Gaon Panchayat, former president Mira Subba, vice-president Jhuma Sen, and ward members Swapna Chetry Bhujel, Ranjit Chetry, Bhanu Tanti, Lakshmi Jaishi, Khusbu Kar, and Shantanu Debnath emerged victorious.

Additionally, Congress candidate Rupa Chetry and Rajior Dal's Sarada Chetry won seats in the same panchayat. In Makumpathar, a BJP stronghold, all eight BJP-supported candidates retained their positions.

Commenting on the results, Rajiya Sabha MP Rameshwar Teli said that the BJP's sweeping victory across all 13 gaon panchayats and four ZPC seats was made possible due to the commitment and delivery of promises by the BJP-led governments at both the Union and State levels.

"In the coming days, more develop-



ment work will be carried out without delay. BJP is the only political party that works sincerely and confidently for the people of our country," Teli stated.

**Our Sivasagar correspondent adds:** The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) appears poised for a sweeping victory in the Panchayat elections within the 96 Sivasagar Legislative Assembly Constituency (LAC), as per results available at the time of filing this report.

BJP-backed candidates have so far secured victories in 54 out of 90 Panchayat wards where results have been declared, indicating a strong performance by the ruling party in the region.

Of the four Zila Parishad Constituencies (ZPCs) in the LAC, BJP candidates are leading in Desangmukh, Morabazar, and Rongpur. In the Jakaichuk ZPC, the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) candidate has taken the lead.

The Congress and Rajior Dal have shown poor electoral performance, reportedly due to internal rifts among the major opposition parties.

Despite AGP being an ally of the BJP, the party, under the leadership of Pradip Hazarika, has fielded its own candidates in most Panchayats in the Jakaichuk and Morabazar ZPCs, signaling friction within the alliance.

In Sivasagar Sadar Constituency Development Committee (CDC), a total of 1,74,617 voters were eligible to vote, including 87,063 males, 87,553 females, and one transgender voter.

On polling day, held on May 2, a total of 1,29,092 votes were cast, comprising 63,639 male voters, 65,452 female voters, and one transgender voter, marking a turnout of 73.93 percent.

Counting is currently ongoing at the Sivasagar Government HS School.

In the Nazira CDC area, 1,19,363 voters out of 1,57,418 exercised their franchise, registering a turnout of approximately 75 percent.

The polling figures include 58,087 male voters out of 77,222 and 61,276 female voters out of 80,196.

Meanwhile, in Demow CDC, the total number of voters stood at 1,71,648, including 85,068 males and 86,578 females.

A total of 1,27,843 votes were polled, with 62,419 male and 65,424 female voters participating, recording a turnout of 74.48 percent.

Counting continues across all centres, and final results are expected to further reflect the BJP's strong electoral presence in the Sivasagar district.

**Our Nagaon correspondent adds:**

The counting of votes for the Panchayat Election 2025 is underway across four designated centres in Nagaon district, amid tight security and peaceful conditions.

The centres are located at Nagaon Government Boys' Higher Secondary School, Nagaon Government Girls' Higher Secondary School, Raha College, and the office campus of the Commissioner of Kaliabor Co-district.

Security arrangements have been intensified at all the counting venues to ensure a smooth and transparent counting process.

District Commissioner and District Election Officer Narendra Kumar Shah has been visiting the centres regularly to monitor proceedings.

He interacted with officials and staff at the venues, reviewing the measures in place to ensure transparency, impartiality, and safety throughout the process.

A brief moment of tension was reported at the counting centre for No. 24 Bajjagaon Zila Parishad Constituency, located at Nagaon Government Girls' HS School.

Counting there began around 10 AM, two hours later than scheduled.

A conflict reportedly broke out between workers of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the opposition Indian National Congress (INC), resulting in a brief chaotic scene and alleged manhandling. The situation was quickly brought under control by counting officials and security personnel.

Despite the incident, counting has continued in an orderly and peaceful manner across the centres.

According to the Election Cell, early trends indicate that candidates from the ruling BJP-led alliance are leading in the majority of Zila Parishad (ZP) and Anchalik Panchayat (AP) seats across the district, with only a few exceptions favouring opposition candidates.

Final results for the Zila Parishad Constituencies are expected later today.

**Our Jorhat correspondent adds:** The BJP and its ally, the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), are on track to secure a comprehensive victory in the 2025 Panchayat elections in Jorhat district, as per counting trends observed till Sunday evening.

Counting is underway at the Jorhat Boys' Higher Secondary and MP School, where the BJP-AGP alliance has already taken a substantial lead in 12 Zila Parishad Council (ZPC) seats under the Jorhat, Mariani, and Teok assembly constituencies, following the completion of the first round of counting.

Sources further indicated that the ruling alliance is also ahead in the remaining four ZPC seats under the Titabar assembly constituency, which falls within the Titabar co-district.

In terms of Anchalik Panchayat (AP) results, the alliance has claimed four wins and is leading in the remaining 26 seats under Titabar.

Out of 60 AP seats spread across Jorhat, Mariani, and Teok constituencies, the BJP has already won 17 seats while the AGP has secured one, with the alliance leading in the rest.

Friday's polling sealed the fate of 2,190 candidates (excluding 48 who were elected unopposed) from across the four assembly constituencies in the district—Jorhat, Teok, Mariani, and Titabar.

Supporters of the BJP and AGP have gathered in large numbers outside the counting centre, waiting eagerly for final results.

Of the four assembly constituencies in Jorhat district, three—Jorhat, Mariani, and Teok—are currently held by the BJP and AGP. Titabar is the lone constituency represented by the Congress.

Jorhat Lok Sabha constituency, comprising 10 assembly segments across the districts of Jorhat, Majuli, Sivasagar, and Charaideo, is represented by Gaurav Gogoi of the Congress.

## Noted physician and writer Dr Adhir Kumar Brahma passes away

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, May 11:** Eminent physician and writer Dr Adhir Kumar Brahma passed away on Saturday morning at a private hospital in Bongaigaon. He was 68. According to family sources, Dr Brahma had been undergoing treatment at the hospital for the past few days following a brief illness. He breathed his last around 11 AM.

A resident of Baganshali in Kokrajhar, Dr Brahma served as the Superintendent and also held charge of the blood bank at the Kokrajhar Rup Nath Brahma Civil Hospital during his long and distinguished career. He also served as the president of the Indian Medical Association (IMA), Kokrajhar branch, and held several key positions within the health services department. Dr Brahma was widely respected not only for his medical expertise but also for his contributions to Bodo literature. A prolific writer, he authored numerous books, including poems inspired by his profession, and was an active member of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha. His passing has been widely mourned across Kokrajhar and beyond. Various social organisations, individuals, and members of the medical fraternity have expressed deep condolences, remembering his valuable contributions to both healthcare and literature.

The Bodo Sahitya Sabha also issued a heartfelt condolence message, mourning the loss of a revered figure who had made significant contributions to the cultural and intellectual fabric of the region.

## Training on non-GST state taxes in Assam

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, May 11:** The Guwahati Branch of the Eastern India Regional Council (EIRC) of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) successfully organised a seminar on Compliances under Select State Tax Laws in Assam on Saturday at ICAI Bhawan, Guwahati.

The programme was presided over by CA. Raginee Goyal, Branch Chairperson, who delivered the welcome address and introduced these less complied state tax laws of Assam by giving overview. Among the distinguished guests were Vivek Agarwal and Dibya Ranjan Borah, both Assistant Commissioners from SGST, they emphasised on the need to spread awareness about these laws and appealed to all Chartered Accountants to educate and motivate their clients to pay the taxes online so that notices are not required to be issued by the Department.

CA Neha Agarwala, an expert in the field, presented on "Practical Step-by-Step Compliance & Procedures for Assam Electricity Duty Act, 1964," offering valuable insights and practical knowledge essential for understanding and executing duties under the Act. CA. Tista Gupta, who has thoroughly researched on the subject, discussed "Applicability, Exemptions, and Common Issues in the Assam Professions, Trades, Callings and Employment Taxation Act, 1947," highlighting key concerns and clarifications relevant to professionals and employers operating within the state. CA Mohan Agarwal, gave insightful remarks emphasizing the critical role of state tax law compliance and sought the focus of professional responsibilities of chartered accountants.

## Gauhati High Court directs swift repatriation of Nigerian national after 1457 days of illegal detention

**HT Correspondent**

**KHERONI, May 11:** In a landmark decision, the Gauhati High Court has directed the immediate repatriation of Karamdeen Oaladeji Oladimeji, a Nigerian national who has been held at the Matia Transit Camp in Goalpara, Assam, for 1,457 days beyond his prison sentence. The ruling, issued on May 9, 2025, under case number WP(C)/2207/2025, underscores the illegality of his prolonged detention and instructs authorities to act promptly or face the possibility of his unconditional release.

According to the official court order, Oladimeji was initially detained on November 12, 2020, for entering India without valid travel documents. He was later convicted on August 18, 2021, by

the Judicial Magistrate First Class (II) in Karimganj (now Sribhum), under the Foreigners Act, 1946, and the Passport (Entry into India) Rules, 1950. He was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and fined ₹2,000 for each offence. Despite completing his sentence by May 13, 2021, he continued to be held at the transit camp—an act now deemed unlawful by the court.

The bench, comprising Justices Kalyan Rai Surana and Malasri Nandi, heard arguments from Oladimeji's legal counsel, D.K. Agarwala, along with Tawhid Laskar and A. Borbhuyan. The legal team emphasized that the Nigerian Embassy could issue an Emergency Travel Certificate (ETC) upon conducting an online interview. Acknowledging this, the

court directed the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of External Affairs to coordinate with the Nigerian Embassy to facilitate the issuance of necessary travel documents within seven days.

In the event of any delays, the court ordered the Superintendent of the Matia Transit Camp to arrange a video conference between Oladimeji and Nigerian Embassy officials to expedite the process. Once the ETC is issued, the Assam Home & Political (B) Department has been instructed to make necessary arrangements for Oladimeji's travel from Matia to Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International (LGBI) Airport in Guwahati. The onward journey to Nigeria—via New Delhi or another international airport—is to be coordinated accordingly. The

court clarified that the cost of travel would be borne by Oladimeji himself.

The High Court expressed grave concern over the unjustifiable delay in the repatriation process and warned that failure to comply within the stipulated timeframe would lead to Oladimeji's unconditional release. It emphasized that further detention beyond the court-mandated period would be the sole responsibility of the concerned authorities.

The matter has been listed for further hearing on May 30, 2025.

This ruling highlights the judiciary's commitment to upholding legal standards in detention cases involving foreign nationals and draws attention to procedural lapses in India's immigration and deportation mechanisms.

## DPS Nagaon celebrates Grandparents' Day with joy and emotional fervour

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, May 11:** Delhi Public School (DPS) Nagaon celebrated Grandparents' Day on Saturday, May 10, 2025, with immense warmth and enthusiasm under the theme "Grammy and Gramps—Our Eternal Treasure." The event was marked by a vibrant display of intergenerational bonding and heartfelt tributes to the elderly members of students' families.

According to an official statement issued by the school, the celebration commenced at 9:30 AM with a brief introductory session, followed by a welcome address by the Principal.

In her speech, she underlined the crucial role grandparents play in a child's upbringing and the emotional security they provide within the family structure.

One of the key attractions of the day was a ramp walk featuring Nursery students accompanied by their grandparents. The touching presentation drew admiration and applause from all in attendance, as the young learners and their elders showcased their unique bond in a heartwarming display.

This was followed by a series of class-wise cultural performances by students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade II.

## Dr Phangcho assesses malaria outbreak in BTR's Kokrajhar and Chirang

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, May 11:** Director of Health Services, Assam, Dr Umesh Phangcho concluded his two-day visit to Kokrajhar and Chirang districts in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) on Sunday.

The visit was carried out as per the directive of the Health Minister of Assam to assess the rising malaria cases in the region.

On Saturday, Dr Phangcho visited malaria-affected areas in Kokrajhar district, where an alarming spike in malaria cases has prompted concern among public health officials.

He toured the remote villages of Saralpara and Bantijhora, reviewing the on-ground situation and inter-

acting with local health officials and frontline workers to evaluate the ongoing anti-malaria operations and preventive measures.

According to official data, Kokrajhar district recorded over 500 malaria-positive cases as of April 30, 2025.

The outbreak has already claimed three lives, including a 10-year-old girl and two teenage boys aged 15 and 19, underscoring the seriousness of the situation.

Following the field inspection, Dr Phangcho chaired a high-level review meeting at the Kokrajhar District Headquarters, where he discussed both immediate and long-term strategies to contain the outbreak. The meeting was attended by

district health officials and administrative officers.

In Chirang district, Dr Phangcho visited the Sidli and Ballamguri blocks, conducted field inspections in vulnerable areas, and held discussions with local health authorities.

He stressed the need to strengthen preventive measures to control the spread of vector-borne diseases such as malaria.

Speaking to the media, Dr Phangcho stated that he had conducted an in-depth assessment of the prevailing malaria situation in both districts.

He confirmed that the concerned authorities have already initiated necessary measures to combat and eradicate malaria in the region.

## KVK Karbi Anglong conducts demonstration on compost production from Parthenium

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, May 11:** In a significant step towards promoting sustainable agriculture and addressing the challenges posed by invasive weeds, the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Karbi Anglong, organised a one-day demonstration programme on compost production from Parthenium hysterophorus at Amlokhi, Karbi Anglong recently.

The event was jointly conducted by KVK Karbi Anglong, the Department of Agronomy, and the All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on Weed Management, Assam Agricultural University (AAU), Jorhat.

According to an official statement, the programme aimed to highlight the potential of converting Parthenium—an aggressive and hazardous weed—into a beneficial resource for farmers.

Dr Monuj Kumar Doley, Head of KVK Karbi Anglong, inaugurated the programme and outlined its objectives, stressing the need for innovative weed management strategies in agriculture. Dr Kalyan Pathak, Head of the Department of Agronomy, elaborated on the health and environmental risks associated with Parthenium.

He pointed out that the weed can cause severe health conditions such as dermatitis, asthma, hay fever, and bronchitis in humans,



as well as allergic reactions in livestock.

He emphasised the value of converting the weed into compost as a sustainable solution.

Dr Khagen Kurmi, Professor in the Department of Agronomy, provided insights into sustainable Parthenium management through composting and the preparation of botanical formulations.

He noted that this method not only miti-

gates the harmful effects of the weed but also contributes to soil fertility and productivity.

Dr Manas Jyoti Barooah, Principal Investigator of AICRP on Farm Implements and Machinery, discussed the production and agricultural benefits of biochar derived from Parthenium.

He explained how biochar can enhance soil health and support crop growth.

Dr Milon Jyoti Konwar, Scientist at the Directorate of Research, AAU, Jorhat, highlighted the detrimental impact of Parthenium on crop yields, livestock, and grazing land.

He stressed the urgency of adopting effective control measures for this invasive species.

A live demonstration on the preparation of compost using Parthenium was conducted by Prakshiya Boruah, Subject Matter Specialist (Agronomy), and Monuj Pegu, Farm Manager, KVK Karbi Anglong.

The compost was prepared using dry cow dung, chopped banana pseudostems and leaves, paddy straw, and Parthenium plants (excluding flowers). The resulting compost is expected to be ready for application after approximately 60 days.

In an effort to encourage local participation and sustainable practices, vermi-beds were also distributed to Self Help Groups in the village.

The event witnessed the active engagement of 20 farmers who gained practical knowledge and hands-on experience in transforming Parthenium into useful compost.

The initiative is part of a broader effort to promote environmental sustainability, manage invasive species, and empower farmers with low-cost, eco-friendly solutions for soil health improvement.

## In the remembrance of our beloved Meena Nunisa



Today the 12/05/2025, Monday it would have been 42 years of our togetherness !Having battled for 10 [ten] years against the disease contracted from our middle daughter Late Bhaswati [Lovely], you finally lose out year before last, on 8th. May, 2023, Friday and left for heavenly abode! Everyday sweet memories of yours come our way. Since you will never be forgotten, we pledge to you today. The hallowed space within our hearts is the, place, where you'll always stay. We still love you and deeply miss you though you are gone. Today on the 12th. May, 2025, Monday on our 41st. 'Marriage Anniversary Day' also the 'International Nurses' Day' [Florence Nightingale Day], again, we fondly remember you with tearful eyes and beseech the Almighty to grant your soul everlasting peace !

Dr. Motilal Nunisa [Husband]

-/- and -/-

Smti. MAINODI Nunisa [Chakraborty] [Babli] [Eldest daughter]  
Shri Pinaki Chakraborty [Son - in -law] and  
Ms. PONAXI Nunisa [Lolo] [Youngest daughter]  
**Om shanti ! Om Sadgati ! Om Shanti!**



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*If you fell down yesterday, stand up today*  
—H. G. Wells

## Declaration of assets

The gesture of Supreme Court judges declaring their assets is at best symbolic. The declaration itself does not and cannot constitute a meaningful solution to judicial corruption, especially when the mechanisms for oversight remain weak, opaque, and riddled with structural loopholes. The immediate provocation for this move—the discovery of burnt currency at the residence of Delhi High Court judge Yashwant Varma—has added urgency to the narrative, but urgency is not the same as effectiveness. If anything, this incident highlights the gaping holes in the system and the inadequacy of the current means of accountability. It took a fire to bring out this specific problem, but fire can in no way be a solution to expose corruption! The declaration of assets, as a standalone act, suffers from several intrinsic limitations. It deals only with visible, documented, and legal forms of wealth—assets that are officially held and can be presented on paper. However, the primary currency of corruption is black money, which by its very nature exists outside official records and declarations. Those who engage in corrupt practices rarely channel the proceeds into traceable bank accounts or real estate holdings that can be openly declared. Instead, such funds are typically laundered, concealed, or converted into benami assets. Therefore, the act of publicly listing one's white money holdings does little to address the real, subterranean networks of illicit wealth accumulation. It may help cultivate a veneer of transparency, but it doesn't shine any light into the darkest corners where corruption truly thrives.

Moreover, the efficacy of asset declaration is fundamentally tied to the presence of robust external oversight. In the Indian judicial framework, judges are not subject to independent anti-corruption bodies like the Lokpal or the Lokayukta. This glaring omission significantly dilutes the impact of asset declarations. Without an empowered, autonomous agency to scrutinize the veracity of these declarations or to investigate anomalies, the process becomes largely performative. Judges remain their own watchdogs, operating within an insular system of in-house supervision that has long been criticized for its lack of transparency, its aversion to accountability, and its tendency to shield errant members. It is precisely this self-regulatory model that has allowed instances of misconduct to be quietly buried without public scrutiny or legal consequence.

The Indian judiciary has often justified its internal mechanisms by invoking the doctrine of judicial independence, an important principle to protect judges from political or executive interference. But judicial independence should not be conflated with judicial impunity. Transparency and accountability can and must coexist with independence; they are not mutually exclusive. The Varma case and its aftermath may serve as a test of this balance, but past precedent does not inspire much confidence. The root problem is the lack of structural mechanisms to ensure external and impartial oversight. In countries with more robust anti-corruption frameworks, judges are not immune to investigation or prosecution by external bodies. Their asset declarations are subject to audit, and any discrepancies can trigger formal inquiries. In India, however, the absence of such mechanisms means that even if a judge accumulates disproportionate assets, there is no clear, institutional pathway to investigate or prosecute the matter unless it erupts into a scandal too large to suppress.

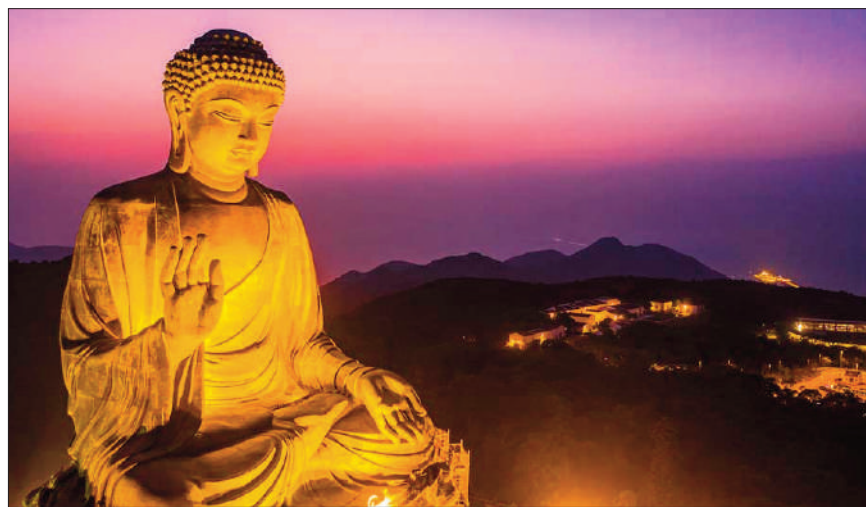
## Buddha's path to truth and inner awakening

In the silence of ancient forests and beneath the shade of the Bodhi tree, a prince once set out on a journey not for conquest or power, but for truth. Siddhartha Gautama, known to the world as the Buddha, renounced the opulence of royal life to search for answers to the deepest questions of human existence—suffering, mortality, and the purpose of life. What began as a solitary quest for enlightenment eventually grew into a timeless spiritual philosophy that continues to guide millions across the world. The path Buddha laid out was not a mystical revelation exclusive to saints, but a universal journey of self-discovery that resonated with the human heart. It was a call to awaken, to see clearly, and to live in harmony with oneself and the world.

The Buddha's teachings arose from a direct experience of suffering and a relentless determination to overcome it. Born into a life of privilege in the Shakya kingdom, Siddhartha was shielded from the harsh realities of the world. However, the illusions of luxury shattered when he encountered the four sights—an old man, a sick man, a dead body, and an ascetic. These sights sparked an existential crisis, prompting him to question the nature of life itself. Was life merely a cycle of birth, suffering, and death? Could there be a way to transcend this painful loop? Driven by these questions, he left behind his family, wealth, and status, and embarked on a spiritual journey that would eventually reshape the ethical and philosophical outlook of the world.

Siddhartha's path was not easy. He wandered through forests, learned from various spiritual teachers, and subjected himself to severe austerities. For six years, he practiced extreme asceticism, starving his body in the hope that weakening the flesh would elevate the spirit. Yet, even after these rigorous trials, enlightenment eluded him. It was only when he abandoned the extremes and embraced the "Middle Path"—a balanced way of living—that he found clarity. This Middle Path became the cornerstone of his teachings. Sitting under the Bodhi tree at Bodhi Gaya, Siddhartha meditated deeply and finally attained enlightenment. He became the Buddha—the awakened one.

The essence of Buddha's path lies in understanding the nature of suffering and its cessation. The Four Noble Truths, which form the foundation of his teachings, offer a profound psychological and philosophical insight into human experience. The first noble truth acknowledges the existence of suffering (dukkha)—the anxiety, dissatisfaction, and pain inherent in life. The second identifies the cause of suffering—craving, attachment, and ignorance. The third proclaims the possibility of the



cessation of suffering (nirvana), and the fourth prescribes the Eightfold Path as the way to achieve it. This framework was not meant to be worshipped but practiced. It demanded inner discipline, mindfulness, and ethical conduct.

The Eightfold Path is not a linear set of instructions but an integrated way of living that nurtures wisdom, ethical behavior, and mental discipline. It begins with right view and right intention, cultivating a clear understanding of reality and a compassionate purpose in life. Right speech, right action, and right livelihood guide one's conduct in society, fostering harmony and non-harm. Right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration focus on mental cultivation, encouraging self-awareness and meditative insight. Together, these elements form a holistic path to inner awakening.

What sets Buddha's path apart from many other religious or philosophical traditions is its emphasis on personal experience over dogma. The Buddha encouraged inquiry and self-exploration. He famously told his followers not to accept his words blindly but to test them through their own experience, like a goldsmith testing the purity of gold. This rational and experiential approach empowered individuals to take responsibility for their own transformation. Enlightenment was not bestowed by any divine entity but attained through inner awakening. The Buddha's teachings thus emphasized the potential of every human being to awaken, regardless of caste, gender, or social status.

At the heart of the Buddha's path is mindfulness—an unwavering awareness of the present moment. In a world perpetually distracted by desires and fears, mindfulness brings clarity and peace. It allows

one to observe thoughts, emotions, and sensations without attachment or aversion. Through mindfulness, one learns to see things as they truly are, stripping away the illusions that fuel suffering. This inner clarity does not lead to detachment from the world, but rather to a deeper connection with life. Compassion and wisdom arise naturally when one sees beyond the ego and recognizes the shared suffering of all beings.

The path to awakening is not an escape from the world but a transformation of one's relationship with it. The Buddha never advocated withdrawal into isolation for all; he encouraged right engagement with society through ethical living and compassionate action. Monks and householders alike were taught to cultivate generosity, kindness, and equanimity. In this way, the teachings of the Buddha became not just a monastic discipline but a universal ethic. In kingdoms and villages alike, his message of peace, non-violence, and inner

freedom resonated with people across cultures and ages.

Buddha's inner awakening was also a social awakening. In an age steeped in rigid social hierarchies and ritualistic orthodoxy, his message was radical. He spoke against the caste system, admitted women into the monastic order, and taught in the language of the common people. His path was open to all who sought truth and liberation. In doing so, he sowed the seeds of an egalitarian spiritual community that transcended social divisions. The Sangha, or community of practitioners, became a living example of the Buddha's teachings in action.

The relevance of the Buddha's path is perhaps even more pressing today. In a world plagued by stress, consumerism, conflict, and ecological crisis, the ancient

wisdom of mindfulness and compassion offers a powerful remedy. The Buddha taught that inner peace is the foundation of outer peace. Unless one conquers the turbulence within—anger, greed, fear—there can be no true harmony in the world. Meditation, once confined to monastic cells, is now practiced in offices, schools, and homes around the world. Neuroscience has begun to affirm what the Buddha intuited centuries ago—that mindfulness changes the brain, reduces suffering, and enhances well-being.

Yet, the path to awakening is not about techniques alone. It requires a fundamental shift in values—a movement from ego to empathy, from grasping to letting go. It is a lifelong journey that begins with a single step: the willingness to look within. The Buddha's own life is a testimony to the power of inner transformation. From a sheltered prince to an enlightened teacher, his journey reflects the universal possibility of awakening.

The simplicity of Buddha's path belies its depth. It does not promise miracles or heaven but offers something more enduring—a freedom that arises from understanding oneself. It is a path open to all, regardless of belief, for it is not bound by ritual or creed. It speaks directly to the human condition, to the yearning for peace, meaning, and liberation. In a world increasingly fragmented by ideologies and identities, the Buddha's message remains a beacon of unity and compassion.

To walk the Buddha's path is not to abandon life but to embrace it fully, with awareness and love. It is to see beauty in the fleeting, to find strength in silence, and to awaken not to another world, but to this very moment, fresh and full of possibility. The path is not in the sky, as the Dhammapada says, but in the heart. Each breath, each step, each act of kindness can be a step toward awakening. The truth that the Buddha discovered is not locked in ancient texts—it lives wherever a human being chooses clarity over confusion, love over hatred, and awareness over ignorance.

As we reflect on the life and teachings of the Buddha, we are reminded that the journey to inner awakening is not the privilege of saints but the birthright of every human soul. In the quiet moments of reflection, in the patient practice of mindfulness, and in the simple acts of compassion, the path unfolds—timeless, luminous, and ever within reach. The world may change, but the truth the Buddha discovered remains unchanged: that liberation is possible, that suffering can end, and that the light of awakening shines within us all. (The writer is Editor in Chief of the Assamese E-magazine SAMPROTOK. He can be reached at himangshur1989@gmail.com)

## International Nurses Day 2025: Caring for nurses is caring for the future

Dipak Kurni

Each year on May 12th, the world pauses to pay homage to a profession that, more than any other, embodies the principles of compassion, resilience, and healing. International Nurses Day (IND), celebrated on the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale—the trailblazing reformer and founder of modern nursing—is not merely a tribute to nurses' indispensable service. It is also a moment of reckoning. A time to reflect on the persistent gaps in healthcare systems, the undervaluation of caregiving labour, and the urgency of reimagining nurses as not just healers, but pillars of economic and social resilience. In 2025, this recognition takes on even greater meaning under the International Council of Nurses (ICN) theme: "Our Nurses. Our Future. Caring for nurses strengthens economies."

This powerful theme encapsulates a profound truth—nurses are not auxiliary assets to national development; they are essential catalysts. By spotlighting the intrinsic link between the well-being of nurses and the economic health of nations, this year's observance compels a paradigm shift. In a world increasingly shaped by global health threats, demographic transitions, and the mounting burden of chronic diseases, the strength of economies will depend not only on factories, data, or infrastructure, but on the stamina, skills, and support given to nurses.

Florence Nightingale, whose legacy inspired this annual celebration, revolutionised healthcare in the 19th century through data-driven nursing reforms during the Crimean War. Today, her symbolic lamp continues to burn—especially during the annual "Lamp Lighting" ceremonies worldwide—signifying the enduring light nurses bring to the darkest moments of human vulnerability. But in 2025, the flame must illuminate more than tradition. It must cast light on an urgent global agenda: to protect, empower, and invest in nurses as a moral imperative and a strategic necessity.

The statistics underscore this urgency. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there exists a global shortfall of 5.9 million nurses. Nurses constitute nearly 59% of the global health workforce and in many low- and middle-income countries, they provide up to 80% of primary healthcare. Yet they remain undervalued, overburdened, and underpaid. The COVID-19 pandemic brought them into the international spotlight as frontline warriors, but once the applause faded, many found themselves again in unsafe working conditions with insufficient mental, emotional, and financial support.

This context makes the 2025 theme particularly resonant. It is not simply a celebration of the profession, but a clarion call for action. By drawing attention to the economic impact of nursing, the ICN challenges policymakers to recalibrate their understanding of development. Healthier populations mean greater workforce productivity, fewer days lost to illness, lower public health expenditures, and a stronger economic base. In fact, estimates from

the International Labour Organization (ILO) suggest that every dollar invested in health—particularly in nursing—generates up to four dollars in economic returns. It's a fiscal argument as much as a humanitarian one.

Moreover, nursing is a profoundly gendered profession. Over 90% of nurses worldwide are women. To invest in nurses, therefore, is to invest in gender equality. This links directly to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). However, despite their numerical dominance, women in nursing remain underrepresented in leadership roles and policy-making bodies. Addressing this imbalance is not just about fairness—it's about making healthcare more responsive, inclusive, and effective.

India, home to nearly 3.3 million registered nurses and midwives, presents a telling case. Despite this large workforce, the nurse-to-population ratio remains around 1.7 per 1,000—well below the WHO recommended 3 per 1,000. The shortage is acute in rural and tribal areas where health infrastructure is already fragile. Each year, thousands of nurses graduate from Indian institutions, yet systemic issues such as poor remuneration, contractual employment, job insecurity, and unsafe workplace environments hinder retention. Worse, the allure of better-paying jobs abroad has created a persistent "nursing brain drain," particularly to countries like the UK, Canada, and Gulf states. While remittances provide economic benefits, the cost is the weakening of India's own health system.

The Indian government, through the Indian Nursing Council (INC), has taken steps toward reform: updating curricula, increasing digitalisation in licensure, and expanding nursing education. However, much more remains to be done. The pandemic further highlighted the vulnerabilities of Indian nurses—many of whom worked long hours in COVID-19 wards without adequate protective equipment or psychological support. While public appreciation spiked momentarily, lasting structural support was largely absent. International Nurses Day 2025 thus serves as a call to translate respect into policy—to prioritise fair wages, safe workplaces, and meaningful career pathways.

Internationally, the ICN and WHO have put forward frameworks such as the "Global Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery 2021–2025," urging countries to build a workforce that is educated, employed, empowered, and equitably distributed. These recommendations are not aspirational—they are foundational to achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and ensuring global health equity. Without a robust nursing workforce, no nation can claim preparedness for future health crises or progress toward inclusive development.

It is also worth noting the evolving landscape of healthcare itself. Digital health technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), and telemedicine are transforming patient care models. Nurses are at the forefront of this digital revolution—not as passive

users, but as active integrators of empathy and efficiency. However, to ensure they are not left behind, nations must invest in digital literacy, ethical training, and curriculum reform. The future of healthcare will be technologically enabled but human-centred—and nurses are vital to bridging that gap.

The themes of International Nurses Day have consistently evolved to reflect pressing realities. In 2020, amidst the pandemic, the theme was "Nurses: A Voice to Lead – Nursing the World to Health." The 2021 theme advanced the conversation to envision "A Vision for Future Healthcare." By 2022, it demanded action: "Invest in Nursing and Respect Rights to Secure Global Health." The 2023 and 2024 themes—"Our Nurses. Our Future." and "The Economic Power of Care"—began linking nurse welfare with systemic outcomes. The 2025 theme is thus not an isolated slogan, but part of a growing global consciousness that caring for nurses is not an auxiliary task—it is central to societal progress.

At a policy level, this means integrating nurses into decision-making bodies, creating national frameworks for workforce planning, and enabling public-private partnerships that fund nursing education and employment. At the community level, it requires combating the stigma and violence nurses often face, particularly during crises. At the institutional level, it means reforming how nursing is perceived—not as subordinate to doctors, but as a critical, autonomous pillar of health systems.

It is also essential that other sectors beyond health—finance, labour, gender, and education—recognise their stake in this agenda. Economic planning must account for the value nurses bring. Gender policies must address workplace equity in nursing. Labour ministries must ensure fair contracts and benefits. And education systems must provide adequate infrastructure and scholarships for nursing aspirants, especially in underserved areas.

International Nurses Day 2025, therefore, is not merely an observance—it is a movement. It asserts that the fate of nations is intertwined with the fate of nurses. In every rural clinic, urban hospital, refugee camp, or school infirmary, nurses are shaping outcomes not just in health, but in human dignity. Their well-being is a mirror reflecting our collective priorities.

The world has long entrusted nurses with the task of healing its wounds. It is time the world healed theirs. Investing in nurses is not an act of charity—it is an act of foresight. It is a commitment to a more just, healthy, and economically resilient world. This year's theme—"Our Nurses. Our Future. Caring for nurses strengthens economies"—must be internalised as both a philosophy and a strategy. Only then can we build a future where every nation stands on the strength of those who care.

As we commemorate May 12th, may we not only light the symbolic lamp but also ignite the real engines of change: policy, investment, equity, and respect. For in safeguarding our nurses, we are safeguarding our future. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurni@gmail.com)

## Operation Sindoor: India's decisive action against terrorism

By: Dr. Satyawan Saurabh

India recently carried out a historic military operation, "Operation Sindoor," against terrorists in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), which is not just a military action but a symbol of the strength, courage, and self-reliance of the Indian Army. This operation came out as a big step against terrorism and gave a message to the whole world that when it comes to its security and honor, India will never back down. In Operation Sindoor, the Indian Army destroyed 9 terrorist hideouts inside Pakistan and POK. These hideouts included the headquarters of major terrorist organizations like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. By successfully carrying out this military action, the Indian Army gave a clear message to Pakistan and terrorists that India is not ready for any kind of compromise regarding its security.

**Objective and plan of Operation Sindoor**  
For India, terrorism has become not just a military challenge but a national crisis. India was losing its civilian and military lives due to continuous terrorist attacks from Pakistan and cross-border terrorism. Not only Indian Army personnel were being martyred in these attacks, but innocent civilians were also losing their lives. India has always taken steps against terrorism through diplomatic and military means, but now it was clear that a decisive military action was required to destroy the bases of terrorism.

Keeping the plan of Operation Sindoor a secret, the Indian Army devised a strategy to attack terrorist bases in Pakistan and POK. Under this, a massive airstrike was planned by the Indian Air Force, in which the terrorist bases were destroyed by entering 100 kilometers inside Pakistan's border. In this attack, 9 important bases, including the headquarters of terrorist organizations like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, were targeted. The Indian Army ensured that the operation was made successful and effective from every aspect so that the terrorists do not get any chance and the safety of the citizens of India can be ensured.

**Strategic success of Operation Sindoor**  
The biggest success of Operation Sindoor was that the Indian Army destroyed the terrorist hideouts in Pakistan and POK without any major war. In this action, India proved that it will not tolerate any terrorist activity and will take every possible step to protect its borders. The Indian Air Force targeted the terrorist hideouts within Pakistan and POK through its airstrikes. This attack was carried out with such precision that not only were the terrorist hideouts destroyed, but a message was also given to Pakistan and terrorists that India is fully prepared for its security.

During this military action, the Indian air defense system shot down a Pakistani F-16 aircraft, which was trying to enter the Indian border. This incident proves that India is extremely vigilant about the security of its airspace and will not tolerate any intrusion. The quick response of the Indian Army and Air Force proved that India is fully capable of facing any challenge.

**Global impact and international response**  
Operation Sindoor gave a message not only to Pakistan but to the whole world that India is not ready to make any compromise in its policy against

terrorism. This bold step of India gave a strong message against terrorism at the international level. India proved that it will not tolerate terrorism from any country within itself, whether that country is Pakistan or any other country.

After this operation, India's military capability and strategic thinking were appreciated in the international community. Many of Pakistan's allies made statements about India's military action, but it became clear from these statements that the attitude of the countries of the world was positive about India's action against terrorism. The United Nations and other international organizations saw this move of India as a decisive action against terrorism.

**Tension between India and Pakistan**  
Operation Sindoor has further increased the tension between India and Pakistan, but this step of India was completely in self-defense and against terrorism. Pakistan has always been pressuring India to escape its responsibility towards terrorism, but India has proved that it will not shy away from taking any step for its security. Indian action was criticized by Pakistan, but India clearly stated that the purpose of its action is only to eliminate terrorism, and it is expected of Pakistan that it should take steps to stop terrorist activities on its land.

This move by India has taught Pakistan that the fight against terrorism is not fought only through war and military actions but also through diplomacy and internal security. Pakistan needs to understand that if it continues to promote terrorism, it will have to face the consequences.

**India's permanent stand against terrorism**  
Operation Sindoor was not only successful as a military operation, but it is also a confirmation of India's self-reliance and its policy against terrorism. This action proves that India has made its fight against terrorism more decisive. Through this operation, India also gave the message that it will take every possible step to completely eliminate terrorism and will not give Pakistan any opportunity to support its terrorist activities.

Going forward, it remains to be seen how India will force Pakistan to take action against terrorism through its military action as well as diplomatic means. Eradication of terrorism is possible only when the whole world unites against it and countries that provide shelter to terrorists are held accountable. With the combination of India's military and government, it is expected that this fight against terrorism will be fought more effectively across the world.

Operation Sindoor is not just a military action, but it is a symbol of India's courage, determination, and strong will against terrorism. India has proved that it can go to any extent for its security and honor. This action against terrorists in Pakistan and PoK is a strong step, which sends a message against terrorism across the world. The Indian Army is proud of the success of this operation and also congratulates the Government of India, who took this bold step.

As a result of Operation Sindoor, the question arises as to what steps Pakistan and other countries of the world will take against terrorism. This action of India is only the beginning, and it is hoped that in the future India will take even more decisive steps so that terrorism can be completely eradicated. Jai Hind! (The author is a Research Scholar in Political Science, poet, freelance journalist, and columnist)



# What causes heart palpitations, how common are they, and how do I know they are occurring?

By: Tom Seymour

With heart palpitations, a person may notice that their heartbeat does not feel right. Many factors can trigger these heart flutters and in some cases, they can also indicate an underlying heart problem.

People are not usually aware of their heartbeat, but sometimes, it comes to their notice. This may be because their heart is pounding too hard, too fast, too slow, or irregularly.

This article explores the causes of heart palpitations, how to test for them, and some treatment options.

## Common causes

Many factors can trigger heart palpitations. Some causes include physical or mental stress, anxiety, dehydration, and lack of sleep.

However, they can also indicate an underlying heart problem.

## Heart conditions

The British Heart Foundation notes that palpitations can stem from a wide range of underlying heart conditions, such as:

- cardiomyopathy, wherein the heart becomes enlarged
- heart valve problems
- congenital heart disease

Palpitations can also result from arrhythmia, which refers to any change to a person's regular heartbeat.

## Causes of arrhythmia include:

- atrial flutter, which is a fast and irregular heartbeat
- ventricular tachycardia, which occurs when the lower chambers of the heart pump too fast, reducing the amount of oxygen in the blood
- atrial fibrillation, which is when there is a short circuit in the heart that causes the atria, or upper chambers in the heart, to pump rapidly
- supraventricular tachycardia, which is when the heart suddenly beats a lot faster than normal

It may also be a warning sign of heart failure or a heart attack, both of which can result from a range of structural and other issues.

## Emotional factors

Strong emotions can cause heart palpitations. Emotional factors that can trigger heart palpitations include:

- anxiety
- stress
- panic
- depression
- insomnia or lack of sleep

Heart palpitations most commonly occur due to anxiety-related causes.

## Medication

Certain medications can also trigger heart palpitations. According to the United Kingdom's National Health Service (NHS), the following medicines may trigger palpitations:

- asthma inhalers
- antihistamines
- high blood pressure medications
- antibiotics
- antidepressants
- antifungal medications

Medication for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, such as Adderall, may also cause heart palpitations.

## Medical conditions

Certain underlying medical conditions may be the cause of heart palpitations. These include:

- an overactive or underactive thyroid
- low blood sugar levels
- high or low potassium levels
- levels of magnesium that are too low or high
- pheochromocytoma, which is a type of neuroendocrine tumor

Other medical conditions include:

- dehydration
- diabetes
- anemia
- postural hypotension, which is when a person experiences dizziness and low blood pressure when standing up
- a high fever
- sleep apnea

## Lifestyle

Lifestyle factors that may cause heart palpitations include:

- caffeine consumption, including tea, coffee, or energy drinks
- alcohol consumption
- tobacco smoking
- strenuous exercise
- using recreational drugs, such as

cannabis, cocaine, heroin, ecstasy, or amphetamines

• rich or spicy food consumption

Why do heart palpitations happen after eating?

## Hormonal changes

Hormonal changes are another possible cause. Changes in hormone levels may result from:

- menstrual periods
- pregnancy
- menopause
- thyroid problems

## Are they normal?

A 2021 article states that heart palpitations are very common and typically harmless.

In many cases, palpitations can be scary but not serious. However, they can be a symptom of arrhythmia and may also be a warning sign of cardiac arrest.

For this reason, it is a good idea for people who experience heart palpitations to seek medical advice.

## Symptoms

People experience heart palpitations in different ways. The NHS notes that some common descriptions include the heart:

- pounding
- fluttering
- beating harder, faster, or irregularly

A person may feel a heart palpitation in the neck, throat, or chest. They may also feel them in their ear if they are lying down.

For some people, palpitations last for only a few seconds, while others may experience them for minutes or hours at a time.

How do doctors diagnose the cause?

## A doctor will likely:

- ask about symptoms
- carry out a physical exam
- look at the individual's medical history

• do a test using a 12-lead electrocardiogram (ECG)

An ECG measures heart rate and rhythm parameters through electrical tracing.

Depending on the symptoms, the doctor may also do blood tests, an exercise stress test, and other investigations.

tigations, such as asking the person to wear an arrhythmia monitor at home. They may also refer the person to a cardiologist.

People may find it useful to keep a diary noting the following information:

- what their palpitations feel like
- how often they happen
- when they happen
- what the triggers are
- whether they last for seconds, minutes, or hours

Being able to answer some of the following questions may also help with diagnosis:

- Is the heart rate too fast or slow during a palpitation episode, and is the rhythm regular or irregular?
- Is there lightheadedness, dizziness, shortness of breath, or chest pain?

• Do the palpitations tend to occur during a particular activity? Is there a pattern?

• Do the palpitations start and stop suddenly or fade in and out?

## Treatment options

Not everyone with heart palpitations will need treatment. If they do, it will depend on the type of palpitations, the person's symptoms, and the cause and amount of palpitations they are experiencing. Options include:

- Emotional causes: A person may find it beneficial to learn how to deal with a panic attack and use breathing techniques to help remain calm.
- Medication: If a person starts to have palpitations while taking certain medications, a doctor may recommend an alternative.

• Lifestyle: The heart palpitations should resolve without treatment, and people may find it beneficial to avoid the triggers.

• Hormonal: Heart palpitations that occur due to hormonal changes are usually temporary.

The doctor may prescribe antiarrhythmic drugs, such as beta-blockers or non-dihydropyridine calcium channel blocker therapy. Beta-blockers slow the heart rate and reduce blood pressure.

If a person has arrhythmia, a

healthcare professional may recommend the following medical procedures:

- Catheter ablation surgery: During catheter ablation surgery, a cardiologist will thread an ablation device into the heart through a catheter that passes through a deep vein in the groin, neck, or chest. The device causes scars to form over faulty electrical tracts in the heart. This can help correct the way electrical impulses travel through the heart.
- Electrical cardioversion: This procedure involves sending an electrical shock into the chest wall to try to stabilize a person's heart rhythm and rate. A doctor may choose this therapy to "reset" the electrical rhythm of the heart.
- Implantable pacemaker or defibrillator placement: A pacemaker is a permanent cardiac device that monitors and treats electrical conditions of the heart.

• Some people experience regular palpitations, which may be bothersome. To reduce these, a person can try the following:

- Find a comfortable position and relax.
- Perform deep breathing techniques.
- Try to avoid panic, as this can worsen symptoms.
- Take magnesium supplementation, although a person should discuss this with a doctor first.
- Stay hydrated.

People may also try the Valsalva maneuver breathing method. A 2015 study found that the Valsalva maneuver is a simple and noninvasive method for stopping an abnormal heart rhythm. However, the researchers also noted that more research is necessary.

## Complications

Many cases of heart palpitations are harmless. However, if they are a sign of an underlying heart condition, there can be serious complications.

Some heart conditions, such as atrial flutter, can lead to stroke. Heart palpitations can also be a

symptom of heart failure and may precede cardiac arrest.

Some people may faint due to a sudden drop in blood pressure. Always get palpitations checked out and discuss management with a healthcare professional.

## Prevention

Often, lifestyle strategies can help reduce or stop nonserious palpitations. For example, people should try to reduce or avoid the following:

- caffeine
- alcohol
- tobacco
- any medications that may trigger palpitations

## Other tips include:

- following a healthy diet
- getting enough sleep
- getting regular exercise
- doing yoga, meditation, breathing exercises, or tai chi to help manage stress

• avoiding known triggers or learning new ways to approach them

These measures may also help reduce the risk of heart disease.

## When to contact a doctor

Heart palpitations usually pass quickly and are not serious, but it is a good idea to speak with a doctor if they occur.

If a person of any age experiences heart palpitations, they should contact a doctor. In addition, anyone with the following should contact a doctor if palpitations occur:

- a history of heart problems
- palpitations that worsen or do not improve
- other symptoms, such as chest pain
- other health concerns

## Summary

Many people experience heart palpitations from time to time. They can be non-severe, and some people will not need treatment. However, they can also indicate an underlying health condition.

For this reason, people should seek help if the palpitations occur unexpectedly or often, if they have an existing heart condition, or if they have other symptoms. (Courtesy: Medical News Today)

# Measles could again become widespread as cases surge worldwide

By: Rebecca Schein

Globally, measles is on the rise across the U.S., Canada, Mexico, South America and parts of Europe. In 2025, North and South America saw 11 times more cases than during the same period last year. In Europe, measles rates are at their highest point in 25 years.

In the U.S., as of May 2, 2025, health authorities have confirmed 935 cases of measles affecting 30 states. This is a huge surge compared with the 285 cases reported in 2024. A large measles outbreak is happening in Canada, too, with over 1,000 cases.

The Conversation asked Rebecca Schein, a specialist in pediatric infectious diseases, to explain what this spike at home and abroad might mean for a disease that was declared eliminated from the U.S. in 2000.

## How do measles cases this year compare with previous years?

From 2000 to 2010, less than 100 measles cases were reported each year in the U.S. Since 2010, there have been isolated outbreaks, mainly in unvaccinated communities, with approximately 200 to 300 cases a year. The latest major outbreak in the U.S. was in 2019, with 1,274 cases, primarily in the New York City metropolitan area and parts of New Jersey.

Cases fell in 2020 to 2023 during the COVID-19 pandemic, returning to pre-pandemic levels in 2024. Currently, most U.S. cases are coming from an epidemic in Texas, with 702 confirmed cases as of May 6. Of these, 91 people were hospitalized and three people, two of them children, died. Measles cases are still being reported. Texas is one of 12 measles outbreaks documented in the U.S. in 2025 to date.

The World Health Organization has declared both North and South America to be at high risk for measles. Canada reported a total of 1,177 cases as of April 19, with 951 of them linked to an outbreak that began in New Brunswick in October 2024 and spread to seven provinces. In 2023, there were 12 measles cases in all of Canada.

Mexico reported 421 confirmed measles cases as of April 18, and another 384 cases are under investigation. There are also small measles outbreaks in South America, with Belize reporting its first two cases since 1991. Brazil reported five cases, and in Argentina there are 21 confirmed cases of measles, mainly in the capital city of Buenos Aires.

In Europe, measles cases rose tenfold, hitting 35,212 in 2024, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

## How did the US eliminate measles?

Measles is one of the most contagious infections ever identified. One person with measles can spread the infection to 12 to 18 others. That number, which epidemiologists call R0, is 1 to 4 for the flu and 2 to 5 for

## COVID-19.

In 1912, measles became a nationally reportable disease tracked by all the health departments in the U.S. At that time, there were about 3 million to 4 million cases and 6,000 deaths each year in the country. Medical care improved and the death rate decreased, but cases spiked to epidemic levels every two to three years.

It was not until 1963, when the first measles vaccine became widely available, that cases dropped dramatically. The current measles vaccine, which is called the MMR vaccine because it also includes vaccines against mumps and rubella, was released in 1971. In 1977, the U.S. government launched the National Childhood Immunization Initiative to ensure that school children received vaccination against polio, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, mumps, rubella and measles.

especially sharp drop during the pandemic from limited exposure to medical care.

Aligned with this trend, measles cases in the U.S. have been rising. As a result, some infectious disease experts worry that measles is heading toward becoming a common infection again.

## What happens if measles rates continue to rise?

Public health officials define endemic infections as being consistently present within a region. For example, the common cold and now COVID-19 are endemic in the U.S.

A higher-than-normal number of cases in an area is termed an outbreak. For measles, an outbreak is defined as more than three cases in a county or local area. When cases from an outbreak spread outside the local area, that is an epidemic, and if an epidemic spreads into many countries across the world, it becomes a pandemic.

The measles outbreak in Texas started in January 2025 as an outbreak in six counties and quickly reached epidemic levels, hitting a total of 29 counties and a count of 702 cases as of May 6.

A 2022 study used a computer algorithm to model the trajectory of measles cases in the U.S. given the drop in vaccination rates during the pandemic. If children who missed vaccines due to the pandemic do not receive catch-up vaccinations, and vaccine hesitancy continues at current rates, the study found, then 21% of U.S. children – about 15 million – will be vulnerable to measles over the following five years. That is well below the number needed to prevent measles outbreaks.

A study using a similar approach published in April 2025 found that measles is likely to become endemic again in the U.S. and predicted that the country could experience 850,000 cases over the next 25 years if vaccination rates remain the same. If vaccine rates decrease further, the study found, case numbers could increase to 11 million over the next 25 years.

## What would it take to reverse the rise in measles?

Reversing this trend will require steadily increasing community vaccination rates. The April 2025 study found that boosting community vaccination rates by 5% would tamp down the increase in cases to between 3,000 and 19,000 over the next 25 years.

Another epidemiological model that estimates measles spread, published in February, predicted that by intervening early in an outbreak with local health department support, measles outbreaks can be contained as long as 85% of the population is vaccinated against the disease.

That, of course, requires ensuring ongoing access to free and accessible childhood vaccinations and restoration of the public's trust in measles vaccines. (Courtesy: Down to Earth)

Vaccination rates in children starting elementary school rose to 96% by 1981. Beginning in 1993, the Vaccines for Children program helped ensure that every child could receive vaccinations regardless of ability to pay.

Vaccination programs were a resounding success. By 2000, measles cases arising in the U.S. had fallen to zero, with infections occurring only in people who traveled abroad. That year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared that measles was eliminated in the country.

## Why are rising measles rates so worrisome?

Measles is a virus, like the common cold. Unlike bacterial infections, which can be treated with antibiotics, viral infections are typically not treatable but can often be prevented through vaccination programs.

Vaccination stimulates the body's immune system to make antibodies to fight a specific infection. For most people, just one dose of the measles vaccine protects them from infection. The second dose helps ensure long-term protection. Measles is so infectious that 95% of the population must be vaccinated to protect the community, a concept called herd immunity.

During the past 20 years, however, vaccination rates are decreasing globally, with an

# Surgery remains the frontline defense against Cancer

By: Dr Parveen Mendiratta

Cancer is one of India's fastest-growing health crises. According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), over 14.6 lakh new cancer cases were reported in 2022, and this number is expected to rise to 15.7 lakh by 2025. Among the growing arsenal of treatments, including chemotherapy, radiation, and immunotherapy, surgery continues to be the single most effective and decisive intervention for many types of cancer.

Surgery is a fundamental part of cancer treatment that involves the removal of tumors. For cancers that are localized and have not spread extensively, surgery can offer the possibility of a complete cure. For example, when tumors are detected early, they can be surgically removed before they spread to other areas of the body, increasing the chances of long-term survival.

For many patients, surgery is not only about curing the disease but also improving their quality of life. Tumors that obstruct vital organs, cause bleeding, or result in debilitating pain can be surgically removed to relieve these symptoms, offering significant comfort and enhanced quality of life for patients, even in advanced stages of cancer.

## Surgical Advances in Oncology

Recent advancements in surgical oncology have made treatments less invasive and more precise, leading to faster recovery and fewer complications. Techniques such as minimally invasive surgery, laparoscopic surgery, and robotic-assisted surgery have revolutionized how cancer surgery is performed. These methods allow for smaller incisions, reducing the risk of infection and enabling quicker recovery times.

Even in more advanced stages of cancer, surgery remains important. While it may not cure the cancer, surgical procedures can help manage the disease by removing tumors that cause blockages or pain, greatly improving the patient's comfort and functionality.

## Is Surgery Always Necessary?

While surgery is an essential tool in many cancer treatments, it is not always necessary. The decision to proceed with surgery depends on several factors, including the type of cancer, its location, the stage of the disease, and the patient's overall health. Some cancers may not be suitable for surgery, especially if they have spread widely or if the procedure could pose too much risk to the patient.

However, for many patients where surgery is an option, it remains the most direct and effective approach to fighting cancer. Though it is not a cure-all, surgery continues to be one of the most reliable tools for oncologists when managing the disease.

The Future of Cancer



fort and functionality.

Surgery can also be combined with other treatments like chemotherapy or radiation. For example, surgery may be used to remove the main tumor, followed by chemotherapy to target remaining cancer cells in the body. This combination improves overall treatment outcomes and reduces the risk of recurrence.

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## The Future of Cancer

The future of surgical oncology is bright, with ongoing innovations in medical technology continuing to improve the precision and outcomes of cancer surgeries. Intraoperative imaging, genetic tumor testing, and the development of targeted therapies are all advancing the field of surgery, helping doctors to make more informed decisions about treatment.

Surgery remains a critical part of cancer treatment, especially when combined with chemotherapy and radiation. It offers the best chance of survival for many patients, particularly in the early stages of the disease. As advancements in surgical technologies continue to evolve, surgery will only become more effective, ensuring it remains a crucial component of cancer care. For anyone facing a cancer diagnosis, consulting a surgical oncologist is essential to understanding the treatment options available and how surgery can improve survival chances and quality of life. (The author is the Head of Department, Surgical Oncology, Yatharth Hospital, Greater Noida)



# Trump praises 'strong, unwaveringly powerful' leadership of India, Pakistan

**NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, May 11:** US President Donald Trump on Sunday praised the "strong and unwaveringly powerful" leadership of India and Pakistan for reaching a "ceasefire" and offered to work with them for a "solution" on the Kashmir issue.

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.

"I will work with you both to see if, after a 'thousand years,' a solution can be arrived at concerning Kashmir. God Bless the leadership of India and Pakistan on a job well done!!!" Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

His comments came hours after India and Pakistan on Saturday reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, with immediate effect.

"I am very proud of the strong and unwaveringly powerful leadership of India and Pakistan for having the strength, wisdom, and fortitude to fully know and understand that it was time to stop the current aggression that could have lead (led) to the death and destruction of so many, and so much,"

Trump said.

"Millions of good and innocent people could have died! Your legacy is greatly enhanced by your brave actions. I am proud that the USA was able to help you arrive at this historic and heroic decision," Trump said.

He went on to say that even though this has not been discussed, he is going to "increase trade substantially with both of these great Nations."

In Islamabad, Pakistan's Foreign Office Sunday said it appreciates President Trump's "willingness to support efforts aimed at the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute".

Trump on Saturday announced that India and Pakistan have agreed to a "full and immediate ceasefire" after a "long night" of talks.

Soon after Trump's announcement, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said that the directors general of military operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan have agreed to stop all firings and military action on land, air and sea with effect from 5 pm (IST) on Saturday.

Tensions between India and Pakistan soared after the Indian Armed Forces hit terror launchpads in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) last week in response to the Pahalgam terror attack.



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Saturday said that over the past 48 hours, Vice President J D Vance and he engaged with senior Indian and Pakistani officials, "including Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Shehbaz Sharif, External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir, and National Security Advisors Ajit Doval and Asim Malik."

"I am pleased to announce the Governments of India and Pakistan have agreed to an immediate ceasefire and to start talks on a broad set of issues at a neutral site," Rubio said.

Vance had also expressed gratitude to the leaders of India and Pakistan for their "hard work and willingness to engage in this ceasefire."

"Great work from the President's team, especially Secretary Rubio. And my gratitude to the leaders of India and Pakistan for their hard work and willingness to engage in this ceasefire," Vance said in a post on X.

Last month, Trump had said that there have always been tensions between India and Pakistan, and the two countries will figure it out between themselves "one way or the other."

Several members of the Trump administration and lawmakers lauded Trump's efforts for de-escalation.

"I am incredibly proud to serve alongside Vice President Vance and Secretary Rubio. This historic administration is working every day to achieve peace. The golden age is coming and it starts with peace throughout the world," Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said on X.

Former national security advisor Mike Waltz, whom Trump plans to nominate as US ambassador to the United Nations, said, "progress towards stability in a historically volatile region. It won't be easy, there will be violations and much work to be done, but another step in President Trump's commitment to peace."

The House Committee on Foreign Affairs in the US has said President Trump is the "President of Peace."

Far-right political activist Laura Loomer said Trump "deserves the Nobel Peace Prize" for his efforts on India and Pakistan.

"He is truly such a transformative historical figure and the most consequential President of our lifetime. Once again, he has proven his commitment to Peace. Thank you, President Trump," Loomer said in a post on X. (PTI)

## Israeli strikes on Gaza kill 11 people, mostly women and children



**DEIR AL-BALAH (Gaza Strip), May 11:** Israeli strikes overnight and into Sunday killed 11 people in the Gaza Strip, mostly women and children, according to local health officials.

Two of the strikes hit tents in the southern city of Khan Younis, each killing two children and their parents. Other strikes killed a child and a man riding a bicycle, according to Nasser Hospital, which received the bodies. In northern Gaza, an Israeli strike killed a 16-year-old boy, according to the Indonesian Hospital.

The Israeli military says it only targets militants and tries to avoid harming civilians. It blames Hamas for civilian deaths in the 19-month-old war because the militants are embedded in densely populated areas. There was no immediate Israeli comment on the latest strikes.

Israel has sealed Gaza off from all imports, including food, medicine and emergency shelter, for over 10 weeks in what it says is a pressure tactic aimed at forcing Hamas to release hostages. Israel resumed its offensive in March, shattering a ceasefire that had facilitated the release of more than 30 hostages.

Aid groups say food supplies are running low and hunger is widespread.

U.S. President Donald Trump, whose administration has voiced full support for Israel's actions, is set to visit Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates this week in a regional tour that will not include Israel.

The war began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking 251 hostage. Fifty-nine hostages are still inside Gaza, around a third of them believed to be alive, after most of the rest were

released in ceasefire agreements or other deals.

Israel's offensive has killed over 52,800 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many of the dead were combatants or civilians. The offensive has destroyed vast areas of the territory and displaced some 90% of its population of around 2 million.

Israel recovers remains of soldier killed in Lebanon in 1982.

In a separate development, Israel said it retrieved the remains of a soldier killed in a 1982 battle in southern Lebanon after he had been classified as missing for more than four decades.

The recovery of Sgt. 1st Class Tzvi Feldman's remains brought more closure to a case that has plagued Israel for years. The Israeli military said his remains were recovered from deep inside Syria, without providing further details.

Feldman went missing, along with five other Israeli soldiers, in a battle with Syrian forces in the Lebanese town of Sultan Yaquob. Several years later, two of the missing soldiers were returned alive to Israel in prisoner exchanges with Syria. The remains of another soldier were returned in 2019, after Russia said it had helped locate them in Syria, while the fate of the other two remained unknown.

For many long years, I have authorized numerous covert operations to locate the missing from Sultan Yaquob, and I promised the Feldman family that I would never stop working to bring their son home, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday.

Cases of soldiers missing for decades have a powerful emotional and political resonance in Israel, where military service is compulsory for most Jewish men. (AP)

## UK hails India-Pak ceasefire, calls for sustained de-escalation

**LONDON, May 11:** The UK on Saturday welcomed the ceasefire agreed between India and Pakistan, calling on both nations to sustain their steps towards de-escalation.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the UK had been "engaged" with both countries for some days in pursuit of a ceasefire.

"I'm pleased to see today that there's a ceasefire. The task now is to make sure that that is enduring and is lasting," he told the BBC from Kyiv, where he is meeting European leaders for peace talks over the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

"Today's ceasefire between India and Pakistan is hugely welcome. I urge both parties to sustain this. De-escalation is in everybody's interest," said Foreign Secretary David Lammy. He took to social media soon after Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri told reporters in New Delhi that the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) of Pakistan had called his Indian counterpart on Saturday afternoon to agree to "stop all firing and military action on land, in the air and sea, with effect from 1700 hours IST".

The announcement followed a night of intense military activity in the region, with Lammy expressing "serious concern" and calling on India and Pakistan to move toward a "dialogue that leads to a swift and sustainable ceasefire". Earlier, in a joint statement with fellow G7 Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United States and the High Representative of the European Union, the UK had strongly condemned the "egregious terrorist attack" in Pahalgam on April 22 and urged maximum restraint from both India and Pakistan.

"Further military escalation poses a serious threat to regional stability. We are deeply concerned for the safety of civilians on both sides. We call for immediate de-escalation and encourage both countries to engage in direct dialogue towards a peaceful outcome.

"We continue to monitor events closely and express our support for a swift and lasting diplomatic resolution," read the statement, issued hours before the ceasefire announcement.

Diaspora groups in Britain reacted with guarded relief, with Friends of India Society International (FISI) UK highlighting India's "firm and uncompromising" stand against terrorism and INSIGHT UK stressing on a "humanity against terrorism" message.

"There are no winners in war. A lot of innocent people suffer unnecessarily and therefore, I welcome this step and hope that good sense will prevail where both sides agree never again," said Rami Ranger, House of Lords peer and Chairman of the British Sikh Association. "History has a habit of repeating itself if we don't learn from it. So, I hope this time, the Pakistani leaders will learn from the history. This could be the time when we draw a line and end this hostility forever," Lord Ranger said.

Chietig Baipae, Senior Research Fellow at the London-based think tank Chatham House, struck a note of caution because the ceasefire does not resolve the "underlying grievances" in the India-Pakistan bilateral relationship. (AP)

## Chinese Foreign Minister Wang speaks to NSA Doval, calls for lasting ceasefire with Pak

**BEIJING, May 11:** Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi spoke to India's National Security Advisory (NSA) Ajit Doval and expressed hope that New Delhi and Islamabad would address their differences through dialogue and achieve a lasting ceasefire.

During their conversation, Doval told Wang that war was not India's choice but India needed to take counter-terrorism action after the Pahalgam attack, state-run Xinhua news agency reported in separate dispatches.

Wang also condemned the April 22 terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, which had cross-border linkages and triggered the worst fighting between India and Pakistan in years.

Wang also spoke to Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar. Xinhua's reports said.

Hostilities soared between India and Pakistan after the Indian military hit terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) on May 7 in response to the Pahalgam attack, which claimed 26 lives.

The two nuclear-armed neighbours on May 10 reached an understanding to stop all firings

and military actions on land, air and sea with immediate effect after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes.

In his talks with Doval, Wang expressed hope that India and Pakistan would remain calm and restrained, properly handle differences through dialogue and consultation, and avoid escalating the situation, according to Xinhua's reports.

Wang said China supports and expects India and Pakistan to achieve a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire through consultation, which is in the fundamental interest of the two countries and meets the common aspiration of the international community.

He said China condemns the terrorist attack in Pahalgam and opposes all forms of terrorism. Noting that the world is undergoing both transformation and upheaval, Wang said peace and stability in Asia are hard-won and deserve to be cherished. India and Pakistan are neighbours that cannot be moved away and they are both neighbours of China, he said.

Doval told Wang that the Pahalgam attack resulted in serious casualties for the Indian side and that India needed to take counter-terrorism actions.

## US, China begin 2<sup>nd</sup> day of tariff talks

**GENEVA, May 11:** The US and China on Sunday resumed crucial tariff talks that have put the global economy on edge, but appeared to have diverging views of where the negotiations presently stand.

US President Donald Trump wrote on social media that "great progress" was being made and even suggested a "total reset" was a possibility as the sides took their seats for the second and final scheduled day of discussions in Geneva.

Beijing has yet to comment directly, but its official news agency took a tough approach, saying China will "firmly reject any proposal that compromises core principles or undermines the broader cause of global equity".

Still, Trump wrote Sunday on social media that "great progress" was being made.

He gave no further details, and officials at the White House also offered little information during and after the opening day of discussions.

Two officials speaking to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter confirmed that the talks had resumed on Sunday morning.

The discussions could help stabilise world markets roiled by the US-China standoff that has ships in port with goods from China unwilling to unload until they get final word on tariffs. The discussions have been shrouded in secrecy, and neither side made comments to reporters as they left Saturday.

In its editorial, Xinhua said, "Talks should never be a pretext for continued coercion or extortion, and China will firmly reject any proposal that compromises core principles or undermines the broader cause of global equity."

Several convoys of black vehicles have been seen coming and going from the residence of the Swiss ambassador to the UN delegation in Geneva, which hosted the

talks aimed at de-escalating trade tensions between the world's two biggest economies.

Trump last month raised US tariffs on China to a combined 145%, and China retaliated by hitting American imports with a 125% levy. Tariffs that high essentially amount to the countries' boycotting each other's products, disrupting trade that last year topped USD 660 billion.

Even before talks got underway, Trump suggested Friday that the US could lower its tariffs on China, saying in a Truth Social post that "80% Tariff seems right! Up to Scott!" — referring to lead negotiator and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent.

The talks mark the first time the sides have met face-to-face to discuss the issues. And though prospects for a breakthrough are slight, even a small drop in tariffs, particularly if taken simultaneously, would help restore some confidence. (AP)

## Bangladesh's interim government bans deposed PM Sheikh Hasina's Awami League

**DHAKA/NEW DELHI, May 11:** Bangladesh's interim government led by Muhammad Yunus on Saturday evening banned deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League under an anti-terrorism law.

The announcement to ban Hasina's Awami League came after the student-led newly-floated National Citizen Party (NCP) activists rallied since Thursday and carried out blockades across Dhaka demanding the ban. "The official gazette notification will be issued in this regard on the next working day," Yunus's office said, describing it as a "statement of the Council of Advisers" or the Cabinet.

The statement said the Council decided that the ban would remain effective until the completion of the "trial of the Awami League and its leaders in Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal in the interest of protecting the country's security and sovereignty".

It said the decision was also taken for the security of the leaders and activists of the July 2024 uprising that eventually led to the ousting of the Awami League regime alongside the complainants and witnesses of the trial in the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT).

The meeting chaired by Yunus simultaneously amended the ICT law allowing the tribunal to try any

political party, its front organisations and affiliated bodies.

Hasina's 16-year-long Awami League regime was toppled on August 5 last year in a student-led violent mass uprising prompting the 77-year-old former prime minister to flee to India.

Three days after her ouster, Yunus took charge as the chief adviser of the interim government.

Hasina and many of her party leaders have been facing 100s of cases, including that of mass murder and corruption, since then. Most of her party leaders and ministers in her government are either arrested or fled abroad.

A large part of Students against Discrimination (SAD), which led the last year's movement that ousted Hasina, crystallised as the National Citizen Party (NCP) earlier this year.

Formed in 1949, the Awami League led the movement for the autonomy of Bengal in the then East Pakistan for decades and eventually led the Liberation War in 1971.

The announcement to ban Awami League came as Bangladesh on Saturday witnessed an escalating tension as NCP supporters marched towards Yunus's official residence to mount pressure for the ban. (AP)

## Israel's blockade means Gaza's hospitals cannot provide food to recovering patients

**KHAN YOUNIS (Gaza Strip), May 11:** It cost a fortune, she said, but Asmaa Fayeze managed to buy a few zucchinis in a Gaza market. She cooked them with rice and brought it to her 4-year-old son, who has been in the hospital for the past week. The soup was his only meal of the day, and he asked for more.

"It's all finished, darling," Fayeze replied softly. Still, it was an improvement from the canned beans and tuna she brings on other days, she said.

Hospital patients are among the most vulnerable as Palestinians across Gaza struggle to feed themselves, with Israel's blockade on food and other supplies entering the territory now in its third month.

With hospitals unable to provide food, families must bring whatever they can find for loved ones.

"Most, if not all, wounded patients have lost weight, especially in the past two months," Dr. Khaled Alser, a general surgeon at Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan Younis, told The Associated Press. Nutritional supple-

ments for intensive care unit patients are lacking, he said.

"Our hands are tied when it comes to making the best choice for patients. Choices are limited," he said.

**Hunger worsens as supplies dwindle**

Malnutrition is on the rise across Gaza, aid groups say. Thousands of children have been found with acute malnutrition in the past month, but adults as well are not getting proper nutrients, according to the U.N. It estimates that 16,000 pregnant women and new mothers this year face acute malnutrition.

Since Israel's blockade began on March 2, food sources have been drying up. Aid groups have stopped food distribution. Bakeries have closed. Charity kitchens handing out bowls of pasta or lentils remain the last lifeline for most of the population, but they are rapidly closing for lack of supplies, the U.N. says.

Markets are empty of almost everything but canned goods and small amounts of vegetables, and prices have been rising. Local pro-



duction of vegetables has plummeted because Israeli forces have damaged 80% of Gaza's farmlands, the U.N. says, and much of the rest is inaccessible inside newly declared military zones.

Fayeze's son, Ali al-Dbary, was admitted to Nasser Hospital because of a blocked intestine, suffering from severe cramps and unable to use the bathroom. Fayeze believes it's because he has been eating little but canned goods. She splurged on the zucchini, which now costs around USD 10 a kilo-

gram (2.2 pounds). Before the war it was less than a dollar.

Doctors said the hospital doesn't have a functioning scanner to diagnose her son and decide whether he needs surgery.

Israel says it imposed the blockade and resumed its military campaign in March to pressure Hamas to release its remaining hostages and disarm.

Hamas ignited the war with its Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, in which militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took

251 hostage, most of whom have been released in ceasefire agreements or other deals. Israel's offensive has killed over 52,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many of the dead were civilians or combatants.

**Concern over Israeli plans to control aid**

Israeli officials have asserted that enough food entered Gaza during a two-month ceasefire earlier this year. Rights groups have disputed that and called the blockade a "starvation tactic" and a potential war crime.

Now Israeli plans to control aid distribution in Gaza, using private contractors to distribute supplies. The U.N. and aid groups have rejected the idea, saying it could restrict who is eligible to give and receive aid and could force large numbers of Palestinians to move — which would violate international law.

Those under care at hospitals, and their families who scrounge to feed them, would face further chal-

lenges under Israel's proposal. Moving to reach aid could be out of the question.

Another patient at Nasser Hospital, 19-year-old Asmaa Faraj, had shrapnel in her chest from an airstrike that hit close to her tent and a nearby charity kitchen in camps for displaced people outside Khan Younis.

When the AP visited, the only food she had was a small bag of dates, a date cookie and some water bottles. Her sister brought her some pickles.

"People used to bring fruits as a gift when they visited sick people in hospitals," said the sister, Salwa Faraj. "Today, we have bottles of water."

She said her sister needs protein, fruits and vegetables but none are available.

Mohammed al-Bursh managed to find a few cans of tuna and beans to bring for his 30-year-old son, Sobhi, who was wounded in an airstrike three months ago. Sobhi's left foot was amputated, and he has two shattered vertebrae in his neck. (AP)



**'No civilian casualties, no damage to any military installations'**

## Governor hosts Sarva Dharma meet to reaffirm national unity amid 'Operation Sindoor'

**HT Bureau**

**NAMSAL, May 11:** In a significant step toward fostering communal harmony and dispelling misinformation in the wake of India's latest counter-terror operation, the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Lt General K T Parnaik, PVSM, UYSM, YSM (Retd), convened a Sarva Dharma Meet at Raj Bhavan on Saturday.

The interfaith gathering brought together religious leaders and representatives from various communities to deliberate on the implications and purpose of Operation Sindoor, which was launched by India on May 7, 2025.

According to an official statement issued by Raj Bhavan, the Governor addressed the gathering in a spirit of inclusivity, underlining that Operation Sindoor was a tragic terror attack in Pahalgam on April 22.

The attack claimed several innocent lives and shocked the nation, prompting a calibrated but firm response from Indian security forces.

The Governor emphasised that the operation was "precise, restrained, and exclusively targeted terrorist camps" spread across nine identified locations.

He clarified that India's actions were not driven by a desire for revenge, but by the imperative to safeguard citizens and maintain national security.

"This was not retaliation—it was a necessary act to protect our people," he said, reaffirming India's long-standing commitment to peace and stability.

Drawing on his extensive military background, including his tenure as Chief of the Northern Command—India's largest operational military formation—the Governor elaborated that the armed forces ex-



ecuted the operation with "measured and calibrated" actions.

He stated that the mission was designed to avoid both escalation and collateral damage.

"There were no civilian casualties, no damage to any military installations. That precision reflects the professionalism of our armed forces," he said.

He also revealed that Pakistani forces had made attempts to stoke communal discord by targeting religious institutions during this period.

However, these efforts were swiftly and effectively thwarted by Indian security forces. "Their intention was to create disharmony among India's diverse com-

munities. But we stood united—and vigilant," the Governor remarked.

The Governor reiterated that India did not initiate aggression.

He noted that global leaders have supported India's right to self-defense, and the broad international consensus reflects an acknowledgment that security is a prerequisite for peace.

"Our response was both responsible and resolute," he added.

Calling upon the people of Arunachal Pradesh—particularly religious leaders—the Governor urged everyone to remain vigilant against fake news and divisive narratives.

He stressed the importance of unity in

times of national challenge and expressed confidence in the collective wisdom and patriotic spirit of the state's citizens.

"Every citizen should be well-informed about the capabilities and intentions of our armed forces."

National awareness is the foundation of national strength," he said, while highlighting the enduring patriotism of Arunachali people.

He paid homage to their historic contributions, particularly their unwavering support to the Indian Army during the 1962 Sino-India War, noting that "the spirit of nationalism runs deep in Arunachal Pradesh."

The meeting saw the active participation of Dharm Gurus and representatives from a spectrum of faiths, including Indigenous traditions, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, and Christianity.

Civil society members, educationists, and intellectuals also attended the session, contributing to a robust dialogue around national security and community cohesion.

In their collective response, the participants thanked the Governor for initiating a transparent and inclusive conversation at a critical juncture.

They expressed their unanimous resolve to uphold truth, peace, and unity, and pledged to work together to counter misinformation and resist any attempt to fragment the social fabric of the nation.

As India continues to navigate the complexities of external threats and internal resilience, the Sarva Dharma Meet served as a powerful symbol of solidarity, mutual respect, and shared responsibility—a message echoed not only within Arunachal Pradesh, but across the country.

## MLA stresses strengthening govt school enrolment in Lower Subansiri



**HT Bureau**

**NAMSAL, May 11:** In a concerted move to revamp the educational landscape of Lower Subansiri district, MLA of Ziro-Hapoli, Er Hage Appa, chaired a high-level meeting on Saturday, May 10, 2025, at the District Secretariat Building, Ziro.

The meeting, aimed at addressing the pressing issue of low enrolment rates in government schools, brought together key stakeholders from the education sector, including school management committees (SMCs), education officials, and civil society representatives.

According to an official statement issued following the meeting, the MLA expressed deep concern over the declining enrolment figures and the deteriorating state of government-run educational institutions in the district.

He underscored the urgent need for systemic reforms to improve student intake and the overall quality of education.

While acknowledging the challenges, Er Appa also lauded the efforts of the School Management Committee of N G Government Secondary School, Tajang Village, which has reportedly made notable progress in boosting student enrolment.

He called on the committee to share its successful model with other schools in the district, suggesting that replicable strategies at the grassroots level could significantly impact enrolment figures.

The MLA emphasised the importance of empowering local SMCs, advocating for their creation in areas with minimal administrative oversight.

He highlighted that direct engagement between SMCs, parents, teachers, and students is crucial for effective monitoring and accountability in government schools.

Further, he assured attendees that there would be no political interference from his side in the transfer and posting of teachers, entrusting the responsibility of rationalizing staff distribution to the Education Department and SMCs.

Deputy Commissioner of Lower Subansiri, Vivek H P (IAS), also addressed the gathering and urged introspection among stakeholders.

He questioned why private school teachers remain highly motivated despite often earning lower salaries than their government counterparts.

Stressing the role of leadership in schools, he said, "Every student deserves a clean and conducive environment for learning, and it is the responsibility of headmasters and principals to ensure the upkeep of their institutions."

Calling schools the "building blocks of our civilized society," the DC encouraged teachers and administrators to remain committed even to challenging students.

He proposed a multi-pronged and multi-dimensional approach to improve the district's 18 proposed government schools, emphasising better infrastructure, increased en-

rolment, and enhanced academic standards. District Academic Education Officer (DAEO), Shri Rubu Buker, provided a detailed account of the enrolment initiative undertaken at N G Government Secondary School, Tajang.

He revealed that a 12-member task force was constituted, with each member assigned to bring in at least five students.

The effort, he said, was bolstered by collaboration with the Tajang Welfare Council, which has been instrumental in offering free books, transportation, and coaching for students who require additional academic support.

Adding to the discourse, Tage Opo, Block Resource Centre Coordinator (BRCC), highlighted a significant structural reform underway in the district.

He said that the number of government schools had been reduced from 76 to 25 during the 2024–25 academic session, with plans to further consolidate to 18 schools in the 2025–26 session.

The strategy, he explained, is intended to facilitate effective monitoring, teacher rationalisation, and quality education delivery.

"Consolidation will allow us to focus our resources and improve learning outcomes," said Opo.

He also stressed the necessity of providing qualified teachers and improved infrastructure to regain the trust of students and parents in public education.

From the civil society front, Pura Nado, President of the Apatani Students Union, voiced the need for stricter oversight not just on students, but on teachers as well.

"Earlier, students were disciplined in schools. Now, the time has come to discipline irregular teachers," he stated.

Drawing a comparison between private and government schools, Nado noted that private institutions are more adept at marketing their facilities and results through social media and suggested that government schools adopt similar promotional strategies.

He also proposed the organisation of inter-school co-curricular activities such as literary meets and sports tournaments to foster a spirit of healthy competition among students.

In a significant resolution proposed by MLA Hage Appa and agreed upon unanimously by those present, the meeting concluded with a decision to entrust SMCs, Zilla Parishad Members (ZPMs), and apex village bodies with the responsibility of improving both enrolment and educational standards in their respective areas.

The meeting also saw participation from several prominent community representatives, including Tage Rita, Secretary of the Apatani Women Association Ziro (AWAZ), and Hage Komu, Secretary of Tanii Supun Dukun (TSD), among others, who shared their perspectives and committed to supporting the district's education mission.

## Hornbill healthcare inaugurated in Itanagar to expand health and wellness services in Arunachal

**HT Bureau**

**NAMSAL, May 11:** In a significant step toward strengthening healthcare infrastructure in Arunachal Pradesh, Hornbill Healthcare, a new unit under Hornbill Biotech Pvt Ltd, was formally inaugurated on Saturday at the Hornbill Futsal Ground, located at 6 Kilo on NH-415 in Itanagar. The launch is part of the company's ongoing efforts to expand its presence in the Northeast through its association with the global wellness brand Tiens.

According to an official statement issued by the company, the newly established facility is designed to offer a range of health and wellness products and services tailored to meet the needs of people residing in Itanagar, Naharlagun, and across the Capital Complex region.

The company described the initiative as a milestone in its vision to bring accessible, affordable, and holistic healthcare to the doorsteps of Arunachal's citizens. The inaugural ceremony was marked by a vibrant gathering, featuring community members, wellness professionals, and local dignitaries.

Noted politician and youth leader Yumlam Achung attended the event as the special guest, commending the initiative for its potential to support the state's public health goals.

In his address, Achung highlighted the importance of encouraging private sector participation in the health domain, especially in a geographically challenging and de-

veloping region like Arunachal Pradesh.

"Initiatives like Hornbill Healthcare are timely and much needed. They not only contribute to the state's healthcare ecosystem but also generate awareness about preventive health and wellness," he remarked.

Representatives of Hornbill Biotech Pvt Ltd used the occasion to underscore the company's broader mission of promoting wellness through science-backed products and services aligned with the Tiens global model.

The Tiens Group, an international wellness conglomerate, is known for integrating traditional practices with modern biotechnology, and Hornbill Healthcare plans to mirror this approach locally.

"Through Hornbill Healthcare, we aim to bridge the gap in wellness services and empower individuals to take control of their health," a company spokesperson said.

The facility will serve as both a service center and awareness hub, offering health consultations, wellness products, and nutritional supplements.

The company also reaffirmed its intent to expand its footprint across the Northeast, citing Arunachal Pradesh as a strategic starting point due to rising awareness and demand for wellness-oriented lifestyles.

Plans are reportedly underway to establish similar centres in other districts to ensure a wider reach across tribal and urban populations.

## Dental OPD and ultrasonography centre inaugurated at PHC Tirbin, Leparada

**HT Bureau**

**NAMSAL, May 11:** In a significant development for rural healthcare in Arunachal Pradesh, Bassar MLA Nyabi Jini Dirchi on Saturday inaugurated a Dental Outpatient Department (OPD) and Ultrasonography Centre at the Primary Health Centre (PHC) in Tirbin, Leparada District.

The move aims to provide accessible and improved diagnostic and dental care services to the residents of Tirbin Circle and nearby areas.

According to an official statement, the inauguration marks a major milestone in the state's ongoing efforts to decentralize quality healthcare and enhance public health infrastructure at the grassroots level.

The new facilities are expected to significantly reduce the travel burden for residents who previously had to seek such medical services in distant urban centres.

Addressing the gathering during the inaugural event, MLA Nyabi Jini Dirchi expressed her satisfaction over the operationalisation of these much-needed health services.

"These facilities will bring quality healthcare closer to our community, ensuring timely diagnoses and early intervention. The availability of an ultrasound machine will allow for accurate diagnostic capabilities, while the Dental OPD will cater to the essential oral health needs of our people," she said.

Calling upon the community to

actively utilise and safeguard the facilities, Dirchi emphasised the importance of community ownership in ensuring the success of such initiatives.

"We must all work together to make the most of this infrastructure, and I urge our people to view this as a collective resource for the betterment of public health," she added.

The MLA also praised the relentless efforts of Dr Toyum D Lendo, Senior Medical Officer (SMO) at PHC Tirbin, along with the District Health Society of Leparada, for their role in upgrading local healthcare services.

She further assured continued support for health-focused developmental projects, noting that improving health outcomes remains one of her top priorities as a public representative.

The inauguration was attended by a host of dignitaries and community members, including Tirbin EAC Kenli Riba, District BJP President Jonya Basar, various Heads of Departments (HoDs), senior citizens, medical staff, and members of the general public from the Tirbin Circle.

The event saw enthusiastic participation, reflecting the community's anticipation and appreciation for improved medical infrastructure.

Locals hailed the launch as a timely intervention, particularly in light of the growing healthcare de-

mands in the region.

With rising awareness around preventive care and diagnostics, the introduction of an ultrasonography centre is expected to enhance maternal and child health services, as well as support other essential diagnostics such as abdominal scans and early detection of various conditions.

The Dental OPD, meanwhile, is expected to address a long-standing gap in oral healthcare services. Previously, residents had to travel to district hospitals for even basic dental procedures—a challenge especially burdensome for the elderly, children, and pregnant women.

Officials from the District Health Society stated that adequate staffing, regular maintenance, and follow-up awareness campaigns will be key to the long-term effectiveness of these services.

Community health workers are also expected to be trained in promoting the use of these new facilities and ensuring widespread access.

The inauguration of the Dental OPD and Ultrasonography Centre at PHC Tirbin represents a step forward in the state's mission to strengthen primary healthcare, especially in remote and rural belts of Arunachal Pradesh.

It reinforces the government's broader goal of building resilient healthcare systems that are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to local needs.

## MP Tapir Gao inaugurates 'Mipang Migang Mikmo' war memorial

### 'Preserving nature is a shared responsibility'

**HT Bureau**

**NAMSAL, May 11:** In a moving tribute to Arunachal Pradesh's forgotten warriors, Member of Parliament (East) Tapir Gao on Saturday inaugurated the 'Mipang Migang Mikmo' War Memorial at Harkam Viewpoint in Gobuk village, Upper Siang district.

The memorial is dedicated to the brave warriors from Gobuk who fought valiantly against British forces during the Third Anglo-Abor War of 1893–94.

The ceremony, according to an official statement, was attended by several dignitaries including Advisor to the chief minister and HMLA Alo Libang, HMLA Oni Panyang, Deputy Commissioner Talo Jerang, Superintendent of Police Token Sarang, and Adi Baane Kebang (ABK) President Tadam Libang, along with representatives from ABK Youth Wing, government departments, local leaders, Gaon Bura, and a large gathering of villagers.

In his address, MP Tapir Gao hailed the inauguration as a landmark step in preserving regional history and honouring local heroes who have remained unacknowledged in mainstream narratives.

He commended the Adi Baane Kebang (ABK) and the local community for taking the initiative to memorialise these warriors.

"This effort aligns with the national vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to recognise the contributions of India's unsung heroes," Gao remarked.

He urged the Mipang Migang Mikmo Committee to document the stories of the commemorated warriors in both audiovisual and written formats to ensure their legacy is passed on to future generations.

Gao called the initiative a "symbol of pride and identity" and encouraged similar efforts across Arunachal to preserve tribal and community histories.

Highlighting development-related concerns, Gao spoke about the importance of creating a peaceful and progressive environment.

He urged residents to avail government welfare schemes such as PMJAY (Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana) and CMAAY (Chief Minister Arogya Arunachal Yojana) to access quality healthcare.



He also stressed the need for vigilance in the education of children, warning against negligence that could lead youths toward drug abuse or anti-social behaviour.

Speaking on environmental issues, the MP appealed to the community to protect wildlife and forests, cautioning against

hunting and deforestation.

"Preserving nature is a shared responsibility, and our forests are not just ecological assets—they are also repositories of our history and heritage," he said.

Advisor to the chief minister Alo Libang, attending as guest of honour, called the event a "historic moment" for

Gobuk and the Upper Siang region.

He assured continued support in efforts to honour Arunachal's freedom fighters and ensure that their sacrifices receive due national recognition.

In his remarks, HMLA Oni Panyang highlighted the need to remember the freedom fighters of Mirem Batum and the Gobuk warriors commemorated by the memorial.

He called for sustained efforts in preserving their legacy through education and public awareness.

Deputy Commissioner Talo Jerang described the event as a "milestone in Arunachal's cultural and historical revival."

He suggested institutionalising the celebration of the memorial's inauguration annually and noted the site's potential as a cultural and historical tourism destination, advocating for its beautification and proper maintenance.

Earlier, ABK President Tadam Libang provided insights into the organisation's role in initiating and supporting the construction of the war memorial, reaffirming the ABK's commitment to the welfare and historical recognition of the Adi community.

Other speakers at the event included community leaders such as Gaon Bura of Simong, Tanyo Lipir, land donor Koni Miyu, President of Upper Siang District

GB Association Akkong Libang, HGB Gobuk Duggeng Sitek, HGB Simong Padok Libang, and President of Gobuk Welfare Society Dubom Tekseng.

The 'Mipang Migang Mikmo' memorial, as per oral history passed down through generations, honours seven warriors from Gobuk village—Late Matkam Tekseng, Late Jantang Kombo, Late Pikor Siboh, Late Gongkar Miyu, Late Kirpon Kirkom, Late Tongyang Miyu, and Late Kakir Libang—who travelled to Bomjir in Lower Dibang Valley to support Adi brethren resisting British advancement at Bongal Yapgo during the 1893–94 war.

In recognition of their bravery, the people of Bomjir reportedly gifted symbolic items to the Gobuk warriors—"Sisuk Rebung" (horn) to Jantang Kombo, "Ngiding" (spear) to Pikor Siboh, and "Benjak Rebung" (buffalo horn) to Kipom Kirkom.

These heirlooms are still preserved by their descendants today.

The inauguration of the Mipang Migang Mikmo memorial not only honours the sacrifices made over a century ago but also aims to instill a sense of pride and historical consciousness among future generations, bridging Arunachal Pradesh's vibrant tribal history with India's broader narrative of resistance and independence.



## Inaugurating missile facility

# BrahMos a message of our armed forces' strength, says Rajnath

**LUCKNOW, May 11:** BrahMos is not just a weapon but a "message of strength" of India's armed forces, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday at the inauguration of the largest integration and testing facility of the super-sonic cruise missile system.

"India is now one of the most powerful nations in the world. We are constantly increasing our strength, and I believe that the facility centre that is being inaugurated today will help in further strengthening India's power," he said while virtually addressing the event from Delhi.

"BrahMos is one of the world's fastest, supersonic cruise missiles. BrahMos is not just a weapon, but it is a message in itself. A message of the strength of our armed forces. A message of our deterrence towards the enemy. A message of our commitment to safeguarding our borders," Singh said.

The country's largest BrahMos integration and testing facility cen-

tre in Lucknow will strengthen India's efforts towards self-reliance in the defence sector, the Defence Minister said, addressing the inaugural ceremony at the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor in his Lok Sabha constituency.

"A good thing is that in this defence corridor, we are seeing very important participation of both public and private sectors," he said.

On the private sector, he noted that PTC Industries Limited is starting Titanium and super-alloy material plants. "Apart from this, the foundation of seven additional critical projects is also being laid. This will certainly accelerate the pace of India's self-reliance in the defence sector," the defence minister said. Major investments have been made in aircraft manufacturing, UAVs, drones, ammunition, composite and critical materials, small arms, textiles and parachutes, he said.

"When our government moved

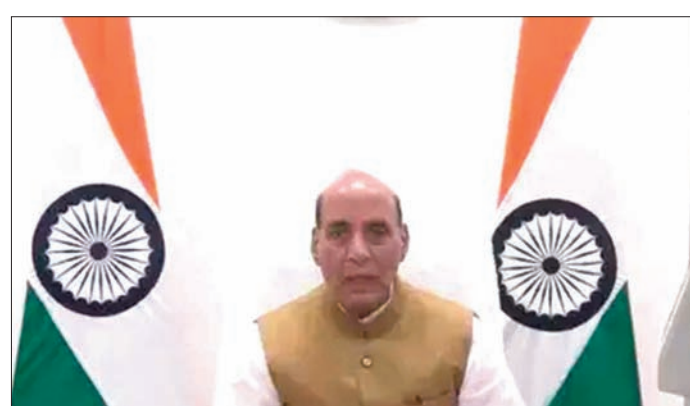
forward with the vision of a defence corridor in Uttar Pradesh... one of our objectives was that we should once again develop Uttar Pradesh as the production centre of the country.

"The UP Defence corridor passes through Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi, Chitrakoot, Agra and Aligarh, and all these nodes will emerge as new centres of development in the coming times," Singh said. He expressed happiness that the project was completed in just 40 months.

"Looking at the circumstances around us today, it becomes very important that we continue to fulfil our goals in such a timely manner," Singh said and congratulated the DRDO, engineers and people and institutes associated with this project.

Singh said the inauguration of the BrahMos facility assumes importance as it took place on National Technology Day.

"On this day in 1998, under the



leadership of respected Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji, our scientists showed India's strength to the world by conducting nuclear tests in Pokhran.

"That test was the result of the tireless efforts of our scientists, engineers, defence personnel and many other stakeholders. This is the day to recognise our scientists and engineers and acknowledge their contribution," he said.

National Technology Day commemorates the momentous events of May 11, 1998, when India successfully conducted nuclear tests under Operation Shakti, and saw the maiden flight of the indigenously developed Hansa-3 aircraft.

In recognition of these achievements, the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee declared May 11 as National Technology Day. "Today is an important day for

me personally. Because I had a dream for my city, Lucknow, that my city would make a big contribution in strengthening India's Defence sector, that dream is now being fulfilled," Rajnath Singh, who is the Lok Sabha MP from Lucknow, said.

"Today is a historic day for our city, Lucknow, our state Uttar Pradesh, and our entire country. Today, I believe, is a day to worship the power that gives strength to our forces, which lies in our forces and wreaks havoc on the enemy," Singh said.

The Rs 300-crore facility is a key part of the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor and represents India's commitment to self-reliant defence manufacturing, the Ministry of Defence said.

"It includes not only missile production but also testing, integration, and a materials complex for aerospace-grade components. A major leap toward #AtmanirbharBharat and a strategic boost to

regional industrial growth," the Ministry of Defence said on X.

The Uttar Pradesh government had said the facility will manufacture one of the world's fastest supersonic cruise missiles, with a range of 290 to 400 km and a top speed of Mach 2.8.

The missile, a product of BrahMos Aerospace, a joint venture between India and Russia, can be launched from land, sea, or air and uses a "fire and forget" system.

Completed in three-and-a-half years, the BrahMos production unit in Lucknow is spread over 80 hectares of land provided free of cost by the Uttar Pradesh government, the state government had said in the statement.

The UP Defence Industrial Corridor, announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018, has six nodes --- Lucknow, Kanpur, Aligarh, Agra, Jhansi, and Chitrakoot --- where major investments are being made to boost defence manufacturing. (PTI)

## Ask Pakistanis about strength of BrahMos missile: Adityanath

**LUCKNOW, May 11:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said a glimpse of the valour of the BrahMos missile was seen during Operation Sindoor and if that was not enough, one should ask Pakistanis about it. He also said the time has come to deal a crushing blow to terrorism and to achieve it, the entire country has to unite under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the BrahMos Aerospace Integration and Testing Facility here, Adityanath said, "What is the BrahMos missile? You have seen a glimpse of the valour of the BrahMos missile during Operation Sindoor. And if the glimpse was not visible, then ask Pakistanis about the strength of the missile."

Adityanath said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has declared that any incident of terror will be considered as a war. "Until we completely crush terrorism, there will be no solution to this problem. The time has come to crush it and for this, entire India, in one voice, has to unite under Modi's leadership," he added. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader said terrorism is a "dog's tail" that can never be straightened. "Terrorism will not follow the language of love. We have to give a reply to it in its own language. And in this direction, India has given a message to the world through Operation Sindoor," he said. Adityanath congratulated Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and the armed forces' personnel for the success of Operation Sindoor. "It is necessary for any self-reliant country to achieve its goals on its own, instead of depending on other countries for its defence supplies. Israel is an example of this. It has achieved the goal of self-reliance in the field of security. It has forced its neighbouring enemy countries to face tough times," he said. The chief minister said the Defence Manufacturing Corridor and the BrahMos missile are part of the target set for the country by Modi in 2014. He said in 2018, the prime minister had announced two defence corridors in the Union Budget.

"After the government was formed again at the Centre in 2019, Rajnath Singh, as the defence minister, organised the Defence Expo in Lucknow for the first time in 2020. He had also announced then that a production unit of BrahMos missiles will be set up in Lucknow," Adityanath said. He said the target for Uttar Pradesh was to invest Rs 50,000 crore in six defence-manufacturing corridors and provide employment to one lakh youngsters.

"So far, along with the Defence Expo, we have signed 57 MoUs with companies from different parts of the country and the world, through which investments worth about ₹ 30,000 crore are going to be made in the defence sector. We are moving ahead with the target of providing employment to about 60,000 youngsters," he said.

Drawing a comparison with the previous Samajwadi Party (SP) government in Uttar Pradesh, Adityanath said while there were no jobs before 2017 and people were migrating, the state is witnessing investments now.

"Earlier, companies had problems coming here because there was no policy and no security. Today, people are safe, their investments are safe and we are moving ahead with strength to meet the country's security needs. We have the required infrastructure now," he said. The chief minister asserted that his government will facilitate any defence production-related programme. On the occasion, a book, titled "Brahmand", on defence production was released. Adityanath also handed over appointment letters to those selected by BrahMos Aerospace. A replica of the BrahMos missile was presented to the chief minister, according to an official statement.

Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak, Industrial Development Minister Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi, Rajya Sabha MP Brajraj, Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh and senior officials of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and BrahMos Aerospace were present on the occasion, the statement said. (PTI)

## Blackout reimposed in several Punjab districts as precautionary measure

**CHANDIGARH, May 11:** Punjab reimposed blackout measures in several districts as a precautionary measure after withdrawing it earlier on Saturday.

Blackout measures have been imposed in many districts including Hoshiarpur, Ferozepur, Fazilka, Pathankot, Patiala, Moga, Kapurthala, and Muktsar districts.

The development came after Pakistan violated the bilateral understanding reached this afternoon to immediately stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea. The district authorities in Punjab earlier withdrew blackout measures and restrictive orders after India and Pakistan agreed to an immediate ceasefire following four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes that brought the two countries teetering on the edge of full scale war. Amritsar Deputy Commissioner Sakshi Sahwney said, "Since there are reports of ceasefire violation, we will remain on alert today."

"We will observe a blackout if and when needed. I advise all kindly be prepared for enforcement of blackout if the need arises and be at home. Please do not indulge in bursting of firecrackers. We have done this drill several times, so please do not panic. This is by way of abundant caution."

The Hoshiarpur district administration said that blackout was imposed at 8:50 pm and an air raid siren was sounded.

"Lights off as a measure of abundant precaution. Please cooperate," said a message shared by the district authorities. In Ferozepur, the district authorities clamped the blackout at 8:40 pm, urging citizens to switch off lights. "Do not need to panic," said a message shared by the administration. The blackout continued till 10:30 pm. An official in Fazilka said the blackout was enforced at 9:30 pm, while it has been clamped in Rupnagar from 9:30 pm to 5:30 am.

The Ludhiana district administration said, "In view of the change in circumstances, all members of the public are requested to stay indoors and must go for voluntary blackout wherever is possible." There is no major cause of concern but voluntary blackout must be ensured as a matter of abundant precaution, said the Ludhiana deputy commissioner.



The Sangrur district administration also announced a blackout from 9:10 pm to 11 pm.

In a late night media briefing on Saturday, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri called upon Pakistan to take appropriate steps to address these violations and deal with the situation with "seriousness and responsibility".

The armed forces have been given instructions to deal strongly with any instances of repetition of the violations of the border along the International Border as well as the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, he said.

"For the last few hours, there have been repeated violations of the understanding arrived at earlier this evening between the Directors General of Military Operations of India and Pakistan," he said. "This is a breach of the understanding arrived at earlier today," Misri said.

The directors general of military operations (DGMO) of India and Pakistan agreed to stop all firings and military action on land, air and sea with effect from 5 pm on Saturday, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri announced in Delhi.

## Technology, weapons used in conflict with Pak rooted in self-reliance: Jitendra Singh

**NEW DELHI, May 11:** India's scientific prowess and advances in technology as well its progress in these fields in the last 11 years were demonstrated to the world in the recent armed conflict with Pakistan, Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh said here on Sunday.

Addressing a function to celebrate the National Technology Day, Singh said many of the technologies and weapons used in the conflict over the past four days - from drones to missiles - were rooted in the concept of self-reliance (atma nirbharta) espoused by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

India celebrates National Technology Day on May 11 every year to mark the anniversary of the nuclear tests at Pokhran in 1998. "Over the last few days, there has been an abundant opportunity for India to demonstrate its scientific prowess to the rest of the world.

Any armed conflict these days is driven by technology. "Therefore, it was a vindication of India having acquired supremacy in every sphere of scientific technology, including defence," Singh said at the event organised by the National Technology Board of the Ministry of Science and Technology.

"Whatever you saw happening on the television screens was more or less indigenous - a creation of Atmanirbhar Bharat and also an indication of what Viksit Bharat (developed India) is going to be," Singh said. "For the first time, the world has realised that the India of today is not the India of the past," he said, referring to remarks made by a Pakistani minister.

Singh recalled that the TDB was the first to fund a drone project that was demonstrated during a Beating Retreat ceremony a few years back to mark the conclusion of the Republic Day celebrations. (PTI)

## Jawaharlal Nehru had convened special session during Indo-China war: Digvijaya

**GUNA (MP), May 11:** Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on Sunday reminded the Union government of the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru convening a special session of Parliament during the war with China following a request by Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Singh wondered whether India had accepted a third-party mediation as he questioned the "silence" of PM Narendra Modi over the understanding reached between India and Pakistan after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes.

Singh demanded that Modi attend all-party meetings and the government convene a special session of Parliament, given the latest developments- the Pahalgam terror attack, Operation Sindoor, and an understanding reached between India and Pakistan amid the cross-border military confrontation.

Referring to the "ceasefire" announced by US President Donald Trump on Saturday in the midst of growing military confrontation between India and Pakistan, Singh said it is a stated position of India that it will never accept a third-party intervention (on cross-border issues).

He questioned the reliability of Trump's statements. (PTI)

## New book explores collapse of empires and global struggle for new order

**NEW DELHI, May 11:** Hot on the heels of the 80th anniversary of World War II's end, best-selling author Phil Craig's new book offers a powerful and original retelling of how the war's closing chapters reshaped the future of Britain, its colonies, and dominions.

Published by Hachette India, "1945: The Reckoning - War, Empire and the Struggle for a New World" delves into the collapse of the British, Dutch, and French empires as global power dynamics shifted.

It focuses on India, where a generation on the cusp of independence faces a tough choice between loyalty to the British Raj and supporting Subhas Chandra Bose's Japanese-backed Indian National Army (INA). Through the story of a family torn apart by these opposing paths, the book highlights the deep questions of loyalty, identity, and the future of a free India.

"The book explores the lives of real people and two of the most important in this book are Subhash Chandra Bose and Kodandera Subayya Thimayya. Through tracking them closely, all of the book's many themes fall naturally



into place - the war, the fate of the British Empire and the way decolonisation happens (or in some places, does not).

"Both men believe passionately in independence, but they choose very different routes toward it. Their lives intersect in numerous fascinating ways, in fact Thimayya's brother joins Bose in the INA," Craig, who is also the co-author of "Finest Hour", told PTI.

Thimayya, the first Indian officer to command a brigade in the Indian Army, fought against the INA as well as the Japanese. He

eventually served as the third chief of Army staff from 1957 to 1961, playing a pivotal role in shaping India's military landscape during the post-independence era.

May 8 is observed as the end of World War II as it marks the surrender of Nazi Germany to the Allied forces, officially ending the war in Europe. This event, celebrated as Victory in Europe Day (VE Day), marked the culmination of years of fighting.

The book, in its description, also sheds a spotlight on a little-known Australian special forces mission

in Borneo, secretly directed from London. However, the campaign goes horribly wrong as questions are asked about whether its true purpose is military or imperial.

"And in Indochina and the East Indies British Generals free and arm Japanese prisoners of war and use them in savage campaigns that aim to put colonial rulers back into their palaces," it added.

According to the publishers, "1945: The Reckoning - War, Empire and the Struggle for a New World" confronts "uncomfortable truths" with honesty and depth, offering a nuanced and human portrait of a world in transition -- and challenging readers to reconsider what "victory" in World War II really meant.

The book's foreword is written by renowned author, historian and broadcaster James Holland.

"This is a book that crosses the globe from Britain to Germany and from India to Indonesia...it is ambitious, deeply thought-provoking and, as with all the very best history, compellingly told," Holland writes in his praise for the book.

The book, priced at ₹ 899, is available for purchase across on-line and offline stores. (PTI)

## Raut questions timing of India-Pak understanding, seeks all-party meet to discuss issue

**MUMBAI, May 11:** Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday lambasted the government for agreeing to reach an understanding with Pakistan at a juncture when there was an opportunity to teach the neighbouring country a lesson, and demanded an all-party meeting over the issue.

Talking to reporters, he also accused the government of demoralising the armed forces by accepting the understanding between the two countries to stop all military actions. He said it was done on the directions of US President Donald Trump. "What does Donald Trump have to do with it?" he asked.

Raut alleged that the understanding between the two countries was reached when a Pakistani missile headed to Delhi was struck down in Haryana, and added that Gujarat could also be targeted. The betrayal took place to save some industrialists in Gujarat, he claimed.

"Under what authority was Trump mediating since Operation Sindoor is yet to get over. India is a sovereign country with a population of 140 crore. Trump directs and we agree to a ceasefire under what terms and conditions? What has India got?" Raut said.

He said India's image was maligned due to this. "There should be an all-party meeting to deliberate under what terms and conditions was the ceasefire agreed upon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi must remain present," he said.

Raut asked the necessity behind agreeing to the ceasefire as there was an opportunity to teach Pakistan a permanent lesson and when the spirits of the armed forces were high.

"But the political leadership in the country suddenly fumbled and demoralised the armed forces. There was no need to withdraw at this stage. When we reached a decisive point, this kind of a decision was taken to



benefit someone," Raut alleged.

The Rajya Sabha member said China and Turkey backed Pakistan. The government should declare which countries back India. Not a single nation backed India. Whose failure is it, Raut asked.

"Where are the terrorists (involved in the Pahalgam attack)? Till the terrorists are killed, Operation Sindoor is incomplete. BJP should seek PM Modi's resignation. He has betrayed the country," Raut added.

India and Pakistan on Saturday reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, with immediate effect after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes that brought the two countries teetering on the edge of full-scale war.

Barely hours after this development first announced by US President Donald Trump who claimed that the two countries have agreed to a "full and immediate" ceasefire after US mediation, Jammu and Kashmir was shaken by a series of drone sightings in the night followed by explosions, prompting security personnel to engage air defence systems to bring them down. (PTI)



Highway connecting Kohima to Jessami, is a vital route for the people of Kikrura, Phek, Meluri and Kiphire districts

## Students protest delayed road project in Nagaland's Phek

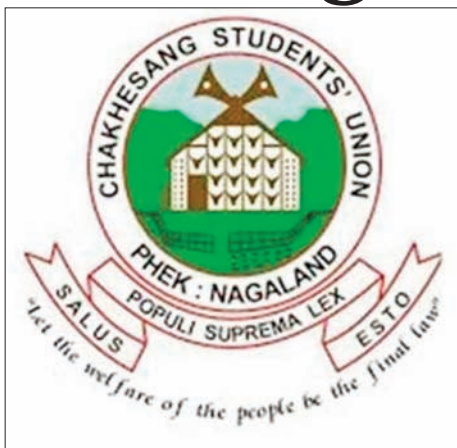
**PHEK (NAGALAND), May 11:** An organisation of students on Saturday organised a rally to protest the "delay" in developing a key road at Kikrura area in Phek district of Nagaland.

The protestors, supporters of the Chakhesang Students' Union (CSU), raised slogans against the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) the contractor engaged for the 29 km road project - Kohima-Jessami National Highway (Package 2).

The highway, which connects Kohima to Jessami, is a vital route for the people of Kikrura, Phek, Meluri, and Kiphire districts.

Locals have long suffered due to landslides, blockages, and poor road conditions that continue to hinder mobility and endanger lives.

CSU president Phulo Sara said that people were frustrated over the "lack of progress" of



the project though work for it began on January 5, 2024.

Despite repeated representations and a

seven-day ultimatum issued on May 2, no tangible improvement has been made, he said.

"With the monsoon season approaching, the worsening road condition poses a serious threat to commuters and reflects gross administrative apathy," Sara said, emphasising the urgent need for pothole repairs, drainage systems, and landslide mitigation.

The CSU had earlier locked the NHIDCL office in Pfcutero in October 2024 as part of its first phase of protest.

Sara also criticised the slow pace of work, citing a report of April 20 last year that pegged physical progress at just 10.69 per cent.

He raised doubts about the contractor's ability to complete the project by the January 2026 deadline.

Demanding immediate deployment of adequate machinery and manpower, the CSU warned of "stringent protests" if swift and concrete actions are not taken. (PTI)

## Meghalaya to launch statewide survey on drug abuse



**SHILLONG, May 11:** Meghalaya Minister in-charge Social Welfare Paul Lyngdoh recently announced that the state government will soon launch a statewide survey on drug abuse to identify areas based on their vulnerability factor.

Addressing media persons, Lyngdoh said the survey, which will be a major initiative, will be conducted in collaboration with the United Nations Organization on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC).

"This will help us update information and also identify areas based on their vulnerability factor," he added.

To tackle the problem of drug trafficking in the state, the minister also informed that the government is in the process of procuring two vehicles, which will be tasked with narcotics scanning, one of which is already on its way. "We expect with the constant intervention of the DGP, this should materialise soon," he said.

He added, "In regards to the Sniffer dogs, I am happy to share with you that they are currently being trained. It will take another six months before completing the training of the sniffer dogs."

On the joint VDP training and

coordination initiative, Lyngdoh said that few dorbar shnongs have already come forward and applied for being recognized as VDPs.

"In Shillong until DREAM came into being, there were only 11 VDPs and now we expect this number to go up at least double the current number as we have been having regular interaction and consultative meetings with the dorbar shnongs."

He further informed, "In the Cantonment area, which has always been seen as something which is off the radar beyond the reach of the state government, I am happy to share with you that the CEO of the Cantonment Board is now partnering with the dorbar shnong of areas within the cantonment board. In Jhalupara for instance, a major point where there is also a large concentration of migrant population, CCTVs will be installed."

Stating that the government is also engaging with faith leaders, Lyngdoh said that the Catholic Diocese has agreed to set up new rehab centres - "one of them which we have initiated and which will take place shortly is the RTCC in Ri Bhoi district". (NNN)

## NSF urges N'land govt to ensure safe return of students

**KOHHIMA, May 11:** The Naga Students' Federation (NSF) has urged the Nagaland government to take urgent steps to evacuate the students from the state studying in Northern India amid the military conflict between India and Pakistan.

In an official letter addressed to Nagaland chief secretary on Saturday, the NSF stated that several students from Nagaland studying in Northern India were facing problems due to closure of airports.

"The lives of Naga students and working professionals have been thrown into disarray," stated NSF president Medovi Rhi and education secretary Temjentoshi in the letter.

The federation emphasised that many affected people are seeking assistance to return home safely. (PTI)

## Notorious peddler held with drugs worth over a lakh rupees in Tripura

**HT Correspondent**

**AGARTALA, May 11:** In a significant breakthrough in its ongoing crackdown on narcotics, the Tripura Police on Friday arrested a notorious drug peddler and seized contraband worth over a lakh of rupees from the Motinagar area under West District.

Acting on a tip-off, a team from Amtali Police Station, led by Officer-in-Charge Himadri Sarkar and second officer Mrinal Kanti Pal, raided the residence of one Shukku Mia in the Motinagar locality.

"During the search, the team recovered 50 vials of brown sugar, 130 Yaba tablets, and an additional 33 grams of brown sugar stored in a container," said OC Himadri Sarkar. The accused was immediately taken into custody and brought to the police station for further questioning.

A case under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act has been registered against Shukku Mia, who is set to be produced before the



court on Saturday.

"We will intensify raids in the coming days. Shops and houses being used as drug distribution fronts will not be spared. Our aim is to eliminate the drug menace from this area," the OC added.

## Union Minister acts on NEHU issue



**SHILLONG, May 11:** Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has directed the concerned department of the ministry to take appropriate action on the demand for appointment of a new vice chancellor (VC) of the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU). Informing this recently, Meghalaya cabinet minister and BJP leader, AL Hek said the Union Education minister had responded to his letter today.

"He (union minister) has informed us that the matter has been sent to the concerned department for appropriate action," Hek added.

Hek also informed that he had written a letter to the Union Education minister for his intervention into the demand of the North Eastern Hill University Students Union (NEHUSU) and Khasi Students' Union (KSU) NEHU unit for immediate removal of the incumbent VC Prof PS Shukla and appointment of a new VC.

Disagreeing that the centre is not taking the NEHU issue seriously, the minister said, "If they had taken the issue very lightly, they would not have replied to my letter." (NNN)

## Meghalaya to adopt Miyawaki Forest method

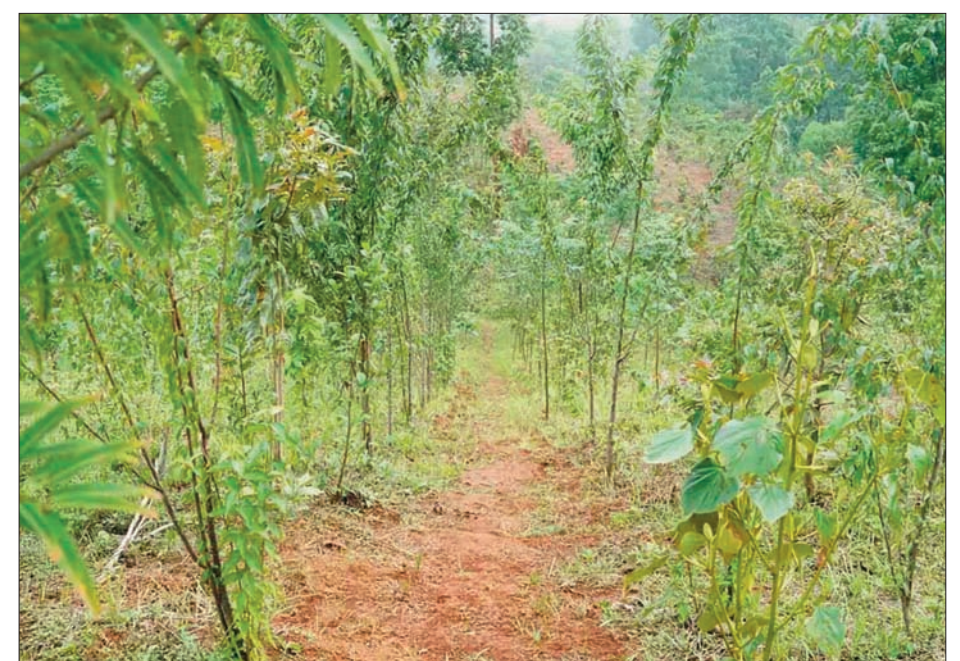
**SHILLONG, May 11:** Meghalaya is taking a big step forward in protecting the environment by using the Miyawaki Forest method - a fast and effective way of growing dense, native forests. This method was developed in Japan by botanist Akira Miyawaki and is now being used across the state as part of a major afforestation project led by the Soil and Water Conservation Department, Government of Meghalaya.

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma has played a key role in pushing for environmental conservation. He has raised serious concerns about deforestation across the state and has been working to restore green cover through various programs.

To support this effort, the state has initiated different interventions including Green Meghalaya and has partnered with different organizations to promote conservation and afforestation programmes. The state government is also providing financial incentives through the Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) for conservation of forest cover.

On Thursday, the Chief Minister visited a Miyawaki Forest site at Mawsharoh, Ummir in East Khasi Hills, where the method is being used to grow a forest on a 1.5-hectare area. Currently, similar projects are being implemented on a total of 25,000 hectares throughout Meghalaya.

Officials from the Soil and Water Conservation Department shared how the Miyawaki method is helping to restore the ecosystem. The method involves planting native trees close together in layers, which leads to rapid



growth of dense, self-sustaining forests. These forests grow faster than traditional plantations and require less maintenance over time.

The project is being carried out with strong support from local communities, who are actively involved in the planting and care of these forests. The first Miyawaki forest plantation in Meghalaya began three years ago in Garo Hills as a pilot project.

"The project will be expanded across the

state as one of our main afforestation drives," said Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma.

The Miyawaki method not only helps restore greenery but also brings many other benefits. These mini-forests help absorb carbon dioxide, fight climate change, improve air quality, reduce noise pollution, and provide shelter for wildlife. Meghalaya's rich soil and unique climate make it ideal for growing these forests. (NNN)

## TYCM urges revision of budgetary allocation



**IMPHAL, May 11:** The Tribal Youth Council Manipur (TYCM) has urged the Executive Committee of the 5th State Level Shirlily Festival 2025 and the concerned authorities to revise the approved budget allocation and incorporate provisions for the promotion of local entrepreneurs, farmers, indigenous products, and disability-inclusive events.

"This is to ensure the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and to facilitate the immediate construction of essential additional infrastructure at Shirlily peak", it also stated.

The 1st Executive Committee meeting of the 5th State Level Shirlily Festival 2025, held last month under the chairmanship of Prashant Kumar Singh, Chief Secretary, Government of Manipur, approved a budget allocation of ₹ 6.30 crore for various Shirlily Festival-related activities.

While the State Government organizes the Shirlily Festival annually with substantial investment, the TYCM said it "believes that this festival is not merely for entertainment purposes—it should also serve as a catalyst for socio-economic development and promoting local entrepreneurship and ecotourism, especially for the residents of the hill areas". The TYCM also said it is a valuable platform for promoting local entrepreneurs, youth initiatives, and indigenous farmers.

Upon thoroughly reviewing the approved budget, the TYCM said it observed with concern that no provisions have been made to promote local entrepreneurship or to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Additionally, the current state of infrastructure from Shirlily village to Shirlily peak is inadequate and requires urgent attention, the TYCM also said. The trail from the village to the peak is approximately 1.5 km. At present, there is only one rest house, a water tank, and two public toilets at the peak. However, there are no public toilets or rest houses along the route, and the existing stair guard/pathway is in a dilapidated condition, the TYCM added.

Furthermore, according to the TYCM, the current infrastructural facilities along the route from

Shirlily village to Shirlily peak are grossly inadequate to accommodate the increasing number of visitors and participants.

Upon a thorough examination of the approved budget allocation for the 5th State Level Shirlily Festival 2025, the Tribal Youth Council Manipur (TYCM) has identified certain event items that appear to be over budgeted or unjustified, and therefore require revision and reduction.

The TYCM then said that the Shirlily Lily Festival is a government-organized and government-financed event, and not managed or funded by any private firm or NGO. The State Government has a fully functional Transport Department with its own fleet of buses. Therefore, the allocation of ₹ 5.25 lakhs for public transportation between Imphal and Ukhrul is unnecessary, the YCM also said. Such logistical arrangements should be the responsibility of the Transport Department without requiring additional expenditure.

Furthermore, the Government of Manipur has its own Police Department and Traffic Police personnel, who are regular salaried public servants. Their mandated duties include maintaining law and order and managing traffic during public events. Hence, the allocation of an additional ₹ 16 lakhs for security and traffic management is also deemed unnecessary, the TYCM stated.

The State Government has approved budget allocations for certain items that are unnecessary, instead of prioritizing genuine and essential components for the Shirlily Festival 2025, it added.

Langdang village, being a crucial gateway to Shirlily peak and other tourist spots, plays a vital role in the festival's success. The TYCM urged the State Government and the festival organizers to revisit the planning process and include Langdang village in the budgetary allocations. This would not only benefit the local community but also enhance the overall festival experience.

Specifically, the TYCM recommended considering Phangrei (zero point) for festival-related development and providing support for roadside shops, temporary amenities, and other facilities within Langdang village's jurisdiction.

The TYCM then appealed to the authorities to mend differences and work towards a more inclusive celebration that reflects the spirit of unity and cooperation. By doing so, we can ensure the 5th State Level Shirlily Festival is a grand success, benefiting all stakeholders involved. (NNN)

## Proposed route aims to bridge a vital infrastructure gap, linking remote towns like Dentam Sikkim to get new railway line, Centre approves final location survey

**GUWAHATI, May 11:** The final location survey for a new line in Sikkim, from Melli to Dentam via Jorethang and Legship, has been approved by the Railway Ministry, an official statement said.

The survey, to be executed by Northeast Frontier Railway, has been approved at a cost of Rs 2.25 crore, it said.

This move marks a major step forward in expanding rail connectivity to the southern and western regions of Sikkim, it added.

The proposed route aims to bridge a vital infrastructure gap, linking remote towns like Dentam, located near the India-Nepal border at Chivabhanjyang, with the national railway network.

The new line, estimated to have an approximate length of 75 km during the initial feasibility survey, is envisioned as a strategic extension of the under-construction Sivok-Rangpo railway line, which is expected to be operational by 2027.

Melli, a key entry point to southern and western Sikkim, is likely to serve as a junction for the proposed



extension, thereby ensuring seamless integration of the region into the national transportation system.

The final location survey will provide detailed technical and feasibility insights necessary to guide the final alignment, engineering design and cost estimation for the project.

This new connectivity project is expected to act as a catalyst for

economic growth in the region, especially in Gyalshing and surrounding areas, by enhancing access, promoting tourism, boosting trade and creating employment opportunities, the statement issued on Saturday said.

The work tenders related to the execution of the survey are expected to be floated shortly, it said. (PTI)

## OTPC, Assam Power Development Corp jointly developing 250 MW battery energy system

**AGARTALA, May 11:** ONGC Tripura Power Company Ltd (OTPCL), a subsidiary of ONGC, and Assam Power Development Corporation Ltd are jointly developing a 250 MW battery energy system, an official said here on Sunday.

Under the project, power generated from solar power will be stored in the battery energy system and will be available for distribution through power substations during peak hours.

"We have floated a joint venture with the Assam Power Development Corporation to set up a 250-MW battery energy system in Assam. The technology is new to store solar power through a battery energy system for using it during the peak hours or at night when solar energy generation goes off," the official said.

According to him, since the concept is new to energy players, the setting up of a 250 MW battery energy system will be implemented in a phased manner.

"The battery energy system is just like a warehouse where the power generated from solar sources will be stored in the facility, and later it will be supplied during peak hours or at night," he explained.

He said the proposed facility is the first such initiative in the northeastern region to ensure proper storage and optimum utilisation of solar power, and will be a game changer for solar energy in the region. (PTI)





# AMITABH BACHCHAN RETURNS TO X TO PRAISE 'OPERATION SINDOOR', SAYS PAHALGAM ATTACK WON'T BE FORGOTTEN



**NEW DELHI, May 11:** Megastar Amitabh Bachchan on early Sunday morning made his social media come-back with a lengthy post on 'Operation Sindoor' by the Indian armed forces in retaliation of the Pahalgam terror attack, after sharing a series of blank posts on his X page and personal blog for weeks.

The veteran actor had not made any post on X since April 22, hours before terrorists attacked Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir killing 26 people.

Bachchan, 82, expressed sadness over the massacre of innocent civilians in Pahalgam.

In his post, he also lauded the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government for launching 'Operation Sindoor' which targeted nine terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, including Bahawalpur which is a

major base of Jaish-e-Mohammad terror outfit.

"The Pahalgam attack where they killed 26 innocent tourists .. all with their families enjoying a holiday , mercilessly, at one spot - even on a couple just married three days ago, who had come for their Honeymoon .. will never be forgotten .. SO , the Government , who have been telling the neighbouring authorities to stop terrorist camps and activities in our Country , has never been heeded ..

"Hence Modi and the Government decided to respond to the terrorist base camps in the neighbours and launched a military procedure .. the results of which are well known .. 9 of their terrorist camps and outfits were destroyed .. militarily .. (sic)" the actor wrote on X. Bachchan concluded his post with the lines from his father, Hindi poet

Harivansh Rai Bachchan's popular poem "Agnepath", exhorting the armed forces.

The actor said

he chose to select words from the poem "as an inspiration and a demand to the Army and all Indians .. to continue the fight !! Against the injustice done to us and in particular the innocent .. !!!

"Tu na thamega kabhi, tu na mudega kabhi, tu na jhukega kabhi, kar shapath, kar shapath, kar shapath, agneepath, agneepath, agneepath," he wrote.

Hours after India and Pakistan on Saturday reached an understanding on stopping military actions, the arrangement came under severe pressure with New Delhi blaming Islamabad for breaching it.

In a media briefing close to midnight, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri called upon Pakistan to take "appropriate steps" to address these violations and deal with the situation with "seriousness and responsibility". This came around five hours after the foreign secretary announced that India and Pakistan had reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea with immediate effect. (PTI)

## Not for or against entourage, some discretion from actors would be great: Ishaan Khatter



**MUMBAI, May 11:** Ishaan Khatter has a balanced perspective on the discourse around the entourage accompanying actors, saying that he is neither in favour or against the idea of working with a support staff -- it should be up to the artists.

Khatter's latest web series "The Royals" delivers a tongue-in-cheek take on the rising costs of actor entourages, which often add extra burden on film budgets.

"No one person should have enough people to burden an entire setup. There's a good bit of tongue-in-cheek fun to have there. My personal experience has been very different on different sets. 'I've worked on 'A Perfect Couple', where I was literally my own everything, and I had no person with me. In setups like these, you've a lot of ... we're used to a lot of help. It can often be funny," Khatter told PTI.

"The Royals" stars Khatter as Aviraaj Singh, a reluctant new-age prince, and Pednekar as Sophia Shekhar, a self-made CEO of a start-up, who team up to transform the former's haveli into a luxury B&B experience.

In the show's second episode, Khatter's character is seen talking about the many expensive hobbies of his royal family. He tells his younger brother, played by Vihaan Samat -- "What about your entourage? It's like you're leading an election rally."

To this, Samat's character replies, "My staff handles the work here which none of you can do." As an actor, Khatter said he prefers not to have a manager on the set with him. "I prefer to just do the work mixed with the team. So, I'm not for or against, but definitely some discretion from the actor would be great," he said.

Samat, known for starring Vikramaditya Motwane's "CTRL" and Netflix's "Mismatch", said though the show is inspired by several well-known titles, including "The Crown" and "Bridgerton", its uniqueness lies in its rootedness in Indian culture. "There's a mix of various shows that are already there, the time, the space, the characters, the context, the modernity, the Indian setting, but also mainly the comedic element and the way you treat these matters," the actor said. (PTI)



## National award-winning makeup artist Vikram Gaikwad dies at 61

**MUMBAI, May 11:** National award-winning makeup artist Vikram Gaikwad, known for his work in movies such as "83", "Uri: The Surgical Strike" and "Ponniyin Selvan", died on Saturday here at a hospital, his younger brother said. He was 61. "He was hospitalised at Hiranandani Hospital in Powai three days ago due to BP issues. He passed away today at around 8:30 am. His BP was going low, and we were not able to revive him.

"He was quite well when he was admitted. We were not expecting that he would pass away so soon," Dr Prasanna Paranjpe, Gaikwad's younger brother, told PTI.

Gaikwad's work spans across Hindi, Marathi, and South Indian films such as "83", "Shakuntala Devi", "Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior", "Sanju", "Dangal", "PK", "3 Idiots", "Omkaara", "Balgandharva", "Katyar Kaljat Ghusali", "Ponniyin Selvan", and "O Kadhal Kanmani".

He won the National Award for best makeup artist in 2012 for Vidya Balan-starrer "Dirty Picture", followed by another win for Bengali movie "Jaatishwar" in 2014.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde condoled his death in a post on X, saying he brought life into characters with his artistry.

"National Award-winning, renowned makeup artist Vikram Gaikwad passed away today, leaving us in sorrow. With his departure, we have lost a magician who breathed life into characters on screen through his artistry in makeup. (PTI)

## 'Operation Sindoor' film announcement sparks backlash, director issues apology

**NEW DELHI, May 11** The announcement of a film based on Operation Sindoor, India's recent military strikes in Pakistan, has sparked a major controversy and backlash, prompting the director to issue an apology.

The film, titled "Operation Sindoor", was announced on Friday night by director Uttam Maheshwari on social media. The project will be produced by Nicky Vicky Bhagnani Films and The Content Engineer.

The makers also shared a poster which featured a woman soldier wearing combat gear and holding a weapon. She is seen applying sindoor, the red vermilion worn by married Hindu women, to her hair parting.

The scene is set in a battlefield with explosions, barbed wire, military tanks, and fighter

jets.

India carried out the targeted strikes on terror sites in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir early Wednesday under 'Operation Sindoor', two weeks after the massacre of 26 people, mostly tourists, in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam.

The announcement of the movie faced backlash, with many social media users criticising its timing.

"Sharam karo yaar, war is on. (Have some shame)," said one user.

Another person wrote, "'Sindoor' or 'Operation Sindoor' should not be commercialised by corporations or the film industry (to make a movie in that title!) for profit. Legally, it may be allowed but morally, it's wrong. Some things deserve respect, not a chance to cash in."

"Stop embarrassing

yourself and your country," read one post.

"This is so inappropriate and uncalled for," one user posted.

One user criticised the film's team, saying that it should be boycotted.

"They can stoop to such levels of disgrace and disrespect for the nation and our armed forces soldiers' who are at the frontline sacrificing their sweat and blood. At this hour of crisis it Wasn't required at all!!!!" the post added.

Following the criticism, Maheshwari, whose past work as a filmmaker is not known, issued an apology on his Instagram Stories.

"My sincere apologies for recently announcing a film based on Operation Sindoor, inspired by the recent heroic efforts of our Indian Armed Forces. The intent was never to hurt or provoke anyone's sentiments. (PTI)

## Preity Zinta thanks spectators for not panicking after PBKS-DC match was called off in Dharamshala

**NEW DELHI, May 11** Days after the clash between Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals was cancelled in Dharamshala amid blackout in the hill town due to India's ongoing military conflict with Pakistan, actor and co-owner of the Punjab IPL team Preity Zinta on Sunday expressed gratitude to spectators at the stadium for not panicking.

At the Thursday's game, the Punjab side was 122 for 1 in 10.1 overs when lights went out which at first was attributed to floodlight failure. The teams and the assembled fans were eventually evacuated from the stadium for their security.

Videos of Zinta asking spectators to vacate the stadium in an orderly manner also started doing rounds of the social media.

The actor, who said she was finally back home after "a crazy last few days", on Sunday thanked fans for being "absolute rock stars".

"To all the people that were in the Dharamshala stadium - Thankyou Thankyou for not panicking & for any stampedes... I'm sorry I was a bit curt & said no to pictures with everyone but the need of the hour was the safety of everyone and it was my duty & responsibility to make sure everyone stayed safe. Thank you for making it possible," she wrote in a post on X.

The Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium, which can house ap-

proximately 23,000 spectators, was packed to about 80 per cent of its capacity at the time of evacuation on Thursday night.

The Indian Premier League (IPL) was on Friday suspended indefinitely due to the escalating military confrontation between India and Pakistan with a BCCI official saying that continuing the event in the current situation would not look appropriate.

The players and support staff of both PBKS and DC teams were evacuated from Dharamshala and escorted to the Jalandhar railway station in batches through Hoshiarpur amid tight security. The squads arrived in New Delhi aboard a special 'Vande Bharat Express' on Friday night.

Dharamshala's lone airport and the ones in neighbouring Kangra and Chandigarh were closed for operation as part of the precautionary measures to thwart Pakistani attacks.

In her post, Zinta also thanked Union Railways Minister Ashwini

Vaishnav, ICC chairman Jay Shah, IPL chairman Arun Dhimal, and Punjab Kings CEO Satish Menon for their constant support.

"A heartfelt thank you to Indian Railways & our Railway minister Mr. Ashwini Vaishnav for helping both IPL teams and all officials & families leave Dharamshala in a safe, swift & comfortable way. A big thank you to @JayShah, Mr Arun Dhimal, BCCI & our CEO Mr Satish Menon & the Operations team of @PunjabKingsIPL for helping co-ordinate the evacuation of our stadium in Dharamshala safely & in an orderly manner. Everything was handled so well (sic)" she added.

BCCI Vice President Rajeev Shukla on Saturday said the Board officials and IPL Governing Council will discuss on Sunday the best possible schedule to resume the suspended T20 League following the announcement of an immediate ceasefire between India and Pakistan. (PTI)





## Bhatia slips to tied-16<sup>th</sup>; Straka, Lowry take lead in Truist

**FLOURTOWN (USA) May 11** Akshay Bhatia slipped from top-five to tied 16th after the third and penultimate round of the Truist Championship here.

In blustery conditions, Bhatia shot 71 after the first two rounds of 63-70 for a total card of 6-under.

Austrian Sepp Straka shot a 4-under 66 and Irishman Shane Lowry had a 67 to share the lead heading into the final round.

Straka started the round two strokes behind and on the third round he offset his only bogey with five birdies.

Two of those came in the final four holes and he had a clutch par putt from 16 and a half feet at the 18th on the Philadelphia Cricket Club's Wissahickon Course to finish at 14 under.

Aaron Rai (71) was Tied-38th and Sahith Theegala struggled continued as she shot 8-over 78 and was 70th.

Bhatia had two birdies in the first three holes and then had a bogey-birdie on fourth and fifth.

Then came a hat-trick of bogeys from seventh to the ninth as he turned in one-over 36.

On the back nine, he the 12th, 14th and the 15th and bogeyed the 13th, 17th and the 18th.

Lowry moved into a tie for the lead by matching Straka's birdie on the downwind par-4 17th and will be paired with the 32-year-old Austrian on Sunday in the final round of the sixth Signature Event of the PGA TOUR season.

Keith Mitchell, the leader after 18 and 36 holes, shot 1-over.

He was 11 under with Justin Thomas, who charged up the leaderboard despite bogeys on the two par 5s in a 67.

Hideki Matsuyama was another stroke back after a 63, the best score of the day.

Defending champion Rory McIlroy made an early move before spoiling a three-birdie run with consecutive bogeys. (PTI)

## Bayern Munich celebrate Bundesliga title with last home win for Thomas Müller



**BERLIN, May 11:** Thomas Müller led Bayern Munich's Bundesliga title celebrations after helping the team beat Borussia Mönchengladbach 2-0 in his last home game for the club.

After being presented with the trophy, Bayern captain Manuel Neuer gave it to Müller to hoist toward the Munich sky and start the confetti-filled revelry.

There was another outpouring of emotion when Harry Kane got his chance to lift the "salad bowl" — it's the England captain's first team trophy after a career of near-misses.

Kane was still holding onto the trophy even as Neuer got the customary beer showers underway by dousing Müller after a speech to the crowd. But soon Kane was soaked, too, and he let the trophy out of his grip.

Bayern won its record-extend-

ing 34th German championship title last weekend.

Michael Olise made sure of Saturday's win by scoring one goal and setting up the other for Kane's league-leading 25th of the season to get the party underway in Munich.

Bochum and Holstein Kiel were relegated while Leipzig's hopes of Champions League qualification ended after drawing at Werder Bremen 0-0.

Last-placed Bochum lost at home to Mainz 4-1, and Kiel lost at home 2-1 to Freiburg, which consolidated fourth place and was poised for Champions League qualification.

Leipzig's scoreless draw in Bremen left it four points behind Freiburg with one round remaining, meaning it can no longer qualify for Europe's lucrative premier competition.

Neither Bochum nor Kiel

have any possibility of catching third-from-bottom Heidenheim following the latter's 3-0 win at Union Berlin. Heidenheim made sure of at least a relegation play-off place.

With one game left to play, Bochum had 22 points, Kiel 25, and Heidenheim 29 — just two behind St. Pauli, which had two matches remaining. St. Pauli plays its penultimate match at third-placed Eintracht Frankfurt on Sunday.

It's Bochum's seventh demotion from the top division. The club was promoted to the Bundesliga as the second division champion in 2021, ending an 11-year absence from the top division. Bochum defeated Bayern 3-2 away in March, but it was Dieter Hecking's team's only win in its last 11 games.

"I've been relegated before, it's anything but nice. You could

see it with the lads, tears were flowing," Bochum captain Maximilian Wittek said. "It's among the worst things that can happen in football."

Kiel was promoted for the first time only last season and coach Marcel Rapp's team has quickly returned to the second division. Kiel scored first but Johan Manzambi equalized before the break and Lucas Höler headed Freiburg toward the Champions League.

Freiburg moved four points clear of Borussia Dortmund, which visits Bayer Leverkusen on Sunday for Xabi Alonso's last home game as Leverkusen coach. A Leverkusen win would send Freiburg to the Champions League. After seven years away, Hamburger SV clinched its return to the Bundesliga by routing Ulm 6-1 in Germany's second division. (AP)

## Marseille and Monaco seal Champions League spots and PSG thrashes Montpellier

**PARIS, May 11:** Marseille and Monaco sealed spots in next season's Champions League while Ligue 1 champion Paris Saint-Germain beat last-placed Montpellier 4-1 with a Goncalo Ramos hat trick.

On the penultimate matchday of the season, Mason Greenwood's 19th league goal in the 85th minute put second-placed Marseille back in the lead at struggling Le Havre. Amine Gouiri scored twice and Marseille won away 3-1.

Lagging one point behind Marseille, Monaco sealed its 18th win — 2-0 over Lyon — with goals from Takumi Minamino and Denis Zakaria and was also guaranteed to finish among the three best teams. The top three qualify for the group stage of the Champions League, and the fourth team grabs a spot in the qualifying rounds.

Gouiri scored Marseille's opener after halftime and the match was stopped soon after because of crowd trouble. Pressing to remain in the top flight next season, Le Havre pushed hard for an equalizer and got it when Issa Soumaré beat goalkeeper Geronimo Rulli from Josue Casimir's assist.

Greenwood's superb curled strike from outside the box put the visitors back on track and Gouiri gave more luster to the win in added time on the break.

"At the start of the season, we had trouble playing at the Velodrome, the ball was hot and we were shaking a bit," Marseille coach Roberto De Zerbi said. "We talked about it. The aim was to stay together, united, without putting football first. We put other things first. We spent some time together. We worked a lot on uniting the team and that showed on the pitch. We saw a family and with

that we have a better chance of winning."

After getting past Arsenal midweek to reach the Champions League final, PSG coach Luis Enrique rested seven players: Gianluigi Donnarumma, Achraf Hakimi, Marquinhos, Nuno Mendes, William Pacho, Fabian Ruiz and Vitinha.

Senny Mayulu, an 18-year-old midfielder, was given a start and did not disappoint to put PSG ahead before halftime with a powerful strike. Ramos made it 2-0 off a deflection, and added another goal from the spot.

Having won the league with six games to spare, PSG is hoping for its first ever treble. In addition to the Champions League final against Inter Milan on May 31, Enrique's team will have another shot at more silverware against Reims the week before in the French Cup final.

Behind Marseille and Monaco, three teams were level on points; Nice, Lille and Strasbourg, which all lost on Saturday. Seventh-placed Lyon can still aim for the fourth spot but will need to win against Angers hoping that the trio of teams all lose.

"There's a lot of regret, anger and disappointment," Lyon striker Alexandre Lacazette said. "We feel sorry for all the fans who believed in us. We've made mistakes all season, but also tonight." At the bottom of the standings, last-placed Montpellier was already demoted. There was still a glimmer of hope for Saint-Etienne, which won at Reims 2-0. Saint-Etienne remained in the relegation zone but just one point behind 16th-placed Le Havre, which was in the relegation playoffs spot. (AP)

## 2<sup>nd</sup> All Kamrup District Inter-School Swimming Competition on May 18

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, May 11:** The All Kamrup District Swimming Association is going to organise the 2nd Inter-School Swimming Competition under the aegis of the Assam Swimming Association at the Dr. Zakir Hussain Aquatic Complex, Sarusajai, here on May 18. The event will witness participation from school-level swimmers representing both Kamrup Metropolitan and Kamrup (Rural) districts.

According to Assam Swimming Association Secretary Bhaskar Das and Publicity Secretary Mukuteswar Goswami, the competition will be inaugurated at 8:00 AM

with the flag hoisting ceremony followed by a march-past and formal salute by the participating school teams.

Interested student participants may contact Navjyoti Gogoi, Secretary of the All Kamrup District Swimming Association, or Coach Babul Gurung at the Sarusajai Swimming Training Centre to submit their registration forms and confirm participation.

Apart from swimming events, the competition will also feature exciting and increasingly popular diving and water polo contests, which are expected to be major highlights for both participants and spectators.

## 35<sup>th</sup> Rajanikanta Dev Sharma Memorial Athletics Meet gets underway

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, May 11:** The 35th Rajanikanta Dev Sharma Memorial Zonal and Regional Athletics Competition, organised by Shishu Shiksha Samiti, Assam, affiliated with Vidya Bharati Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Sansthan, commenced with grandeur at Sankardev Shishu Niketan, Barpeta Road on Sunday.

The opening ceremony was graced by Vidya Bharati's Akhil Bharatiya Secretary Brahaji Rao, general secretary of Shishu Shiksha Samiti, Assam, Jagannath Rajbongshi, B.T.A.D. Executive Member Gautam Das, North-East Sports Head Ranjit Kumar Saikia, and other distinguished members of the Niketan Management Committee.

More than 400 student-athletes and their mentors from various Shishu Niketans across Assam and neighboring northeastern states are participating in the event.

According to Mukuteswar Goswami, prasarak pramukh of the Shishu Shiksha Samiti, Assam (based in Zoo Road, Guwahati), the winners of Sunday's events were awarded by Dr. Pawan Tiwari, organising secretary of Vidya Bharati Purvottar Kshetra, Lt. Col. Dr. Agnivesh Pandey, Principal of Sainik School Mainpuri, and Joint Secretaries of the Assam unit. This evening's cultural

programme, performed by students, was inaugurated with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by Dr. Pawan Tiwari, Dr. Agnivesh Pandey, and Dhanjit Deka. According to Pavitra Gogoi, Zonal Sports Head

of Shishu Shiksha Samiti, Assam, students securing first positions in this meet will get the opportunity to participate in the upcoming Vidya Bharati National Sports Meet scheduled for November.

This competition is expected to play a significant role in the physical, mental, and moral development of the students.



## Alonso has 'all doors open' amid speculation ex-midfielder will succeed him at Madrid: Ancelotti



**BARCELONA, May 11:** Carlo Ancelotti says that Xabi Alonso has "all the doors open" for a move to a big club with speculation building that the former Real Madrid midfielder is set to replace the Italian coach at the helm of the Spanish powerhouse.

Ancelotti gave his routine pre-game news conference Saturday, a day after Alonso announced he was leaving Bayer Leverkusen. He praised the work of Alonso, who has been widely linked to an eventual move back to Madrid after leading the German club to the Bundesliga title last season.

"I read that Xabi is leaving Bayer Leverkusen, where he did a fantastic job," Ancelotti said. "He has all the doors

open because he has shown that he is one of the best coaches in the world."

Ancelotti again refused to speak about his future, especially ahead of Sunday's decisive clasico at Barcelona in La Liga. Madrid trails Barcelona by four points and needs to win to keep alive its chances of winning a trophy this campaign.

But he did speak movingly about what Madrid means — and will mean — for the most successful manager in European soccer.

For Ancelotti, his relationship with the club he has spent six seasons at in two stints is an everlasting "honeymoon."

"The honeymoon with this club never ends, it continues

forever," he said. "I think that Real Madrid, like Milan before, are the teams that stay with me given the time I have spent here. At the beginning there is passion, and when that fades other feelings emerge, a sense of tender care. My honeymoon with Real Madrid will last for as long as I live."

The 65-year-old coach is under contract through the next campaign but is widely expected to leave after an underwhelming season in which the team played worse despite adding Kylian Mbappé to its squad.

Brazil has been courting Ancelotti for over a year and it appears talks are still ongoing with the veteran manager. (AP)

## KIYG 2025: Harsabardhan, Asmita set national youth records on weightlifting Day 1

**PATNA, May 11:** Harsabardhan Sahu and Asmita Dhoni stole the show with record-breaking performances as weightlifting got underway at the Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) 2025 Bihar on Saturday.

Sahu, a Khelo India Athlete from Ganjam district, set two National Youth Records in the boys 49kg class competition.

Sahu, who will turn 16 on May 22, rewrote the National Youth Marks for Clean and Jerk and Total with lifts of 115kg and 203kg respectively after an 88kg lift in Snatch.

The previous records were set by Jharkhand's Babulal Hembram last year.

His teammate, the 16-year-old Jyoshna Sabar, who has a hat-trick of medals in the IWF World Youth Championships and is the reigning Asian Champion in the girls 40kg class, also won gold for Odisha with a dominant performance.

Later in the day, Maharashtra's Asmita Dhoni and Uttar Pradesh's Manasi Chamunda rewrote National Youth Records in Snatch, Clean and Jerk and Total in the girls 49kg class

competition. Asmita conceded the Snatch record to Manasi Chamunda who cleared the barbell loaded at 75kg but brooked no challenge in Clean and Jerk.

By the time, Asmita entered the fray with the load at 91kg, Manasi had claimed the National Youth record for total with 163kg. But that was short-lived as Asmita bossed the Clean and Jerk with lifts of 91kg, 95kg and 97kg.

Each lift helped her raise the National Youth mark for total, while the last two lifts were records for Clean and Jerk.

Maharashtra, buoyed by Dhoni's gold and earlier wins from Akanksha Kishore Vyavahare in weightlifting and Kavya Bhatt in girls' singles table tennis, remained firmly atop the medal tally with 27 gold, 21 silver, and 24 bronze (72 medals in total).

Maharashtra has won nearly twice as many gold medals as its nearest rival, Karnataka.

Punjab claimed to fifth place behind Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, thanks to gold medals from its skeet shooters Harazeez Singh Atwal and Risham Kaur



Guron. Punjab has six gold, the same as Tamil Nadu, Haryana, and Manipur but has more silver medals than them.

Delhi and Assam were also delighted to add a gold medal each on Saturday.

Delhi's 25m Pistol shooter Naamya Kapoor emerged on top, winning a tough competition with Anjali Bhagwat (Madhya Pradesh) by one point, while Assam's gold came through Priyanuj Bhattacharyya in the boys singles final.

Hosts Bihar, meanwhile, lost two sepak takraw finals.

In girls' doubles final, Bihar squandered an 11-4 lead in the decider to lose the contest 15-7, 11-15, 13-15.

In the boys' doubles final, Assam prevailed 15-9, 17-15, saving two match points before sealing the win on the third.

With 19 medals (three gold, eight silver and eight bronze), Bihar climbed into the top half of the medals charts.

With only 13 gold medals up for grabs on Saturday and its strongest discipline, swimming, already concluded, Karnataka was pleased to open its account in another sport. (PTI)

## CA says triple century maker Bob Cowper has died at age 84

**MELBOURNE, May 11:** Bob Cowper, who scored test cricket's first triple century on Australian soil, has died at the age of 84 due to an undisclosed illness, Cricket Australia said Sunday. Cowper played 27 test matches for Australia between 1964 and 1968, with a record of 2,061 runs at an average of 46.84, including five centuries, while also taking 36 wickets with his part-time off-spin.

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



## IPL likely to resume on May 16 or 17, final could be moved out of Kolkata

**NEW DELHI, May 11:** Suspended due to the India-Pakistan military conflict, the Indian Premier League (IPL) is set to resume either on May 16 or 17 with the possibility of the final being moved out of Kolkata.

The announcement of ceasefire on Saturday paved the way for resumption of the league that was suspended on May 9 for one week.

The IPL Governing Council members and the BCCI officials discussed the resumption plan on Sunday.

BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla said the board is still working on creating a suitable schedule.

"As of now there is no decision on IPL. BCCI officials are working out on the solutions. BCCI secretary, IPL Chairman are in talks with franchises and everyone, so very soon we will know about the decision, efforts are being made to resume the tournament early," said Shukla.

An IPL source said the league will resume with the match between Lucknow Super Giants and Royal Challengers Bengaluru in Lucknow -- the game which was supposed to be played on May 9.

"All the teams have been asked



to call back their players, the tournament will resume either on May 16 or 17 in Lucknow. The final schedule will be shared tomorrow (Monday)," a source told PTI.

"Most likely the matches will be held at four venues and Delhi and Dharamsala won't get to host more matches. All the equipment has already been removed from these venues," added the source.

The source also said that there won't be any change in the venue for Qualifier 1 and Eliminator that Hyderabad was supposed to host but Kolkata may miss out on hosting the final, most likely on June 1, due to rain forecast on that day in

the city. "As of now there is no change in venues for the play-off stage but it seems rain can affect the final in Kolkata. In that case the final could be played in Ahmedabad," said the source.

Speaking to PTI, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia added: "In the next few days, we will begin consultations with the franchises, broadcasters, sponsors and the state associations slated to host the remaining matches before finalizing to a decision on the league's resumption."

"Given that the importance of IPL at this juncture, it will also be prudent and necessary to take the

nod of the Government of India before finalising the time for its restart." It is possible that the two teams will be awarded a point each. Punjab Kings had raced to 122 for 1 in 10.1 overs when the game in Dharamsala had to be stopped due to heightened tension between India and Pakistan.

The players were ferried in bus to Jalandhar in Punjab from where they travelled to Delhi by train.

If only four venues are chosen to host the remaining 16 games then Delhi Capitals, Rajasthan Royals and Mumbai Indians will miss out on their home games.

It means the remainder of the tournament will be restricted to Hyderabad, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Lucknow.

CSK, RR and SRH are already out of the reckoning and the battle for sealing the four play-offs spots is among seven teams.

Gujarat Titans as of now are leading the table with 16 points and superior NRR of 0.793, followed by Royal Challengers Bengaluru (16 points, 0.482), Punjab Kings (15), Mumbai Indians (14), Delhi Capitals (13), Kolkata Knight Riders (11) and Lucknow Super Giants (10). (PTI)

## Clinical India crush Sri Lanka by 97 runs to win Women's Tri-Nation tournament

**COLOMBO, May 11:** India displayed absolute dominance to crush Sri Lanka by 97 runs and earn a well-deserved title triumph in the Women's Tri-Nation ODI series after vice-captain Smriti Mandhana's sublime century and the bowlers' collective effort in the title clash here on Sunday.

After Mandhana rose to the occasion to power India to a commanding 342 for seven, the bowlers completed the task by bundling out Sri Lanka for 245, with Sneha Rana (4/38) and Amanjot Kaur (3/54) doing the bulk of the damage.

Skipper Chamari Athapaththu (51 off 66 balls) and Nilakshika Silva (48 off 58) were the chief contributors for the hosts.

Earlier, battling cramps in humid conditions, elegant left-hander Mandhana, who had returned to form with a fifty in India's last match against South Africa, struck a majestic 116 off 101 balls to lay the foundation for India's imposing total after skipper Harmanpreet Kaur opted to bat. Her knock was laced with 15 fours and two sixes, including four successive boundaries off Athapaththu to bring up her 11th ODI hundred in style.

After the early dismissal of

Pratika Rawal for 30, Mandhana shifted gears smoothly.

The stylish Mandhana made Sri Lanka pay for dropping her on 21 as was involved in two big partnerships - 70 for the first wicket with Pratika and 120 for the second with Harleen Deol. She brought up her 32nd ODI fifty with a stylish sweep behind square.

The left-hander added 120 runs in 106 balls with Harleen (47 off 56; 4x4) for the second wicket to steady the innings before falling while attempting a lofted cover drive. But her dismissal set the stage for a strong finish as Jemimah Rodrigues, coming off a career-best 123 against South Africa, smashed a quick-fire 44 off 29 balls (4x4), while Harmanpreet contributed a brisk 41 off 30 (4x4, 1x6) as India piled on 90 runs in the last 10 overs.

There was a brief phase where India looked to have lost steam in the final overs, but came from Deepthi Sharma (20 not out off 14) and Amanjot Kaur (18 off 12) helped them surge past 340.

For Sri Lanka, Sugandika Kumari was the pick of their bowlers with 2/59, while Dewmi Vihanga (2/69) and Malki Madara (2/74) also picked two wickets each.

Set a formidable target, the home team needed a strong start, but instead, they lost Hasini Perera to Amanjot in only the third ball of the Sri Lankan innings.

Attempting to play through mid-off, Perera ended up playing down the wrong line as the ball crashed onto the off-stump.

Sri Lanka were one down without a run on the board and an onerous task awaited the duo of captain Athapaththu and Vishmi Gunaratne (36 off 41 balls).

They seemed to be succeeding, as Athapaththu and Vishmi put Sri Lanka's chase back on track after the early blow. The pair negated the difficult phase well before opening up to hit boundaries.

However, Deepthi's introduction put the brakes on Lankan scoring as the senior off-spinner bowled three economical overs on the trot before Amanjot gave India their second breakthrough by bowling Vishmi around her legs after the batter had shuffled a long way across.

India could have had another wicket but wicketkeeper Richa Ghosh, standing up to debutant pacer Kranti Goud, could not hold to an edge from Athapaththu when she was on 25. (PTI)

### Assam Clinches Gold in Sepaktakraw Boys' Doubles at Khelo India 2025

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, May 11:** In the prestigious Khelo India 2025 Games, the Assam Sepaktakraw boys' team has won the gold medal in the boys' doubles event. In the final held at BSP Indoor Stadium in Patna, Assam defeated Bihar. Assam won the final with a score of 15-9, 17-15.

The team's success is attributed to the players' discipline, teamwork, and sports spirit, which enabled them to win the intensely competitive final. The Assam Sepaktakraw Association's President, Bhavesh Kalita, and Secretary, Bishnu Ram Nunisa, along with all officebearers and members, have congratulated the players, coaches, and team officials on this achievement. They hope that this performance will inspire Assam's new generation.

## Deepika, Salunkhe win bronze as India finish with 7 medals at Archery World Cup Stage 2

**SHANGHAI, May 11:** India's most decorated archer, Deepika Kumari, salvaged her pride with a hard-earned bronze medal after a semi-final heartbreak, while Parth Salunkhe also finished on the podium for the first time as India wrapped up their campaign at the Archery World Cup Stage 2 with seven medals, here Sunday.

A day after compound archers put up a dominating show with five medals, Deepika and Salunkhe added two more from the recurve section to end India's campaign on a high.

Exactly a year after the 21-year-old reigning Olympic champion Lim Sihyeon had knocked Deepika out at the same stage of the Yecheon World Cup, the Indian was undone again by the Korean in the semifinal, losing 1-7 in a largely one-sided women's recurve individual contest.

The 30-year-old four-time Olympian, though, bounced back strongly to defeat another Korean, Kang Chae Young, 7-3 in the bronze medal playoff and return with a consolation podium finish. Deepika's win took India's over-

all medal tally to six at the event, with five coming from the compound section on Saturday that included a remarkable triple-medal haul by comeback archer Madhura Dhamangar.

In the bronze medal playoff, Deepika showed greater composure and tactical clarity than her defeat to Lim in the semis.

The opening set ended in a 27-all tie, but Deepika edged ahead with a solid 28 in the second to take a 3-1 lead. Kang, a former world champion who had beaten Deepika in the Berlin World Cup quarterfinals back in 2017, fought back in the third, scoring a flawless 30 to Deepika's 27 to make it three-all.

The Indian responded with her best shooting under pressure, firing three perfect arrows for 30 in the fourth set to again take a 5-3 lead.

Needing just a draw in the final set to secure victory, Deepika delivered once more, shooting 29 to Kang's 28, to bag the bronze.

Earlier, Deepika began nervously in the semi-final, losing the first set 26-27 despite hitting two 9s. The second set saw both archers shoot

28, but Lim held steady to force a split and deny Deepika any rhythm. The world No. 1 then shifted into top gear, drilling in a perfect 30 in the third set while Deepika managed 28. With momentum fully on her side, Lim wrapped up the match in the fourth with a 29, as Deepika managed a 28. It was a repeat of their 2023 clash, though Deepika had managed to take two set points back then.

In the men's section, 21-year-old Salunkhe, who qualified lowly at 60th place, impressed with his resilience after a 1-7 loss to top seed and Korean legend Kim Woojin in the semifinals. After taking just one point off multiple Olympic medallist and reigning champion Woojin in his semifinal loss, Salunkhe bounced back impressively to beat higher-seeded French archer Baptiste Addis 6-4 in a tense five-setter to earn his maiden World Cup medal.

Salunkhe began in style with a flawless 30, including an X, to take the opening set. He slipped in the second, hitting an 8 that led to a 28-all tie. (PTI)

### Bhullar finishes 39<sup>th</sup> as Herbert wins in Japan

**CHIBA (JAPAN), May 11:** Gaganjeet Bhullar opened and closed the final round with a double bogey but still managed one-under 70 to finish tied-39th in the USD two million International Series Japan here on Sunday. The other Indian in the fray, SSP Chawrasia opened and finished with a birdie to card 73 and finish tied-68th.

Bhullar had five birdies, four of them in a row from the 13th to the 16th on the final day, as he ended the tournament at three-under 281, while Chawrasia, with two birdies against four bogeys on Sunday, went 3-over 287 for the tournament.

Lucas Herbert scripted a grandstand finish with an eagle on the par-five 18th hole for the second day in a row, extending his winning margin to a dominant five shots.

At the Par-71 Caledonian Golf Club in Chiba, the 29-year-old Australian won his maiden title on the Asian Tour and The International Series. Once he moved into the solo lead, he was never challenged as he closed with a seven-under-par 64 to reach 20-under for the week, five ahead of his playing partners Yuta Sugiyama (69) and Younghun Song (69), both of whom carded 15-under.

American Cameron Tringale (66) rolled in a 15-foot eagle putt on the last hole to finish sole fourth at 14-under, one ahead of Thailand's Atiruj Winaicharoenchai (65) and Japan's Shunya Takeyasu (67).

With this win, Herbert moved to the top of The International Series Rankings as well as the Asian Tour Order of Merit. It was also the LIV Golf player's first international victory in almost two years, having won the 2023 ISPS Handa Championship, also in Japan. (PTI)

### Pranavi finishes tied 40<sup>th</sup> and Diksha tied 52<sup>nd</sup> in Aramco Korea

**SEOUL, May 11:** India's Pranavi Urs faced problems on the front nine for the second straight day as she carded 2-over 74 to finish tied 40th in the Aramco Korea Championship here on Sunday.

Her compatriot Diksha Dagar had an up-and-down round for a 3-over 75 and a tied 52nd place on the leaderboard.

As Pranavi totalled 5-over 221, Diksha aggregated 6-over 222.

Home favourite Hyo Joo Kim produced a steady final round to defend her title and land a second victory of the year.

Heading into the final day one shot clear at New Korea Country Korea, the South Korean carded a 69 (-3) to withstand Chiara Tamburlini's (68) valiant chase and win by two shots on seven-under par.

Kim totalled 7-under 209 and Tamburlini was 5-under 211 to be second.

Pranavi had three bogeys on the front -- the same as the second day -- when she played the stretch as her second nine. On the back nine on the final day, she had two



birdies against one bogey for a 74. Diksha had three bogeys and just one birdie on the front and then landed an eagle on the Par-5 13th, but dropped shots on 11th, 15th and the 18th for her 75.

The victory marks Kim's 25th career win, third on the Ladies European Tour (LET), and second of 2025 after she won the Ford Championship on the LPGA. A year ago Kim won Aramco Team Series -- Korea by three shots.

Two groups ahead, LET Order of Merit winner Tamburlini started to pile on the pressure. The Swiss star rebounded from a bogey at the par-4 first to card five birdies at the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 7th and

9th to take the outright lead on five-under par.

In solo third on four-under par was South Korean amateur Seojin Park. A member of the country's national team, Park fired the round of the week 65 (-7) to shoot up the leaderboard on the final day.

Four players finished fourth on three-under par, including France's Perrine Delacour, South Africa's Lee-Anne Pace, Norway's Dorteia Forbrigg and Austria's Emma Spitz.

The next event is in the Netherlands for the start of the Tour's European swing, beginning with the Dutch Ladies Open. (PTI)



cus Stoinis, Aaron Hardie, Josh Inglis and Xavier Bartlett (all from Australia).

"The foreign players are not used to something like this (war like situation). So, it was natural for them to feel anxious. Led by Stoinis,

they all wanted to leave at the earliest and understandably so. But Ponting has convinced them to stay back post ceasefire which I think is remarkable," said a source in the team.

South African Marco Jansen, who is a regular in PBKS playing eleven this season, is the only one who left India but is transiting in Dubai which is only a short flight away.

With the announcement of IPL resumption imminent, Punjab find themselves well-placed with majority of their star Indian and foreign players already in the country and on standby.

With Ponting galvanising the team from a nervous situation, it could push the squad to do something special in this IPL.

In the first season of Shreyas Iyer and Ricky Ponting era, Punjab stand on the cusp of its first play-off berth since 2014.

The other stranded team in Dharamsala was Delhi Capitals after the game was abandoned after Punjab Kings raced to 122 for 1 in 10.1 overs. The match will resume from that position at a yet to be decided venue and date. (PTI)

## How Pontings pep talk prompted anxious PBKS foreign players to stay back in India after ceasefire

**NEW DELHI, May 11:** Punjab Kings head coach Ricky Ponting was about to take off for home when the ceasefire between India and Pakistan came into force.

Despite that, the Australian legend had the option to fly back to Australia but he chose not to, making a last-minute disembarkation from the plane packed with anxious passengers.

Ponting stayed back in Delhi, but he also ensured that the PBKS' foreign players, who were edgy considering the possibility of a full scale war between two nuclear-armed countries, did not board the flight from the national capital on Saturday night.

"It shows Ponting's character. Only he could have pulled that off," Punjab Kings CEO Satish Menon told PTI referring to the pep talk given by the World Cup winning captain to the entire bunch of foreign players.

The anxious batch of players, who had to make a nervous road/train journey from Dharamsala to Delhi following the abandonment of the IPL game on May 8, included Mar-

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