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India ramps up diplomatic offensive against Pakistan, says it's at war with terrorists • Rajnath reviews security scene

Op Sindoor: India foils Pak bid to attack military base

NEW YORK/LONDON, May 9: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday carried out a comprehensive review of the national security scenario with the top military leadership, a day after Pakistan's attempts to target Indian military installations were repelled.

Every aspect of the evolving security situation was discussed in the meeting, it is learnt.

The meeting was attended by Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan, Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi, Air Chief Marshal A P Singh, Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi and Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh.

India last night neutralised Pakistan military's attempt to hit military stations in Jammu, Pathankot, Udhampur and some other locations with missiles and drones.

"Defence Minister Rajnath Singh chaired a high-level meeting to review the security situation along the western border and operational preparedness of the Indian armed forces," a defence ministry spokesperson said.

After the Pakistani attempts were foiled last night, the defence ministry said India remains "fully prepared to defend its sovereignty and ensure the safety of its people." Indian military officials said the Pakistani drones and missiles were effectively engaged by Indian armed forces and the attempts by the enemy were thwarted.

Pakistan's fresh attempts to target Indian military installations came less than 24 hours after a similar attempt.

Meanwhile, India has ramped up diplomatic offensive against Pakistan following the military conflict, with its Ambassador to the US Vinay Kwatra saying that the country is at war with the terrorists and will bring justice to victims of the Pahalgalam terror attack



by holding the "lowlifes, subhuman monsters" accountable.

Separately, Indian envoy to the UK Vikram Doraiswami said India's response to Pakistan's original conflict escalation with the terrorist attacks in Pahalgalam was "precise, targeted" and focussed solely on terror infrastructure but Islamabad has chosen to continue to escalate the matter instead of taking an "off-ramp" to end the crisis.

Tensions between India and Pakistan soared significantly following India's Operation Sindoor on early Wednesday in response to the Pahalgalam attack on April 22 that had cross-border linkages and Pakistan's subsequent unsuccessful attempt to attack 15 Indian cities.

"April 22 was the most heinous terrorist act," Kwatra said in an interview with CNN on Thursday.

"It is nobody's case to say that these terrorists should be given a free pass, and that's precisely what we did the day before yesterday, held them accountable," Kwatra said and described (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

ONLY PRESS MEET TO BE ORGANISED TO MARK 4TH ANNIVERSARY OF GOVT: CM

Assam govt brings an end to Bihu celebrations

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, May 9: Amid heightened tensions between India and Pakistan, the Assam government has cancelled all Bihu celebrations across the state, as well as events marking the four-year anniversary of the current state government.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced the decision via his official social media handle.

"Over the past month, we have joyfully celebrated Bihu across Assam through numerous cultural events. I sincerely thank everyone for their enthusiastic participation and contributions. However, the time has now come to conclude this festive season. I humbly appeal that all remaining Bihu functions scheduled from May 10 onwards be kindly cancelled. Let

us bring this vibrant celebration to a graceful close, with the same unity and spirit in which it was celebrated," Sarma wrote on the micro-blogging site X.

The chief minister also confirmed that there will be no celebrations marking the government's four-year milestone on Saturday.

In another post, Sarma stated, "Tomorrow marks the completion of four years of the present Government in Assam. However, there will be no celebrations to mark the occasion. A press conference will be held as the only official event."

Tensions between India and Pakistan have escalated in the aftermath of recent events in Pahalgalam, which intensified following Indian airstrikes on terror hideouts in Pakistan.



Ronghang lambasts APHLC for misleading people over PGR/VGR land row

HT Correspondent

DONGKAMUKAM, May 9: Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Tuliram Ronghang, has accused the opposition All Party Hills Leaders Conference (APHLC) of misleading the people on the Professional Grazing Reserve (PGR) and Village Grazing Reserve (VGR) land eviction issue, claiming the party is trying to seize power "by any means."

He made the remarks during a mass joining programme of the BJP at Chengbong playground, Kopili, in West Karbi Anglong.

The event, organised by the BJP's Kopili Mandal Committee, saw the reported defection of a large number

of opposition workers to the ruling party. Those joining included members from the APHLC led by Bin Phangcho, the Congress led by Suken Pator, the Autonomous State Demand Committee led by Rajen Pator, and the CPI (ML).

In his address, Ronghang said, "Eviction cannot be carried out in the Kheroni PGR/VGR land in West Karbi Anglong, as the matter is sub-judice. No one is above the law, and the Court has issued a stay order. The allegations made by the APHLC are baseless and politically motivated."

Ronghang also reaffirmed that the KAAC, under his leadership, is a democratically elected body with a five-year mandate. He refuted (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

BSF foils infiltration bid along Pak border in Jammu; kills 7 terrorists

NEW DELHI/JAMMU, May 9:

The Border Security Force on Friday said it has foiled an infiltration bid from across the India-Pakistan International Border in Jammu, killing at least seven terrorists and destroying a Rangers post.

The terrorists were engaged around 11 pm on Thursday in Samba district after a "big group" of terrorists was detected by the "surveillance grid".

This infiltration bid was supported by fire from Pakistan Rangers post Dhandhar, a BSF spokesperson said.

He said the troops neutralised the infiltration bid, killing "at least" seven terrorists and caused "extensive" damage to the Dhandhar post.

Officials said there could be more terrorists, who could have been neutralised.

The BSF also shared a thermal imager clip of the firing and "destruction" of a bunker of the said post where a heavy machine gun of the Rangers was mounted.

The force is on high alert in the wake of the current hostilities between the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Assam Cong calls for decisive action against terrorism at Jai Hind Yatra

GUWAHATI, May 9: The Assam Congress took out 'Jai Hind Yatra' on Friday, as a mark of support and solidarity with the country's armed forces in the ongoing military conflict with Pakistan.

State party chief Bhupen Kumar Borah, women wing's president Mira Borthakur Goswami, several MLAs and office-bearers participated in the programme at the Rajiv Bhavan here.

Many of Congress leaders and members, including Borah, dressed in green t-shirts, waived the Tricolour as a band played patriotic tunes.

"As Indians, our country comes first. We stand with our government and our armed forces in this crucial time. Our respect and salute to the bravery of our armed personnel," Borah said.

He added that India's strong stance against terrorism has caught global attention and it was time for the country to give a decisive blow to those (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

HT BRIEFS

CM congratulates

GUWAHATI: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday congratulated the Catholic community on the election of Cardinal Robert Prevost as the new pope. Prevost, 69, became the first pope from the United States in the history of the Catholic Church. "Congratulations to all the Catholics around the world on the election of Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost as the new Pope - Pope Leo XIV," Sarma said in a post on X. Prevost, a member of the Augustinian religious order, took the name Leo XIV.

Party workers

KHERONI: A significant political event unfolded on Friday as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) welcomed 1,223 party workers from various political backgrounds during a mass joining programme at Langsibu Aklam, Phelangpi, West Karbi Anglong. The party workers were from Congress, All Party Hills Leader's Conference (APHLC), Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC), and Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation CPI (ML) who joined BJP during the programme organised by the BJP Kopili Mandal Committee under the 111 No. Ronghang Legislative Assembly Constituency (LAC). Speaking on the occasion, Tuliram Ronghang, Chief Executive Member (CEM), Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), as the chief guest warmly welcomed the new members, emphasising the growing public trust in BJP's developmental agenda under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Assam's chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

At least 24 airports closed for civilian flights till May 15

NEW DELHI, May 9: At least 24 airports in northern and western parts of the country, including Srinagar and Chandigarh, have been shut for civilian flights till May 15, sources said on Friday.

Earlier, these airports were closed for civilian flights till May 10 in view of the military conflict between India and Pakistan.

Airlines on Friday said that their flights have been cancelled due to temporary closure of airports till May 15.

The sources said at least 24 airports have been closed for civilian

flights till 05:29 hours of May 15. The airports include Chandigarh, Srinagar, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Bhubhar, Kishenghar, Patiala, Shimla, Dharamsala, and Bathinda. Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Leh, Bikaner, Pathankot, Jammu, Jamnagar, and Bhuj are among the other airports that have been temporarily closed for civilian flights.

"Following a notification from aviation authorities on continued closure of multiple airports in India, Air India flights to and from the following stations -- Jammu, Srinagar, Leh, Jodhpur, Amritsar, Chandigarh, Bhuj, Jamnagar and Rajkot -- are being cancelled till 05:29 hrs IST on 15 May," the airline said in a post on X.

Air India also said customers holding valid tickets for travel during this period will be offered a one-time waiver on rescheduling charges or a full refund for cancellations.

In a post on X, IndiGo said in accordance with the latest directives from the relevant authorities, all flights to and from 10 destinations will remain cancelled until 05:29 hours on May (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'God-Sent Tax' unites India, funds security measures: Himanta on Cong's 'Gabbbar Singh Tax' jab



GUWAHATI, May 9: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday said that the GST regime, brought by the BJP-led Central government, funds the country's security and resilience, and called it 'God-Sent Tax'.

Sarma also dismissed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's description of GST as 'Gabbbar Singh Tax'.

The chief minister also lauded the Indian armed forces for crushing all attempts by Pakistan to strike at multiple targets in the country.

"Rafale jets and S-400 systems don't just appear — they are built on the strength of our taxpayers," Sarma

posted on X, referring to the French fighter jets and the air defence system engaged by India in its ongoing military conflict with Pakistan.

"That's why GST was never a 'Gabbbar Singh Tax' — it's a 'God-Sent Tax' that unites India and funds its security, growth, and resilience," he added, in an apparent reference to the Congress criticising the tax regime.

Rahul Gandhi on several occasions dubbed the GST as "Gabbbar Singh Tax" to allege it is harsh on businesses. In another post on the micro-blogging site, the chief minister shared a graphic of Pakistan's attempts to strike Indian locations and Indian armed forces success in thwarting it.

He said that from May 7 to 9, Pakistan attempted to target multiple military locations in northern and western parts of India, including Awantipora, Jammu, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Pathankot, Srinagar, Bhilai, Phalodi and Chandigarh. India's unbreakable defence ensured that all "targets" were neutralised mid-air by the Integrated Counter UAS Grid and Air Defence System.

Debris was also neutralised before impact, ensuring zero damage, the chief minister said.

"Bonus: Pakistan's own Air Defence system in Lahore was neutralised," Sarma added in the post. (PTI)

Pak used Turkish drones to target 36 locations last night: Indian Military



NEW DELHI, May 9: Pakistan unleashed a swarm of Turkish drones to target Indian military facilities, probe air defence systems and gather intelligence last night and kept its civil airspace open during the assault endangering civilian flights, officials said on Friday as the conflict between two militaries spiralled.

Most drones were downed using kinetic and non-kinetic means, said Col Sofiya Qureshi of the army and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh of the air force.

The two military officials said Pakistan used its civil airliners as a "shield" as it did not close its civil airspace during its attempts to attack Indian installations with drones and missiles on May 7, knowing fully well that the strikes would elicit a swift response from India.

"On the night of May 8-9, Pakistan carried out large-scale violations of Indian airspace, attempting to target military infrastructure with 300-400 drones across 36 locations from Leh to Sir Creek,"

said Singh.

"Indian forces neutralised many drones using kinetic and non-kinetic means. An armed UAV strike on Bhatinda was also thwarted," she said.

India responded by launching drone strikes on four Pakistani air defence sites, destroying a radar, the Wing Commander added.

Singh said the "possible" purpose of the large-scale Pakistani intrusions were to test the air defence systems and gather intelligence.

"Forensic examination of the drone debris is being undertaken. Preliminary reports suggest them to be Asisguard Songar drone of Turkey," she said.

"Pakistan escalated with artillery and drone attacks across the Line of Control, causing casualties. Alarming, Pakistan kept its civil airspace open during the assault, endangering civilian flights," she said.

In response to the Pakistani attack, Indian military launched armed (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

The group has asked the government to take strict action against manufacturers

Group of mothers urge govt to crack down on digital promotion of nicotine products

NEW DELHI, May 9: A group of mothers have appealed to the Central government to take decisive action against the digital promotion of tobacco products growing unchecked.

While the current laws ban promotion of tobacco products in all forms, the manufacturers allegedly continue to actively promote them on digital media targeting children and youths, they said.

The group -- Mothers Against Vaping -- have emphasised that despite the enactment of laws specifically banning new-age gateway devices such as vapes, e-cigarettes and heat-not-burn products, they are being freely promoted and sold in the market.



The group has written to different ministries including Home Affairs, Health and Family Welfare, Women and Child Development, Consumer Affairs, Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), and Informa-

tion and Broadcasting to address the issue.

Considering the gravity of the concern, the Mothers Against Vaping has issued a set of appeals to the ministries, including taking down

the illegal and misleading contents online, and acting against entities creating such content in violation of The Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act (PECA), 2019 and the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003.

The group has also called on the government to take strict action against manufacturers and brands allegedly profiting from these products.

It has also asked the government to direct digital platforms to remove content that promotes or glamorises vapes, e-cigarettes and other heated tobacco products.

Mothers Against Vaping has further appealed for the establishment of an inter-ministerial task force

comprising representatives from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, MeitY and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to monitor the digital promotion of these products.

The Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2019 unequivocally bans the production, manufacture, import, export, transport, sale, distribution, storage and advertisement of electronic cigarettes. Despite this law, the group said they have observed a disturbing trend of these products being glamorised and promoted to the youth through digital platforms.

Similarly, the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003, specifically (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Sarma urges people to reject fake news

GUWAHATI, May 9: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday urged people to reject fake news from "vested interests" and comply with official guidelines, amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan.

"As India stands UNITED under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodiji, as responsible citizens let us REJECT fake news from vested interests, REPORT those trying to undermine our Armed Forces, COMPLY with official guidelines. Jai Hind (sic)," Sarma said in a post on X.

Earlier in the day, the central government dismissed claims of a

suicide attack on an Army brigade in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri and a drone attack in Punjab's Jalandhar, by certain social media handles, as "fake news".

The Press Information Bureau's (PIB) Fact Check Unit found that there was no "fedayeen" or suicide attack on any Army cantonment in Jammu and Kashmir, while the video claiming to be that of a drone attack in Jalandhar pertained to a farm fire. Reiterating its commitment to countering disinformation and safeguarding national integrity, the PIB urged citizens to rely only on verified sources and refrain from sharing any unverified content. (PTI)

Oil companies assure public: Ample fuel stocks available, no need for panic buying

NEW DELHI, May 9: India has ample stocks of petrol, diesel and cooking gas LPG, and there is no need for panic buying, oil companies assured the public on Friday.

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), in separate statements, assured of enough stock availability and smooth operations.

They made the statements after social media was flooded with posts and videos showing people queuing at petrol pumps to stock fuel as tensions between India and Pakistan escalated.

"Indian Oil has ample fuel stocks across the country and our supply lines are operating smoothly," IOC said in a post on X.

"There is no need for panic buying, fuel and LPG are readily available at all our outlets,"

Panic buying was mostly witnessed in states bordering Pakistan.

Several towns in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab enforced blackouts after Pakistan's armed forces launched multiple attacks using drones and other munitions along the entire western border on the intervening night of May 8-9. The Indian Army said the attacks were "effectively repulsed".



These had led to a fear of escalation in tension and panic buying. "Help us serve you better by staying calm and avoiding unnecessary rush. This will keep our supply lines running seamlessly and ensure uninterrupted fuel access for all," IOC said.

BPCL said sufficient petrol, diesel, CNG, and LPG are available across its vast nationwide network.

"All BPCL fuel stations and LPG distributorships across its nationwide network are operating smoothly and are fully equipped to meet the energy needs of consumers. There is no cause for concern or panic buying. Our supply chain operations remain robust and efficient, ensuring uninterrupted supplies. We urge all customers to remain calm. BPCL remains steadfast in its commitment to energy accessibility and reliability," it said.

HPCL said sufficient fuel and LPG stocks were available across the country.

"Our supply chain is operating seamlessly," it said. "There is absolutely no need for panic buying. Fuel and LPG are readily available at all HPCL outlets. Let's stay calm and avoid unnecessary rush to ensure uninterrupted service for everyone."

India on Wednesday struck at nine sites in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and Pakistan, its deepest strikes inside Pakistan in decades, in retaliation for a deadly terrorist attack two weeks before. Thereafter, Pakistan attempted to unleash drones and missiles at Indian military targets in more than a dozen cities and towns, many of them home to air force bases.

The three firms advised the citizens to stay calm and avoid unnecessary rush, which will help the company in keeping their supply lines running seamlessly and ensure uninterrupted fuel access for all.

Meanwhile, Nayara Energy, in a statement, said its 4,05,000 barrel per day refinery at Vadinar in Gujarat continues to operate at full capacity.

"All our retail outlets are operating normally, and we are well stocked to meet fuel demand. We are keeping a close watch on the situation, staying in regular contact with government officials, and complying fully with the established guidelines. We have multiple tiers of security at the refinery with robust surveillance mechanisms. This security apparatus works in close collaboration with the government's agencies," it added. (PTI)

PSU banks refute rumours, say ATMs well stocked and fully functional



NEW DELHI, May 9: Dismissing rumours, public sector banks including State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank on Friday said their ATMs are fully functional, well-stocked, and that digital services are operating smoothly.

The announcements came against the backdrop of reports on social media that ATMs are likely to be shut in the coming days on account of rising tension between India and Pakistan.

They also said that all their digital services are operating smoothly.

"All our ATMs, CDMs/ADWMs and digital services are fully operational and available for public use," India's largest bank, State Bank of India, said in a post on X. India's largest lender also advised its customers not to rely on unverified information.

Similar messages have been posted by Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank, Union Bank of India, Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank and Punjab & Sind Bank.

"All our digital services too are operating smoothly, ensuring a seamless banking experience from the comfort of your home," Punjab National Bank said in social media post.

Union Bank of India MD and CEO A Manimekhalai has said the bank has asked its staff in the border states to be cautious and follow all the guidelines issued by the local state level banking committee.

Apart from that, the bank is ensuring that adequate cash is kept at the branches and ATMs so that economic activities are not impacted, the CEO said, adding that it has also upped the cybersecurity defence. Canara Bank in a post on X said, "all our ATMs are functioning as usual. Please don't fall prey to the rumours. Canara Bank is always at your service and your money is safe with us." (PTI)

Markets tumble as India-Pak conflict flares up; Sensex, Nifty tank over 1 pc

MUMBAI, May 9: Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled over 1 per cent each on Friday as tensions soared between India and Pakistan, fuelling fears of a wider conflict.

Besides, steep losses in realty, financial and utility stocks also dented investor sentiments, traders said. Extending its previous day's decline, the 30-share BSE benchmark gauge tanked 880.34 points or 1.10 per cent to settle at 79,454.47, in a largely range-bound trading.

As many as 2,522 stocks declined while 1,343 advanced and 145 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The NSE Nifty dropped 265.80 points or 1.10 per cent to 24,008.

India on Thursday night swiftly thwarted Pakistan's fresh attempts to strike military sites with drones and missiles, including in Jammu and Pathankot, after foiling similar bids at 15 places in northern and western regions of the country as tensions soared between the two countries.

The Indian armed forces on Wednesday had carried out precise missile strikes on nine terror targets in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Pakistan under 'Operation Sindoor'.

"A conflict was anticipated, but the market was not expecting the situation to intensify, raising concerns about its duration. However, it is still projected to be a short-lived confrontation, given the strategic advantage and the opponent's weak economic standing."

"Interestingly, Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) continued to invest in the Indian market until yesterday, while retail investors remain slightly cautious at the moment," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

From the Sensex firms, ICICI Bank, Power Grid, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, Bajaj Finserv, Adani Ports, Mahindra & Mahindra and NTPC were among the laggards. Titan Company climbed over 4 per cent higher after the Tata group firm reported a 13 per cent increase in its consolidated profit after tax at Rs 871 crore in the March quarter, driven by robust sales.

Larsen & Toubro jumped nearly 4 per cent after the firm reported a 25 per cent increase in consolidated profit after tax (PAT) of ₹ 5,497 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2025, supported by higher revenues and an exceptional gain.

In contrast, Tata Motors, State Bank of India and Asian Paints were among the gainers.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark dropped 1,047.52 points or 1.30 per cent, and the Nifty declined 338.7 points or 1.39 per cent.

"Benchmark indices extended their downward trajectory for the second consecutive session on May 9, as heightened geopolitical tensions overshadowed



otherwise constructive global cues. On a weekly basis, both the Sensex and Nifty posted losses exceeding 1 per cent, reflecting broader risk-off sentiment," according to Bajaj Broking Research.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.30 per cent, and the midcap index dipped 0.10 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, realty tanked 2.08 per cent, utilities (1.50 per cent), financial services (1.40 per cent), power (1.11 per cent), Bankex (1.04 per cent), FMCG (0.65 per cent) and services (0.63 per cent).

Capital Goods jumped 1.67 per cent, industrials (1.10 per cent), consumer durables (1.29 per cent) and metal (0.17 per cent).

"Markets came under pressure as geopolitical tensions between India and Pakistan intensified," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹ 2,007.96 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi and Shanghai's SSE Composite index settled lower, while Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended in the green.

European markets were trading higher. US markets ended in positive territory on Thursday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 1.53 per cent to USD 63.80 a barrel.

"...defence-related stocks like Bharat Electronics and Hindustan Aeronautics outperformed, gaining on expectations of increased defence spending."

"Looking ahead, elevated geopolitical risks have significantly heightened market volatility, as reflected in the surge of the India VIX. Investors are advised to adopt a stock-specific approach and refrain from taking aggressive positions until there is more clarity," Mishra said.

On Thursday, the BSE Sensex declined by 411.97 points or 0.51 per cent to settle at 80,334.81. The Nifty ended lower by 140.60 points or 0.58 per cent at 24,273.80. (PTI)

CCPA issues notices to 13 e-commerce players for illegal sale of walkie talkies

NEW DELHI, May 9: Government watchdog CCPA has issued notices to 13 e-commerce players like Amazon and Flipkart for illegal sale of walkie-talkie devices on their platforms, which could raise security concerns at a time of military conflict between India and Pakistan. In an official statement on Friday, the government said the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued 13 notices to leading digital marketplaces against the illegal listing and sale of walkie-talkies on e-commerce platforms.

These platforms are: Amazon, Flipkart, Meesho, OLX, TradeIndia, Facebook, Indiamart, VardaanMart, Jiomart, Krishnamart, Chimiya, Talk Pro Walie Talkie

and MaskMan toys. The crackdown focuses on the sale of walkie-talkies without proper frequency disclosure, licensing information, or Equipment Type Approval (ETA), constituting a violation of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. Earlier, Union Food and Consumer Minister Pralhad Joshi in a social media post said: "The sale of non-compliant wireless devices not only breaches statutory obligations but may also pose significant risks to national security operations."

These violations contravene multiple legal frameworks, including the Consumer Protection Act, Indian Telegraph Act, and Wireless Telegraphy Act, he said. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Op Sindoor: India foils

India's action as "a very precise, calibrated, measured response to these terrorists." "We are at war with the terrorists, and we will, as I said, bring justice to the victims and hold them accountable," he said, answering a question if India is at war with Pakistan. "Our foremost objective in this was (to) hold these lowlifes, subhuman monsters accountable and bring justice to the victims."

India's High Commissioner to the UK Doraiswami, who was interviewed by a series of UK media outlets on Thursday to present India's stance on the rising tensions between India and Pakistan, told 'Sky News' that the international community can intervene by pointing out the opportunity for an off-ramp to Pakistan.

He displayed an image live on air of US-designated Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorist Abdul Rauf leading prayers for the terrorists killed in Operation Sindoor, also presented during a briefing by Foreign Secretary Vikram Mistry in New Delhi. "Everybody knows that for the last 30 years, Pakistan has used this (terrorism) as a means of sub-critical warfare against India," said Doraiswami.

"If the international community really wants to be able to look at this and worry about it, the simple solution is to tell Pakistan it has an opportunity for an off-ramp. These are things that the world should have compelled Pakistan to do 30 years ago, and to compel them to implement their promises about taking down this infrastructure. It has not done so," he said.

Asked if India fears a further escalation of conflict in the region, the envoy asserted that the "original escalation" is Pakistan-sponsored terror groups attacking and shooting civilians in Pahalgalam on April 22.

"Our response thereafter was precise, targeted, reasonable and moderate. It was focused principally and solely on terrorist infrastructure. We did not strike the Pakistani military establishment. We did not strike national infrastructure, and we made it abundantly clear... that the object of this exercise was clearly to avoid military escalation - a fact actually acknowledged in a left handed way, of course, by the Pakistani side in terms of their own official statements which said that the airspace hadn't been violated," said Doraiswami.

"The logical solution would be, as we've said repeatedly, for Pakistan to take the opportunity of an off ramp, which we have made abundantly clear, including this morning, that if Pakistan stops attacking our military facilities, the matter ends there, but it is for them to decide," he said.

In his interview with CNN, Kwatra said that from a large number of Congressmen and Senators to the whole world, they all appreciate that India should respond and bring accountability for these terrorists and justice for the victims. He said the terrorists killed the civilians in Pahalgalam on the basis of religion, identifying and killing "all non-Muslims". "So what we did the day before yesterday was essentially our response to terror," Kwatra said, adding that India's response has been very measured, calibrated and proportionate.

Responding to a question on explosions being heard in Kashmir, Kwatra said Pakistan has again decided to stand with the terrorists. "Rather than take action against them, they are essentially lending them support," he said. To a comment that Pakistan has denied involvement in the attacks, Kwatra said that "denial and obfuscation" have always been the first part of Pakistan's strategy.

"They have this unique characteristic where they assume responsibility of their past actions in future, not in the present moment," the diplomat said as he asked where was Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, who plotted the 9/11 attacks in the US, found... the killer of American journalist Daniel Pearl or perpetrators of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks found? (PTI)

Ronghang lambasts APHLC

APHLC president JI Kathar's claims calling for a re-election, labelling them as misinformation.

JI Kathar has repeatedly demanded a re-election in the KAAC, alleging that the last election was conducted illegally. He has also accused the BJP and its allies of promoting the influence of 'Bongo Sena', a term he uses to criticise perceived threats to tribal interests in Karbi Anglong.

Countering these claims, Ronghang accused Kathar of hypocrisy, saying, "JI Kathar himself is the chief of 'Bongo Sena', being married to a Bengali woman. People should remain cautious of Kathar and his party."

The CEM also called for political unity on the issue of an Autonomous State and informed the public that ex-gratia payments of ₹ 5 lakh have been given to the families of those who lost their lives during the Autonomous State movement. The meeting was also attended by MP Amar Singh Tisso, MLAs Darsing Ronghang and Bidhyaseng Englang, and BJP West Karbi Anglong District President Radip Ronghang.

BSF foils infiltration bid

two countries following the Pahalgalam terrorist attack of April 22 and India's strike on terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in retaliation. (PTI)

Assam Cong calls for

sponsoring such violence. "We have lost so many to terrorism. We must deal a death blow to terrorism and its supporters this time," the state party president added. The Jai Hind Yatra is being organised by the Congress across the country as a sign of solidarity with the armed forces. (PTI)

Pak used Turkish drones

drones launched at four air defence sites in Pakistan. "One of the drones was able to destroy an air defence radar," Singh said. She said Pakistan also carried out artillery shelling across the Line of Control using heavy calibre artillery guns and armed drones at Kandhan, Uri, Poonch, Mender, Rajouri, Akur and Udhampur in Jammu and Kashmir area which resulted in some losses and injuries to Indian Army personnel.

"Pakistan Army also suffered major losses in Indian retaliatory firing.

"Additionally, Pakistan's irresponsible behaviour again came to the fore as Pakistan did not close its civil airspace despite it launching a failed unprovoked drone and missile attack on May 7," said Qureshi.

"Pakistan is using civil airliners as a shield, knowing fully well that its attack on India would elicit a swift air defence response. This is not safe for the unsuspecting civil airliners, including the international flights which were flying near the international border between India and Pakistan," she said. The official also showed screenshots of flight movement on the website flightradar24.

In the high air defence alert situation in the Punjab sector, the airspace on the Indian side is absolutely devoid of civil air traffic due to our declared closure. However, there are civil airlines flying the air route between Karachi and Lahore," she said. The Indian Air Force demonstrated considerable restraint in its response, thus ensuring safety of international flights, she said. Tensions between India and Pakistan soared significantly following India's Operation Sindoor early Wednesday and Pakistan's subsequent unsuccessful attempt to attack 15 Indian cities. (PTI)

At least 24 airports closed

15 due to temporary airport closures. The airports are Srinagar, Jammu, Amritsar, Leh, Chandigarh, Dharamsala, Bikaner, Rajkot, Jodhpur and Kishangarh. "These precautionary measures have been instituted with your safety and security as our highest priority," the airline said.

The military conflict between India and Pakistan has intensified. Under Operation Sindoor, armed forces had carried out strikes on terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on Wednesday in retaliation against the Pahalgalam terror attack that had killed at least 26 people last month. (PTI)

Group of mothers urge govt

Section 5, prohibits both direct and indirect advertisements of tobacco products. Yet, prominent tobacco brands are being subtly promoted through memes, videos and other engaging content on social media platforms, effectively circumventing the law and targeting the impressionable minds of children, they said.

Psychologist Dr Bhawna Barmi, who is also the founder of Happiness Studio and a member of Mothers Against Vaping, said that manufacturers of addictive products know well that children and youths, being addicted to digital devices, are most effectively targeted through online platforms.

"By promoting sleek and appealing vape products across social media, they deliberately entice young minds to experiment with these harmful devices. At this vulnerable age, the youth are easily influenced by peer pressure and the desire to appear 'cool', often mimicking the behaviours they see in such digital promotions. Hence, to protect the health and future of our children, Mothers Against Vaping is urgently appealing to the honourable ministers to take decisive action so that such promotions are immediately removed and blocked on different social platforms," Barmi said. Mothers Against Vaping firmly believes that tackling the unchecked digital promotion of banned tobacco and vaping products is critical to the success of India's broader tobacco control efforts, the group said in a statement. It stands ready to collaborate with the government and other stakeholders to support the implementation of effective solutions to curb the promotion of these new-age gateway devices, it said.

Author and education specialist Shruti Nagar Dave said, "The digital world has been a boon in many ways. For instance, online platforms such as YouTube help students to learn. Yet it is deeply concerning that these channels are being used to promote banned products like e-cigarettes and vapes."

It would be highly impractical to ask the youth to shun online platforms since internet has become an integral part of life, Dave said. "Instead, we can make such spaces safer for our children. Digital platforms should also join this fight and take all steps to remove such content by co-operating with various stakeholders," she said.

The Mothers Against Vaping has pointed out that the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, clearly mandate that intermediaries exercise due diligence and not host content that violates Indian laws. However, platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and Telegram continue to host and disseminate content promoting banned products like e-cigarettes and vapes, the group said in its statement. Under Rule 3(1)(b) of the IT Rules, intermediaries are required to inform users not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, store, update or share any information that is obscene, invasive of another's privacy, or otherwise inconsistent with or contrary to the laws of India, it stated.

This includes content that advertises tobacco products, which are strictly regulated under Indian law. By continuing to host such material, these platforms are violating the very rules they are supposed to uphold, the statement added. (PTI)

TRAI recommends 4 pc of revenue plus ₹ 500 per subscriber as spectrum fee for satcom operators

NEW DELHI, May 9: Telecom regulator TRAI on Friday released its recommendations on pricing of spectrum to be given for satellite-based internet services, suggesting a levy of 4 per cent of annual revenues as fee on operators like Elon Musk's Starlink.

Operators offering services in urban areas would have to shell out an additional Rs 500 per subscribers annually, TRAI said in its recommendations to the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).

No additional levy would be applicable for services in rural areas.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) recommended that satellite broadband spectrum be allotted for five years, which can be extended by another two years.

The 4 per cent of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) spectrum charge would be for both geostationary orbit (GSO) and NGSO (non-Geostationary orbit) operators.

These would be subject to a minimum annual spectrum charge of Rs 3,500 per MHz.

Releasing the recommendations, TRAI chairman Anil Kumar Lahoti said satcom services once available can play a vital role in taking connectivity to underserved areas where telecom networks are not available. They also play a critical role in disasters, in rescue and relief operations.

Starlink earlier this week got a Letter of Intent (LoI) for the start of its services. It now has to procure a license before starting services in India.

SpaceX, the aerospace company led by Elon Musk, has already tied up with rivals Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel to bring Starlink's broadband internet services to India.

Both Indian firms will offer Starlink equipment through their network and also support customer installation and activation on devices.

Over the past few months, rivals Jio and Airtel had come to-

gether to demand an auction for awarding spectrum for satellite services in India. Musk on the other hand lobbied for administrative allocation as per international norm.

In October last year, the government sided with Musk on the issue of allocating airwaves, to be used for offering low latency internet services using satellite, at a pre-decided price through administrative route.

Both Jio, India's largest wireless carrier, and Airtel, the No 2 player in the world's most-populous nation, where data usage is rapidly rising, feared lower entry cost will chip away some of their subscriber base.

Based on the recommendations of TRAI, the DoT would now go to the Cabinet for pricing of satellite spectrum and once approved any satcom wanting to offer services in India can apply.

Starlink is the world's largest Low-Earth-Orbit (LEO) constellation operated by SpaceX.

Bharti already partners with

Eutelsat OneWeb, the second largest LEO constellation.

Similarly, Jio Platforms has a joint venture with SES, a leading global satellite-based content connectivity solutions provider.

Jio Space Technology Ltd, where Jio holds 51 per cent and SES 49 per cent, is to use multi-orbit space networks that is a combination of geostationary (GEO) and medium earth orbit (MEO) satellite constellations capable of delivering multi-gigabit links and capacity to enterprises, mobile backhaul and retail customers across the length and breadth of India and neighbouring regions.

Eutelsat OneWeb, in which Airtel is the single-largest shareholder with a 21.2 per cent share, and Jio's joint venture with SES have already secured GMPCS licenses and IN-SPACE approvals.

Starlink currently operates over 6,000 LEO satellites, while Amazon's Kuiper project plans to deploy 3,236 satellites starting in early 2025. (PTI)

Undertrial prisoner found dead in Kokrajhar district jail

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, May 9: A 47-year-old undertrial prisoner, Nakul Mondal, was found dead inside the Kokrajhar District Jail early Friday morning, in what is being suspected as a case of suicide by hanging.

The body was discovered by jail authorities and later recovered by police in the presence of the District Magistrate. Mondal's remains were subsequently sent for a postmortem examination to determine the precise cause of death.

A resident of West Khatalpara village under Basugaon Police Station in Chirang district, Mondal had been in judicial custody since April 30, following his arrest for allegedly attacking his younger brother, Sahadev Mondal, with a sharp weapon during a dispute over family land.

Sources within the jail revealed that Mondal is believed to have hanged himself during the night, though officials stated that a detailed investigation is underway to confirm the circumstances surrounding the incident. Authorities have yet to comment on whether any lapses in jail supervision contributed to the tragic death. The incident has raised concerns about the mental health and safety of undertrial prisoners in custodial settings and may prompt a review of jail monitoring procedures across the district.

32 Assam Rifles is not only a pillar of military strength but also a beacon of humanity

Governor presents Unit Appreciation to 32 Assam Rifle personnel for exemplary service

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, May 9: In a solemn function held at Raj Bhavan on Friday, Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya presented the Unit Appreciation to the 32nd Battalion of the Assam Rifles, acknowledging their exemplary service and unwavering commitment during their deployment in the state from November 1, 2022, till date.

Honoured for their outstanding performance in both operational and administrative domains, the 32 Assam Rifles received accolades for their all-round excellence, steadfast discipline, and humanitarian contributions during their tenure in Haflong, Assam.

Addressing the gathering of officers and jawans, Governor Acharya commended the unit, popularly known as the "Tenacious Thirty-Two," for their distinguished legacy and consistent record of success in numerous critical operations.



"The 32 Assam Rifles is not only a pillar of military strength

but also a beacon of humanity, service, and compassion. Their

role in maintaining peace, aiding civilians, and supporting education and development initiatives in remote areas is truly commendable," the Governor added.

Lauding the battalion's civic efforts, particularly in empowering the youth through career guidance, scholarship programs, and skill development initiatives, the Governor said that Assam Rifles has been a testament of humanity.

Urging upon the personnel to take forward the baton of responsibility of the Assam Rifles, the Governor said, "The onus lies on the Assam Rifles personnel to enrich the legacy of Assam Rifles which is one of the nation's oldest paramilitary forces."

The event was attended by Commandant Colonel GP Singh, VSM; OSD to the Governor Prof Bechan Lal; Subedar Major L Shyam Singh; officers and jawans of the battalion; and officials of Raj Bhavan.

All cultural events cancelled in Karbi Anglong

HT Correspondent
KHERONI, May 9: In response to the intensifying national security situation under Operation Sindoor targeting Pakistan, the District Magistrate of Karbi Anglong has issued an emergency directive revoking all permissions for cultural events and programs scheduled from May 10, 2025, onwards.

The directive, effective immediately, aims to ensure public safety and regional stability amid heightened security concerns. As an additional precaution, the Dis-

trict Magistrate has mandated that any cultural activities scheduled for May 9 must conclude by 10:00 PM, with no exceptions.

Officials emphasized that these measures are necessary to maintain law and order and prepare local resources for any contingencies that may arise during the ongoing national effort.

Local residents and event organizers have been urged to cooperate fully with the administration and security agencies and refrain from public gatherings during this critical period.

Teachers given tearful farewell

HT Correspondent
SIVASAGAR, May 9: Two subject teachers of Fuleswari Girls' HS School, Sivasagar Jyotimala Baruah and Trailukya Handique were given tearful farewell on Friday through a meeting held in the school auditorium. They were given books, mementoes and plaques by the teachers and students separately. The teachers spoke a few words recollecting their long tenure as teachers in the school.

Manoj Kr Borthakur, president, SMDC, Swarnamoni Borgohain, principal, teachers, students and employees were present on the occasion. The meeting observed one minute silence praying for those that sacrificed their lives in the western front from barbaric shelling across the line of control.

World Red Cross Day observed

HT Correspondent
JORHAT, May 9: The Jorhat district branch of Indian Red Cross Society observed the World Red Cross Day on Thursday by organising a programme at the Jorhat High School, which included art and essay competitions among the students in two categories.

A member of Jorhat district branch of the Red Cross Society informed that the event began with paying tributes before

the portrait of Jean Henry Dunant, the man behind the establishment of the International Red Cross Society, the global humanitarian organisation.

Senior teacher of school Anamika Saikia inaugurated the programme, which was anchored by Bidyut Bhusan Bora, Secretary, Jorhat district branch, Indian Red Cross Society.

Indrajit Kumar Barua, a noted writer and a retired Secretary of the State Government, and Dr Balin Khargharia, a known social worker and a retired Joint Director of Health Services, along with Jayanta Hazarika, Treasurer, Jorhat district branch of the humanitarian body (Red Cross Society) and Suresh Baruah, a social worker, gave away the prizes and certificates to the winners.

Speaking on the occasion they highlighted the significance of the day and the activities of the organisation that is involved in a wide range of activities focused on humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and promoting international humanitarian law.

These activities include providing medical care, emergency relief, disaster preparedness, and supporting victims of conflict and violence.

The programme was also attended by Red Cross Society workers Sanjeev Bora, Sudip Sarkar, Devjit Bargohain Dr. Pankaj Nath, Naren Chandra Bora amongst others.

The certificate of life members of Indian Red Cross society and position holders, participation certificate of the essay and Art competitions were also distributed at the event. Earlier the Headmaster of the school Abidur Rahman delivered the welcome address.

Rally taken out against insurgency in Longding

HT Correspondent
DIBRUGARH, May 9: A massive rally titled 'United Peace Rally' was taken out in insurgency infested Longding in Arunachal Pradesh on Friday.

The rally was taken out under the initiative of the Wancho Council in which all the members of community based organisation of the Wancho community like the Wancho Wamgham Council, Longding District Students Union, ZPCs and ZPMs, Gaon Burahs, Market Welfare Association of Longding, Kanubari, Pongchau, Tissa and Wakka etc took part.

Hundreds of people from various age categories took part in the rally carrying banners and placards in their cards, denouncing insurgency and halt to kidnappings, extortion, and killings by various militant outfits.



The rally started from the Longding daily market and after traversing through the main thoroughfares of the town culminated at the Deputy Commissioner's Office.

Representatives of the organisations held a discussion with the DC Bekir Nyorak and demanded before the government and administration to initiate steps to contain

Rongali Bihu Sanmilian cancelled

HT Correspondent
DEMOW, May 9: In light of the prevailing national situation and a humble appeal made by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to suspend all Bihu celebrations scheduled from May 10 onwards, the organizing committee of the 32nd Annual Sepon Kendriya Rongali Bihu Sanmilian has officially announced the cancellation of this year's event.

The three-day celebration was scheduled to be held on May 13, 14, and 15, 2025, at the Sepon College Playground near Demow. In a statement issued on May 9, the organizers expressed their solidarity with the state government's call and emphasized that the decision was taken in view of the current situation, prioritizing the nation's sentiments and responsibilities.

The committee has thanked the public, participants, and well-wishers for their understanding and support, reaffirming their commitment to upholding peace and unity during this sensitive period.

Man arrested in Dhubri for spreading pro-Pakistan hatred videos on Facebook

HT Correspondent
DHUBRI, May 9: Police in Gauipur have arrested Abubin Miraz Uddin Sheikh, a resident of Alomganj in Dhubri district, on Friday for allegedly disseminating videos containing hateful content in support of Pakistan on his Facebook account.

According to police sources, Sheikh was apprehended based on information regarding the circulation of these provocative videos on social media. The videos are reported to contain content that promotes hatred and expresses support for Pakistan, potentially inciting communal disharmony and disrupting public peace.

The Gauipur police will register a case against Sheikh and have initiated an investigation into the matter. Authorities are currently examining the content of the videos and are likely to press charges related to promoting enmity between different groups and other relevant sections of the law.



to taking strict action against individuals found indulging in such activities.

The investigation is ongoing, and further details are expected to emerge as the police delve deeper into the case, including the motive behind the creation and dissemination of these videos.

Biswanath Court sentences accused to 20 years RI

HT Correspondent
BISWANATH CHARIALI, May 9: In a significant judgment that reinforces the commitment of law enforcement to child protection, the District and Sessions Court of Biswanath has convicted Bishal Thapa (23), son of Bom Bahadur Thapa of Gohain Chapori under Sootea Police Station, for the sexual assault of a 5-year-old girl. The verdict was pronounced on May 8, 2025, with the accused receiving 20 years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of ₹ 15,000 under Section 4(2) of the POCSO Act. The disturbing incident occurred in 2021 and was registered as Sootea PS Case No. 01/2021. The investigation was led by SI Kalpajit Sharma, then Officer-in-Charge of Sootea Police Station, whose thorough handling of the case was instrumental in securing the conviction.

Two notorious thieves nabbed red-handed stealing from Dhubri Court Building

HT Correspondent
DHUBRI, May 9: In a brazen act of theft, two individuals known for their notoriety were apprehended red-handed by court officials within the premises of the newly constructed court building in Dhubri on Friday. The arrested individuals have been identified as Mohibul Hoque, son of Latif Sheikh, and Luis Sheikh, both are resident of Ward No-14, IG Road, Dhubri.

According to sources within the court, both Mohibul and Luis had been repeatedly pilfering bathroom fittings from the newly built structure over the past few days. Their streak of alleged petty crime came to an abrupt end today when vigilant court officials caught them in the act.

Upon being caught red-handed, the court officials immediately took the two alleged thieves into custody and subsequently handed them over to the Dhubri Sadar Police. The police have confirmed the arrest and have initiated an investigation into the matter. They are expected to file charges against Mohibul and Luis for theft and potentially other relevant offenses. This incident has raised concerns regarding the security arrangements at the new court building and has prompted authorities to likely review and enhance the existing measures to prevent future occurrences. The police are expected to conduct a thorough investigation to ascertain the full extent of their activities related to the court building thefts and any other potential criminal involvement in the area.

Young Girl offers critical Cancer treatment with herbal medicine in Nagaon

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, May 9: Kalpana Das, a young girl from Senchowla Kalangpar village in Nagaon district, has been gaining widespread attention for providing herbal treatment to cancer patients across Assam and beyond.

Following the demise of her father, Late Sukur Das, a senior lawyer of the Nagaon Bar Association, in 2022, Kalpana has continued his legacy of offering alternative treatment for cancer using a herbal remedy developed by her father. Patients from Assam, neighboring states, and even distant places like West Bengal, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, and Bangalore have reportedly sought her help, with many claiming significant recovery.

Kalpana's commitment to natural and indigenous medicine has brought renewed hope to people suffering from the life-threatening disease. Her work has gained recognition not only among patients but also from the National Biodiversity Authority, which has reportedly acknowledged and approved the herbal formulation for cancer treatment.

It is worth noting that Late Sukur Das had authored a comprehensive book documenting the herbal medicine, its preparation, and use. In the book, he recounted discovering the remedy in a dream and successfully applying it to treat cancer patients, marking what he described as a medical breakthrough.

Kalpana Das's dedication continues to inspire and draw attention to the potential of traditional knowledge systems in modern healthcare.

Margherita Traders Association burns Pakistan flag replica

Cancels Bohagi Utsav in solidarity with nation



HT Correspondent
MARGHERITA, May 9: In a striking demonstration of patriotism and unity, the Margherita Traders Association staged a protest along NH 315 in Margherita on Friday, where members

burned a replica of the Pakistan flag to express strong condemnation of Pakistan amidst ongoing tensions between the two countries.

Echoing chants of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" and "Indian Army Zindabad," the demonstration ig-

nited a fervent wave of national pride and unwavering support for the Indian Armed Forces.

In response to the current national sentiment and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's call to suspend Bihu festivities from May 10 onwards, the association has also announced the cancellation of the 42nd Bohagi Utsav, a popular three-day cultural festival that was scheduled from May 15 to 17.

"In this challenging moment, as our brave Indian Army and Union Government stand firm against our eternal adversary Pakistan, we proudly heed the Chief Minister's call," said Satya Borkatoky, spokesperson of the Margherita Traders Association.

"Today we burned the Pakistan flag replica and raised our voices in unwavering support of our nation and its defenders."

The cancellation of the Bohagi Utsav, a vibrant annual event celebrated with music, dance, and community gatherings, underscores the Association's decision to prioritize national solidarity over celebration.

Borkatoky further stated that the protest was not only symbolic but a message of unity and resolve, meant to inspire citizens across Assam and India to stand together with the armed forces and the government during these trying times.

Radisson Blu Guwahati presents Nawabi Feast and Mother's Day delights



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, May 9: Radisson Blu Guwahati is all set to bring an exquisite culinary experience for its guests with the launch of the Nawabi Feast and special Mother's Day celebrations. The hotel invites guests to indulge in royal flavours, heartwarming festivities, and unforgettable dining moments at Café B You and The Great Kabab Factory.

The Nawabi Feast at Café B You will take place every Friday throughout May, offering guests an opportunity to savour Lucknow's rich, aromatic cuisine. With a specially curated Nawabi buffet fea-

turing live counters, the event promises an authentic culinary journey. "The Nawabi Feast is our tribute to the royal kitchens of Lucknow, and we are excited to bring this regal experience to our guests," said Ankur Mehrotra, General Manager of Radisson Blu Guwahati.

In addition to the Nawabi Feast, Radisson Blu Guwahati will host special Mother's Day celebrations on May 11. Café B You will offer a heartwarming Mother's Day Brunch from 12:30 PM onwards, featuring a specially crafted menu, live counters, live singing. The hotel will also provide an option

for guests to cook for their mothers at the exclusive live counters. Additionally, on a table of four and above, mothers will enjoy their meal complimentary. The hotel will also present all mothers with a special gift hamper as a token of appreciation.

The Great Kabab Factory (TGKF) will offer a Mother's Day Dinner from 7:00 pm onwards, showcasing a special Table d'Hôte (TDH) menu designed to celebrate mothers.

"We believe that every mother deserves to be celebrated, and our Mother's Day offerings are crafted to provide a memorable experience for families," added Ankur Mehrotra. "Whether it is the Nawabi Feast or the special brunch and dinner for mothers, our focus is on creating unforgettable culinary experiences."

The Nawabi Feast is priced at ₹ 2299 + taxes per person, while the Mother's Day Brunch at Café B You is priced at ₹ 2669 + taxes, with a 20% discount on food and soft beverages for mothers. The Mother's Day Dinner at TGKF is available at ₹ 2199 + taxes, also offering a 20% discount for mothers.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

All great achievements require time
-- Maya Angelou

Japanese investors opting for India

India has emerged as the second most attractive destination for Japanese investors in Asia, after Singapore. It surpassed China, the most attractive place for Japanese investment in Asia for over four decades. Hitherto, India was eighth in 2020 in terms of getting investment from Japan. Latest Japanese interest in India manifests a major breakdown in Japanese confidence in China's potential for competitiveness and adaptability to cope with Trump's tariff war. The USA-China tension geared up the new era of overall India-Japan relation, including economic and political dynamism, based on the legacy of Abe regime. From a mere bilateral economic relation to specific strategic relation, it shifted to defence and global partnership. Giving thrust on Shinzo Abe's policy for combating China's rise in power, followed by COVID 19 pandemic, Japanese investment made a sharp downturn in China in the post Abe period. It fell from US\$ 11,024 million in 2020 to US\$ 3,305 million in 2024, leaving a big space for India to attract Japanese investment. Eventually, Japanese investment in India surged five times more in the post Abe period, from US\$ 1,570 million in 2020 to US\$ 5,341 million in 2024 and crossed investment in China. In ASEAN, Japanese investment witnessed an erratic trend. ASEAN has been the favoured trade block for Japanese investors both in respect of investment climate and cultural heritages, including Japanese living styles.

The noteworthy feature of Japanese investment in ASEAN is that Vietnam, which emerged as a better destination for Japanese investment in 2020 during Trump's Presidency in the first period, rattled down to less attractive than India in 2024. Why has India shined in Japanese investment, outpacing China and ASEAN? Why India is shining in terms of Japanese investment overtaking China? There are three major factors which attributed to Japanese tilt towards India. They were big and fast growth in local market, spur in the growth of export of service sector and increasing global protectionism. Growth in local market was triggered by sustainable and faster pace in GDP. During 2014-15 to 2023-24, the average growth in GDP was 6.5 percent a year, despite hindered by COVID 19 pandemic. The growth trajectory vies India's dream to be 3rd biggest economy by 2028, overtaking Germany and Japan, according to Morgan Stanley.

Growth in India was triggered mainly by service sector, despite poor show in manufacturing sector. Service sector accounted for 55 percent of GDP in 2023-24. The average growth in service sector was 8 percent in pre-pandemic and increased to 8.3 percent in post pandemic periods. Service sector made a boom in exports too. It sparked to 13.5 percent growth in 2024-25, against dormant growth in merchandise exports by 0.14 percent. Even during pandemic period, service exports pitched a continuous upward trend, against erratic growth in merchandise exports. Service exports accounted for nearly 47 percent in India's total exports. India ranks 7th in the global service exports. It accounted for 4.3 percent in global exports in 2023-24, from 1.9 percent in 2005. The unhindered growth in service sector as well as hike in exports of services leveraged higher potential for local demand market. Given the sustainable growth in GDP, driven mainly by service sector, rural and semi-urban consumption spurred. The transformation in the financial management system and dynamism, such as expansion of banking facilities in non-urban areas and rapid growth in digitization, coupled with growth in agriculture, evoked a new era of domestic demand.

Operation Sindoor: India's resolute stand against terror

The serene meadows of Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir, often dubbed the "mini Switzerland" for their breathtaking beauty, were shattered by a horrific terrorist attack that claimed the lives of 26 innocent civilians, including one Nepali national on April 22, 2025. The assailants, operatives of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and its proxy, The Resistance Front (TRF), deliberately targeted Hindu tourists, executing them with chilling precision in front of their families. This barbaric act, the deadliest civilian attack in India since the 2008 Mumbai massacre, was not merely an assault on lives but a calculated attempt to disrupt the fragile peace in Kashmir, destabilize its burgeoning tourism industry, and incite communal strife across the nation. India's response, meticulously planned and executed, culminated in Operation Sindoor—a pre-dawn, tri-service military operation on May 7, 2025, that targeted nine terrorist camps across Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). This article explores the context, execution, and implications of India's resolute counter-terrorism strategy, weaving together the diplomatic, economic, and military dimensions of its response to the Pahalgam atrocity.

The Pahalgam attack was a stark reminder of Pakistan's decades-long strategy of using terrorism as a low-cost instrument of warfare against India, often shielded by the specter of nuclear escalation. Since the late 1980s, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has nurtured militant groups like LeT, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and Hizbul Mujahideen to foment insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir, resulting in thousands of deaths, including the forced exodus of Kashmiri Pandits and high-profile attacks such as the 1993 Mumbai bombings, the 2001 Parliament attack, and the 2008 Mumbai siege. The 2019 Pulwama bombing, which killed 40 Indian paramilitary personnel, prompted India's first overt military response with airstrikes on a JeM camp in Balakot, marking a shift from strategic restraint to proactive deterrence. The Pahalgam attack, however, crossed a new threshold with its brazen targeting of civilians, particularly Hindu tourists, in a region that had seen relative calm following the abrogation of Article 370 in

2019 and a surge in tourism, with over 23 million domestic and 40,000 foreign visitors in 2024.

India's initial response was multifaceted, blending diplomatic, economic, and political measures to isolate Pakistan internationally and signal its resolve domestically. On April 24, 2025, the Cabinet Committee on Security, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, announced the suspension of the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, a landmark agreement governing the sharing of six rivers critical to both nations. This move, justified by Pakistan's persistent support for cross-border terrorism, was a bold escalation, prompting Pakistan to label it an "act of war." India also closed the Integrated Check Post at Attari, suspended the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme, and revoked all visas for Pakistani nationals, giving them 48 hours to leave the country. Diplomatic ties were downgraded, with military advisors from both high commissions declared persona non grata, and India imposed a comprehensive ban on Pakistani imports, airspace access, and port entry. These measures, while severe, were carefully calibrated to avoid immediate military confrontation, allowing India time to build a global consensus on Pakistan's complicity.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri played a pivotal role in this diplomatic offensive, briefing envoys from 25 countries, including G20 partners, Gulf states, and notably China, despite strained bilateral ties. India presented evidence of cross-border linkages, including intelligence linking the attackers to LeT and JeM camps in Pakistan. The international community's response was largely supportive, with the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Russia condemning the attack and affirming India's right to self-defense. A closed-door meeting of the United Nations Security Council, convened at Pakistan's request, rejected Islamabad's claim that Pahalgam was an Indian false-flag operation, further isolating Pakistan diplomatically. Only China and Turkey, Pakistan's steadfast allies, demurred, with China reportedly watering down a UNSC statement condemning the attack.

Prime Minister Modi's personal outreach to leaders in the US, UK, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Russia, alongside Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar's briefing to Iran's visiting Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Aragchi on May 7, underscored India's commitment to galvanizing global support.

Despite these diplomatic successes, India recognized that economic and political measures alone could not deter Pakistan's terror infrastructure. For two weeks, New Delhi waited, hoping Islamabad would dismantle the camps and punish the perpetrators. Instead, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif denied involvement, offered a "neutral" investigation, and accused India of war-mongering, while Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and PPP Chairman Bilawal

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Dipak Kurmi

Bhutto-Zardari issued provocative threats, including warnings of "blood flowing in rivers" if water supplies were disrupted. Pakistan's ceasefire violations along the Line of Control (LoC) intensified, with unprovoked firing reported for nine consecutive nights, further escalating tensions. Credible intelligence also revealed that Pakistan was amassing more terrorists at these camps for additional attacks, leaving India with no choice but to act decisively.

Operation Sindoor, launched at 1:05 AM on May 7, 2025, was a masterclass in military precision and strategic restraint. Coordinated by the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force, the operation targeted nine terror facilities in Muzaffargarh, Kotli, Bahawalpur, Rawalakot, Chakswari, Bhimber, Neelum Valley, Jhelum, and Chakwal—five in PoK and four in mainland Pakistan's Punjab province, the heartland of its ruling elite. These sites, long associated with LeT and JeM, included Bahawalpur, JeM's headquarters, and Muridke, LeT's nerve center. In a mere 25 minutes, 24 missiles struck with surgical accuracy, killing over 70 terrorists and injuring 60 others, according to Indian sources. The strikes deliberately avoided civilian, economic, or military targets, minimizing collateral damage and reinforcing India's intent to target terrorism, not the Pakistani state. Foreign Secretary

Misri described the operation as "measured, non-escalatory, proportionate, and responsible," aimed at dismantling terror infrastructure and preempting further attacks.

The operation's codename, "Sindoor," carried profound symbolism, evoking the sacred vermilion worn by married Hindu women and serving as a tribute to the widows who witnessed their husbands' executions in Pahalgam. It also signaled a doctrinal shift in India's counter-terrorism strategy under Prime Minister Modi. Unlike the hesitancy of past decades, when India refrained from striking deep within Pakistani territory, Operation Sindoor demonstrated an expanded reach and unwavering resolve. The strikes in Sialkot, Muridke, and Bahawalpur—well-known terror hubs—sent a clear message: no sanctuary is off-limits for India's military in the face of terrorism. This approach builds on the 2019 Balakot airstrikes, which targeted a JeM camp in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, but goes further by penetrating Pakistan's Punjab heartland, a region historically shielded from such actions.

Domestically, Operation Sindoor galvanized political unity. An all-party meeting on April 24 affirmed bipartisan support for a strong response, with leaders across the spectrum condemning Pakistan's actions. The Congress Working Committee, while urging a time-bound investigation into security lapses, endorsed the military operation, as did regional leaders like Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) took charge of the Pahalgam probe, deploying teams to Anantnag to reconstruct the attack and gather forensic evidence, ensuring that the investigation would reach its logical conclusion. The government also moved swiftly to counter communal tensions, with Home Minister Amit Shah directing state governments to prevent retaliatory violence against Muslims or Kashmiri students, as isolated incidents of harassment were reported in Punjab and Haryana.

The operation's success, however, does not guarantee a change in Pakistan's behavior. Pakistan's military establishment, led by ISI chief and newly appointed National Se-

curity Adviser Lt Gen Muhammad Asim Malik, has long viewed terrorism as a strategic asset against India. Prime Minister Sharif's pledge of retaliation and the foreign office's vow to respond "at a time and place of its choosing" suggest that Pakistan may escalate, potentially through further ceasefire violations or missile tests, as indicated by its planned ballistic missile exercises. Pakistan's suspension of the 1972 Simla Agreement, which governs the LoC and mandates peaceful dispute resolution, risks further destabilizing the region by undermining the sanctity of the LoC. Moreover, Pakistan's nuclear posturing, exemplified by Minister Hanif Abbasi's threats, continues to complicate India's response calculus, though analysts like Lt Gen (Retd) D.S. Hooda argue that such rhetoric has lost its deterrent effect.

The international community now faces a critical test. While the US, UK, and others have supported India's right to self-defense, their leverage over Pakistan—through economic aid and military cooperation—must be used to compel Islamabad to dismantle its terror infrastructure. Pakistan's duplicity, exemplified by its harboring of Osama bin Laden while posing as a US ally, underscores the need for sustained pressure. India, for its part, must remain vigilant, preparing for potential Pakistani retaliation while strengthening its domestic security framework. The Pahalgam attack exposed lapses in intelligence and local policing, necessitating greater outreach to Kashmiri communities and investment in technology-enabled border defenses.

Operation Sindoor is not merely a military triumph but a moral and strategic assertion of India's sovereignty. It marks the end of an era of impunity for Pakistan's terror factories and establishes a new red line: any attack on Indian soil will meet a swift, proportionate, and decisive response. As the widows of Pahalgam mourn, the vermilion of Sindoor symbolizes both their grief and India's unbreakable resolve. The ball is now in Pakistan's court—whether it chooses reason or a suicidal course will shape the future of this volatile region. *(The writer can be reached at dipakurmigpld@gmail.com)*

The dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma

By: Diganta Barooah

Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, the current and 15th Chief Minister of Assam since 2021, is a leader in the true sense of the term. Who can deny his eloquence and dynamism in tackling any kind of adversity thrown before him? His perfect acumen in defeating any kind of adversity is a matter of envy to his detractors. He is the perfect example of a politician that should be. Right from his formative years, he has been acquiring skills and experience in tackling any kind of political challenges vis-a-vis his political detractors. Born on 1st February in the year 1969, he attended his kindergarten at the Balya Bhawan of Jorhat. He did his high schooling at Kamrup Academy, Guwahati and completed his Higher Secondary, Graduation and Master's Degree from the erstwhile Cotton College (Now Cotton University) of Guwahati in Assam. Dr Sarma also completed his LLB from BRM Government Law College of Guwahati. He did his PhD from Gauhati University of Assam. He practised law at the Gauhati High Court for some period. Dr Sarma was the General Secretary of the Students Union of Cotton College during those formative years. Dr Sarma was a former member of the Indian National Congress. He joined the Bharatiya Janata Party on 23rd August, 2015 and after that he was made convener of NEDA (The North East Democratic Alliance). He is a five time Member of the Assam Legislative Assembly from the Jalukbari Constituency. He has been elected from the Jalukbari Constituency continuously since 2001. Dr Sarma assumed the Office of the Chief Minister of Assam on 10th May, 2021. Himanta Biswa Sarma, the 15th Chief Minister of Assam, stands as one of the most influential political figures in Northeast India today. Known for his strategic foresight, efficient administration, and grassroots connection, Sarma has played a pivotal role in redefining Assam's political and developmental trajectory. His journey from student activism to state leadership is marked by political agility, social reform, and a deep understanding of Assam's challenges and potential.

While being in the INC Sarma contested the Assam Legislative Assembly elections in 2001 from the Jalukbari constituency, defeating a seasoned opponent. This marked the beginning of his uninterrupted winning streak from Jalukbari, having been elected five times consecutively. From 2001 to 2015, Sarma held various key ministerial portfolios under the Congress government in Assam: #Minister of Health and Family Welfare #Minister of Education #Minister of Planning & Development #Minis-

ter of Finance #Minister of Public Works Department (PWD) During this period, he earned accolades for: #Expanding Assam's healthcare infrastructure, especially in rural areas #Launching the Mrityunjay 108 emergency ambulance service #Introducing reforms in public education and school teacher recruitment #Pushing for higher budget allocations to social welfare sectors. In August 2015, Himanta Biswa Sarma made headlines when he resigned from the Congress and joined the BJP, citing lack of recognition and internal mismanagement. This political shift became a watershed moment in Assam's political history. Sarma quickly became one of the most influential leaders in the BJP's Northeastern expansion strategy.

During his Convener'ship of NEDA, he was instrumental in building regional alliances and strengthening BJP's presence in:

- Assam
- Arunachal Pradesh
- Manipur
- Meghalaya
- Nagaland
- Tripura

His meticulous planning and electoral strategy led the BJP to a historic victory in the 2016 Assam Assembly elections, ousting the Congress from power for the first time in 15 years. Himanta Biswa Sarma as Chief Minister of Assam: Following BJP's second consecutive victory in the 2021 Assembly Elections, Himanta Biswa Sarma was unanimously chosen by the party as the Chief Minister of Assam, succeeding Sarbananda Sonowal. He took oath on May 10, 2021, ushering in a new era of assertive and proactive governance. Since assuming office, Himanta Biswa Sarma has launched a series of impactful reforms and schemes aimed at governance modernization, economic development, and social welfare.

Mission Basundhara : A landmark initiative aimed at digitizing land records, reducing land-related disputes, and easing the burden of bureaucratic paperwork. Over 8 lakh applications were received in the first phase.

Orunodoi Scheme : One of the largest direct benefit transfer (DBT) programs in Assam. Under this, economically disadvantaged women receive monthly financial aid to ensure nutritional and financial security for their families.

Healthcare Modernization : In the healthcare sector, Sarma pushed for: #New medical colleges in Kokrajhar, Tinsukia, and Nalbari #Expansion of ICU beds and oxygen generation units during COVID-19 #Health insurance schemes for frontline workers of Government of Assam.

Assam Police Reform : The Sarma-

led government has adopted a tough-on-crime policy. The "encounter culture" has returned, with the police cracking down heavily on drug rackets and organized crime. While this has improved law and order, it has also sparked criticism from civil rights groups.

Educational Transformation : From merging poorly performing schools to introducing smart classrooms, the government is focused on quality over quantity. Teacher recruitment has become more merit-based, and digital learning initiatives have been expanded.

Employment Generation : The Assam government announced plans to provide 1 lakh government jobs, and significant steps have been taken from time to time for streamlined recruitment drives.

Flood Management and Infrastructure : Flooding is a chronic problem in Assam. Sarma's administration has prioritized the construction of embankments, dredging of rivers, and setting up flood response teams. Advantage Assam 2.0 :

Building on its strengths, Assam hosted the "Advantage Assam 2.0: Investment and Infrastructure Summit 2025" to promote economic growth, industrialization, and global collaborations. Its objective was to showcase Assam as a premier investment destination. The Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment and Infrastructure Summit 2025 in Guwahati, was held from 25th to 26th February. It included an inaugural Session, seven ministerial sessions and 14 thematic sessions. It is one of the greatest achievement of Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma as investors from other parts of the world and from India came to our state and promised large scale investments in our state Assam. Himanta Biswa Sarma has emphasized population control, especially in minority-dominated districts. He advocates for educational awareness and voluntary adoption of birth control measures. His stand has received support from some quarters and criticism from others. He also called for ending child marriages in Assam, resulting in mass arrests across the state. This crackdown, though seen as controversial, underscores his commitment to long-term social reform.

Cabinet Decisions : Since 2021, 112 Cabinet Meetings have resulted in 1,513 decisions, with an impressive 90.5% implementation rate.

Departmental Meetings : 261 meetings since 2021, yielding 3,289 decisions. **District Visits** : The Assam Cabinet undertook a commendable 1,945 district visits, reflecting a hands-on approach to governance. The year 2023 witnessed a series of noteworthy events, including Mega Bihu celebrations that set Guinness World Records. The Amrit Brikshya Andolan marked an-

other significant achievement, establishing 10 Guinness World Records. Other cultural milestones included Khel Maharan and Sanskritik Mahasangam, showcasing the rich cultural tapestry of Assam.

Atmanirbhar Assam Abhijan: A Beacon of Economic Progress :

Under the visionary leadership of the CM, the Atmanirbhar Assam Abhijan has made substantial strides, providing more than 1 lakh jobs and fostering economic self-reliance. The Assam BJP has hailed Chief Minister Sarma's leadership as a driving force behind the state's rapid development. In a statement, State BJP of Assam highlighted key achievements, including Assam's ambitious plan to launch its own satellite—an initiative aimed at tackling floods, monitoring agriculture, and addressing border issues. This move positions Assam as the first Indian state to launch its own satellite, marking a milestone in technological advancement. The State BJP of Assam contrasted the current government's performance with the previous Congress-led administration, pointing out that Assam's capital expenditure has grown from ₹ 3,000 crore in 2015-16 to ₹ 24,000 crore in 2025-26. He attributed this rise to the BJP government's commitment to infrastructure and economic growth. Emphasizing BJP's focus on empowerment, the State BJP cited initiatives such as Arunodoi, Nijut Moira, the Women's Entrepreneurship Scheme, and the CM's Atmanirbhar Scheme. These programs have supported communities like the Morans, Motoks, Tea Tribes, Bodos, and Koch-Rajbongshis, promoting economic self-reliance. Assam's cultural heritage has also gained global recognition, with traditional performances like Bihu, Jhumur, and Bagumba aiming to set world records. Assam BJP president Dilip Saikia appreciated the 2025-26 Budget presented by Finance Minister Ajanta Neog, calling it inclusive and beneficial for all communities. He highlighted provisions for over 25,000 Naamghars (Vaishnavite prayer halls) and religious institutions, reinforcing Assam's spiritual heritage. Saikia reiterated that BJP's welfare schemes, including Orunodoi, PM Awas Yojana, PM Kisan, and Nijut Moira, have been implemented without bias, benefiting people across all religious and linguistic backgrounds. This can only happen with the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma. The BJP reaffirmed its commitment to "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas," emphasizing that regions with significant minority populations, such as Barpeta, Dhubri, and Morigaon, have also received the benefits of government schemes. The Chief Minister launched a zero-cost insurance scheme for government employees in

collaboration with SBI and UBI. Under this scheme, families of state employees can claim ₹ 10 lakh for natural deaths and up to ₹ 1 crore for accidental deaths. "This initiative ensures that our employees and their families feel financially secure, no matter what happens," Chief Minister remarked. He also introduced Swagata Swatirtha, an online portal to streamline transfer processes for third and fourth-grade employees. The portal will allow employees to select up to five district preferences, eliminating the need for manual interventions. "We want to end the days when employees had to knock on doors for transfers," Sarma said, emphasising on transparency of the automated system. Another major highlight was a women empowerment scheme, aimed at supporting 30 lakh women with tiered financial aid. Women will receive ₹10,000 in the first year, ₹25,000 in the second (half funded by banks), and ₹50,000 in the third. The Honorable Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma stated several key achievements in the year 2024 :

Economic Growth : Assam's GSDP rose to ₹6.43 lakh crore in 2024, with an ambitious target of ₹7.12 lakh crore for 2025. "We are well on track to making Assam a million-dollar economy," he said.

Crime Reduction : The state reported a 62% reduction in crime, with only 40,000 cases registered in 2024 compared to 1.3 lakh in 2020.

Tourism Boom : Assam welcomed over 75 lakh tourists, including 23,000 foreigners. Kaziranga National Park, especially after visits by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the President Droupadi Murmu, emerged as a key attraction. The Chief Minister also highlighted cultural milestones, including Assamese being granted classical language status, marking the culmination of years of struggle. "This recognition is a proud moment for Assam and our linguistic heritage," he said.

Infrastructure & Industry : One of the major achievements was the initiation of the Tata Semiconductor Facility, which is expected to create 30,000 direct and indirect jobs. Scheduled for completion by 2025, the project places Assam at the forefront of Industry 4.0. On infrastructure, the state constructed 1,236 bridges from 2021 to 2024. Announcing upcoming projects, the Chief Minister stressed on the ₹12,000 crore tunnel between Numaligarh and Gohpur and a ₹32,000 crore expressway that will cut travel time to Silchar to five hours. Other upcoming projects include a 32-km elevated corridor in Kaziranga and the construction of Swahid Kanaklata University, which

will focus on futuristic subjects such as robotics, Artificial Intelligence, and AR.

Governance & Social Welfare :

Despite the Lok Sabha Model Code of Conduct, the state government conducted 33 cabinet meetings in 2024 and implemented numerous welfare schemes, CM said. Under Mission Basundhara 1 and 2, the government resolved several land disputes and announced the launch of Mission Basundhara 3. CM Sarma also praised the success of the Arunodoi Scheme, which, he claimed has evolved into a comprehensive poverty alleviation model and inspired similar initiatives across India. "In 2025, we aim to continue this momentum by focusing on inclusive growth and welfare," the CM said recently. While critics label him as authoritarian, his supporters see him as a doer, not a talker. His ability to connect with the grassroots, along with strategic political maneuvering, has made him the BJP's most valuable asset in Northeast India. Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma's growing influence in national politics cannot be overlooked. Besides being the Convener of NEDA, he is often involved in: #BJP's election strategy in other States of India. #National debates on federal policies affecting the Northeast #Diplomatic meetings involving cross-border issues with Bhutan and Bangladesh. Political observers often see him as a potential Union Cabinet Minister or even a Prime Ministerial candidate from the Northeast in the long term. Himanta Biswa Sarma is married to Riniki Bhuyan Sarma, a prominent entrepreneur and media personality. The couple has two children. Himanta Biswa Sarma's leadership represents the emergence of a bold, new political narrative in Assam—one rooted in development, identity, and reform. Whether it is cracking down on crime, promoting digital governance, or positioning Assam as a driver of Northeast India's growth, Sarma continues to reshape the state's destiny. As Assam treads into a new decade of transformation, the role of leaders like Himanta Biswa Sarma becomes more crucial than ever. Love him or criticize him, one cannot deny that he is one of the most consequential Chief Ministers Assam has ever seen. As long as Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma is the Chief Minister of our beloved state Assam, we can be optimistic about the growth and development of Assam. His dynamic leadership will definitely and surely soar Assam to greater heights in the years and years to come. *(The author is the Development Officer, Transformation and Development Department. He can be reached at 7002699011/9678785439 or digantabarooah@gmail.com)*

The role of hobby and personality in career building

By: Dr. Buljit Buragohain

A student's hobby and personality play a vital role in shaping his career. In today's complex and competitive world, career choices are no longer confined to academic achievements or societal expectations. A career is a long journey where personal satisfaction, interest, and mental peace go hand in hand. In this journey, a student's own interests (hobbies) and personality traits can act as the foundation for a stress-free, successful, and fulfilling life.

A hobby is something a person is naturally drawn to and enjoys doing spontaneously. A student's hobbies often reveal their hidden talents. If these hobbies are carefully identified and nurtured, they can guide students toward promising career paths. Examples- A student interested in drawing, painting, or design can excel

in fields like graphic design, animation, fashion design, interior design, architecture etc. Those who enjoy reading and writing can pursue journalism, content creation, literature, translation, editorial work, blogging etc. Students passionate about music, dance, acting, or photography can thrive in the creative arts. Students who love coding, gaming, or working with computers may find ideal careers in software engineering, web development, game design, or data science.

Hobbies not only guide career choices but also enhance essential life skills such as creativity, discipline, focus, problem-solving ability, and self-confidence. Pursuing a hobby-based career fosters satisfaction and deep interest, making it easier to stay dedicated both academically and professionally.

Personality is a complex

combination of thoughts, behaviours, feelings, and actions that shape how an individual functions. It determines how a person behaves at work, makes decisions, and interacts with others. In career selection, personality traits are highly relevant. Examples - Extroverted students usually enjoy being around people. They often excel in fields like marketing, public relations, teaching, hospitality etc. Introverted students prefer focused and independent work, often thriving in careers such as research, programming, analysis, accounting, data analysis etc. Students with practical and analytical minds may lean toward technical, scientific, mathematical etc as careers. Those with empathetic and caring natures may find success in professions like healthcare, nursing, social work, counseling etc.

When a student chooses a

career that matches their personality, they experience more job satisfaction, reduced stress, and a more stable, long-term career.

When a student's hobbies and personality traits align with the demands of a career, they are more likely to feel satisfied with their work; demonstrate excellence and productivity; experience less stress and burnout; remain in the same field for a longer time; face challenges with confidence. This alignment transforms a career from just a means of earning to a meaningful and enthusiastic part of life.

Parents and schools play a crucial role in helping students identify their hobbies and personalities and guide them in the right direction. Schools can introduce vocational subjects, creative curricula, and subject-based projects to help students dis-



cover their interests. Practical exposure through internships, volunteering, or job shadowing helps students gain real-world experience. Regular career guidance should be offered in schools. Trained counsellors can use interest tests, personality tests, and aptitude tests to help students find the right path. Parents should recognize and support their child's inner interests and natural inclinations. Choosing a career

based solely on tradition or financial gains is not always suitable.

In today's world, career planning is a challenging and multifaceted process. In this process, hobbies and personality traits are indispensable. While hobbies nurture inner interests, tendencies, and creativity, personality shapes behaviour, thinking, and workplace effectiveness. When both factors align, a career becomes not just a job but

a meaningful and fulfilling life path. Thus, recognizing and valuing these factors is essential for building a stable and future-ready career. **(The author is a Career Counselor and Assistant Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Assam Don Bosco University. Anyone interested in learning more about career opportunities may contact 9435188630 on Saturdays from 6 to 9 PM for career counselling)**

GMDWSB Recruitment 2025 – 12 Engineer, Assistant & Grade IV Posts

Last Date: 11/05/2025

Guwahati Metropolitan Drinking Water & Sewerage Board (GMDWSB) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 12 Engineer, Assistant and Grade-IV posts under Project Implementation Unit (PIU) of South East Guwahati Water Supply Project (SEGWSP) under Guwahati Metropolitan Drinking Water & Sewerage Board. Interested and eligible candidates may apply.

1. Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE- Civil)
No of posts: 02 posts in PIU-SEGWSP, Guwahati.

Eligibility Criteria: Full time B.E./B.Tech Graduate in Civil Engineering from a recognized University or AICTE affiliated Institution. Having a post graduate degree would be an added advantage. Minimum 12 years of professional experience in works related to Civil is a must out of which 06 years of externally aided project (EAP) experience in civil works related to water-supply is desired. Experience in surface water source water supply projects shall be given preference. Having experiences in field execution work shall be given preference.

Age Limit: 60 years.
Remuneration Range: ₹ 50,000 to ₹ 1,00,000 per month.

2. Assistant Engineer (AE- Civil)
No of posts: 04 posts in PIU-SEGWSP, Guwahati.

Eligibility Criteria: Full time B.E. / B.Tech Graduate in Civil Engineering from a recognized University or AICTE affiliated Institution. Minimum 07 years of professional experience in works related to Civil is a must out of which 04 years of externally aided project (EAP) experience in civil works related to water-supply is desired. Experience in surface water source water supply projects shall be given preference. Having experiences in field execution work shall be given preference.

Age Limit: 50 years.
Remuneration Range: ₹ 40,000 – ₹ 70,000 per month.

3. Junior Engineer (JE- CIVIL)
No of posts: 04 posts in PIU-SEGWSP, Guwahati.

Eligibility Criteria: Full time 03 years Diploma holder in Civil Engineering from a recognized University or AICTE affiliated Institution. Minimum 03 years of professional experience in works related to civil works related to water-supply. Having experiences in field execution work shall be given preference. Having experiences in externally aided projects shall be given preferences.

Age Limit: 45 years.
Remuneration Range: ₹ 30,000 to ₹ 50,000 per month.

4. Senior Administrative Assistant
No of posts: 01 position in PIU-SEGWSP, Guwahati.
Eligibility Criteria: Full time Graduate in any field from recognized University/Institution. Minimum 05 years of experience in the field of administration in Government related sectors/projects. Experience in externally aided projects of Government of Assam shall be given preference.

Age Limit: 45 years.
Remuneration Range: ₹ 20,000 to ₹ 40,000 per month.

5. Grade-IV
No of posts: 01 posts in PIU-SEGWSP, Guwahati.
Eligibility Criteria: Should be minimum 8th standard pass. Minimum experience of 1 year in the same field. Candidates having other skills like driving, plumbing, cooking etc. shall be given preference.

Age Limit: 55 years.
Remuneration Range: ₹ 14,000 to ₹ 22,000 per month.

How to Apply for GMDWSB Recruitment ?

Eligible candidates may submit their CVs along with self-attested documents of Educational Qualification, Work Experience, Proof of birth certificate and Colored passport size photograph and the scan copies of the following documents to the office of the Project Director, SEGWSP, via email career.segwsp@gmail.com, latest by 5:00 P.M. on 11th May, 2025.

^ Copies of Pass certificates (Xth , XIIth , Graduation, Post Graduation)
^ Copies of work experience certificate (including the present work)
^ Copy of proof of D.O.B

^ Certificate from last Employer

All the above certificates/documents should be self attested.

Candidates should clearly mention the name of the post applied for and total years of experience in the application or in the CV.

Water Resources Department Recruitment 2025 – 212 AE & JE Vacancy

Assam Public Service Commission.

Last Date: 14, 16 & 22/05/2025

Assam Public Service Commission has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 212 Assistant Engineer (Civil), Assistant Engineer (Mechanical) and Junior Engineer (Civil) vacancy under the Water Resources Department, Govt. of Assam. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

Water Resources Department Recruitment 2025

1. Assistant Engineer (Civil)

No of posts: 45

Category-wise vacancy:

UR: 5, # SC: 7, # STP: 5, # STH: 4, # OBC/MOBC: 24

Pay: Rs. 30,000/- to Rs. 1,10,000/- PM (PB-4) with Grade Pay of Rs.12,700/- PM
Age Limit: The candidates should not be less than 21 years of age and not more than 38 years of age as on 01-01-2025.

Educational Qualification:

(i) Candidate must possess a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering/Technology in Civil Engineering (B.E/B.Tech in Civil Engineering) from an Indian or Foreign University recognized by Govt.

OR

Candidate must have passed (Part A & B) of AMIE (India) in Civil Engineering if he/she had enrolled in AMIE course on or before 31-05-2013.

(ii) The Bachelor's Degree in Engineering / Technology must be a Regular Course recognized by AICTE/ UGC as mentioned in Point No. (i). Bachelor's Degree in Engineering / Technology obtained through Distance Mode of Education, by whatever name called will not be accepted.

2. Assistant Engineer (Mechanical)

No of posts: 7

Category-wise vacancy:

UR: 5, # SC: 0, # STP: 1, # STH: 0, # OBC/MOBC: 1

Pay: Rs. 30,000/- to Rs. 1,10,000/- PM (PB-4) with Grade Pay of Rs.12,700/- PM
Age Limit: The candidates should not be less than 21 years of age and not more than 38 years of age as on 01-01-2025.

Educational Qualification:

(i) Candidate must possess a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering/Technology in Mechanical Engineering (B.E/B.Tech in Civil Engineering) from an Indian or Foreign University recognized by Govt.

OR

Candidate must have passed (Part A & B) of AMIE (India) in Mechanical Engineering if he/she had enrolled in AMIE course on or before 31-05-2013.

(ii) The Bachelor's Degree in Engineering / Technology must be a Regular Course recognized by AICTE/ UGC as mentioned in Point No. (i). Bachelor's Degree in Engineering / Technology obtained through Distance Mode of Education, by whatever name called will not be accepted.

3. Junior Engineer (Civil)

No of posts: 160

Category-wise vacancy:

UR: 88, # SC: 15, # STP: 20, # STH: 7, # OBC/MOBC: 22

Pay: Rs. 14,000/- to Rs. 70,000/- PM (PB-2) with Grade Pay of Rs.8,700/- PM
Age Limit: The candidates should not be less than 18 years of age and not more than 40 years of age as on 01-01-2025.

Educational Qualification:

(i) Candidate must have 3 (Three) years Diploma in Civil Engineering/ Construction Technology/ Civil & Planning from any technical institute recognized by AICTE.

(ii) The Diploma course in Civil Engineering/ Construction Technology must be a Regular Full time course. Diploma in Civil Engineering/ Construction Technology obtained through Distance mode of education, by whatever name called, will not be accepted.

Eligibility Criteria of Water Resources Department Recruitment

Residency:

(i) The candidate must be a permanent resident of Assam.

(ii) The candidate must produce PRC issued in Assam for educational purpose/ Employment Exchange Registration certificate along with the application form.

Nationality: Candidates must be Indian citizens as defined in Article 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India.

Age Relaxation: The upper age limit is relaxable as mentioned below

By 5 years for SC/ST candidates i.e. up to 43 years.

By 3 years for OBC/MOBC candidates i.e. up to 41 years.

For Persons with benchmark disability (PwBD) by 10 years.

Application Fee:

General/EWS: 297.20, # OBC/MOBC: 197.20

SC/ST/BPL/ PwBD: 47.20, # Payment Mode: Online

How to Apply for Water Resources Recruitment ?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for Water Resources Department AE Vacancy by visiting at official recruitment portal of Assam Public Service Commission. They may follow below mentioned steps .

Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

Click on Online Application Form link .

A new webpage will be opened.

Enter all your personal and educational details as required .

Upload your passport sized photograph and signature and other required documents.

Pay the application fee as per your category and at the end click on submit button.

Don't forget to take a print of submitted application form .

Important Dates of Water Resources Recruitment 2025

Starting date of submission of online application: 15th April 2025 [AE (Civil)]

Last date of submission of online application: 14th May 2025

Starting date of submission of online application: 23rd April 2025 [AE (Mech)]

Last date of submission of online application: 22nd May 2025

Starting date of submission of online application: 17th April 2025 [JE (Civil)]

Last date of submission of online application: 16th May 2025

Water Resources Department Recruitment 2025 – 229 AE & JE Vacancy

Last Date: 14/5/2025, 16/5/2025, 22/5/2025 & 7/6/2025

Assam Public Service Commission has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 229 Assistant Engineer (Civil), Assistant Engineer (Mechanical), Junior Engineer (Mechanical) and Junior Engineer (Civil) vacancy under the Water Resources Department, Govt. of Assam. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

1. Assistant Engineer (Civil)

No of posts: 45

Category-wise vacancy:

UR: 5 # SC: 7 # STP: 5 # STH: 4 # OBC/MOBC: 24

Pay: ₹ 30,000 to ₹ 1,10,000 PM (PB-4) with Grade Pay of ₹ 12,700 PM

Age Limit: The candidates should not be less than 21 years of age and not more than 38 years of age as on 01-01-2025.

Educational Qualification:

(i) Candidate must possess a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering/Technology in Civil Engineering (B.E/B.Tech in Civil Engineering) from an Indian or Foreign University recognized by Govt.

OR

Candidate must have passed (Part A & B) of AMIE (India) in Civil Engineering if he/she had enrolled in AMIE course on or before 31-05-2013.

(ii) The Bachelor's Degree in Engineering / Technology must be a Regular Course recognized by AICTE/ UGC as mentioned in Point No. (i). Bachelor's Degree in Engineering / Technology obtained through Distance Mode of Education, by whatever name called will not be accepted.

2. Assistant Engineer (Mechanical)

No of posts: 7

Category-wise vacancy:

UR: 5 # SC: 0 # STP: 1 # STH: 0 # OBC/MOBC: 1

Pay: ₹ 30,000 to ₹ 1,10,000 PM (PB-4) with Grade Pay of ₹ 12,700 PM

Age Limit: The candidates should not be less than 21 years of age and not more than 38 years of age as on 01-01-2025.

Educational Qualification:

(i) Candidate must possess a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering/Technology in Mechanical Engineering (B.E/B.Tech in Civil Engineering) from an Indian or Foreign University recognized by Govt.

OR

Candidate must have passed (Part A & B) of AMIE (India) in Mechanical Engineering if he/she had enrolled in AMIE course on or before 31-05-2013.

(ii) The Bachelor's Degree in Engineering / Technology must be a Regular Course recognized by AICTE/ UGC as mentioned in Point No. (i). Bachelor's Degree in Engineering / Technology obtained through Distance Mode of Education, by whatever name called will not be accepted.

3. Junior Engineer (Civil)

No of posts: 160

Category-wise vacancy:

UR: 88, # SC: 15, # STP: 20, # STH: 7, # OBC/MOBC: 22

Pay: ₹ 30,000 to ₹ 1,10,000 PM (PB-4) with Grade Pay of ₹ 12,700 PM

Age Limit: The candidates should not be less than 21 years of age and not more than 38 years of age as on 01-01-2025.

Educational Qualification:

(i) Candidate must possess a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering/Technology in Mechanical Engineering (B.E/B.Tech in Civil Engineering) from an Indian or Foreign University recognized by Govt.

OR

Candidate must have passed (Part A & B) of AMIE (India) in Mechanical Engineering if he/she had enrolled in AMIE course on or before 31-05-2013.

(ii) The Bachelor's Degree in Engineering / Technology must be a Regular Course recognized by AICTE/ UGC as mentioned in Point No. (i). Bachelor's Degree in Engineering / Technology obtained through Distance Mode of Education, by whatever name called will not be accepted.

3. Junior Engineer (Civil)

No of posts: 160

Category-wise vacancy:

UR: 88 # SC: 15 # STP: 20 # STH: 7 # OBC/MOBC: 22

Pay: ₹ 14,000 to ₹ 70,000 PM (PB-2) with Grade Pay of ₹ 8,700 PM

Age Limit: The candidates should not be less than 18 years of age and not more than 40 years of age as on 01-01-2025.

Educational Qualification:

(i) Candidate must have 3 (Three) years Diploma in Civil Engineering/ Construction Technology/ Civil & Planning from any technical institute recognized by AICTE.

(ii) The Diploma course in Civil Engineering/ Construction Technology must be a Regular Full time course. Diploma in Civil Engineering/ Construction Technology obtained through Distance mode of education, by whatever name called, will not be accepted.

4. Junior Engineer (Mechanical)

No of posts: 17

Category-wise vacancy:

UR: 10, # SC: 0, # STP: 0, # STH: 2, # OBC/MOBC: 4+1

Pay: ₹ 14,000 to ₹ 70,000 PM (PB-2) with Grade Pay of ₹ 8,700 PM

Age Limit: The candidates should not be less than 18 years of age and not more than 40 years of age as on 01-01-2025.

Educational Qualification:

(i) Candidate must have 3 (Three) years Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from any technical institute recognized by AICTE.

(ii) The Diploma course in Mechanical Engineering must be a Regular Full time course. Diploma in Mechanical Engineering obtained through Distance mode of education, by whatever name called, will not be accepted.

Eligibility Criteria of Water Resources Department Recruitment

Residency:

(i) The candidate must be a permanent resident of Assam.

(ii) The candidate must produce PRC issued in Assam for educational purpose/ Employment Exchange Registration certificate along with the application form.

Nationality: Candidates must be Indian citizens as defined in Article 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India.

Age Relaxation: The upper age limit is relaxable as mentioned below

By 5 years for SC/ST candidates i.e. up to 43 years.

By 3 years for OBC/MOBC candidates i.e. up to 41 years.

For Persons with benchmark disability (PwBD) by 10 years.

Application Fee:

General/EWS: ₹ 297.20

OBC/MOBC: ₹ 197.20

SC/ST/BPL/ PwBD: ₹ 47.20

Payment Mode: Online

Important Dates of Water Resources Recruitment 2025

Starting date of submission of online application: 15th April 2025 [AE (Civil)]

Last date of submission of online application: 14th May 2025

Starting date of submission of online application: 23rd April 2025 [AE (Mech)]

Last date of submission of online application: 22nd May 2025

Starting date of submission of online application: 17th April 2025 [JE (Civil)]

Last date of submission of online application: 16th May 2025

Starting date of submission of online application: 8th May 2025 [JE (Mechanical)]

Last date of submission of online application: 7th June 2025

Russia holds Victory Day parade marking 80th anniversary of defeat of Nazi Germany

MOSCOW, May 9: Russia marked the 80th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II with a massive military parade on Red Square on Friday attended by President Vladimir Putin and foreign leaders, including Chinese President Xi Jinping and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Victory Day, which is celebrated in Russia on May 9, is the country's most important secular holiday. The parade and other ceremonies underline Moscow's efforts to project its global power and cement the alliances it has forged while seeking a counterbalance to the West amid the conflict Ukraine that has dragged into a fourth year.

World War II is a rare event in the nation's divisive history under Communist rule that is revered by all political groups, and the Kremlin has used that sentiment to encourage national pride and underline Russia's position as a global power.

The Soviet Union lost 27 million people in what it calls the Great Patriotic War in 1941-45, an enormous sacrifice that left a deep scar in the national psyche.



Speaking at the parade, Putin hailed Russian troops fighting in Ukraine, saying that "we are proud of their courage and determination, their spiritual force that always has brought us victory."

The parade featured over 11,500 troops and more than 180 military vehicles, including tanks, armoured infantry vehicles and artillery used on the battlefield in Ukraine. As a reminder of Russia's

nuclear might, launchers for the Yars nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missiles rolled across Red Square.

Fighter jets of Russian air force's aerobatic teams flew by in close formation followed by jets that trailed smoke in the colours of the national flag.

After the show, Putin shook hands with Russian military officers who led the troops on Red

Square. He also talked to a group of medal-bedecked senior North Korean officers who watched the parade, hugging one of them.

Last month, Putin thanked North Korea for fighting alongside Russian troops against Ukrainian forces and hailed their sacrifices as Pyongyang confirmed its deployment for the first time.

The Russian and North Korean statements that underlined their expanding military partnerships came after Russia said that its troops have fully reclaimed the Kursk region that Ukrainian forces seized in a surprise incursion last year.

Festivities this year were overshadowed by Ukrainian drone attacks targeting Moscow and severe disruptions at the capital's airports.

Russian flag carrier Aeroflot on Wednesday morning cancelled more than 100 flights to and from Moscow, and delayed over 140 others as the military were repelling repeated Ukrainian drone attacks on the capital.

Russian authorities have tightened security ahead of the parade and cellphone internet outages have been reported amid electronic countermeasures aimed at

foiling more potential drone attacks.

Putin had declared a unilateral 72-hour ceasefire starting May 7 to coincide with the Victory Day celebrations, but warned that Russian troops will retaliate to any attacks. Moscow has been reluctant to accept a U.S.-proposed 30-day truce that Ukraine has accepted, linking it to a halt in Western arms supplies to Ukraine and Kyiv's mobilisation effort, conditions Ukraine and its Western allies have rejected.

Ukrainian authorities reported scores of Russian strikes on Friday that killed at least two people in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions and damaged buildings.

As the Red Square parade and other festivities unfolded in Moscow, dozens of European officials were meeting in Lviv, in western Ukraine, to endorse the creation of a special tribunal tasked to prosecute Russian officials accused of war crimes.

"Today, we celebrate Europe Day with Ukraine and its people," EU foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas, wrote on X, adding that "we stand united with Ukraine for a lasting peace." (AP)

Bangladesh's interim govt mulling to ban ousted ex-PM Hasina's party

DHAKA, May 9: Bangladesh's interim government on Friday said it would take a "quick decision" on banning deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League.

The announcement by the interim government chief Professor Muhammad Yunus's office in a statement came after student-led newly floated National Citizen Party (NCP) activists overnight rallied in front of his official residence demanding Hasina's party be disbanded.

NCP leadership had spearheaded the massive student-led protests that resulted in the ouster of Hasina on August 5 last year. Those students came together to form the NCP earlier this year. "The government considers with seriousness the recent demand raised on behalf of different political parties, organisations and the people to disband Awami League over allegations of autocratic rule and terrorist activities," the interim government statement said.

The government has established contacts with different political parties and "will take a quick decision in consultation with them," it said.

The NCP set up a makeshift stage near Yunus's official residence 'Jamuna' after midnight Thursday. The party activists also offered Friday prayers at the scene.

The government statement came as leaders of different Islamist parties and groups such as Jamaat-e-Islam,

its student front Islami Chhatra Shibir and Hefazat-e-Islam on Friday also joined the rally of the NCP.

The statement urged everyone to keep restraint until a decision is made and added that the government has disbanded what it called as "terrorist Chhatra League", regarded as Awami League's front organisation.

"Our movement has started. This campaign may continue for one day or even a month. We will have to remain on the street until the announcement of banning Awami League is made," an NCP leader Sarjis Alam told the rally.

The activists also chanted slogans against the Awami League.

Earlier, NCP leader Abul Hasanat Abdullah on Thursday night initiated the sit-in protest near Yunus's residence along with several supporters and other leaders such as Nahid Islam joined him after midnight.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which was Awami League's main rival, has already distanced itself from the demand saying they are opposed to a ban on any political party. Most of the leaders of the Awami League are in jail or on the run at home and abroad.

Since its inception, NCP has been demanding a ban on Hasina's party. The former prime minister, currently believed to be in India, and several of the Awami League leaders, face a series of cases against them in various Bangladesh courts. (PTI)

Pakistan stock exchange continues to feel effects of India-Pak conflict

KARACHI, May 9: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Friday continued to feel the effects of the ongoing conflict in the region with equity investors said to have suffered 820 billion rupees in losses in the last three days.

The market opened, like the last three days, to conflicting sentiments but by close, had recovered more than 700 points.

The benchmark KSE-100 index climbed 799.65, or 0.77 per cent, to stand at 1,04,326.46 from the previous close of 1,03,526.81 at 11:06 am.

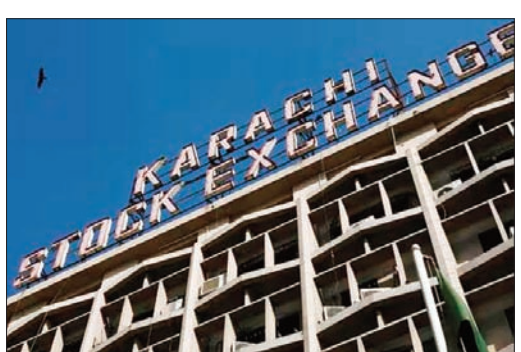
The volatility had increased following the military confrontation between India and Pakistan triggered by the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that had cross border linkages.

Yousuf M Farooq, director research at Chase Securities said such short-term volatility and corrections are a normal feature of equity markets.

"We are advising our clients that only long-term investors participate in the market, maintaining discipline during periods of uncertainty and gradually building their portfolios over time," he said.

Sana Tawfik, head of research at Arif Habib Limited, said that having suffered its largest plunge by 6.5 points in the last two days investors had shown some resilience on Friday, even with fears of increased drone attacks across the country.

"The stocks showed some recovery today and were up two per cent in the first 30 minutes of trading," she said. She said no major development of escalation by afternoon had calmed the market.



Other financial analysts said that some investors, after assuming that the conflict wouldn't break out into a full scale war, have started accumulating stocks trading at highly attractive valuations following the sharp drawdown over the past week. Early on Wednesday, Indian armed forces conducted precision strikes under Operation Sindoor in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), targeting terror launchpads.

The strikes were in response to the attack by terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam killing 26 people on April 22. Pakistan resorted to indiscriminate firing in the border areas killing 13 Indians and injuring several others. On Thursday, Pakistan increased the intensity of its unprovoked firing across the Line of Control using mortars and heavy calibre artillery in areas in Kupwara, Baramulla, Uri, Poonch, Mendhar and Rajouri sectors in Jammu and Kashmir, killing 16 people. (PTI)

Trump floats cutting China tariffs to 80%

WASHINGTON, May 9: President Donald Trump on Friday floated cutting tariffs on China to 80% ahead of a weekend meeting as he looks to deescalate the trade war.

Top US officials are set to meet with a high-level Chinese delegation this weekend in Switzerland in the first major talks between the two nations since Trump sparked a trade war with stiff tariffs on imports.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer will meet with their counterparts in Geneva in the most-senior known conversations between the two countries in months, the Trump administration announced Tuesday. It comes amid growing US market worry over the impact of the tariffs on the prices and supply of consumer goods.

No country has been hit harder by Trump's trade war than China, the world's biggest exporter and second largest economy. When Trump announced his "Liberation Day" tariffs on April 2, China retaliated with tariffs of its own, a move that Trump viewed as demonstrating a lack of respect. The tariffs on each other's goods have been mounting since then, with the US tariffs against China now at 145% and China tariffs on the US at 125%. (AP)

Ukraine says it uncovered Hungarian espionage network

KYIV, May 9: Ukraine's main security agency said Friday it had arrested two people on suspicion of spying for Hungary by gathering intelligence on Ukraine's military in the west of the country.

In a statement, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) said that two suspects, both former members of the Ukrainian military, had been detained and face charges of treason, which is punishable by life imprisonment. It was the first time in Ukraine's history that a Hungarian espionage operation had been discovered, the statement said.

The activities of the suspected spies were focused on the Zakarpattia region of western Ukraine, which borders Hungary and is home to a sizeable Hungarian ethnic minority. Budapest and Kyiv have clashed over the rights of Hungarians in Zakarpattia, most of which was part of Hungary until the end of World War I. Hungary, a member of NATO and the European Union, has taken an adversarial approach to Ukraine since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, refusing to supply



Kyiv with weaponry or to allow its transfer across Hungarian territory.

The Hungarian government, led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, has also threatened to block EU financial assistance to Ukraine, argued against sanctions on Russia and opposed Ukraine's eventual membership in the EU.

Orbán is widely seen as having the warmest relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin among EU leaders, though he has acknowledged that the war was a result of Russian aggression.

Ukraine's SBU said both suspected spies were overseen by a career officer of Hungary's military intelligence, whose identity had also been established. That officer supplied the network with cash and a special device for covert communication to support the operation, and had attempted to recruit other individuals into the network, the SBU said. The Hungarian Defence Ministry and Military National Security Service did not immediately respond to requests for comment. (AP)

Pak says economic affairs ministry's X account hacked after post seeking more loans

ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI, May 9: Pakistan on Friday said that the X account of its ministry of economic affairs was hacked and an appeal was posted on it for more international loans to meet the "heavy losses" caused by the current tensions with India.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting issued a "FAKE TWEET ALERT", saying the account was "hacked". An official also confirmed that the X account has been hacked, and "work was going to switch off the account".

The hacking led to a fake appeal by the Economic Affairs Division of the ministry, calling for more loans and urging the international community to help defuse the tensions with India following the Pahalgam terror attack. The tensions caused the stock market in Pakistan to tumble.

"Govt of Pakistan appeals to International Partners for more loans after heavy losses 'inflicted' by enemy. Amid escalating war and stocks crash, we urge international partners to help de-escalate. Nation urged to remain steadfast," the post on the account said.

Interestingly, "inflicted" was misspelt in the post, leading to suspicion as official handling accounts seldom make such glaring mistakes.

The post came after the Pakistan Stock Exchange fell by more than 6,000 points on Thursday. However, the market recovered on Friday and gained more than 1,000 points in the



morning trading session.

The timing of the post was also intriguing as it coincided with a meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) executive board to decide on the next installment of a USD 7 billion loan agreed last year.

Pakistan is expected to get more than USD 2 billion as part of the second tranche of the loans and a new loan which the fund approved to combat the impact of environmental changes. Earlier, India's Press Information Bureau had took a swipe at the fashion the economic affairs division of Pakistan was seeking alms. PIB is central government's media information and publicity arm. (PTI)

Australian prime minister says reducing student debt is re-elected govt's first priority

MELBOURNE, May 9: Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese told his government colleagues on Friday that reducing student debt would be the first legislative priority for his administration that was returned to power in the nation's first election in which the Baby Boomer generation was outnumbered by younger voters. Albanese addressed a crowded room full of centre-left Labour Party lawmakers in Parliament House for the first time since his government won an emphatic election victory on May 3.

The struggle a growing number of young Australians — particularly those burdened with student loans — face to buy their first home, due to soaring real estate prices and a lack of new housing construction was a major election issue. Albanese said a bill to reduce student debt by 20% would be the first legislation to be introduced when Parliament resumes in late July.

"I think that's important, not just in itself but for what it says about our commitment to inter-generational equity," Albanese said.

Baby Boomers are often defined as people born between World War II and 1964. Their needs have long dominated Australian election

campaigns. As vote counting continued on Friday, Labour was on track to win 88 seats in the 150-seat House of Representatives, the lower chamber where parties need a majority to form government. The party held 78 seats in the last parliament.

The conservative opposition alliance of parties was likely to claim only 41 seats.

Albanese praised the diversity of Labour's elected lawmakers and said at least 57% of them are expected to be women once the vote counting is completed. The Australian population was 50.7% female at the last census in 2021.

"I... see people of different ethnicities, different backgrounds, different experiences, different faiths. I see a diverse group of people that are truly representative of our nation," Albanese told his government colleagues.

But the government has been criticised for dropping Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus, the government's most senior Jew, and Industry and Science Minister Ed Husic, the government's most prominent Muslim, from the new Cabinet that will be sworn in on Tuesday.

The government would be the first in Aus-

tralia without a Jewish minister since 2010, Dreyfus staffer Stephen Spencer said. Dreyfus is one of three Jewish lawmakers in the government. Cabinet ministers are decided by party factions that are entitled to a proportion of ministerial seats that reflects their share of government lawmakers.

Foreign Minister Penny Wong, Defence Minister Richard Marles, Treasurer Jim Chalmers and Finance Minister Katy Gallagher have been assured they will hold their portfolios. But Albanese has yet to announce the remainder of his ministers.

The meeting of Labour lawmakers on Friday endorsed the 30 appointments to the Cabinet and junior ministries.

Health Minister Mark Butler said Anne Aly, a junior minister, was expected to be promoted to Cabinet next week which would mean a Muslim woman replacing Husic.

"It's a tough day for Ed and for Mark," Butler told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

Sydney Muslim community leader Jamal Rifi called for Albanese to intervene to keep Husic, a Sydney lawmaker, in Cabinet. (PTI)

Pope Leo XIV celebrates first Mass as pope, calls his election both cross and blessing

VATICAN CITY, May 9: Pope Leo XIV, history's first US-born pontiff, said Friday that his election was both a cross to bear and a blessing as he celebrated his first Mass as the head of the Catholic Church.

Leo spoke off-the-cuff in English in the Sistine Chapel to the cardinals who elected him to follow in the footsteps of Pope Francis, who put a commitment to social justice at the core of his papacy. He acknowledged the great responsibility they had placed on him before delivering a brief but dense homily on the need to joyfully spread Christianity in a world that often mocks it.

"You have called me to carry that cross and to be blessed with that mission, and I know I can rely on each and every one of you to walk with me as we continue as a church, as a community, as friends of Jesus, as believers, to announce the good news, to announce the Gospel," he said.

It was in the same frescoed chapel that Leo, the Chicago-born Augustinian missionary Robert Prevost, was elected Thursday afternoon as the 267th pope, overcoming the traditional taboo against a pope from the United States because of the secular power the country wields.

Leo will be formally installed as pope at

a Mass on May 18, the Vatican said Friday, and will preside over his first general audience May 21.

Leo had asked all heads of Vatican offices, who technically lost their jobs with the death of Pope Francis, to return to work until further notice, according to the Vatican. It said he wanted to take time for "reflection, prayer and dialogue" before taking any further decisions on confirming them definitively.

A Mass that may suggest his priorities

Two women delivered the readings of Scripture at the start of the Mass, perhaps an indication of Leo's intention to continue Francis' focus on expanding women's role in the church. As a cardinal, Leo put into practice one of Francis' most revolutionary reforms by having three women serve on the Vatican board that vets bishop nominations.

Speaking in near-perfect Italian, Leo lamented that the Christian faith in many parts of the world is "considered absurd," mocked or opposed in the face of temptations such as money, success and power. He complained that in many places Jesus is misunderstood, "reduced to a kind of charismatic leader or superman".

"This is true not only among non-believers but also among many baptised Christians,



who thus end up living, at this level, in a state of practical atheism," he said. "A lack of faith is often tragically accompanied by the loss of meaning in life, the neglect of mercy, appalling violations of human dignity, the crisis of the family and so many other wounds that afflict our society."

The cardinals applauded as the Mass concluded. Leo was seen wearing simple black shoes — eschewing, as Francis did, the red loafers of the papacy preferred by some tra-

ditionalist popes.

Shortly thereafter, the Vatican said Leo had asked all Vatican leaders, who technically lost their jobs when Francis died April 21, to remain in their posts.

Francis had his eye on the new pope
Francis, the first Latin American pope, clearly had his eye on Prevost and in many ways saw him as his heir apparent. He sent Prevost, who had spent years as a missionary in Peru, to take over a complicated diocese

there in 2014. Francis brought Prevost to the Vatican in 2023 to head of the Vatican's powerful Dicastery for Bishops, which vets bishop nominations around the world and is one of the most important jobs in church governance.

Since arriving in Rome, Prevost had kept a low public profile but was well known to the men who count, and respected by those who worked with him. Significantly, he presided over one of the most revolutionary reforms Francis made, when he added three women to the voting bloc that decides which bishop nominations to forward to the pope.

In a 2023 interview with Vatican News, the then-cardinal said the women had enriched the process and reaffirmed the need for the laity to have a greater role in the church. "Even the bishops of Peru called him the saint, the saint of the north, and he had time for everyone," said the Rev Alexander Lam, an Augustinian friar from Peru who knows the new pope.

An Augustinian pope
The last pope to take the name Leo was an Italian who led the church from 1878 to 1903. Leo XIII softened the church's confrontational stance toward modernity, especially science and politics, and laid the

foundation for modern Catholic social thought. His most famous encyclical — a high-level papal teaching — addressed workers' rights and capitalism at the beginning of the industrial revolution and was highlighted by the Vatican in explaining the new pope's choice of name.

The previous Leo also had close ties to the Augustinian order: He rebuilt an ancient Augustinian church and convent near his hometown of Carpineto, outside Rome, that is still in use by the order today.

Vatican watchers said Prevost's decision to name himself Leo was particularly significant given the Leo XIII's legacy of social justice and reform, suggesting continuity with some of Francis' chief concerns. Specifically, Leo cited one of Francis' key priorities of making the Catholic Church more attentive to lay people and inclusive.

"He is continuing a lot of Francis' ministry," said Natalia Imperatori-Lee, the chair of religious studies at Manhattan University in the Bronx.

She added that his election could send a message to the US church, which has been badly divided between conservatives and progressives, with much of the opposition to Francis coming from there. (AP)

Calls for more parliamentary and assembly seats Takam Sanjoy urges delimitation reforms in Arunachal Pradesh

HT Bureau

NAMSAL, May 9: Former Member of Parliament and Minister Takam Sanjoy has made a strong appeal to the Government of India, the Delimitation Commission, and the Election Commission of India to revise the existing parliamentary and legislative representation of Arunachal Pradesh. In a detailed statement, he advocated for an increase in Lok Sabha seats from 2 to 6, Rajya Sabha seats from 1 to 2, and Legislative Assembly seats from 60 to 90 through constitutional amendments.

Sanjoy emphasized the need for this "revolutionary step" to better represent the peace-loving and diverse tribal population of the state. He highlighted the historical, political, and constitutional developments that have brought Arunachal Pradesh into the mainstream of Indian democracy — from the days of NEFA (North-East Frontier Agency) to Union Territory status in 1972, and full statehood in 1987 under the leadership of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi through the 55th Amendment.

He recalled Gandhi's iconic remark, noting how Arunachal



achieved statehood without any form of agitation or protest:

"No stones thrown, no demonstration on streets, no dharnas near secretariat and no bandh calls anywhere."

Sanjoy outlined several key reasons for the proposed seat enhancement like Geopolitical sensitivity: Arunachal borders China, Myanmar, and Bhutan — making it a strategically vital re-

gion. Underrepresentation: Despite being home to 26 tribes and over 100 sub-tribes, political representation remains limited.

Strategic strengthening: More seats would reinforce India's claims and presence in the region against Chinese assertions.

Geographical size: Arunachal is the largest state in the Northeast, yet it has only 2 Lok Sabha seats.

Low literacy & development:

The state ranks second-lowest in literacy (2011 Census) and faces infrastructure and socio-economic challenges.

Women's reservation: The new 33% reservation in legislatures further justifies increasing seat numbers.

Historical resolution: The Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a resolution on March 23, 1998, seeking an increase in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha seats — a motion originally moved by Sanjoy himself.

Population alone inadequate: In tribal belts like Arunachal, delimitation should consider geography, ethnicity, and security — not just population size.

District expansion: The state now has 28 districts, reflecting administrative and ethnic diversity.

Sanjoy called on political parties, civil society, student unions, and the general public to unite in pursuing these demands. He also revealed that a permanent platform would soon be established to spearhead democratic engagement and lobbying efforts with central authorities.

Police bust cross-border militant recruitment network in Arunachal



ITANAGAR, May 9: The Arunachal Pradesh Police on Thursday said they have busted a network involving militant recruitment, arms trafficking, and cross-border criminal activity in the state.

The racket was linked to the National Socialist Council for Tani-land (NSCT) and its armed wing, the United Tani Army (UTA), a senior police officer said here.

"Taniland" refers to a proposed state for the Tani community people, a group of tribes living mainly in the state's northeastern region, particularly along the border with Assam. Several groups advocated for the creation of "Taniland".

An investigation began in January after the police took suo moto cognisance of threatening videos and letters circulated on social media, allegedly issued by an NSCT leader Anthony Doko, who was wanted in 20 cases.

A case was registered in this regard under various sections of the BNS and UAPA, Capital Superintendent of Police Rohit Rajbir

Singh told reporters here.

Several people were arrested for recruiting youth from marginalised communities into the UTA and other offences like the Arms Act violation.

"Intelligence inputs confirmed involvement of some of them in an attempt to traffic a young boy from the Tarasso region in Papum Pare district to a militant training camp in Myanmar," the SP said.

He added that further investigation revealed that at least three other boys had already been taken out of Itanagar to recruit them into the UTA by force.

Two of those boys have returned, sharing disturbing accounts of physical and mental torture and harsh living conditions during their forced training, the SP said.

A chargesheet in the case has already been submitted, while investigations are still on, he said.

On April 30, the police arrested one person linked to NSCN-KYA, who was engaged in extorting money from contractors to fund insurgent operations, Singh said

adding that arms and ammunition were also recovered.

During interrogation, the arrested man said about an arms trafficking network based in Itanagar, with links to insurgent groups in Nagaland. More arrests, recovery of arms and unaccounted cash followed, the SP said.

"In response, a second case was registered at Itanagar Police Station under sections of the BNS, section 13 of the UAPA and sections of the Arms Act, targeting the wider network involved in the distribution and concealment of illegal arms," Singh said.

During the course of the investigation, authorities also uncovered a connection between this arms racket and a narcotics network operating in the Gohpur-Chimpu corridor near the state capital Itanagar, he said.

This resulted in a third case being registered at Chimpu Police Station under the NDPS Act. Two individuals were arrested, and narcotics were seized during follow-up operations. (PTI)

Arunachal Congress organises 'Tiranga Yatra' to honour armed forces



ITANAGAR, May 9: The APCC organised a 'Tiranga Yatra' in the state capital on Thursday to express solidarity with the Indian armed forces that carried out 'Operation Sindoor' to avenge the Pahalgam terror attack.

Led by Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) vice president Toko Mina, senior party leaders and members of the party's frontal wings marched from Rajiv Gandhi Bhawan to Indira Gandhi Park.

Hundreds of Congress workers

joined the rally, chanting slogans against Pakistan and lauding the action following the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam.

"We condemn the Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives, including an IAF Corporal from Arunachal Pradesh. Pakistan cannot stand against India's morale and strength," Mina said.

She emphasised that the Congress party stands with the government in its fight against terrorism.

"Our armed forces delivered a befitting reply by striking nine terrorist strongholds in Pakistan and dismantling their launch pads. Under the leadership of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, the party has extended full support to the government's actions against terrorism," she added.

The 'Tiranga Yatra' was held following the directive of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) to uplift the morale of the armed forces. (PTI)

'Waqf Amendment Act a step towards equity, empowerment'

ITANAGAR, May 9: Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen (Retd) K T Parnaik on Friday hailed the Waqf Amendment Act 2025 as a progressive and inclusive measure aimed at empowering underprivileged sections of society.

Speaking at a Waqf reform awareness meet held at Raj Bhavan here, the governor said the Waqf Amendment Act ensures that the benefits and revenues generated from Waqf properties are effectively utilised for the upliftment of those in need, helping them stand shoulder to shoulder with other communities.

"The reform is not just about administration, it is about empowerment and equity," Parnaik said, addressing a gathering of community leaders, scholars, and representatives from various faiths.

He noted that the Waqf Amendment Act is the outcome of extensive consultations and thoughtful deliberations, and represents a collective effort to bring about meaningful reforms for the benefit of all sections of the Muslim community, a Raj Bhavan communique said here.

"The process was guided by the inclusive spirit of 'Sabka Prayas' and reflects true national participation and teamwork," he said.

Parnaik also urged the Muslim community not to view itself as a minority, citing inspiring figures like former President A P J Abdul Kalam as shining examples of the community's contributions to India's growth and development. (PTI)

ATIVICR petitions against cancellation of Land Possession Certificates in Itanagar

HT Bureau

NAMSAL, May 9: The Aboriginal Tribal Inhabitant Villagers of Itanagar Capital Region (ATIVICR), representing both urban and rural indigenous communities within the twin capital cities of Itanagar and Naharlagun, have submitted a formal petition to the Governor, Chief Minister, and Chief Secretary of Arunachal Pradesh recently, urging immediate intervention against a recent administrative order.

The petition contests an order issued by the Deputy Commissioner of Itanagar Capital Region, Talo Potom, on May 5, 2025 (Order No. DC-ICC-PCCF/05/2025), which nullifies all Land Possession Certificates (LPCs) and allotments issued within the Itanagar Wildlife Sanctuary and Durpung Reserve Forest. The order refers to a prior directive (No. DC/M/LPC-207/15) dated February 27, 2022.

ATIVICR has strongly condemned the decision, calling it "arbitrary and unjust," and warned of its serious implications for the traditional land rights and livelihoods of the indigenous tribal inhabitants. The group claims that the move risks mass displacement, loss of ancestral territories, and the erosion of constitutionally protected tribal rights.

"This directive not only violates the spirit of justice and tribal inclusion but disregards the historical and



cultural ties that the indigenous communities share with their land," ATIVICR stated in the petition.

The organization has called for the immediate revocation of the Deputy Commissioner's order and urged the state's top leadership to intervene and safeguard the rights of the tribal landholders. They emphasized the need for a governance approach that balances environmental conservation with indigenous rights and long-standing habitation.

The issue is expected to spark wider public and political discourse in the coming days, as questions arise about the legal framework governing land rights, forest conservation, and the role of traditional tribal ownership in modern administrative policies.

AAPPHE&WSWU holds 4th Mega General Conference-cum-Election in Itanagar



HT Bureau

NAMSAL, May 9: The All Arunachal Pradesh Public Health Engineering and Water Supply Department Workers Union (AAPPHE&WSWU), affiliated with the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), is currently hosting its 4th Mega General Conference-cum-Election at Arunalay Pastoral Centre, Hill Top, Itanagar. The three-day event, which began on May 7, will conclude on May 9.

Delegates from across Arunachal Pradesh have gathered to deliberate on pressing issues such as workers' rights, departmental reforms, and welfare programs. The conference also marks

the formation of the union's new State Executive Body for the 2025-2028 session.

Newly Elected State Executive Body (2025-2028) comprises President: Shri Tadar Dowda, Vice President (HQ): Mihin Chada, Vice President (Eastern Zone): Takar Tania, Vice President (Western Zone): Tarh Tadey, General Secretary: Tapuk Tok, Assistant General Secretary: Tadar Tamey, Finance Secretary: Linya Bogo, Convenor: Tadar Sinkap, Co-Convenor: Rajendra Singh, Treasurer: Tame Simon Tarh, Games & Sports Secretary: Tarh Chandra, Cultural Secretary: Gebom Angu, Assistant Cultural Secretary: Tadar

Peter, Social Service Secretary: Gumku Changriang and RTI Cell Secretary: Riso Peter Tagar

Women Wing Executive Body comprises of President: Taw Anu, Vice President: Tech Yarang, General Secretary: Tadar Yari, Assistant General Secretary: Biri Angu, Spokesperson: Taba Asum and Chief Advisor: Tech Reena Nabam

In addition to strategic discussions, the event includes cultural performances, interactive sessions, and initiatives aimed at strengthening unity and policy direction within the union under the BMS banner — India's largest trade union.

Consecration of Lungchaseng Buddha Vihara & Central Buddha Jayanti Celebration 2025 at Nampong

Inauguration of the Lungchaseng Buddha Vihara is scheduled for May 12



HT Bureau

NAMSAL, May 9: The sacred Poi-Lu-Chong cum Buddha Jayanti 2025 celebrations will be held with great spiritual fervor and cultural vibrancy in Nampong village, Namsai district, from May 11 to May 13, 2025. The

three-day event will mark the consecration of the Lungchaseng Buddha Vihara and the central celebration of Buddha Jayanti in Arunachal Pradesh.

The inauguration of the Lungchaseng Buddha Vihara is scheduled for May 12 and will be

graced by Deputy Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Chowna Mein, as Chief Guest. He will be joined by other dignitaries including: Tapir Gao, MP, Arunachal East, Wangki Lowang, Minister for Environment, Forest, Climate Change, Geology, Mining &

DoTCL, Chau Zingnu Namchoom and MLA, Namsai and adviser to Minister for RWD, Sports & Youth Affairs.

The celebrations will commence with a grand Ya-Fra (religious procession) on May 11, starting from Nampong and covering several villages including Piyong, Innaw, Nongtaw, Chiseng, Wingko, Wingko Mengkeng, Lekang, Kaichu, Enten, Manna, Manfaiseng, Lathao, Solungtu, Namsai, Deobill, Telburi, and Ningroo Charali, before returning to Nampong.

On May 12, the day of the consecration and Buddha Jayanti, a Dharma Sabha (religious discourse) and continuation of the Ya-Fra will be held. The celebrations will also feature: A drum-beating competition, a cultural night, illumination of 1,000 candles and hot air balloon release, symbolizing peace and enlightenment.

The three-day event is expected to attract devotees, cultural enthusiasts, and tourists from across the state and beyond, as the region celebrates Lord Buddha's teachings and honors the spiritual heritage of the Tai-Khamti Buddhist community.

History is witness those who challenged India's self-respect got befitting reply: Congress

Congress reiterates its solidarity with the government

NEW DELHI, May 9: History is witness that whenever someone challenged India's self-respect, they got a befitting reply, the Congress said on Friday and asserted that its Jai Hind Yatra, being taken out across the country, was in support of India's brave soldiers.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said once again India had been challenged and its tolerance and patience tested, with terrorists having ruthlessly killed innocent people.

"They will have to pay the price for this," Ramesh asserted.

"History is witness... whenever someone has challenged the self-respect and self-esteem of India, we have given them a befitting reply," the Congress leader said in a post in Hindi on X.

"When our soldiers roar with passion to sacrifice every drop of their blood to protect this land, the heart of the enemy shivers. Once again we have been challenged, our tolerance and patience tested. The terrorists have ruthlessly killed our innocent people, they will have to pay the price for this," Ramesh said.

Every single Congress worker stands with the country's army in this difficult time, he added.

"We are taking out a Jai Hind Yatra across the country today in support of our brave sol-



diers. We are proud of our soldiers. 'Jai Hind ki Sena'," Ramesh said.

The Congress also reiterated its solidarity with the government in whatever decision it takes against Pakistan.

Congress spokesperson Ragini Nayak said Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi had consistently said "we are with the government of India in thought, word and deed".

"If the Indian government takes any major decision against Pakistan, then our full cooperation and support is with the govern-

ment. Today, we will reiterate this message through the Jai Hind Yatra," she said during a press conference at the party's 24, Akbar Road, headquarters.

The Indian Army is working day and night to give a befitting reply to the attacks of Pakistan and, in such a situation, "it is our duty to come together to boost the morale of the Indian Army," she said.

The Congress appeals that it is the responsibility of the government to prioritise the safety of people in all villages and cities near the India-Pakistan border, Nayak said.

"We express our deepest condolences to

those who lost their lives in Poonch and it is also the government's responsibility to take care of their families and provide prompt treatment to the injured," she said.

"It is hoped that the government will take strong steps in this direction. The Indian Army will take revenge from Pakistan for the blood of innocent Indians," she added.

On the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday, India neutralised the Pakistan military's attempt to hit military stations in Jammu, Pathankot, Udhampur and some other locations with missiles and drones.

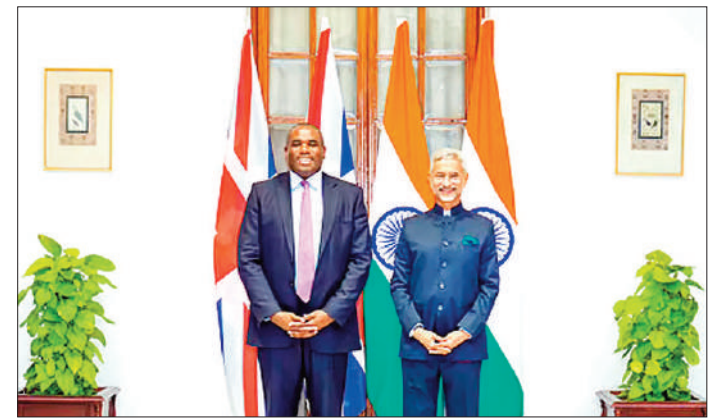
On Thursday afternoon, the defence ministry said the Indian Armed Forces had foiled Pakistan's attempts to target military installations in 15 cities in the country's northern and western parts.

It said the Pakistani military attempted to target Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Pathankot, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Adampur, Bhatinda, Chandigarh, Nal, Phalodi, Uttarlai and Bhuj.

Defence Minister Singh on Thursday said no limit would become an obstacle to protect India's sovereignty and the nation was fully prepared for such responses.

Early on Wednesday, the Indian Armed Forces carried out missile strikes on nine terror targets in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Pakistan under Operation Sindoor in response to the April 22 Pahalgam attack. (PTI)

UK Foreign Secretary Lammy speaks to Jaishankar on India-Pak tensions



NEW DELHI, May 9: As the conflict between India and Pakistan spirals, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday held a phone conversation with his British counterpart David Lammy and conveyed to him that there must be "zero-tolerance" to terrorism.

The Jaishankar-Lammy conversation came against the backdrop of efforts by India's strategic partners to reduce tensions between New Delhi and Islamabad.

"Our discussions centered around countering terrorism, for which there must be zero-tolerance," the external affairs minister said in a social media post.

Jaishankar held phone conversations with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Italian Deputy Prime Minister Antonio Tajani and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas on Thursday.

Tensions between India and Pakistan soared significantly following India's Operation Sindoor on early Wednesday and Pakistan's subsequent unsuccessful attempt to attack 15 Indian cities.

US State Department Spokesperson Tammy Bruce said Rubio emphasised the need for immediate de-escalation.

"He expressed US support for direct dialogue between India and Pakistan and encouraged continued efforts to improve communications," she said.

"The secretary reiterated his condolences for the horrific terrorist attack in Pahalgam and reaffirmed the United States' commitment to work

with India in the fight against terrorism," Bruce added.

On his phone talks with Kallas, Jaishankar said: "Discussed ongoing developments with EU HRVP @kajakallas."

"India has been measured in its actions. However, any escalation will get a firm response," he added.

On India-Pakistan tensions, the European Union said it is "monitoring closely and with great concern the growing tensions in the region and the ensuing consequences, including the possible loss of more lives." "The EU calls on both parties to exercise restraint, to de-escalate tensions and desist from further attacks to safeguard civilian lives on both sides," it said.

"The EU urges both sides to engage in dialogue. It is vital that India and Pakistan also live up to their obligations under international law and take all measures possible to protect civilian lives," it added.

The EU said it will work with all parties to de-escalate the situation.

The British foreign secretary on Wednesday said current tensions between India and Pakistan are a serious concern.

"The UK government is urging India and Pakistan to show restraint and engage in direct dialogue to find a swift, diplomatic path forward," he said.

"The UK was clear in its condemnation of the horrific terrorist attack in Pahalgam last month. We need all sides to work urgently to see regional stability restored and ensure protection of civilians," he added. (PTI)

38 Maoists surrender before police in Telangana



HYDERABAD, May 9: A total of 38 members of the outlawed CPI (Maoists) from neighbouring Chhattisgarh state surrendered before police in Bhadradi Kothagudem district of Telangana on Friday.

From January this year, 265 Maoists have turned themselves in before Bhadradi Kothagudem district police, a release from the police said.

The 38 Maoists of various cadres decided to shun the path of naxalism and lead a peaceful life with their family members, it said.

The rebels laid down their arms and surrendered before Bhadradi Kothagudem Superintendent of Police B Rohit Raju, after learning about the development and welfare measures undertaken by the police and CRPF for the tribal people and welfare activities for the surrendered Maoists under the "Operation Cheyutha" programme, it said.

According to the police, the banned CPI Maoist party has lost support and trust among the tribal people and, along with its outdated ideology, is obstructing the development of the agency areas.

The tribals are being "terrorised" and are facing a lot of difficulties due to the "misdeeds" of the Maoists and some innocent tribals were killed and tortured in the name of police informers by the Maoists, the release said.

The police appealed to the ultras, who wish to surrender and lead a normal life, to contact their nearest police station or district higher officials, either through their family members or in person. (PTI)

Punjab: Metal debris found in Bathinda, Hoshiarpur

HOSHIARPUR/BATHINDA, May 9: Amid the military conflict between India and Pakistan, debris resembling parts of a missile was found in a field in Hoshiarpur, while metal parts of some unidentified objects were discovered at two locations in Bathinda, officials said on Friday.

Some villagers in Bathinda also claimed they heard loud explosions and saw lights flashing in the sky on Thursday night, triggering panic in the area.

In Hoshiarpur, metal debris resembling parts of a missile was found on Thursday evening, SP (Investigation) Mukesh Kumar said.

Acting promptly, police informed the Indian Air Force (IAF) after cordoning off the area. A team from the IAF soon reached at the site and conducted a preliminary inspection, the SP said.

In Bathinda, debris of an unidentified object was found in a field in Tungwali village on Friday.

"Some objects fell on the field (on Thursday night) followed by a loud explosion, which dam-



aged the windows, doors and a cattle shed of a nearby house," a villager said.

Another villager said a three-foot deep crater was created after the objects fell on the field.

Police said the Army will be the right authority to give information about the exact nature of the objects.

The area has been cordoned off, a police officer said, adding that no one was hurt in the incident. Police have cautioned the local people not to touch any metal debris lying on the ground.

Metal parts were also found in a field at Burj

Mahima village in Bathinda.

A metal object resembling a shell was also found in Pathankot district, officials said.

The developments followed after India on Thursday thwarted Pakistan's fresh attempts to strike military sites with drones and missiles, including in Jammu, Pathankot and Udhampur, after foiling its attempts to target military installations in 15 cities in the northern and western parts of the country.

According to the defence ministry, the Pakistani military attempted to target Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Pathankot, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Adampur, Bathinda, Chandigarh, Nal, Phalodi, Uttarlai and Bhuj. The renewed attempts by the Pakistani forces came after the Indian armed forces on Wednesday carried out precise missile strikes on nine terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) under Operation Sindoor in retaliation for the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack. (PTI)

Mumbai Metro 3: BKC-Worli services to start from May 10, final phase to open in August

MUMBAI, May 9: The final phase of Mumbai Metro Line 3 between Acharya Atre Chowk in Worli and Cuffe Parade in south Mumbai will become operational in August, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis announced on Friday.

Services from Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC) to Acharya Atre Chowk are set to start from Saturday, he said. Fadnis and deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde rode by a Metro train through the underground corridor from BKC to Siddhivinayak Temple on Friday afternoon.

Speaking to reporters after the 10-minute ride, Fadnis said the BKC to Acharya Atre Chowk section (phase 2A) of Metro Line 3 will be open to the public from Saturday morning.

Last year, the 13 km stretch between JVLR Aarey and BKC was thrown open for the public, he noted.

Phase 2A of Metro Line 3, also called Aqua Line, is 9.77 km long, and its tunnel has been built through the "rockbed" underneath the Mithi River, officials said.

It will have six stations, namely, Dharavi, Shitaladevi, Dadar West, Siddhivinayak, Worli, and Acharya Atre Chowk.

Fadnis said Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be invited when the final phase between Atre Chowk and Cuffe Parade will become operational.

The Colaba-BKC-Aarey line is the longest underground Metro route in the country, and the project is an "engineering marvel" as the corridor passes beneath the Mithi river and densely-populated areas like Girgaon, the chief minister noted.

The work of two stations in the next phase is in final stages, and once it is completed, the entire metro corridor will be opened to the public, he said.

"The Metro stretch that is operational is receiving good response. Ridership is increasing, and when end-to-end connectivity becomes available, the ridership will increase more," said the chief minister.

The underground metro corridor has 26 stations and

boasts of a state-of-the-art design with multiple entry and exit points which will avoid congestion, he said.

Metro-3 will provide excellent connectivity for the airport, Fadnis said, adding it will take some time due to ongoing constructions, but until then shuttle services will be operated for the convenience of passengers.

Trials of the common mobility card for all modes of transport in Mumbai including Metro, monorail, railways and BEST buses have been successful so far, and once all the trials are over, the card will be rolled out commercially, he said.

"Mumbaikars will then get an end-to-end solution," Fadnis added.

The authorities have entered into a tie-up with Google to enable passengers to track the location of BEST buses in real time, and train passengers too would be able to use this facility, he said.

Deputy CM Shinde said that due to Metro 3, nearly five lakh vehicles will go off the roads, which will save a large amount of fuel and time.

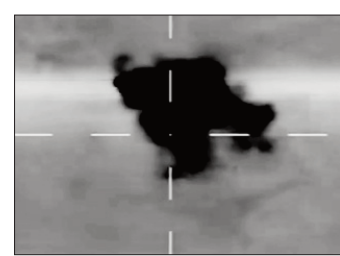
"When this 33 km stretch is completed, you will be able to travel from end to end within an hour," Shinde said.

With the extension to Acharya Atre Chowk becoming operational, Metro 3 will provide connectivity between BKC and the business hubs in Worli, Lower Parel and Prabhadevi. Reaching the shrines of Siddhivinayak temple, Shitaladevi temple and Mahim Darga too will become more convenient.

As per the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation, the minimum fare will be ₹ 10 and the maximum fare will be Rs 40 for the journey in phase 2A of the underground corridor. For the travel between JVLR Aarey and Acharya Atre Chowk, passengers will have to shell out ₹ 60.

MMRC has planned 244 services on the corridor with eight Metro trains, and the travel time between BKC and Acharya Atre Chowk will be 15-20 minutes, while that between JVLR Aarey and Acharya Atre Chowk will be 36 minutes. (PTI)

Pak attacks with drones, munitions along western border effectively repulsed: Indian Army



NEW DELHI, May 9: Pakistan's armed forces launched multiple attacks using drones and other munitions along the entire western border on the intervening night of May 8-9, which were "effectively repulsed", the Indian Army said on Friday.

"Pakistani troops also resorted to 'numerous ceasefire violations' along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, the Indian Army said in an early morning post on X.

It also shared a small video clip with the post, asserting that all nefarious designs will be responded with force.

"OPERATION SINDOOR" - Pakistan Armed Forces launched multiple attacks using drones and other munitions along entire Western Border on the intervening night of 08 and 09 May 2025. Pak troops also resorted to numerous ceasefire violations along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir," the post said.

The drone attacks were "effectively repulsed" and a "befitting reply" was given to the ceasefire violations, the Indian Army said.

"#IndianArmy remains committed to safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Nation. All nefarious designs will be responded with force," it added.

The developments followed the precise missile strikes carried out by the Indian armed forces on nine terror targets in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Pakistan early Wednesday under Operation Sindoor, in retaliation for the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.

The Ministry of Defence on Thursday reiterated that any attack on military sites in India will invite a "suitable response".

In a late night statement on Thursday, the defence ministry said, "Military stations at Jammu, Pathankot and Udhampur were targeted by Pakistani-origin #drones and missiles along the International Border in J&K today."

"The threats were swiftly neutralised using kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities in line with the established standard operating procedures (SOPs). No casualties or material losses were reported. India remains fully prepared to defend its sovereignty and ensure the safety of its people," it said. (PTI)

CM Sukhu orders areas bordering Pathankot to be on high alert

SHIMLA, May 9: Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said areas bordering Punjab's Pathankot are on high alert, and police have been directed to issue special instructions to blackout border areas in Himachal Pradesh's Nurpur and Indora when air raid warning sirens are blown. Sukhu held a meeting with the officials and district heads and said, "There is nothing to panic but we should ensure our safety and fulfil our responsibility and stay alert". He also appealed to the general public to believe only official information. Talking to the reporters here, he said that the offices of chief secretary, general administration department and control rooms would remain open to assist people and act promptly in times of need.

The chief minister assured that no stone would be left unturned in ensuring safety of about 103 students, currently pursuing their studies in Jammu and Kashmir and asked the Chief Secretary for prompt and co-ordinated action to bring the students back home safely.

Security has been beefed up across the state and strict vigil is being kept in districts bordering Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, officials said. SP Nurpur, Ashok Rattan has urged people to refrain from spreading rumours on social media and not to post any statement that could disturb peace and harmony. (PTI)

India's reservoir levels improve nationally but eastern, northern regions face deficits

NEW DELHI, May 9: Even as India's overall water storage in major reservoirs has improved significantly over last year, several states are struggling with critically low levels, according to the bulletin issued on Friday.

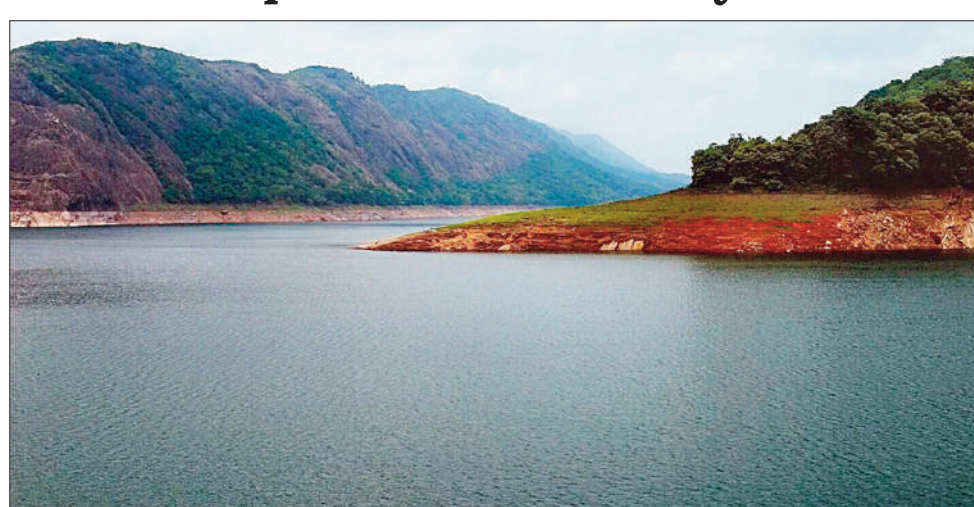
The country's 161 major reservoirs currently hold 57,974 billion cubic meters (BCM) of live storage, accounting for 31.78% of their total capacity, according to the weekly bulletin issued by the Central Water Commission (CWC).

This marks an increase from the 49,290 BCM recorded during the same period last year and exceeds the ten-year average of 50,038 BCM.

Nationally, the current storage is 117.6% of last year's levels and 115.9% of the normal, a sign of overall improvement. However, this aggregated progress masks stark regional imbalances.

The eastern region, covering states like Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal, is facing a sharp water shortage. The region's reservoirs are filled to just 27.87% of their capacity, well below last year's 35.97% and the normal 34.64%.

Critically low storage was reported in Odisha's Rengali and Upper Indravati reservoirs, Bihar's Badua and Chandan dams, and Mizoram's Tuirial reservoir, which is functioning at just 23.4% of its normal storage.



The situation is grimmer in the northern region, where states such as Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan collectively recorded only 24.09% of reservoir capacity compared to 29.5% last year. Himachal Pradesh's Pong Dam and Punjab's Thein Dam have reported substantial deficits. Storage in the Pong Dam is down to 40.22% of

normal and Gobind Sagar is operating at only 20.44% of its full capacity.

The live storage in the Indus basin stands at just 2,831 BCM — only 19.1% of its capacity of 14,819 BCM — representing a massive 40% shortfall from the average.

This shortfall is particularly alarming given that

the Indus system supports large parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh through irrigation, drinking water and hydropower generation.

The western region, comprising Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa, fared relatively better. With 34.7% storage, it exceeded both last year's figure (28.15%) and the normal (27%). Gujarat showed a particularly positive trend, with some reservoirs reporting more than 50% of normal storage.

The reservoirs reached 37.8% of their full capacity in central India, which includes Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand.

This is up from 34.5% last year and well above the ten-year average of 30%. Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh saw sharp gains, with key reservoirs like Gandhi Sagar, Indira Sagar and Bansagar performing significantly better than in previous years.

The southern region, with the highest number of monitored reservoirs (45), recorded 28.79% storage — an improvement over last year's 15.19% and above the normal of 20.58%.

Tamil Nadu stood out with an exceptional rise in storage levels, up by over 91% compared to the ten-year average. Andhra Pradesh's Nagarjuna

Sagar reservoir, however, remains in distress, holding only 31.3% of its normal storage.

Telangana's Priyadarshini Jurala and Uttar Pradesh's Rangawan reservoirs have reported zero storage. Despite the improved national average, 41 reservoirs across the country have storage less than 80% of their normal levels and 17 of these are operating at 50% or less.

These include major reservoirs like Pong Dam, Machchhu II (Gujarat), Bhima Ujjaini (Maharashtra) and Sholayar (Tamil Nadu).

Alarmingly, five reservoirs, including Priyadarshini Jurala in Telangana and Rangawan in Uttar Pradesh, have reported no water at all.

While rainfall and snowmelt have helped improve water levels in many parts of India, especially in central and western regions, the eastern and northern belts remain vulnerable ahead of the peak summer months.

The Central Water Commission has flagged the need for close monitoring and region-specific water management strategies to mitigate risks to agriculture, drinking water supply and hydropower output.

The CWC noted that of the 20 hydroelectric reservoirs it monitors, storage was normal or better in only 12. (PTI)

NSUP initiates measures to evacuate Naga students from Punjab

Union said it is actively coordinating with the authorities concerned



HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, May 9: The Naga Students' Union Punjab (NSUP) on Friday informed all its members that it has taken the initiative to as-

sist and facilitate voluntary evacuation of the Naga students from Punjab, who wish to return home in light of the current situation along the Indo-Pakistan border.

President of the union Sensen Hang and assistant general secretary Tsolo J Lasuh, through a release, advised the students who prefer to remain in Punjab to strictly follow government-issued guidelines and take all necessary precautions to ensure their safety and well-being.

The union also advised those students who do not wish to take assistance from it but have plans to leave Punjab to check the availability of train, bus and plane tickets and manage their travel plans accordingly.

Urging everyone not to panic, the union said it is actively coordinating with the authorities concerned and has ensured that all necessary arrangements and safety measures are in place.

For any queries or assistance, the Naga students were asked to contact NSUP president Sensen Hang (8837469376), vice president Khriethovizo (9774276586), general secretary Nitoli Shohe (9863313014) and assistant general secretary Tsolo J Lasuh (9233497958).

Business grows by 13.6% Tripura Gramin Bank reports 275% surge in net profit



HT Correspondent
AGARTALA, May 9: Tripura Gramin Bank has recorded a remarkable 275.75% year-on-year (YoY) growth in net profit, reaching ₹104.91 crore in FY 2024-25 compared to ₹27.92 crore in the previous fiscal.

The bank's total business rose by 13.60%, standing at ₹14,085.14 crore as of March 31, 2025, up from ₹12,398.55 crore in March 2024.

Addressing the media, the bank's Chairman, Satyendra

Singh, said that deposits grew by 14.38% YoY, reaching ₹10,066 crore from ₹8,800.81 crore in the previous fiscal year.

However, the Credit-Deposit (CD) ratio slightly declined to 39.93% from 40.88% during the same period.

Singh highlighted that the bank earned ₹1.76 crore in commission from the sale of third-party products, including insurance services provided by PNB MetLife, Bajaj, Canara HSBC, and CARE.

In addition, the bank recorded

capital gains and trading profit worth ₹19.67 crore from investments, while interest income from investments stood at ₹470.57 crore—up 10.89% from ₹424.37 crore in FY 2023-24.

The bank's operating profit increased by 24.80%, climbing from ₹153.04 crore in FY 2023-24 to ₹191.11 crore in FY 2024-25. Lending also witnessed a boost, with disbursements touching ₹2,427.86 crore during FY 2024-25 compared to ₹2,192.64 crore in the previous year.

Performance metrics also improved at the branch and employee levels. Per-branch business rose to ₹93.90 crore from ₹82.66 crore, while per-employee business increased to ₹15.56 crore from ₹13.96 crore year-on-year.

"Our Capital to Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) stands at an impressive 24.50%, far exceeding the minimum regulatory requirement of 9% under Basel III norms. This reflects the bank's strong capital base and its ability to meet financial obligations comfortably," Singh added.

Tripura braces for Hot, Humid days; Thunderstorm warning issued from May 10

HT Correspondent
AGARTALA, May 9: The Meteorological Centre in Agartala has issued an alert for hot and humid weather conditions expected to persist across Tripura over the next two days. Alongside, a yellow alert has been issued for thunderstorms and lightning from May 10 to 14.

According to a press statement, a combination of partly cloudy skies, high moisture levels, and intense solar radiation is likely to push daytime temperatures to 37°C or higher in many parts of the state. In some areas, temperatures are expected to remain 3°C to 5°C above normal.

The department also noted the presence of an upper air cyclonic circulation over Northeast Assam and its neighbouring areas, which currently extends up to 3.1 km above mean sea level.

"During the past 24 hours, very light rainfall was recorded in isolated areas of Tripura, particularly in the North district, while the rest of the state experienced dry conditions. Maximum temperatures saw a noticeable rise and remained appreciably above the seasonal average," the statement said.

The yellow warning issued by the Met Centre cautions that thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are likely to occur at isolated places across North, Unakoti, Khowai, West, Sepahijala, Gomati, and Dhalai districts between May 10 and 14.

Residents are advised to stay hydrated, avoid outdoor activities during peak heat hours, and take necessary precautions during thunderstorms.

Mizoram's ruling ZPM dwindling as it losing people's trust, alleges Zoramthanga

AIZAWL, May 9: Mizoram's main opposition Mizo National Front (MNF) president Zoramthanga on Thursday alleged that the ruling Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) is "dwindling" as it is "losing" people's trust.

Addressing a function at the MNF office in south Mizoram's Hnahthial town, Zoramthanga claimed that his party is "gradually progressing and its support base is gaining strength."

The MNF chief is currently on a tour of the southern districts of Mizoram.

"While the ZPM government is dwindling, we (MNF) have been



steadily improving. The ZPM has to be in power for at least one assembly term so that people can know their true colour," the former

chief minister said.

Alleging that the ZPM is "increasingly losing the public trust", Zoramthanga said, "People are not asking whether they (ZPM) will rule in the next term, but the people's question is whether they will be able to complete their present term."

Hitting out at Chief Minister Lalduhoma, the MNF supremo alleged that he has "lost Delhi's favour for which he avoided travelling to the national capital to seek financial help from the Centre".

ZPM leaders could not be reached for comments on Zoramthanga's allegations. (PTI)

Night curfew clamped along unfenced portion of India-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya

SHILLONG, May 9: The Meghalaya government on Thursday imposed night curfew in areas along the around 40 km unfenced portion of the India-Bangladesh border in the state prone to infiltration and smuggling, officials said.

The decision was taken after inputs were received that there is a likelihood of cross-border movements, a senior home department official told PTI.

Instructions were issued to deputy commissioners of border districts to activate restrictions to check infiltration and smuggling, he said.

In an order, the administration of West Jaintia Hills, one of such districts, "imposed curfew from 8 PM to 6 AM up to 200 metres from the Zero Line (International Border)".

Movement of people intending to cross the international boundary, unauthorised procession or unlawful assembly of five or more people and carrying arms or other instruments which can be used as weapons in and around the India-Bangladesh Border were not allowed, according to the order.

A senior home department official said, "Security agencies have briefed Home Minister Prestone Tynsong that there is a likelihood of cross-border movement by members of militant groups, smugglers, and any other illegal activities at night, especially in areas along the unfenced sector."

Over 40 km of the total 444 km-long Meghalaya-Bangladesh border remained unfenced. (PTI)

Manipur Congress takes out Jai Hind Yatra in Imphal

IMPHAL, May 9: Hundreds of Congress workers led by president Keisham Meghachandra and CLP leader Okram Ibobi Singh on Friday took out a rally, "Jai Hind Yatra", to express solidarity with the Indian armed forces that carried out "Operation Sindoor" to avenge the Pahal-gam terror attack. It was also organised to honour and boost the morale of the armed forces.

Congress workers holding the Indian flag covered nearly 4 km during the rally, which started and ended at the Congress office at BT Road.

"Today's rally with the Tricolour was conducted under the directives of the AICC to show our solidarity with the Indian armed forces, which is fighting terrorists and encouraging them," Ibobi, the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader, told reporters. (PTI)

CNC calls 7-day special prayer and fasting

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, May 9: The Council of Nagalim Churches (CNC) on Friday called for a seven-day special prayer and fasting programme for all the national workers. CNC general secretary Rev. Seksim Kasar, in a release, said the prayer and fasting was called in response to a solemn prophecy concerning the spiritual and moral condition of "Nagalim".

"The prophetic message warns of impending destruction should the Naga people continue in their moral decay, spiritual decline,

corruption, and betrayal of divine principles. These are grievous offenses before God and cannot be tolerated indefinitely," the release said. It said a call to repentance has been issued to all Nagas to humble themselves and return to God, seeking His mercy and intervention. The CNC leadership urged all the national workers across all units, regions, and departments to participate in the week-long period of consecration and intercession, believing that fervent prayers, as in the past, can once again prevail.

9 militants arrested in Manipur

IMPHAL, May 9: Security forces have arrested nine militants belonging to several proscribed outfits from three districts of Manipur, police said on Friday.

Four active members of the banned Kangleipak Communist Party (MFL) were apprehended from Lamding Khumanthem Leikai in Thoubal district on Thursday, they said.

During another operation, three cadres of the outlawed United National Liberation Front (Pambei) were held near Lilong Bridge in Thoubal, a police officer said.

Besides, a member of the Kangleipak Communist Party (Noyon) was arrested from Lamlai in Imphal East district, and another militant of the banned KCP (PWG) from Ningthoukhong Kha Keirungba Leikai in Bishnupur, the officer said. Arms and ammunition, including country-made pistols and hand grenades were seized from their possession, he added. (PTI)

VR-Assisted Guided Imagery study will employ Virtual Reality headsets preloaded with guided imagery scripts

Virtual Reality-Assisted Therapy launched to enhance cancer patient care

SHILLONG, May 9: In a pioneering step toward integrating technology with patient care, the DAE-Civil Hospital Cancer Wing, Shillong, has initiated a Virtual Reality-Assisted Guided Imagery Therapy and Study recently.

Spearheaded by the State Cancer Society of Meghalaya in collaboration with Ojaska Labs LLP and supported by SMRATA Trust, this initiative explores the therapeutic use of Virtual Reality (VR) to alleviate treatment-related distress and enhance the emotional well-being of cancer patients undergoing chemo-radiation.

An official signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also held during the event, marking the collaboration between the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Meghalaya, Ojaska Labs LLP, and SMRATA Trust.

This partnership formalizes joint efforts in deploying VR-Assisted Guided Imagery for cancer patients in Meghalaya, aiming to set new benchmarks in digital therapeutics for oncology care.

This initiative brings together cutting-edge VR technology and evidence-based guided imagery therapy to address the overlooked emotional and psychological challenges in cancer care. By allowing patients to virtually



enter calming, immersive environments tailored to manage symptoms like anxiety, pain, and fatigue, Meghalaya is setting a precedent for compassionate, tech-driven healing in clinical settings.

Highlighting the objectives of the project, Principal Secretary in-charge of Health and Family Welfare Dr Sampath Kumar expressed optimism and shared the vision behind the VR-Assisted Guided Imagery Study, emphasizing its transformative potential for cancer care.

"Through Virtual Reality-Assisted Guided Imagery, we are introducing a powerful tool that not only addresses

physical symptoms like pain, nausea, and fatigue but also brings relief from the emotional and psychological stress of chemotherapy and radiation."

A detailed presentation was also given by Sarat Addanki, Chairman of SMRATA and OJASKA Labs, who explained the study's framework, the role of guided imagery in reducing anxiety, and the deployment of VR headsets to provide immersive, calming environments for patients.

The VR-Assisted Guided Imagery study will employ Virtual Reality headsets preloaded with guided imagery scripts available in English, Khasi, and Hindi, designed to address symptoms like pain, nausea, insomnia, fatigue, and anxiety.

Patients undergoing chemo-radiation will participate in sessions structured around their treatment cycles to assess improvements in symptom management and overall quality of life.

During the course of radiation—typically every five days—they are provided with targeted guided imagery sessions aimed at alleviating stress and discomfort. Weekly chemotherapy sessions are complemented by supportive VR experiences that help manage common side effects such as nausea, fatigue, and emotional distress. Finally, at the end of the treatment cycle, patients engage in inner healing sessions that offer closure, emotional reassurance, and a sense of recovery.

Dr Anisha Mawlong, Member-Secretary, State Cancer Society explained that the study will be conducted over a period of 10 to 12 months and is divided into three key phases. Phase 1 focuses on setting up the necessary infrastructure and training the medical staff involved in delivering the intervention.

In Phase 2, patients undergoing chemo-radiation will begin participating in the VR-assisted guided imagery sessions, with data collection running concurrently to assess symptom relief and emotional well-being. Finally, Phase 3 will involve analysing the collected data and compiling a comprehensive report to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the intervention on patient outcomes. (NNN)

5 held in Kohima for robbery, theft

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, May 9: Chiephobozou police under Kohima district arrested five persons for robbery, theft, and house-breaking. The arrests were made following an investigation into a reported robbery and theft case on May 6, Kohima police PRO said in a release. Nerhe model village lodged a complaint with Chiephobozou police on March 12 about a theft of a car engine and gearbox from a garage in the village area.

Following a thorough investigation, the police arrested the five, who have been identified as Petekhrietuo (22), Ruokuozhalie (26), Neizasetuo (26), Raj (25), and Throngpise (25).

Police said preliminary inquiries revealed that the suspects were not only involved in the theft of the car engine and gearbox but also in housebreaking within the Chiephobozou police station jurisdiction, stealing iron materials, and selling them to scrap dealers. They were also involved in theft cases around Jalukie under Peren district.

LOST

I have lost my Registration No 146643 of Session 2023 - 24. Finders may contact. Mobile number 9101729083 Shri Rasen Timung S/o Mr. Longsing Timung & Smti Rani Tisopie Chephongkimi, Diphu.

PROVISION OF RBG WORK WITH ELB AND EMERGENCY SLIDING BOOM AT LUMDING DIVISION

E-Tender Notice No. LMG/Engg/36 of 2025; Dated: 07-05-2025. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **SN. 1. Brief Description of Item:** Provision of RBG Room in connection with interlocking of 13 Nos. manned Engineering LC Gates (CS-20, CS-23, CS-27, CS-32, ST-25, ST-62, CS-5, CS-24, CS-28, CS-35, CS-36, CS-40 & CS-50) with provision of ELB and emergency sliding boom in Guwahati - Furkating Jn. and Chaparmukh (CPK) - Senchoa (SCE) - Amoni (AONI) under Lumding Division. **Tender Value:** ₹1,72,03,634.01. **Earnest Money:** ₹2,36,000.00. E-tenders will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 02-06-2025 and opened at 15:00 hrs. on 03-06-2025. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. of 02-06-2025 in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>. **DRM/Works, Lumding** **NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY** Serving Customers with a smile

No.DME/492993/4

Expression of Interest (EOI) for starting Japanese Language course for students Of Regional College of Nursing, Guwahati-32

Regional College of Nursing, Guwahati-32, the premier Nursing College in North Eastern Region, is interested to start 800-hrs Japanese Language course for their Nursing students, primarily in offline mode, intends to invite Expression of Interest (EOI) from interested candidates having relevant qualification and experience.

No. of position: 1 (one)

Description of the job: This job posting is for a full-time Japanese Language Teacher position for a period of one (1) year, renewable as per the performance of the teacher and at Government discretion.

Required Qualification of Japanese language teacher: At least Graduation in any stream and preferably N2 level of Japanese Language proficiency with teaching experience of minimum one year. The candidates should have well versed in at least either one of these languages: Assamese, Hindi or English

Application procedure: Interested candidates may apply with their Curriculum Vitae along with relevant documents and expected remuneration per month.

The sealed envelope should be superscribed with "Expression of Interest (EOI) for starting Japanese Language course for students of Regional College of Nursing, Guwahati-32" should reach to the office of the Directorate of Medical education, Six-mile, PO- Khanapara, Guwahati- 781022, Kamrup (M), Assam on or before 15th May, 2025 up to 05:00 PM.

Candidates may also E-mail the application with all the details in the Official Email ID of the Directorate: dmeassam@gmail.com. E-mails received after the deadline will not be entertained.

Sd/-

DIPR /D/HLT/13/10-May-25

Director of Medical Education, Assam

Kangana Ranaut to star in Hollywood film 'Blessed Be the Evil'

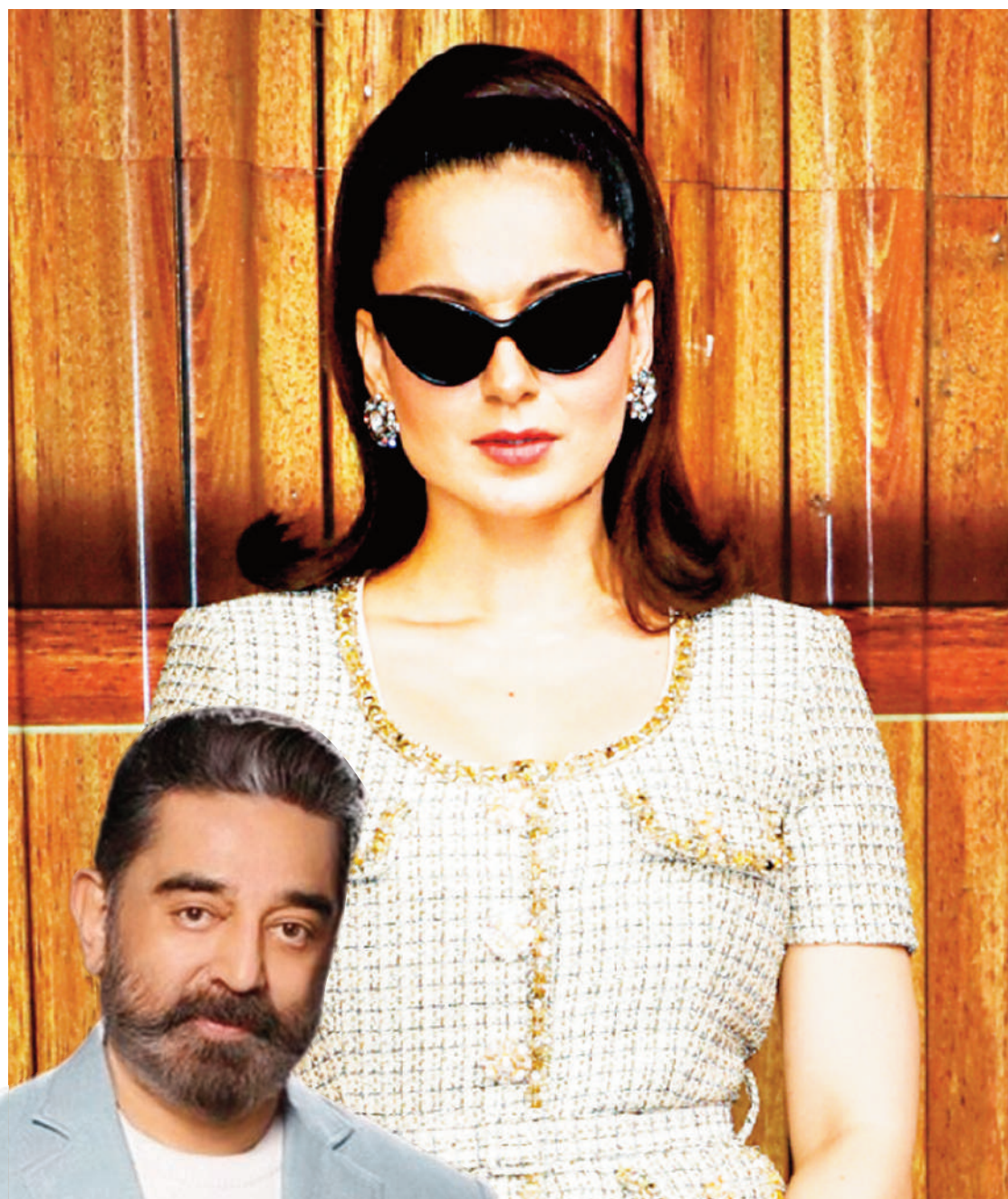
MUMBAI, May 9: Actor Kangana Ranaut is set to make her Hollywood debut with a horror film, titled "Blessed Be the Evil".

Ranaut, known for films like "Tanu Weds Manu", "Fashion", "Queen" and "Thalaivii", will star alongside Scarlet Rose Stallone, daughter of action superstar Sylvester Stallone, and "Teen Wolf" actor Tyler Posey, according to the entertainment news outlet Variety.

The film will be directed by Anurag Rudra from a screenplay by Gatha Tiwary. Both will also produce the upcoming project. Described as a horror drama, the production on the film is expected to begin this summer in New York. The producers are also planning to shoot the movie in the US in the wake of President Donald Trump's threat of a 100 percent tariff on imported films.

"Blessed Be the Evil" follows a Christian couple who, after experiencing a devastating miscarriage, purchase an abandoned farm with a dark past. Their love and faith are soon tested by a malevolent presence, according to official synopsis.

Ranaut, the BJP MP from Himachal Pradesh's Mandi, was most recently seen in "Emergency", which she also directed. Released in January, the film featured Ranaut in the role of the late prime minister Indira Gandhi. (PTI)



AUDIO LAUNCH OF KAMAL HAASAN'S 'THUG LIFE' RESCHEDULED DUE TO 'CURRENT STATE OF HEIGHTENED ALERT'

CHENNAI, May 9: Veteran actor Kamal Haasan on Friday said that an upcoming audio launch event of "Thug Life", his new film with ace filmmaker Mani Ratnam, has been rescheduled in the wake of "developments at our nation's border and the current state of heightened alert".

The audio launch event of the movie was scheduled for May 16 but it will now take place at a new date which will be "announced at a later, more appropriate time", Haasan said in a statement.

"Art can wait. India comes first. In view of the developments at our nation's border and the current state of heightened alert, we have decided to reschedule the audio launch of 'Thug Life', originally planned for the 16th of May.

"As our soldiers stand firm on the frontlines with unflinching courage in defence of our motherland, I believe it is a time for quiet solidarity, not celebration. At this time, our thoughts are with the brave men and women of our armed forces who stand vigilant, safeguarding our nation," Haasan said. The 70-year-old actor said it is the duty of all citizens to respond with "restraint and solidarity". "Celebration must make way for reflection," he added.

"Thug Life", a gangster drama movie, reunites Haasan and Ratnam after a gap of over 35 years in what would be the Tamil superstar's 234th film. They earlier worked on the 1987 critical hit "Nayakan". The film also features Trisha Krishnan, Ashok Selvan, Aishwarya Lekshmi, Joju George, Abhirami, Nassar and Ali Fazal. It is jointly produced by Raaj Kamal Films International, Madras Talkies and Red Giant Movies. (PTI)

Bollywood filmmakers and actors make beeline to secure titles relating to Operation Sindoor

MUMBAI, May 9: "Operation Sindoor", "Mission Sindoor" and "Sindoor: The Revenge"... Bollywood filmmakers are rushing to register film titles inspired by India's military strikes in Pakistan with 30 applications linked to Operation Sindoor submitted in just two days.

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.

Since the strikes, the Indian Motion Picture Producers Association (IMPPA), Indian Film and Television Producers Council (IFTPC) and Western India Film Producers' Association (WIFPA) have witnessed a surge in applications for registration of film titles related to Operation Sindoor. "The three bodies have received over 30 title applications via email related to Operation Sindoor. The numbers will go up to 50-60. This is not something new. Most people have applied for the title, 'Operation Sindoor' and 'Mission Sindoor'. 'One person can apply for any number of titles but the title will be allotted to the person who has first applied for it. Any producer who wants to make a film looks for what is in the news. This is something India is proud of. So, filmmakers want to bring this story," Anil Nagrath, Secretary, IMPPA, told PTI. Nagrath said in the past, they have received title applications for Kargil, Uri, Kumbh, and others.

The titles being applied for also include 'Hindustan Ka Sindoor', 'Mission Operation Sindoor' and 'Sindoor Ka Badla'. The applications have also been received for titles in the name of Pahalgam -- 'Pahalgam: The Terror Attack', 'Pahalgam Attack', and others. According to sources, Aditya Dhar, who directed the 2019 film "Uri: The Surgical Strike" based on the 2016 Uri attack and India's retaliatory strikes, as well as actor Suniel Shetty, filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar, Vivek Agnihotri, Ashok Pandit, production banner T-Series are among those who have applied for the above mentioned titles.

"Once, the title is applied, a committee consisting of members IMPPA, IFTPC or WIFPA, and Producers Guild of India, decides who should get the title purely on the basis of who registered it first. There's no favoritism in this process," Nagrath said. The application fee for the registration of a title is set at Rs 300 plus GST and if it is on an urgent basis then it is Rs 3,000 plus GST. "There's a timeline of three years. For instance, if the film is not ready within three years with the title, then the title will be taken away," Nagrath said. (PTI)



Always expected show like 'Suits LA' will come with some pressure: Bryan Greenberg

NEW DELHI, May 9: American actor Bryan Greenberg says the bar set by "Suits" was so high that he knew boarding the cast of its spin-off, "Suits LA", would come with its own set of challenges.

Greenberg, best known for "How to Make It in America", "One Tree Hill", and "The Mindy Project", plays a lawyer named Rick Dodson in the legal drama series which is currently streaming on JioHotstar in India.

"Suits", featuring Gabriel Macht as the charismatic attorney Harvey Specter and Patrick J. Adams as his protegee Mike Ross, had an ardent fan-following throughout its nine-season run on USA Network, starting 2011. The show became a worldwide phenomenon with its debut on Netflix in 2023.

According to Greenberg, audiences often go through an "adjustment period" when a show taking forward a popular franchise premieres.

"I always expected that when

you join something that is so anticipated and the bar was set so high that it's going to come with some pressure... It's fair that the audience wants to see the original show that they loved.

"But I think what the audience understands is that while we have the DNA of the original show, the same writers, a lot of same directors and characters like Harvey Specter and Louis Litt (Rick Hoffman) coming back, we are a whole new cast, a whole new story, a whole new setting. I would rather be a part of something that's anticipated than be a part of something that nobody cares about," the actor told PTI in an interview.

Set in Los Angeles, "Suits LA" follows Stephen Amell's Ted Black, a former federal prosecutor from New York, who has reinvented himself representing the most powerful clients in Los Angeles.

"His firm is at a crisis point, and in order to survive, he must embrace a role he held in con-

tempt his entire career. Ted is surrounded by a stellar group of characters who test their loyalties to both Ted and each other while they can't help but mix their personal and professional lives. All of this is going on while we slowly unravel the events that years ago led Ted to leave behind everything and everyone he loved," reads its official synopsis.

In the show, Greenberg plays Rick Dodson, who the actor describes as someone who is "highly ambitious and competitive".

"Trying to achieve their goals in a moral and an ethical way is very difficult in the land of Hollywood. As an actor all you want are obstacles. I have got tons of them with that setting and the character."

Greenberg also revealed that he drew inspiration from his agent Matt Vioral to play Rick Dodson.

"My agent is a hardworking guy and Rick is too. He is the

first one in the office and last one to leave, he doesn't win over his clients by wining and dining and schmoozing them.

"He is really doing the work going through the contract by understanding the needs of an artist and trying to execute their dreams, their visions so I kind of based my character on my own agent."

The actor said he would also like original "Suits" characters Mike Ross and Donna Paulsen (Sarah Rafferty) to come back in the new series.

"I think it will be great... Fans are really going to appreciate it." Aaron Korsh, the man behind "Suits", serves as creator and executive producer on "Suits LA".

David Bartis, Doug Liman, Gene Klein, Anton Cropper, Genevieve Sparling, Rick Muirragui and Jon Cowan also executive produce the spin-off, which is backed by UCP, a division of Universal Studio Group. (PTI)



Rock band The Who announces final tour in North America



LONDON, May 9: British rock band The Who is set to perform in North America for the last time with their "Song Is Over Tour".

The final tour for the North America will commence on August 16 and conclude on September 28. It will cover cities like New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Toronto and Vancouver, among others.

The founding members Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend held a press conference on Thursday at the Iconic Images gallery in Piccadilly, London, where they confirmed the news, according to the band's official website.

"Every musician's dream in the early 60's was to make it big in the US charts. For the Who, that dream came true in 1967 and our lives were changed forever. The warmth of the American audiences over the years have been inspirational to me, and reflect the feeling I remember getting after hearing the first rock records coming across the radio. Musical freedom!" "To me, America has always been great. The cultural differences had a huge impact on me, this was the land of the possible. It's not easy to end the big part of my life that touring with The Who has been. Look forward to seeing you one last time," Daltrey said.

Townshend added, "Well, all good things must come to an end. It is a poignant time. For me, playing to American audiences and those in Canada has always been incredible. The warmth and engagement of those audiences began back in 1967 with hippies smoking dope, sitting on their blankets and listening deeply and intensely. Music was everywhere. We all felt equal." The band was formed in 1964 and is known for the songs like "Pinball Wizard", "Baba O'Riley", "My Generation", and "Love, Reign Over Me". (PTI)

Infantino plans Saudi visit during Trump's tour as soccer world gathers in Paraguay



GENEVA, May 9: FIFA President Gianni Infantino will go to Saudi Arabia next week during U.S. President Donald Trump's state visit while the soccer body's 211 member federations gather at their annual Congress being held in Paraguay.

It is unprecedented in modern times for a FIFA president to skip any part of the days-long congress program, where FIFA voters in soccer's six continental bodies caucus ahead of the main meeting often called the sport's parliament. "The FIFA president has ac-

cepted invitations to attend a series of important events with world leaders, where FIFA World Cups will also be discussed," soccer's governing body said in a statement. Infantino also is expected to visit Qatar, the 2022 World Cup host which also is on the U.S. president's Middle East tour schedule.

Infantino's close ties to Trump during the president's first term have grown stronger in about 10 meetings together since December, including Tuesday at the White House with a task force to

oversee federal plans for the 2026 World Cup being co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico. The FIFA leader also meets regularly with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, whose kingdom will host the men's World Cup in 2034. Infantino helped steer those hosting rights to Saudi Arabia in an uncontested vote last December.

Infantino is expected to return from the Middle East in time for the FIFA Congress on Thursday, the last meeting of all FIFA members before they come to the 2026

World Cup.

It also is their first meeting together since before the online votes six months ago that confirmed the Saudi bid for 2034 and sent the 2030 edition to Spain, Portugal and Morocco plus single games in Paraguay, Argentina and Uruguay. He had been due Tuesday in the Paraguayan capital Asuncion to chair an in-person meeting of FIFA's ruling council.

It is now moved up four days for an online session Friday that clears Infantino's schedule for the kind of geopolitical trip he has

seemed to relish detailing on his Instagram account.

Infantino and FIFA have consistently said he needs to maintain good relations with the Trump administration to ensure the 48-team, six-week tournament is safe and successful. FIFA voters chose the North American bid in 2018 when it was backed by then-President Trump.

However, there were no formal meetings for Infantino with President Joe Biden during his four-year term that ended in January. They did pose for a photograph together in 2022 at a G20 meeting in Bali, Indonesia.

Infantino has forged close political and financial ties for FIFA with Saudi Arabia and its crown prince since before the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

In Riyadh on Tuesday, when FIFA delegates are in Paraguay, Infantino is expected to attend a Saudi-U.S. investment forum where World Cup projects are on the agenda.

Saudi Arabia is spending hundreds of billions of dollars on stadiums plus huge city and transport upgrades ahead of the tournament.

Infantino attended a similar conference in Miami Beach in February, when he sat with Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, Elon Musk and Saudi officials. They included the kingdom's ambassador to the U.S., Princess Reema Bandar Al-Saud and the governor of its sovereign wealth fund, Yasir Al-Rumayyan.

Soccer officials have privately expressed concern about Infantino's increasing focus on global politics as much as the sport FIFA runs. (AP)

Bhullar, Chawrasia make cut in Japan, five other Indians miss



TOKYO, May 9: Gaganjeet Bhullar and SSP Chawrasia were the only Indians out of seven in fray to make the cut at the International Series Japan, here Friday.

Bhullar, an 11-time winner on the Asian Tour, had four birdies against two bogeys in his 2-under 69 on the Par-71 course. He had 71 in the first round and is now 2-under for 36 holes and Tied-36th.

Chawrasia with three birdies and three bogeys was even par and T-52nd with rounds of 71-71 and an even par total.

Meanwhile, Jeev Milkha Singh missed the cut by one shot. Other missing out on weekend action were Yuvraj Sandhu, Rahil Gangjee, Ajeetesh Sandhu and Shiv Kapur as the cut fell at even par.

Lucas Herbert protected his overnight lead despite a wobble in the middle of his second round, carding a two-under-par 69 to reach 11-under at the

halfway stage.

The 29-year-old Australian dashed off the blocks on Friday morning, making two birdies in his first two holes. He then added another on the 14th, his fifth hole of the day, to reach 12-under.

However, a sprayed drive on the 15th led to a double bogey, followed by a brace of bogeys on the next two. He responded with five birdies over the next 10 holes for a round of 69.

At 11-under, Herbert was one ahead of the chasing pack led by Japan's Shunya Takeyasu and Korea's Younghun Song.

Another player who took advantage of the calmer morning conditions at the par-71 Caledonian Golf Club was Japan's Yuta Sugiura.

A second consecutive four-under round moved him to eight-under par total, and three behind the leader, where he was joined by South Africa's Ian Snyman. (PTI)

Slot urges fans not to show negative emotions toward Alexander-Arnold when Liverpool hosts Arsenal

LIVERPOOL, May 9: Liverpool manager Arne Slot is urging fans to not show any negative emotions toward Trent Alexander-Arnold against Arsenal on Sunday in the team's first match since the England international's announcement he would be leaving Anfield at the end of the season.

Alexander-Arnold has acknowledged his decision to leave will "anger" some Liverpool supporters, who might feel unhappy he has run down his contract and not allowed the club to get any money for one of its star assets.

Slot said he was "not here to tell the fans how they should react" but doesn't want any anti-Alexander-Arnold sentiment affecting the already-crowned Premier League champion's final matches of the season.

"I think we are all disappointed," Slot said in a news conference Friday, "but Trent is the first one also who said that he would prefer us as a team and us as a club not to be too much distracted by this announcement. "So I am hoping that all the en-

ergy on Sunday goes to the players and to the support of our fans and as less as possible to Trent. Unless it is positive and then they can do whatever they want."

Slot said Conor Bradley is likely to start ahead of Alexander-Arnold at right back against Arsenal.

And the manager wouldn't comment directly on the possibility of Alexander-Arnold heading to Real Madrid — his widely reported next destination — ahead of the Club World Cup starting in mid-June, though he did drop a hint.

"Do you know where he is going?" Slot said with a smile. "He hasn't said anything about it himself — the only thing he has said is that he's going to leave the club."

"For me it's impossible to comment on where he is going and if that is a club that's going to play in the Club World Cup — you see on my smile that we both know where he is going to but it hasn't been said yet — so that's impossible for me to comment on." (AP)

'Firmly committed to prioritise national interest over all other considerations': Jiostar

NEW DELHI, May 9: With the IPL suspended, its broadcast and streaming rights holder Jiostar on Friday said the company stands firmly committed to prioritise national interest over all other considerations, while extending support to the government and armed forces.

The company said it will work with the BCCI to bring back IPL, which has been suspended for a week because of the deepening military confrontation between India and Pakistan, at an appropriate time.

"We, at Jiostar, wholeheartedly support the BCCI's decision to suspend TATA IPL 2025 and stand firmly committed to prioritise national interest over all other considerations."

"At this time, we must stand united with our country, support the government and our armed forces, and extend solidarity and support to the civilians affected," the company said in a statement.

It further said, "We will work with the BCCI to bring back the tournament at an appropriate time." Jiostar will work closely with all stakeholders to ensure



the transition is managed in a seamless manner and everyone involved in the tournament broadcast returns home safely, it added.

Supporting the decision to suspend IPL, Rediffusion Chairman Sandeep Goyal said, "national interest comes first" and it is both "about security and semantics".

"While our soldiers are fight-

ing the enemy on the battlefield, risking their lives, you can't have a stadium full chanting for sixes. The nation's mood is sombre and serious — and it is right everyone closes ranks," he added.

Goyal, however, said, "The broadcaster will surely have a force majeure clause — insurance will cover any losses...For brands, news channels will be-

come the natural choice (to advertise) but for most it will be mostly wait-and-watch." Nuvama Institutional Equity Executive Director Abneesh Roy said as most of the IPL is over and only a small number of matches is left, "we don't see this as significant impact, more of sentimentally negative" on stocks of SUN TV and United Spirits, which have IPL teams Sunrisers Hyderabad and Royal Challengers Bangalore respectively.

The Indian Premier League (IPL) was on Friday suspended because of the deepening military confrontation between India and Pakistan with the BCCI saying that national interest trumps other considerations at a time when the country is responding to a terror attack and unwarranted aggression from across the border.

A cloud of uncertainty had loomed over the future of the ongoing edition since the cancellation of Thursday's match between Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals in Dharamsala midway following air raid alerts in neighbouring cities of Jammu and Pathankot. (PTI)

Akshay Bhatia shoots 63 for promising start at Truist C'ship

FLOURTOWN (PENNSYLVANIA, USA), May 9: Indian-American golfer Akshay Bhatia struck 10 birdies in a brilliant opening-round card of seven-under 63 to grab a share of the third spot in the Truist Championship here.

Bhatia was placed alongside Rickie Fowler, Colin Morikawa and Sepp Straka on the leaderboard. He is two strokes behind leader, Keith Mitchell (61), and one behind Denny McCarthy (62).

Indo-British player Aaron Rai turned in a five-under 65 to be placed tied 11th. Another Indian-American Sahith Theegala managed a modest one-under 69 and is placed tied 55th after the first day.

Mitchell, who is one of the four sponsor exemption this week, shot 61 that shattered the course record at the Philadelphia Cricket Club. The previous Wisahickon Course record of 65 was shared by Colin St Maxen, Zac Blair and Angus Flanagan.

Bhatia had 10 birdies, the best in the field, and three bogeys in his 63. Starting on the back-nine, he birdied the 10th before dropping a shot on the 11th hole. Following this, Bhatia fired five consecutive birdies from the 13th to the 17th hole.

On the front-nine of the Wisahickon course, Bhatia dropped a shot on the first hole before making a run of three consecutive birdies between the fourth and sixth holes. He dropped another shot on the eighth and closed with a 13-foot birdie on the ninth hole.

Bhatia's putting, made possible after some good iron play, helped in achieving the low score. He was tied first for putts per greens in regulation.

"Yeah, it felt like I didn't have many long putts today. For that stretch (five in a row from the 13th to the 17th after starting on the 10th) especially, I felt like I was kind of just hitting my numbers and hitting it pretty close," Bhatia said after his round.

"Definitely a solid day to start. Made a couple of mistakes. Just got to clean up some of the longer putts and get more comfortable with my driver. That's kind of been the issue for me these last four or five weeks. Just trying to slowly but surely get a little bit better with the long driver," he added. (PTI)

Top-5 race, Conference League push and Salah stats: What's still at stake in the Premier League?

LONDON, May 9: The title race is done, three teams have already been relegated, yet the Premier League isn't quite limping to the finishing line.

The race to secure the final four Champions League qualification places, along with champion Liverpool, is maintaining the interest in England's top league with three rounds to go. In fact, it's hardly been tighter.

Six clubs are involved — Arsenal, Manchester City, Newcastle, Chelsea, Nottingham Forest and Aston Villa — and two will miss out on securing a spot in Europe's lucrative elite competition.

As well as that, Bournemouth, Brentford, Brighton and Fulham are in a four-way fight for eighth and qualification for a potential Conference League spot, which would be a big deal to the four somewhat unheralded but improving clubs.

Then there's some individual milestones to reach. Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah takes center stage here, as he leads the

Golden Boot race for the top scorer and also has his eye on a Premier League assist record.

Arsenal, in second place, is a near-certainty to qualify for the Champions League so more scrutiny is on the five teams below, with third-place Man City and seventh-place Villa separated by just four points.

The biggest game this weekend sees fourth-place Newcastle host fifth-place Chelsea on Sunday. They are both on 63 points, one below City and two clear of sixth-place Forest, which is at home to already-relegated Leicester on Sunday.

Chelsea might have the toughest run-in, having to play Manchester United at home and Forest away. Newcastle also has to play Arsenal away and Everton at home.

City can go a long way toward securing a top-five finish by winning at already-relegated Southampton on Saturday, before closing games against Bournemouth at home and Fulham away.



Forest can put things in its own hands by beating Leicester ahead of games against West Ham away and then Chelsea at home, which could essentially wind up being a Champions League playoff.

Villa closes with a run of Bournemouth away, Tottenham at home and Man United away, and is the outsider for Champions League qualification.

Tottenham and Man United are both likely to be more focused on the Europa League final, where the winner also gets a Champions League spot.

If Man City wins the FA Cup after reaching the final against Crystal Palace, there's a strong possibility that eighth place secures a place in the Conference League — Europe's third-tier competition.

Bournemouth currently occupies eighth on 53 points, one ahead of Brentford and Brighton and two clear of Fulham.

Playing in the Conference League should excite Bournemouth and Brentford, in

particular, as they have never played in a European competition.

Brighton played in the Europa League in the 2023-24 season, while Fulham reached the Europa League final in 2010.

Salah, the newly crowned "Footballer of the Year" in England, leads the Premier League's scoring chart on 28 goals — five more than Newcastle striker Alexander Isak. Man City's Erling Haaland has 21.

Salah has either won outright or shared the Golden Boot on three occasions — 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2021-22 — and is set to stop Haaland from winning it three straight seasons.

National interest above all else, says BCCI

IPL suspended indefinitely as India-Pakistan military tensions soar

NEW DELHI, May 9: The Indian Premier League (IPL) was on Friday suspended because of the deepening military confrontation between India and Pakistan with the BCCI saying that national interest trumps other considerations at a time when the country is responding to a terror attack and unwarranted aggression from across the border.

A cloud of uncertainty had loomed over the future of the ongoing edition since the cancellation of Thursday's match between Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals in Dharamsala midway following air raid alerts in neighbouring cities of Jammu and Pathankot.

"The BCCI has decided to suspend the remainder of the ongoing IPL with immediate effect for one week," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia stated in a press release, after early information from the Board suggested that the suspension was indefinite.

"Further updates regarding the new schedule and venues of the tournament will be announced in due course after a comprehensive assessment of the situation in consultation with relevant authorities and stakeholders," it added.

The high-profile league was to wind up on May 25 in Kolkata as per the original schedule. The Board would look to conduct the remaining 16 matches (12 league and four knockouts) at an opportune time and there is speculation that the month of September could be an option if the scheduled Asia Cup is scrapped.

"At this critical juncture, the BCCI stands firmly with the nation. We express our solidarity with the Government of India, the Armed Forces and the people of our country," the Board statement read.

"The Board salutes the bravery, courage, and selfless service of our armed forces, whose heroic efforts under Operation Sindoor continue to protect and inspire the nation, as they lead a resolute response to the recent terrorist attack and the unwarranted aggression by Pakistan's armed forces," it



added. The BCCI said that while cricket remains a national passion, it is not greater than the sovereignty, integrity, and security of the country.

"The BCCI remains firmly committed to support all efforts that safeguard India and will always align its decisions in the best interest of the nation," it stated.

The Board also thanked stakeholders like the official broadcaster, the title sponsor and all associate partners for "putting national interest above all other considerations."

India launched missile attacks on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir a fortnight after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people were killed.

On Thursday, a blackout was enforced in

several districts in India including Pathankot, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Mohali in Punjab and Union Territory Chandigarh amid air raid alarms and reports of explosion-like sounds in Jammu.

Earlier in the day, the Pakistan Super League was moved to the UAE after Indian drone attacks in Lahore and Rawalpindi among other cities.

The military confrontation had caused significant anxiety among the foreign players, according to league sources and they will be flying back over the next few days. Sixty two overseas players were signed up by the 10 franchises at the mega-auction last year.

"The players are doing well but of course there is concern among them after seeing all that has happened," an IPL team official told

PTI when asked about the foreign players' state of mind.

The players of Delhi Capitals and Punjab Kings are currently on their way to the national capital from Dharamsala by road.

On Friday, the IPL bandwagon was in Lucknow for the game between Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru, which now stands suspended.

"Nation first," posted LSG on its official social media page after the league's suspension.

In Sydney, Cricket Australia stated that it was closely monitoring the situation in both India and Pakistan, which shifted its flagship Pakistan Super League (PSL) to the UAE early this morning owing to the Indian military action.

New Zealand's players association had also expressed concerns about the security scenario in India and Pakistan due to the ongoing conflict.

A similar statement was issued by the Cricket West Indies, whose players are also involved in both the IPL and the PSL.

It's not the first time that external factors have caused a disruption to the league, which has been taken thrice out of the country in the past due to varied reasons. In 2009, the entire tournament was moved to South Africa because of security issues amid the Lok Sabha elections.

In 2020, the tournament was played in the UAE in September, instead of the usual April-May window, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The next year, the event began in India in a bio-bubble but was halted when players began testing positive for the deadly infection. The league was eventually completed in the UAE in September that year.

It remains to be seen how the BCCI will complete the ongoing edition after this break.

The Indian team is scheduled to be in England next month for a five-match Test series that will end in the first week of August. (PTI)

Chopra, Rohit, Kohli back Indian armed forces amid escalating conflict with Pakistan

NEW DELHI, May 9: India's sporting icons, including Neeraj Chopra, PV Sindhu, Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, have come out in strong support of the country's armed forces for their strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan, hailing them as "the soul of our nation." India on Thursday night swiftly thwarted Pakistan's attempts to strike its military bases with drones and missiles including in Jammu and Pathankot after foiling similar bids at 15 places in northern and western regions of the country, as tension soared between the two neighbours amid fears of a larger conflict.

"With every passing moment, with every decision taken I feel extremely proud of our Indian Army, Indian Airforce & Indian Navy. Our warriors are standing tall for our nation's pride. It's important for every Indian to be responsible and refrain from spreading or believing any fake news. Stay safe, everyone! #OperationSindoor #JaiHind," Rohit wrote on his X account on Friday.

Modern-day great Kohli posted his tribute on his Instagram page.

"We stand in solidarity with, and salute our armed forces for fiercely protecting our country in these difficult times. We are forever indebted to our heroes for their unwavering bravery and heartfelt gratitude for the sacrifices they and their families make for our great nation," Kohli wrote. "We are proud of our Brave Indian Armed Forces who are fighting for our nation against Terrorism. Let's do our part and make sure to follow guidelines to ensure everyone's safety during this time," double Olympic-medallist Chopra posted.

Two-time Olympic medallist shuttler Sindhu also paid tribute to

the courage of Indian armed forces. "To the brave men and women of the Indian Armed Forces — your courage, discipline, and sacrifice are the soul of our nation. In moments like Operation Sindoor, we're reminded of the silent strength and selfless service that keep our tricolour flying high. India stands with you. Jai Hind," Sindhu posted.

Thursday's IPL match between Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals in Dharamsala was called off due to security reasons following air raid alerts in nearby areas, prompting the BCCI to suspend the league indefinitely.

Former opener Sehrawat blamed Pakistan for the current situation.

"War has been chosen by Pakistan when they had an opportunity to keep quiet. They have escalated to save it's terrorist assets, speaks so much about them. Our forces will reply in the most appropriate manner, a manner Pakistan will never forget," Sehrawat posted on 'X'.

Sehrawat's former India teammate Dhawan also paid his tribute to the Indian forces engaged in the conflict. Dhawan tweeted: "Respect to our brave hearts for protecting our borders with such strength and stopping the drone attack on Jammu. India stands strong. Jai Hind."

India's premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah and T20 captain Suryakumar Yadav chimed in thanking the defence forces. "Grateful to our armed forces for their courage and bravery. We salute them and remain forever in their debt for everything that they do to keep us safe," Bumrah wrote.

"Massively proud of our forces and their resilience. You are the reason we stay unharmed, at our homes. Big salute to your strength and determination in protecting us at borders. We thank you. Jai Hind," Suryakumar wrote on his social media handles. (PTI)

Cricket Australia 'closely monitoring' situation in India, Pakistan



SYDNEY, May 9: Cricket Australia (CA) on Friday said it is "closely monitoring" the escalating tensions between India and Pakistan given that over 20 Australian players and coaches are currently involved in the ongoing Indian Premier League and the Pakistan Super League.

The IPL was thrown into uncertainty on Thursday after air raid alerts in nearby cities forced the match between Delhi Capitals and Punjab Kings to be abandoned midway in Dharamsala. The disruption has prompted the BCCI and IPL organisers to review the unfolding situation and consider their next steps.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has decided to shift the remaining matches of the Pakistan Super League to the UAE due to growing security concerns.

"We continue to closely monitor the situation in Pakistan and India, including obtaining regular advice and updates from the Australian Government, the PCB, BCCI and local government authorities..."

"...and maintaining communication with our players and support staff currently in the region," CA said in a statement.

Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head and coaches Ricky Ponting and Brad Haddin are involved in the IPL while the likes of former batter David Warner, pacers Ben Dwarshuis, Riley Meredith and Sean Abbott are competing in the PSL.

According to local media reports, several Australian players have expressed concerns about their safety and are keen to leave India as soon as possible.

IPL chairman Arun Dhumal on Thursday said government directives are being awaited before deciding on whether to continue with the league.

"We are reviewing the situation right now. It is an evolving situation. We haven't received any directive from the government. Obviously the decision will be taken keeping all the logistics in mind," Dhumal told PTI on Thursday night.

However, he confirmed that Friday's match between Lucknow Super Giants and Royal Challengers Bengaluru would go ahead "as of now." (PTI)

South Africa appoint Shukri Conrad as all-format coach

JOHANNESBURG, May 9: South Africa Test coach Shukri Conrad will take charge of the Proteas white ball teams until the 2027 ICC 50-over World Cup, the CSA announced here on Friday.

Conrad, who has been coaching the SA Test side from 2023, succeeds Rob Walter, who resigned in April after the Champions Trophy.

The 58-year-old's first white ball assignment will be a T20I series against Zimbabwe and New Zealand in July.

CSA Director of National Teams and High Performance, Enoch Nkwe commented: "Shukri's track record with the red-ball team speaks for itself."

"He has laid a solid foundation and instilled a strong identity within the Test environment. I'm excited to see him bring the profile and structure to the white-ball space."

Under Conrad's guidance, South Africa have reached their first-ever World Test Championship final, and will face defending champions

Australia for the title at Lord's, London, from June 11 to 15.

"I'm truly honoured to be entrusted with the responsibility of leading the national team across all three formats. I'm genuinely excited about the prospects that lie ahead. South African cricket has incredible white-ball talent. There's a strong foundation to build on, and I believe we have what it takes to achieve something special," said Conrad.

During his tenure, Conrad will oversee two major white ball events — T20 World Cup 2026 in India and the 50-over World Cup 2027 on home soil.

"During this period, planning will be key for us as we look to manage our player base to ensure that the strongest teams can be fielded in every format."

"We want to obviously be the best in the world in all three forms of the game and that is no doubt my number one target and goal for the Proteas," he added. (PTI)

Rattled PCB moves PSL to UAE as tensions with India escalate

LAHORE, May 9: The PCB on Friday decided to shift the remaining matches of its Pakistan Super League to the UAE because of the ongoing military confrontation with India which has left the event's foreign players anxious.

The PCB (Pakistan Cricket Board) said earlier this morning that the last eight fixtures, which were previously scheduled in Rawalpindi, Multan and Lahore, will now be staged in the UAE.

Schedule of matches, outlining the dates and venues, will be shared in due course, a statement said.

PCB Chairman, Mohsin Naqvi alleged that India had targeted the Rawalpindi cricket stadium in the most recent strike inside Pakistan to disrupt the PSL.

However, the Indian defence ministry has made it clear that only the air defence radars and systems were targeted on Thursday after Pakistan tried to hit 15 places in northern and western regions in India on Wednesday night. (PTI)

IPL resumption: Why scrapping of Asia Cup in September is best option for BCCI

NEW DELHI, May 9: The currently suspended Indian Premier League's 16 remaining games can be completed during a 10 to 12 days window in September as the Asia Cup is now uncertain due to the rising armed hostilities between India and Pakistan.

It would be a miracle if Asia Cup, which is supposed to be hosted by India (at a supposedly neutral venue), goes ahead given the raging conflict which was triggered by the killing of 26 people in a terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam. The nearly non-existent sporting ties are unlikely to resume at any level till tensions ease.

The Asia Cup was given a 19-day window in September where at least two Indo-Pak matches were to take place apart from the possibility of a final clash between the bitter rivals which would have assured the broadcasters of high advertising revenue.

"It is extremely bad optics if cricket continues when there is a possibility of war with a rogue nation (Pakistan). Sports can continue when everything is normal. Plus it is very natural for foreign players and coaches to be wary and wanting to return home," a senior BCCI official told PTI on condition of anonymity after the league was suspended indefinitely on Friday.

Incidentally, the Asian Cricket Council is now headed by Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Mohsin Naqvi and the onus will be on him to deal with financial losses that the Asia Cup cancellation would cause.

It is understood that the BCCI top brass' decision to suspend the league was well thought out call as only a



handful of matches are left which can be completed in a 10-day window with possible double-headers.

The IPL has a dedicated window from March end to May end during which no international cricket is scheduled allowing the best of world cricket to ply their trade in the league. Now that the schedule has gone haywire, the BCCI will have to explore the available options.

The Indian team will be touring England from first week of June to first week of August and that schedule cannot be changed. The only period that looks good right now is between the second and fourth week of September where the BCCI can also negotiate with the various cricket boards to allow their players (except for free-lancers who don't need permission) to come back and complete the assignment.

In August, India have a six-match white ball away series against Bangladesh which could have been stalled for IPL. However, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB)'s

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