

India repels Pak drone attacks at 26 places

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 9: India Friday night repelled fresh drone attacks from Pakistan at 26 locations in the country's north and west including Srinagar airport, as it accused Islamabad of using its civilian planes as a "shield" for its aerial strikes endangering their flights.

As Pakistan targeted several cities for the third consecutive night, this time from Baramulla in north Kashmir to Bhuj in Gujarat, the government said Islamabad had launched between 300 and 400 Turkish drones across 36 locations from Leh to Sir Creek in its failed attempt to target Indian military installations Thursday night.

"Drones have been sighted at 26 locations ranging from Baramulla in the north to Bhuj in the south, along both the International Border and the Line of Control with Pakistan," military officials said. The drone strikes in locations that included airports and airbases have been successfully thwarted, they added.

Besides Baramulla, Srinagar and Bhuj, the locations included Awantipora, Nagrota, Jammu, Ferozpur, Pathankot, Fazilka, Lalgah Jatta, Jaisalmer, Barmer, Bhuj, Kuarbet and Lakhi Nala.

An armed drone targeted a civilian area in Ferozpur, resulting in severe injuries to members of a local family, officials said.

Drone attacks on Srinagar airport and Awantipora air base were thwarted late Friday, while blasts were heard in Jammu and parts of the south Kashmir region, defence officials said in Srinagar.

It was a second straight night of darkness and fear for locals of several border districts as sirens wailed upon spotting of aerial threats from Pakistan

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



COASTAL SECURITY TIGHTENED: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 9: Amid India-Pakistan military conflict, Odisha has tightened security along its coast and around key installations such as the missile testing centre in Chandipur and the Jagannath temple in Puri, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said Friday.

Both the defence facility and the 12th-century shrine are near the coastline. Though the coastal state is far from the Pakistan border, there is a threat perception from the Bay of Bengal, Majhi said.

The state government, in collaboration with the Centre, has taken all steps to protect vital installations in the state, the chief minister said on the sidelines of a programme here.

"In the case of Odisha, there is no such threat from Pakistan. However, we have some key installations like the missile testing range at Chandipur, the Puri temple and other places which could be potential targets through water route in the Bay of Bengal. Coastal security is therefore tightened," Majhi said.

Another round of a high-level meeting is being held to re-



CAUGHT IN CONFLICT: A man searches for his belongings among debris after his house was damaged amid the ongoing military conflict between India and Pakistan, at Uri in Baramulla district, Jammu & Kashmir, Friday

- Pak targets several cities for third night
- Islamabad using Turkish drones against India
- Pakistan using civilian planes as shield
- Attack on Srinagar airport thwarted
- Members of a family injured in Ferozpur

that were effectively engaged by the armed forces.

From Srinagar and Jammu to Punjab's multiple districts and Jaisalmer and Jodhpur in Rajasthan, a vast stretch of the border areas plunged into darkness with public announcements made, urging people to switch off their lights as a precautionary measure.

Heavy cross-border shelling was also underway along the International Border in Suchetgarh and Ramgarh sectors of Jammu and Samba districts.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said Pakistan's strike on places of worship and its 'preposterous' attempts to put the blame on Indian armed forces is reflective of Islamabad's

evil design and efforts to deceive and mislead the world.

Citing Pakistan's attack on a gurdwara in Amritsar and its subsequent attempt to blame it on Indian armed forces, Misri said Islamabad's thinking that India would attack its own cities is the kind of 'deranged fantasy' that only the Pakistani state can come up with.

Two people were killed after Pakistani troops resorted to heavy shelling in areas near the Line of Control (LoC) in J&K, officials said. With this, the death toll due to shelling from across the LoC in the recent days rose to 18.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a high-level meeting with the top defence

32 AIRPORTS SHUT TILL MAY 15: DGCA

New Delhi: Thirty-two airports across northern and western parts of the country, including Srinagar and Amritsar, have been closed for civilian flight operations till May 15, according to the civil aviation regulator. The decision, announced early Saturday, comes in view of the military conflict between India and Pakistan that continued unabated since India's May 7 strikes on terror camps and Pakistan's subsequent shelling of border areas. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) and relevant aviation authorities have issued a series of Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) announcing the temporary closure of 32 airports across northern and western India for all civil flight operations. The airports include Adampur, Ambala, Amritsar, Awantipur, Bathinda, Bhuj, Bikaner, Chandigarh, Halwara, Hindon, and Jammu. Other airports are Jaisalmer, Jamnagar, Jodhpur, Kandla, Kangra (Gaggal), Keshod, Kishangarh, Kullu Manali (Bhuntar), and Leh, according to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. Ludhiana, Mundra, Naliya, Pathankot, Patiala, Porbandar, Rajkot (Hirasar), Sarsawa, Shimla, Srinagar, Thoise and Uttarlai are the remaining airports to be shut, the release said.

establishment to take stock of the security situation.

Modi met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, and the three service chiefs and the Chief of Defence Staff to strategise over the future course of action. Earlier in the day, he held interactions with veterans, including former chiefs of the three services, taking their feedback on the

current situation.

At a media briefing, Misri slammed Pakistan's provocative and escalatory actions to try and target Indian cities and civilian infrastructure using drones last night.

Most drones were downed using kinetic and non-kinetic means, said Col Sofiya Qureshi of the Army and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh of the Indian Air Force

(IAF) at the briefing.

The two military officials said Pakistan used its civilian airliners as a 'shield' as it did not close its civil airspace during its attempts to attack Indian installations with drones and missiles 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.

Tension between the two neighbours soared after the Indian armed forces Wednesday conducted precision strikes targeting terror launchpads in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in response to the April 22 attack by terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed.

Investors lose ₹7L-crore in 2 days as markets tumble

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 9: Investors' wealth eroded by ₹7 lakh crore in two days as stock markets became jittery following the escalation of the India-Pakistan conflict.

India 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.

Extending its previous day's decline, the 30-share BSE benchmark gauge Sensex tanked 880.34 points, or 1.10 per cent, to settle at 79,454.47, in a largely range-bound trading.

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

In two days, the BSE benchmark tumbled 1,292.31 points, or 1.60 per cent.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded ₹7,09,783.32 crore to

₹4,16,40,850.46 crore (USD 4.86 trillion) in two days.

"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 (Thursday), while retail investors remain slightly cautious at the moment," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

"Domestic factors continued to weigh on Indian markets even as global indices stayed firm, as rising tension due to Indo-Pak conflict prompted investors to flee local equities," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

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

BSF foils infiltration bid, kills 7 terrorists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Jammu, May 9: The Border Security Force (BSF) 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 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 two countries following the Pahalgam terrorist attack of April 22 and India's strike on terror targets in Pakistan and PoK in retaliation.

IMF approves \$1bn loan for Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, May 9: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Friday approved the immediate disbursement of about \$1 billion to Pakistan under the ongoing Extended Fund Facility, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) here said.

"Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed satisfaction over the approval of a \$1bn dollar instalment for Pakistan by the IMF and the failure of India's high-handed tactics against it," according to a statement issued by his office.

India earlier raised concerns over the efficacy of IMF programmes in the case of Pakistan, given its poor track record, and also on the possibility of misuse of debt financing funds for state-sponsored cross-border terrorism.

New Delhi opposed the IMF's proposal to extend fresh loans of \$2.3 billion to Pakistan, saying they could be misused for financing state-sponsored cross-border terrorism.

IPL suspended

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 9: The Indian Premier League (IPL) was 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.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, you may receive some kind of material support from family. It is probably for a wise cause, so be sure to use it accordingly, says Ganesha. You may spend the evening with those very loved ones who have supported you.

TAURUS
There is a strong prospect that you will work extremely hard to prove yourself at your workplace today, predicts Ganesha. At times, the returns may not be in proportion to your efforts. You will unwind at the end of the day with a happy and content feeling, expects Ganesha.

GEMINI
Today is an important phase in your life. You will be making a few crucial decisions. At work, you will come up with several fresh ideas, which, along with your will-power, form the winning concoction for your company. In the evening, you may spend a few extra bucks on comforts and entertainment, says Ganesha.

CANCER
A very hectic day for you! Today, you may have too much work to do, and taking even a coffee break may not remain an option. You will be forthright in dealing with issues and nothing will escape your sharp observation. You will be able to manage your work well, and finish it on time.

LEO
The Libra in you gives you substantial balancing prowess, says Ganesha. So, it should come as no surprise that you are fabulous when it comes to balancing people and their interests and giving equal attention to everyone. Make it a point to revive your social contacts even if it takes all afternoon. Ganesha foresees big business parties on the cards for you later in the evening. On a more cautionary note, your spare-time actions might result in considerable expenditure. Curb expensive hobbies.

VIRGO
Work like a thrill to have your contribution noticed, says Ganesha. However, do not expect appreciation in the same degree. Unwind at the end of a long day with the solace of putting in your best.

LIBRA
There are indications that today, you may want to take a break from your humdrum routine in order to recharge your batteries. It is an essential change that we all need from time to time, says Ganesha. Finances may improve sometime later in the day. Children, if any, may be a source of joy in the afternoon. Ganesha says you will get rather emotional towards the end of this fruitful day.

SCORPIO
Life's not too slow nor too fast: you are going steady and strong, feels Ganesha. On the career front, simply grin and bear it all. Workplace efficiency will improve today. At home, you will be happy and content and more importantly – at peace, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
A mixed bag of fortunes in store today, says Ganesha. At work, expect the unexpected and overlook the expected. Don't you worry if you stumble there, says Ganesha, for the evening promises to be ecstatic and a fitting finale to a rather muddled day.

CAPRICORN
A couple of fascinating developments on the family front will fill the air with excitement, and will keep you pleasantly occupied throughout the day, says Ganesha. Your outstanding efforts at work will be rewarded adequately, but you will need to be extra careful while executing plans as you may commit mistakes that will do irreparable damage.

AQUARIUS
As the day begins, you will be irritated and troubled by the most trivial of matters. But you won't let it hamper your pace and sincerely pursue your goals. Evening promises some kind of monetary windfall. Make full use of opportunities on the career front, if any, says Ganesha.

PISCES
Today is a day devoted to matters of the hearth as well as your heart. So, while you will probably be busy during the day keeping tabs on the refurbishments you have planned for your residence, the evening should probably see you in a romantic setting murmuring sweet nothings to your soul mate, says Ganesha.



BIEBER SHUTS DOWN DIVORCE RUMOURS

Hailey Bieber's solo appearance at the 2025 Met Gala ignited marriage trouble rumours with Justin Bieber, who was absent, watching hockey at home. Despite speculation fueled by his absence, Justin publicly displayed affection by posting Hailey's photos on Instagram with flirty captions, seemingly dismissing divorce gossip.

STAN, WOODALL TO STAR IN BURNING RAINBOW FARM

Actors Sebastian Stan and Leo Woodall are set to star in The Order's upcoming film titled, *Burning Rainbow Farm*. According to the entertainment news outlet *Deadline*, the film is directed by Justin Kurzel, best known for films like *Snowtown*.



ANANYA not afraid to fall

MUMBAI: It was in 2019, when her debut film *Student Of The Year 2* released. Actress Ananya Panday, who has completed six years in Hindi cinema, said that when she started off she was nervous and now she is not afraid to try.

"I was 19 when I started. I was nervous, starry-eyed and still figuring out who I was", she said.

The actress added: "Now, I think I've grown into a version of myself who's not afraid to try, to fall, to rise and to keep surprising people. I'm still learning."

"I don't have all the answers, but I know I want to keep getting better and to pick roles that challenge me, scare me a little, and keep giving me butterflies"

Student of the Year 2 is a sports romantic comedy film directed by Punit Malhotra and produced by Karan Johar's Dharma Productions. A standalone sequel to the 2012 film *Student of the Year*, it stars Tiger Shroff, Tara Sutaria, Ananya Panday, and Aditya Seal. It marks the debuts of both Tara and Ananya in Hindi cinema.

She was last seen in the courtroom drama *Kesari Chapter 2*, starring Akshay Kumar and R. Madhavan. **IAN S**



What's in a name-Apparently everything!

Old Mac Donald had a farm, ee-eye, ee-eye-oh, and on that farm, he had a duck.....here a quack, there a quack, everywhere a quack, quack.....and so goes the 1925 rhyme. Cut to 2025, what do we have! Here a Dham, there a dhoom, everywhere a dhoom-dhaam.

The controversy over the self-styled labelling of the newly constructed 21st century Digha temple as Jagannath *Dham* will hopefully be laid to rest soon with retraction of the faulty epithet denoting it, following valid clarification by religious honchos "Here in Puri is the *only* Jagannath *Dham*" as indicated in scriptures of yore.

For all the '*dhoom*' and buzz it managed to create, last heard, Digha temple is after all a replica of the 12th century Puri shrine. The temple that has apparently been modelled in the lines of THE Puri Jagannath temple not only borrowed from the religious rituals of the latter (courtesy the guidance offered by a



few Puri temple servitors), but has also installed the Nilachakra atop and neem- wood idols inside- all, a moving testament to the saying by Oscar Wilde- "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery."

There is something so unique about the original that men in vain try to emulate it. But nothing ever takes away or diminishes the supremacy of the original. In fact, more the imitations, more the heart yearns for the original. And here it is the faith and devotion of millions at play! Anyway, gross fallout of the

incident, could only be a furtherance of Mahaprabhu's glory and 'dhoom-dhaam' celebration and propagation of *Jagannath Culture*, as guidelines that hopefully align Jagannath shrines across India with Puri temple operations emerge. About time! The net

fallout is issue of SOPs for temple servitors with one servitor in the net already. No surprise!

As for *timber* used to craft the wooden idols, regardless of replicas, Puri idols reverberate with original *Dham-timbre* (quality/ character) that draws devotees like no other.

Strangely, last seen, gateway to heaven or not, gateway to pleasure was positively ensured by locating 'female vibrators in Digha,' courtesy the temple navigation map advertised prominently in several news-papers. Hari- Bol!

DR RACHNA RATH



'Art can wait, India comes first'

CHENNAI: Keeping in view the recent developments at the country's borders, the unit of director Mani Ratnam's *Thug Life*, featuring Kamal Haasan in the lead, Friday decided to postpone the audio launch function of the film which was originally scheduled to be held May 16 this year.

Actor Kamal Haasan issued a statement, which he shared on his X timeline.

The eminent actor said, "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."

The actor further said, "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. A new date will be announced at a later, more appropriate time." Stating that at this time, our thoughts are with the brave men and women of our armed forces who stand vigilant, safeguarding our nation, the actor said, "As citizens, it is our duty to respond with restraint and solidarity. Celebration must make way for reflection."

Thug Life, directed by Mani Ratnam, features Kamal Haasan in the lead. The film will also feature actors Silambarasan, Trisha, Joju George, Ashok Selvan and Abhirami in pivotal roles. **IAN S**

LOS ANGELES: National Award-winning actress Kangana Ranaut is all set to make her debut in Hollywood, as she has landed her first leading role in the horror drama *Blessed Be the Evil*.

According to the synopsis, the film 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.

The project, from Lions Movies, will see Kangana star alongside Teen Wolf star Tyler Posey and Scarlet Rose Stallone, reports *variety.com*.

Production is set to begin this summer in New York, with producers specifically noting they chose U.S. locations to "avoid running into any uncertainties stemming from the recently announced Trump industry tariffs."

Director Anurag Rudra of *Tailing Pond* fame will helm from a screenplay he co-wrote with Gatha Tiwary, president and founder of Lions Movies.

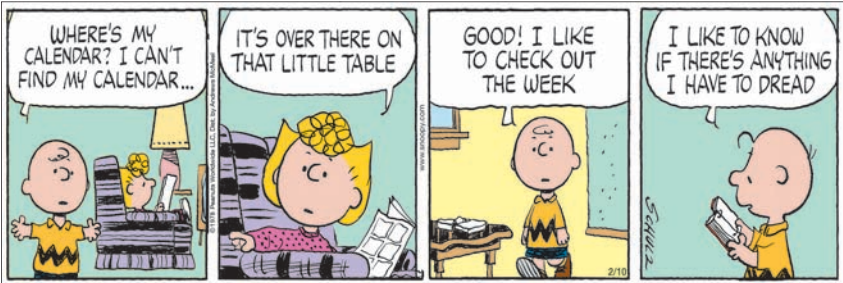
Ranaut brings considerable star power to the project. She is not only a celebrated actor with four National Film Awards and four Filmfare Awards, but also a filmmaker and politician currently serving as a Member of Parliament in India's Lok Sabha.

Her directorial effort in which she portrayed Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, received worldwide theatrical release earlier this year. **IAN S**



Kangana to make Hollywood debut

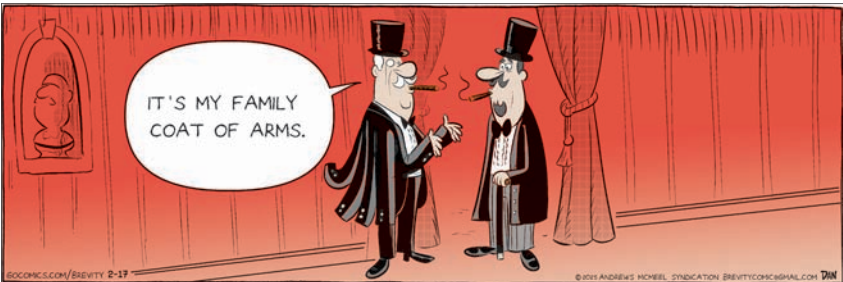
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

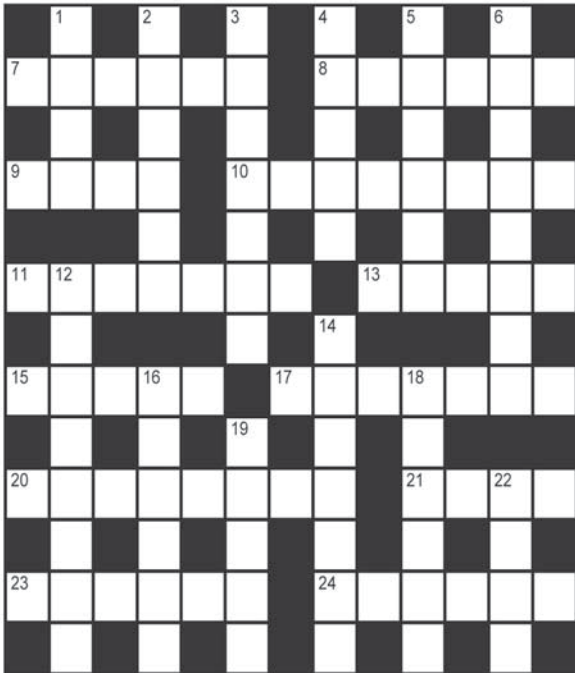


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 "Have I been here before?" (4,2)
 - 8 Fix
 - 9 Canine tooth
 - 10 Ghent natives
 - 11 Light lager
 - 13 Pile up
 - 15 Timeworn
 - 17 Wrack
 - 20 Cites
 - 21 Strip of wood
 - 23 Japanese attire
 - 24 Gives way
 - 5 Orthopedic device
 - 6 Acme
 - 12 Fearless
 - 14 Sports uniforms
 - 16 Embrocation
 - 18 Card carrier
 - 19 Up and down toys (2-3)
 - 22 Shipshape
- Down**
- 1 Epsilon follower
 - 2 Guffaws
 - 3 Mishandles
 - 4 Practice

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

		5	3					1
2								5
9		1						
		9	2			3		
				2			9	5
6					8		7	3
4		8			9		6	
			3					
		5		8	6			

SOLUTIONS

L	I	A	I	S	O	N	R	O	B	E
I	C	P	O	E	E	A	C			
A	L	O	T	T	E	R	I	E	S	B
A	C	S	T	Y	A					
C	R	E	S	T	I	G	N	S		
A	R	C	H	E	S					
F	E									
R	A	N	C	O	U	R				
C	A	R								
A	I	R	E	E	V	E				
A	C	H	E							

1	5	2	9	8	3	4	6	7
8	3	7	6	5	4	1	9	2
9	4	6	7	1	2	8	3	5
2	8	4	5	3	1	9	7	6
5	9	3	4	7	6	2	8	1
6	7	1	2	9	8	3	5	4
4	1	8	3	6	7	5	2	9
7	2	9	8	4	5	6	1	3
3	6	5	1	2	9	7	4	8

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Bringing back students from north, west: CM



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 9: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday said that amid India-Pakistan military conflict, his government has made arrangements to bring back students studying in institutions from northern and western India. The state government’s arrangement came after students studying at Central Sanskrit University in Jammu were ordered to vacate the campus. The Office of the Chief Resident Commissioner, New Delhi and Directorate of Odisha Parivar under the Odia Language, Literature and Culture department made the arrangements to bring back 114 Odia students studying at university to Odisha. Some Odia students studying in Jammu were relocated to Delhi as a precautionary measure, and the first batch has already left for Odisha through

A round-the-clock help desk has been set up at the Office of the Resident Commissioner in New Delhi and at the office of the Directorate of Odisha Parivar in Bhubaneswar

tunity, the official said. A special team has been formed and officers have been given the responsibility to ensure the safe return of Odia students, said Higher Education minister Suryabanshi Suraj. The minister added that four senior officers and 16 support staff from the Directorate of Odisha Parivar and officers from the Office of the Chief Resident Commissioner, New Delhi, have been deployed for the safe return of the students. The concerned officers are monitoring the evacuation work. The aim is to ensure that Odia students reach Odisha safely by Saturday, the minister said. A student from Sambalpur, Jitendra Prasad, said that all Odia students have come to Delhi from Jammu and Kashmir.

‘Celebrate 50 yrs of croc conservation’

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 9: As India marks 50 years of the launch of its National Crocodile Conservation Project, the Orissa Environmental Society (OES) has urged the state government to officially commemorate this historic milestone. In a letter addressed to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Ganesh Ram Singh Khuntia, OES working president Jaya Krushna Panigrahi called for state-level recognition of Odisha’s extraordinary contribution to crocodile conservation. Back in early 1970s, India’s three native crocodile species — gharials, saltwater crocodiles, and muggers — are on the brink of extinction. With support from Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and UNDP, India launched its National Crocodile Conservation Project in 1975, selecting Odisha and Uttar Pradesh as pilot states. Odisha stood out as the only state where all three species existed in the wild.

Odisha Kudo Association seeks state recognition



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 9: A 70-member team, representing Odisha Kudo Association (OKA), comprising players, coaches, and officials, met CM Mohan Charan Majhi at Lok Seva Bhawan here Friday to push for official state recognition of Kudo—a mixed martial art, combining elements of judo, karate, and taekwondo. The delegation emphasised Kudo’s rising popularity and noted that several districts in

the state already have training centres. They appealed the state government to support the sport’s development through formal recognition. Majhi assured the group that the government would consider their request seriously and acknowledged the sport’s benefits in promoting discipline and physical fitness. The meeting also saw the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, Revenue Minister Suresh Pujari, and OKA’s chief coach Nitai Shankar Guin.



RATH YATRA PREP: Maharana servitors carve the hubs of the chariot wheels at Rath Yard on the Grand Road in Puri Friday

OP PHOTO

Be torchbearers of a better tomorrow: Guv

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 9: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati Friday called upon members of Odisha State Bharat Scouts and Guides (OSBSG) to become torchbearers of a brighter future, stating that the nation needs their dedication, discipline, and values, now, more than ever. Speaking at the state-level award ceremony of OSBSG at the New Abhishek Hall of Raj Bhavan here, Kambhampati praised the scouts and guides movement for nurturing responsible citizens through service, self-reliance, and moral integrity. First Lady, Jayshree Kambhampati was also present on the occasion. “The Rajya Puraskar is not the end of your journey. It is a



milestone,” the governor said, urging the young members to carry forward the values of kindness, honesty, and leadership in all their actions. As the chief patron of the OSBSG, the Governor expressed pride in the organisation’s accomplishments and its strong presence even in remote areas of the state. He commended the Odisha state branch for winning several national-level awards.

He also acknowledged the dedicated efforts of scoutmasters, guiders, trainers, and volunteers in instilling timeless values such as compassion, respect for nature, teamwork, and service. At the event, OSBSG members were awarded in eight different categories. The Governor congratulated all the awardees and wished the organisation continued success in its future endeavours.

Joining as guest of honour, School and Mass Education and ST & SC Development Minister Nityananda Gond spoke about the role of Bharat Scouts and Guides in instilling discipline and teaching vital skills to navigate challenging situations. Higher Education, Sports and Youth Services, and Odia Language, Literature, and Culture Minister Suryabanshi Suraj also graced the occasion and said, “The vision of a developed Odisha cannot be realised without your contribution, participation, and leadership.” OSBSG state chief commissioner Kali Prasad Mishra delivered the welcome address. Padma Shri Debi Prasanna Patanayak was honoured with the Utkal Jyoti Samman by Kambhampati during the event.

Majhi gives nod to pension for 23 Emergency detainees

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 9: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday approved the proposal of providing pensions to 23 persons imprisoned under Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) and Defense and Internal Security of India Rules (DISIR) during the Emergency period. According to reports, 19 people under MISA and four under DISIR will receive increased pension. Earlier, pension had been approved for 21 MISA detainees. The process of honouring the sons of the soil has begun

by the CM, following which the pension amount has been increased. These detainees will receive a pension of Rs 20,000 per month, while their medical expenses will be borne by the state government. Significantly, many were arrested under various laws such as MISA, Defense of India Rules (DIR) and DISIR, and imprisoned for opposing the imposition of Emergency in the country. It has been decided that all surviving freedom fighters will receive pensions and medical benefits from January 1, 2025.

Blood donation camp held at DPS Kalinga



Bhubaneswar: A blood donation camp was organised at Delhi Public School (DPS) Kalinga here in collaboration with Central Red Cross Blood Centre, Cuttack recently. The camp was organised May 7, marking the birth anniversary of Mahimananda Mishra, the founder of the educational institution, according to a release issued by the school. Members of the school management, and teaching and non-teaching staffers participated in the camp. Pro Vice Chairperson of DPS Kalinga Mala Mishra and executive trustee Sunaina Patro appreciated the enthusiasm shown by DPS Kalinga fraternity in stepping forward for this noble cause. School principal Suvabrata Mukherjee thanked the organisers for their excellent endeavour in serving the society.

WADERS FLOCK TO HIRAKUD FOR NESTING

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Sambalpur, May 9: Hirakud wetland has turned into an important breeding ground this summer, as thousands of migratory waders (commonly called shorebirds or water birds)—including Terns, Pratincoles, and other waders — laid eggs at approximately 26 islands, scattered across the region for nesting. More than ten species of waterbirds such as River Terns, Gull-billed Terns, Little Terns, Oriental and Little Pratincoles, Little Ringed Plovers, Whiskered Terns, and several varieties of egrets have been observed laying eggs and nurturing their chicks. Large breeding colonies of River Terns and Pratincoles are sighted in some islands. Mothers tirelessly guard eggs and hatchlings and juveniles

To bolster conservation efforts, a team comprising 9 squads, 4 frontline staff, and 2 speedboats has been trained to monitor bird behaviour and nesting patterns

from the scorching summer heat, engaging in post-fledging care throughout the day. The islands, which emerge from the receding waters of the Hirakud reservoir in the month of April, offers ideal conditions—isolation from predators, no human intervention, and abundant fish supply. Although five Indian Skimmers— an IUCN Endangered



species, have been spotted among the flocks. But any nesting activity or sight is yet to be confirmed. In order to protect the breeding sites and prevent disturbances, authorities from Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary have taken proactive steps. Over 100 red flags have been placed across nesting islands to alert

fishermen and raise awareness among the villages residing at nearby areas adjacent to the islands. A dedicated ‘river patrol team’ has been formed to ensure constant surveillance, while tourist boats are kept at bay, as their approach can likely cause birds to abandon nests, leaving eggs and chicks exposed to heat and predators,

said Hirakud Wildlife Division Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Anshu Pragyan Das. The birds build shallow, camouflaged nests directly on sandy or rocky grounds. The eggs and chicks blend so well into the landscape, gets camouflaged, becomes nearly invisible to the human eye. The average gestation period for these birds ranges from 20 to 30 days, with incubation lasting 7 to 25 days. Mating, nesting, and chick-rearing began in April and is expected to continue over the next few months. Shorebirds are among the most threatened bird groups, often preyed upon by stray dogs, snakes, raptors, and other predators. The Hirakud islands offer a rare sanctuary—distanced from human activity, livestock, and land predators such as jackals, hyenas, wild dogs, and wolves from Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary and adjacent shoreline. To bolster conservation efforts, a team comprising 9 squads, 4 frontline staff, and 2 speedboats has been trained to monitor bird behaviour and nesting patterns. ‘Chadhei Club’ members from Sambalpur have also been instrumental in identifying nesting sites within human-influenced zones of the wetland and promoting their protection, according to Das. A waterbird bird census conducted January 18, recorded 3.77 lakh migratory birds across the entire Hirakud Wetland—an increase of 35,000 from 2024. This growing population reaffirms the ecological significance of Hirakud, a designated Ramsar Site by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in 2022.

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	39.2°	38.8°
Min Temp	26.4°	25.6°
Humidity	74%	77%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAST Mainly clear sky		

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX	VARIATION	
BOURCES CURRENCY BOURSES	SENSEX	79454.47 ▼ 880.34
	NIFTY	24008.00 ▼ 265.80
	DOLLAR	85.53 ▼ 0.09
	EURO	96.30 ▼ 0.49
	GOLD	₹96,669 ▲ ₹501
	SILVER	₹96,861 ▲ ₹349

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FOCUS OP SINDOOR

A RATTLED CHINA



With \$52 billion in investment in CPEC projects, over \$20 billion in arms supplies, several billion dollars in aid and loans, China today feels ‘entitled’ to intervene in Pakistan as it has a high stake in the country

Kashgarin Xinjiang to Islamabad to further its connection to Pakistan.

China has contributed to arming Pakistan by transferring weapons worth more than \$20 billion. These constitute over 80 percent of China’s arms transfers world-wide, thus making Pakistan the single largest recipient of Chinese arms. For instance, the latest supplies of JF-17 fighter aircraft, drones, space-based support, beyond visual range PL-15A air-to-air missile systems and others, were pitched against India in the last few days.

China has also provided support to Pakistan at the UN Security Council #1267 committee on counter-terrorism and avoiding any proscription of Pakistan-based terrorists. After the Pahalgam terror attack, China’s backing helped water-down the UN Security Council resolution on the incident.

However, this is contrary to China’s position on countering terrorism. When nine Chinese engineers and technicians were killed at the Dasu hydroelectricity project by terrorists on July 24, 2021,

the communist party-backed Global Times called for missile strikes on terrorists in Pakistan. China today is contemplating the establishment of “police stations” across Pakistan to counter this menace, even as the Pakistan army has dedicated one division of troops to protect China-funded infrastructure projects. China is also stationing thousands of “security guards” in the region.

China’s analysts suggest that these “security guards” are to protect its interests in these restive regions, even though they may also potentially come under the cross-fire between the armed forces of India and Pakistan in any kinetic shoot down. There are a few “red lines” that have been laid down for their intervention in the region. These include any killing of Chinese citizens in this cross fire and any damage to CPEC projects.

China’s analysts have criticised India for keeping the Indus Water Treaty in abeyance and also invoked the UN resolutions on Kashmir. However, China itself has never signed water treaties with any of its lower riparian States. Also, Chi-

na was not a UN member when Resolution #47 was passed on April 21, 1948, whose Article 1 actually called Pakistan to withdraw from Kashmir as a precondition for plebiscite.

Five days after the terror attacks at Pahalgam, China’s foreign minister Wang Yi spoke to his Pakistani counterpart and advocated “swift and fair investigation” and said that “conflict does not serve the fundamental interests of either India or Pakistan, nor does it benefit regional peace and stability”. Though China itself may not entertain any “fair investigation” into terror attacks on its soil, it does look out for a way out of rising tension and conflict.

China’s policy makers and analysts do not see any problem with Pakistan, nor is much stock placed on democracy, civil society, the judiciary or the media. For China, Pakistan and its army are a good bet that helps Beijing balance India and power equations in the region.

With \$52 billion in investment in CPEC projects, over \$20 billion in arms supplies, several billion dollars in aid and loans, China today feels “entitled” to intervene in Pakistan as it has a high stake in the country, particularly at a time China has been feeling the heat of President Trump’s mounting tariffs. It is also confronted with the relocation of several multinational companies like Apple from China to other destinations in South Asia and India. In such a situation, China could also do with supportive countries like Pakistan. India needs to address this issue.

The writer is Professor in Chinese Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

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Srikanth Kondapalli

FOR CHINA, PAKISTAN AND ITS ARMY ARE A GOOD BET THAT HELPS BEIJING BALANCE INDIA AND POWER EQUATIONS IN THE REGION

Indian armed strikes as part of Operation Sindoor on nine sites in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir on May 7 in the aftermath of the attack on tourists in Pahalgam on April 22, have rattled China. Lin Jian, the foreign ministry spokesperson of China, described the Indian military strikes as “regrettable”. Beijing called on India and Pakistan “to avoid worsening the situation” and “remain calm and exercise restraint”.

This call for restraint may seem to be at odds with China’s sabre-rattling in the Taiwan Straits and against the Philippines in the South China Sea. But here it would not like an escalation in the face-off between the two South Asian nations given their proximity to China. Besides, there is also China’s extensive cultivation of interests in Pakistan. China’s assistance has been a pillar of support for Pakistan, a position mirrored by the Chinese media. China’s State-run media agency Xinhua said at least 26 people were killed and 46 injured after India carried out strikes on “six civilian settlements in Pakistan”.

Chinese support is linked to the number of stakes Beijing has in Pakistan. Since 1963, after the border clashes with India, Beijing assiduously built relations with Islamabad. In March 1963, China received portions of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and Gilgit and Baltistan and incorporated large swathes of lands in Aghil, Shimshal, Ruksam and Sakshgam, in addition to occupying 38,000 square kilometers of Aksai Chin. With so much land, China has heightened interests in the current India-Pak standoff. China has also built an “all-weather” road from

SPECTRUM JOURNALISM

Defending our rights is becoming deadlier

The harassment, detention, torture, and eventual murder in 2006 of Anna Politkovskaya, a Russian investigative journalist who exposed government corruption, the horrors of the Second Chechen War, and the increasingly autocratic regime of Russian President Vladimir Putin, is the subject of a new film, Words of War. This tribute to Politkovskaya’s courage was released in the United States on the eve of World Press Freedom Day – a day intended to celebrate a pillar of democracy. But for me, the day has increasingly become one of mourning rather than celebration, because what happened to Politkovskaya is becoming the norm.

My organization, the Committee to Protect Journalists, found that 2024 was the profession’s deadliest year since the CPJ began collecting data in 1992: at least 124 journalists and media workers were killed, two-thirds of them Palestinians killed by Israel. Moreover, 361 journalists were in jail, a near-record high that reflects the growing efforts to criminalize journalism and journalists not only in autocracies but also in supposed democracies, or those that –

until very recently – enjoyed a relatively free press.

In Hong Kong, the 77-year-old British media entrepreneur Jimmy Lai languishes in prison on national-security charges. Lai, the founder of the pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily, has been largely held in solitary confinement for the past four years and, if convicted, will almost certainly die behind bars.

His foreign lawyers have been harassed, intimidated, and threatened with sanctions – tactics used against lawyers representing other wrongfully detained journalists and media leaders, such as Guatemalan editor and journalist José Rubén Zamora.

Such intimidation becomes rampant when crimes against reporters go unpunished. For example, Israel is responsible for a record number of journalist killings, yet a report published by the CPJ in May 2023 found that, over the course of 22 years, no one had been held accountable. Nor has the international community responded to demands for accountability in Israel’s war in Gaza, where foreign media have been denied access.

This matters because journalists everywhere play an

essential role in investigating official wrongdoing, reporting the adverse effects of war and environmental devastation, and identifying risks to people’s health, well-being, and freedom. Politkovskaya, for her part, brought attention to the human-rights abuses being committed in Chechnya, including the disappearance and torture of civilians, and the Kremlin’s lies about the war.

But she is only one of many journalists whose work cost them their lives. Daphne Caruana Galizia, who relentlessly exposed government corruption in Malta, was killed by a car bomb in 2017. Dom Phillips, a British freelance journalist who reported on the devastating effects of illegal drug trafficking, mining, and logging on indigenous communities in Brazil, was shot dead while on a 2022 reporting trip in the Amazon.

Everyone should care about these horrific deaths, because there is a direct link between the type of corruption exposed by Galizia and Phillips, and the amount governments spend on citizens. In other words, without reporters willing to hold those in power accountable, we will remain ignorant of the myriad ways

governments, businesses, and cartels are abusing the system, thereby leaving us worse off.

For years, many people have shrugged when powerful people belittle the work of journalists, jail them under false pretenses, or murder them with no consequence. Many bought into the comforting narrative that these were exceptions or, as many have smugly assured themselves in the West, that this couldn’t possibly happen here.

The truth is that attacks on the press are always a precursor to further restrictions on civil society.

Politkovskaya’s murder came long before Putin’s invasion of Ukraine, the killings of his political opponents Boris Nemtsov and Alexei Navalny, and the torture and murder of Ukrainian journalist Viktoriya Roshchyna. We must stop thinking – and acting – as if the safety of journalists is a concern only for the media. Every journalist’s murder is an attack on our first line of defense against repressive regimes.

Jodie Ginsberg is CEO of the Committee to Protect Journalists.

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Jodie Ginsberg

EVERY JOURNALIST’S MURDER IS AN ATTACK ON OUR FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST REPRESSIVE REGIMES

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It is only by the touch of the Absolute that we can arrive at our own absolute.

SRI AUROBINDO

Bureaucratic Flex

On May Day, while the rest of us were honouring workers of the world, the Haryana government quietly launched a department that sounds like it belongs in a Christopher Nolan film: the Department of Future.

No manifesto, no press conference, not even a cryptic mission statement—just a surprise government notification assigning two IAS officers, Amneet P Kumar and Dr Aditya Dahiya, to lead the charge into... well, no one’s quite sure where.

Naturally, this sparked equal parts curiosity and amusement in bureaucratic circles. Some are wondering if it’s about long-term policy planning or AI governance. Others are betting on climate change, youth innovation, or just a very well-titled office for interdepartmental coordination. Given that one officer is also handling Fisheries and Archives, and the other juggles Parliamentary Affairs and Personnel, it’s hard to tell if this is serious futurism or an administrative afterthought.

Now, before we laugh too hard, it’s worth noting that the idea of a future-facing government wing isn’t entirely outlandish. Countries like the UAE have full-blown Ministries of the Future—with budgets, AI roadmaps, and moonshot visions. But those departments usually come with vision documents, not just job titles.

Still, the name alone is a bureaucratic flex. “Director, Department of Future” will look great on a business card—and LinkedIn, even better. Let’s just hope the department doesn’t end up like most visions of the future: perpetually postponed.

Red beacon and red flags

Puja Khedkar has finally resurfaced. After playing a 282-day game of hide-and-seek with the Pune Police, the former IAS probationer accused of forging disability and OBC certificates has resurfaced and reported for questioning. Her case had already caused a storm last year—remember the Audi, the red beacon, and the VIP tantrums before she’d even completed training? What followed was even murkier: a trail of alleged fraud, sacking from service, and then, well... radio silence until now.

What’s truly concerning isn’t just the accusations but how long she was allowed to vanish without consequence. For nearly ten months, this high-profile case went cold. No sightings, no real pressure, no public updates. If a regular citizen attempted this action, they would likely be tracked, detained, and served with a legal notice promptly. So, what gave Khedkar this extraordinary leeway?

That’s the real question, and one that shouldn’t get buried under procedural updates and bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo. Was there quiet protection? Political shielding? Institutional indifference? Or are we expected to believe she just slipped through the cracks?

This isn’t just about Puja Khedkar. It’s about how our system selectively forgets, forgives, and sometimes even facilitates misconduct, especially when it wears a government badge. If this case is allowed to fizzle out again, it won’t just be her reputation that’s damaged; it’ll be public faith in the steel frame of our civil services. And that’s a lot harder to recover than one elusive babu.

Babu who refused to blink

If bureaucracy were a sport, Ashok Khemka would be the chap who kept showing up to play fair, even after the referee, the crowd, and occasionally his own team, tried to bench him. Now, as he finally calls it a day after 34 years and an eye-watering 57 transfers, it’s worth tipping our metaphorical hat to one of babudom’s most quietly defiant players.

Not to sugarcoat it, in a system where discretion often wins over disruption, Khemka was the man with a highlighter and a conscience. Best known for cancelling the Robert Vadra-DLF land deal in 2012, which certainly earned him a place in administrative folklore, he kept questioning, investigating, and, more often than not, getting shunted for it. His transfer record alone could fill a thriller novel, or at the very least, a solid government file. But instead of throwing in the towel, Khemka chose to dig in his heels, wielding his pen and principles with equal fervour.

Was he difficult? No doubt. Was he inconvenient? Definitely. But he was also necessary. In an age of blurred lines and backroom deals, Khemka reminded us that babbugiri wasn’t meant to be a rubber stamp for political ambition. It was supposed to be the spine.

Now that he’s retired, the silence he leaves behind will speak volumes. One hopes the next Khemka doesn’t face the same trials in doing the right thing. But if they do, they’ll know it’s been done before.

Share a babu experience! Follow [diliptheherian@twitter.com](#). Let’s multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

“Necessity is blind until it becomes conscious. Freedom is the consciousness of necessity.”

KARL MARX

“The real tragedy of the poor is the poverty of their aspirations.”

ADAM SMITH

“While I am interested both in economics and in philosophy, the union of my interests in the two fields far exceeds their intersection.”

AMARTYA SEN

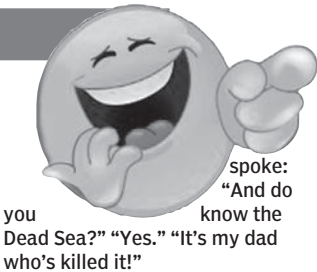
THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1502: On this day in 1502, master navigator and admiral Christopher Columbus, long considered the “discoverer” of the New World, set sail from Cádiz, Spain, on his fourth and final voyage, hoping to find a passage to Asia.
- 1936: Seven months after invading Ethiopia and driving Emperor Haile Selassie I into exile, Italy annexed Ethiopia as part of Italian East Africa.
- 1958: Alfred Hitchcock’s psychological thriller Vertigo, starring James Stewart and Kim Novak, premiered in San Francisco and became widely regarded as one of the greatest movies ever.
- 1960: The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the first birth control pill.

LOL

BRAG ABOUT PARENTS

An Army brat was boasting about his father to a Navy brat. “My dad is an engineer. He can do everything. Do you know the Alps?” “Yes,” said the Navy brat. “My dad has built them.” Then the naval kid



you spoke: “And do know the Dead Sea?” “Yes.” “It’s my dad who’s killed it!”

Letters TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: [edit@orissapost.com](#)

OrissaPOST
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Disseminating misinformation

Sir, Even as tension between India and Pakistan remains high and retaliatory hostilities continue, a great deal of fake stories and news about it are doing the rounds on social media and some news channels. Warmongers and those who celebrate the conflict and fight between the two countries create stories and videos at their whims and fancies and share at will on social media. Similarly, some news channels also disseminate misinformation about the fight. They even go to the extent of telecasting videos taken from other warfronts and thereby mislead people. Those who indulge in passing on such misinformation must understand the gravity of their actions. A country at war with another has to take into account a lot of things before the fight. India is fighting against Pakistan not for people’s entertainment and excitement but to prove something. It has to send a message to its rival through the fight. The Indian government has issued an advisory saying that people should avoid sharing unverified information and rely on official sources for authentic information. People must refrain from passing on misinformation and stand united at a time when the country is faced with a crisis.

Venu GS, KOLLAM

Drones --for good and evil

Sir, Both India as well as Pakistan have drones. But the difference lies in the way the two countries use them. While India has tellingly used Israeli made Harop and Harpy kamikaze drones to target and destroy Pakistan’s HQ-9 missile defense system units, which were developed by China (who else?), Pakistan has frequently used drones to smuggle contraband, including weapons, drugs, and counterfeit currency, into Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir. Today, Pakistan is staring at defeat in the war zone. “What you sow into the lives of others is the harvest you will reap tomorrow” --is Pakistan listening?

Avinash Godbole, DEWAS(MP)



Police and security personnel during a mock drill behind the Taj Mahal in Agra in light of the ongoing military conflict between India and Pakistan, Friday



Members of a family move to a safe place in Uri, Jammu & Kashmir



Congress leaders and supporters in Chennai carry the Indian tricolours as they march during a rally to express solidarity with the Indian armed forces



Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah meets displaced border residents at a shelter camp



People from various villages along the India-Pakistan border collect food at a temporary shelter in Jammu



View of blackout enforced in Amritsar, Punjab. Apart from Amritsar, the blackout was enforced in Ferozepur, Pathankot, Hoshiarpur, Fazilka, Muktsar and Sangrur



War against terror

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

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 Pahalgam terror attack by holding the "lowlives, 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 Pahalgam 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 early Wednesday in response to the Pahalgam attack April 22 that had cross-border linkages and Pakistan's subsequent unsuccessful attempt to attack 15 Indian cities.

Indian envoy to the UK Vikram Doraiswami said India's response to terrorist attacks in Pahalgam was "precise, targeted"

able," he said, answering a question if India is at war with Pakistan. "Our foremost objective in this was (to) hold these lowlives, 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 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 Abdur Rauf leading prayers for the terrorists killed in Operation Sindoor, also presented during a briefing by Foreign Secretary Vikram Mistry in New Delhi.

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 Pahalgam 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.

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. PTI

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

"It is nobody's case to say that these terrorists should be

QUICK CLICK

PM Modi interacts with armed forces veterans

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday held an extensive interaction with a number of veterans, including former chiefs of the three services, amid the ongoing conflict with Pakistan, officials said. The veterans included former chiefs of the army, air force and the navy, besides other retired officers who have served the country, they said. The conflict with Pakistan intensified with the armed forces responding proportionately and adequately to Pakistani attempts to target Indian installations on the intervening night of May 8 and 9. Pakistan violated Indian airspace to target the military installations, Wing Commander Vyomika Singh said at a briefing.

J&K woman killed in heavy Pak shelling from across LoC

Srinagar: A woman was killed and two of her family members injured in heavy shelling by Pakistani troops from across the Line of Control (LoC) targeting Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla and Kupwara districts, officials said Friday. They said the Indian Army has responded proportionately to the Pakistani aggression. Pakistani troops violated the ceasefire along the LoC and resorted to heavy shelling in the civilian areas of the Uri sector in north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Thursday night, officials said. Multiple areas of Uri, including Silikot, Boniyar, Kamalkote, Mohra and Gingle, were targeted with heavy shelling that damaged several structures and forced people to flee, they added.

Patrolling intensified

Pithoragarh: Patrolling has been intensified along the India-Nepal border in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh and Champawat districts following a military flare-up between India and Pakistan in the wake of Operation Sindoor. "We have increased the number of patrolling teams in cooperation with the SSB and asked them to intensify checking at the entry points on the main bridges on the India-Nepal border in the district," Pithoragarh SP Rekha Yadav said Friday.

Lammy speaks to Jaishankar

New Delhi: As the conflict between India and Pakistan spirals, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar 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.

Enhanced security at airports

New Delhi: Enhanced security measures have been put in place at airports across the country, and some flights have been impacted, while airlines have advised passengers to reach airports well in advance before their scheduled flight departures. DIAL, the operator of the country's largest and busiest airport IGIA in the national capital, Friday said operations are normal.

Delhi tests Air raid sirens

New Delhi: Delhi PWD minister Parvesh Verma Friday said air raid sirens will be installed at multiple high-rise buildings across the national capital amid a military conflict between India and Pakistan. The civil defence directorate carried out testing of an air raid siren installed atop the multistorey PWD building in ITO Friday afternoon.

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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 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. In its preliminary analysis, CCPA has found 467 listings of walkie-talkies on Amazon, 314 on Flipkart, 489 on Meesho, and 423 on TradeIndia, indicating the widespread scale of the issue.

The regulator has sought information regarding the name and contact details of each seller, product URLs and listing IDs of the walkie-talkie devices, details of frequency specifications and the number of units sold per listing from January 2023 to date.

"The illegal sale of walk-

Soldier martyred in Pak shelling

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati, May 9: A soldier from Andhra Pradesh has been killed in the heavy shelling by the Pakistan Army along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir.

Murali Nayak of the Sri Sathya Sai district lost his life in the indiscriminate shelling by the Pakistan Army. The jawan, hailing from Kallithanda village under Gaddamthanda panchayat, was on duty on the front lines. His mortal remains are expected to reach his native place Saturday.

It was immediately not clear if Nayak was killed in the shelling on Wednesday or Thursday. The martyred jawan was unmarried.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has expressed shock over the soldier from the state being martyred.

How armed forces protected nation against missiles, drones

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 9: India deployed Barak-8 missiles, S-400 Triumph air defence systems, Akash surface-to-air missiles and indigenously developed anti-drone equipment in thwarting Pakistan's attempts to hit 15 Indian cities Wednesday night, official sources said Friday.

Pakistani military attempted to target Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Pathankot, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Adampur, Bhatinda, Chandigarh, Nal, Phalodi, Uttarlai, and Bhuj using missiles and drones.

Every single one of those missiles was intercepted or neutralised and none reached its intended target, the sources said. The Pakistani military attempted to target the Indian cities in response to India's Operation Sindoor under which nine terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir were smashed early Wednesday. "The Integrated Counter-Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) Grid, S-400 Triumph systems, demonstrated India's capability to project power with surgical precision, they said.

Barak-8 missiles, Akash Surface-to-Air Missiles, and DRDO's anti-drone technologies came together seamlessly to create an aerial shield that held firm," said a source.

"India didn't stop at defending. It retaliated with speed and precision. Operation Sindoor saw the Indian Armed Forces strike deep into Pakistani territory, destroying an HQ-9 air defence unit in Lahore and damaging key radar infrastructure," the source said.

India's rapid, coordinated response showcased the strength of its air defence ecosystem, built over the past 11 years under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and "exposed the hollowness" of the Pakistani air defence system, the sources said.

These platforms, combined with the strategic deployment of Rafale fighter jets equipped with SCALP and HAMMER missiles, demonstrated India's capability to project power with surgical precision, they said.

Sirens wail through night; locals on western front gripped by fear

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Chandigarh, May 9: It was a second straight night of darkness and fear for locals of several districts on India's western border as sirens wailed Friday upon spotting of aerial threats from Pakistan that were effectively engaged by the armed forces.

From Srinagar and Jammu to Punjab's multiple districts and Jaisalmer and Jodhpur in Rajasthan, a vast stretch of the border areas plunged into darkness with public announcements made, urging people to switch off their lights as a precautionary measure.

Blasts were heard in the Jammu region and south Kashmir as well as in Pathankot, Ferozepur and Jaisalmer. Residents in Punjab's Gurdaspur and Tarn Taran's Patti area too re-

ported sound of explosions, although there was no official confirmation on its cause. Air raid sirens blared in Ferozepur, Pathankot, Amritsar and Hoshiarpur districts, sending people into a tizzy. Officials said a blackout was enforced in Ferozepur, Pathankot, Amritsar, Hoshiarpur, Fazilka, Muktsar and Sangrur.

It was the second consecutive night of blackout amid the sound of blasts for Pathankot residents. "Keep lights switched off. Keep the lights of mobile phones, cameras and inverter sets switched off. Cover windows with curtains. Cooperate with the district administration. We are for here your safety," and official announcement was sounded in the district.

Blasts were heard and sirens sounded in the Jammu region and south Kashmir as many parts of the Union Territory plunged in-

to darkness. In Srinagar, mosque loudspeakers were used to convey to locals to switch off their lights.

Multiple aerial threats coming from Pakistan were intercepted in Jaisalmer for a second consecutive night, prompting security forces to issue a red alert and clamp blackouts in several border districts, creating panic among residents.

Sirens rang out in Pokaran, and a complete blackout was imposed in the region. The blackout in Jodhpur, originally scheduled to begin at midnight, was implemented immediately. Barmer, Sriganganagar, and Phalodi also went completely dark.

The border districts had woken up to a tense morning, hung heavy with the wail of air raid sirens and foreboding of what the day would bring. Schools remained shut as did most

businesses. Pawan Kumar, a resident of Amritsar, said, "While we spent an anxious night, things were back to routine during the day."

A few residents in Ferozepur told PTI Videos that they were more apprehensive of the rumours making the rounds. In Bathinda, a local told PTI Videos, "Gunshots kept up till midnight as we sat home in a complete blackout. We spent the night in fear, but things were calm in the morning."

Baldev Chand, an elderly man in Chandigarh who stuck to his routine morning walk Friday, said while there were some anxious moments the previous night, there was nothing to worry about given the way the Indian armed forces thwarted Pakistan's attempts. The UT administration later sounded a fresh air raid siren, appealing to people to remain indoors.

of the day

Quote

There are many potential barriers like evolution of the feedstock logistics, the financing gaps, regulatory coordination which needs to be addressed in forums like this, which provide us with an opportunity to understand these kind of gaps in a much better manner and address them through both government as well as industry-led initiatives in this sector

SANTOSH KUMAR SARANGI | MNRE SECRETARY

Asia index shines a spotlight on quality businesses that have demonstrated consistent dividend payouts a hallmark of financial resilience, capital discipline, and shareholder commitment

ASHUTOSH SINGH | MD AND CEO, ASIA INDEX

There is an increase in sales in war affected markets, however, it is for FMCG, mainly food items

LALIT AGARWAL | MD, V-MART

Q4 RESULTS

UBI profit jumps

Mumbai: State-owned Union Bank of India's March quarter net profit jumped 50 per cent to Rs 4,985 crore, and a top official Friday said RBI's rate cuts will keep its net interest margins under pressure going forward. The bank had earned a net profit of Rs 3,311 crore in the same quarter previous fiscal. Total income rose to Rs 33,254 crore in the quarter as compared to Rs 31,058 crore in the same period a year ago. The bank reported net-interest income Rs 9,514 crore in the March quarter, while the 18 per cent growth in non-interest income at Rs 5,559 crore.

Britannia sales rise

New Delhi: Bakery food company Britannia Industries Ltd has reported a 4.2 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 559.13 crore for the March quarter of FY25, despite subdued demand and a challenging operating environment. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 536.61 crore in the same quarter a year ago. Its revenue from the operation increased 8.9 per cent to Rs 4,432.19 crore in the March quarter from Rs 4,069.36 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Swiggy's loss doubles

New Delhi: Food delivery and quick commerce platform Swiggy Friday reported widening of consolidated net loss during the March quarter to Rs 1,081.18 crore, due to significant investments in quick commerce. The company had reported a net loss of Rs 554.77 crore on a consolidated basis in the year-ago period. Swiggy's revenue from operations rose to Rs 4,410 crore during the January-March period, as against Rs 3,045.5 crore a year earlier.

ABB profit surges

New Delhi: Electrification and automation major ABB India Ltd Friday posted a 3 per cent rise in net profit to Rs 474 crore during the March quarter compared to the year-ago period, primarily on the back of higher revenues. The company follows January-December financial year and reported profit after tax of Rs 474 crore at the end of Q1 CY2025 (January-March 2025) as compared to Rs 460 crore in Q1 CY2024. ABB's cash reserve reaches at Rs 5,756 crore in Q1 2025.



In certain parts of the country, rumours are spreading, causing people to rush to collect essential food items and other daily necessities, we have more than enough stock of everything required across the country

PRALHAD JOSHI | UNION MINISTER

INDIA MOVES TO CUT TARIFF GAP

India has offered to slash its tariff gap with US to less than 4% from nearly 13%, in exchange for an exemption from President Donald Trump's "current and potential" tariff hikes, as both nations move fast to clinch a deal as per officials. This move might bring down trade barriers between India and US



Equity MF flow dips to year low in April

Slow momentum catches market inflow as the trade is clubbed with tariff war and Indo-Pak tensions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 9: Inflow in equity mutual funds dipped 3.24 per cent to Rs 24,269 crore in April as concerns over potential US tariffs and a shift in investor preference toward debt and hybrid strategies weighed on sentiment.

This was the fourth consecutive month of decline in inflow in equity funds amid continued market volatility against the backdrop of escalating tensions between India and Pakistan following the Pahalgam terrorist attack.

Also, the latest fund infusion by investors marks the 50th consecutive month of net inflows into the segment.

Despite the decline, Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) contributions remained robust, registering a record Rs 26,632 crore in inflows in April, higher than Rs 25,926 crore in the preceding month, data released by Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) Friday showed.

"The steady increase in SIP contribution was driven by a steady increase in the number of contributing accounts, which now total 8.38 crore. This continued growth reflects the rising preference among investors for mutual funds as a disciplined and effective tool for long-term savings," Venkat Chalasani, Chief Executive at AMFI said.

Apart from equity, debt funds registered an inflow of Rs 2.19 lakh crore in the month under review after seeing a withdrawal of Rs 2.02 lakh crore in March. Overall, the mutual



Short-term volatility in equity markets is likely but constructive on India's structural long-term growth story, which continues to demonstrate resilience amid global uncertainties

ANKUR PUNJ | MD, EQUIRUS WEALTH

fund industry experienced an infusion of Rs 2.77 lakh crore in April after the typical quarter-end outflows of Rs 1.64 lakh crore in the preceding month.

The inflow has lifted the industry's assets under management to a record Rs 70 lakh crore as of April from Rs 65.74 lakh crore at March-end.

According to the data, equity-oriented mutual funds saw an inflow of Rs 24,269 crore in April, lower than Rs 25,082 crore in March. In February, such funds witnessed an inflow of Rs 29,303 crore, Rs 39,688 crore in January and Rs 41,156 crore in December.

The decline in inflow is due to concerns over potential US tariffs and a shift in investor preference toward debt and hybrid strategies, Ankur Punj MD of Equirus Wealth said.

In April, mid-cap and small-cap mutual funds continued to attract investor interest, with inflows of Rs 3,314 crore and Rs 4,000 crore, respectively. Large-cap funds received Rs

2,671 crore as compared to Rs 2,479 crore in March.

Additionally, hybrid funds saw recovery in April attracting Rs 14,247 crore after an outflow of Rs 946 crore in the preceding month.

On the debt front, the rebound was broad-based, with 12 out of 16 debt mutual fund categories reporting net inflows. "The surge in April inflows also reflects a return to normalcy and reaffirmed confidence in fixed income instruments, particularly among corporates redeploying idle cash following year-end disbursements," Nehal Meshram, Senior Analyst – Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

Liquid funds witnessed highest net inflows of Rs 1.18 lakh crore, reversing more than 89 per cent of its March outflows. Similarly, overnight funds and money market funds attracted Rs 23,900 crore and Rs 31,507 crore respectively, as short-term instruments regained favour amid stable monetary conditions and strong liquidity.

The significant inflows also extended to ultra short and low duration funds, which gained Rs 26,734 crore and Rs 9,371 crore respectively. However, Gold exchange traded funds (ETFs) witnessed a net outflow of nearly Rs 6 crore in April on profit booking.

Celio opens first ever store in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 9: Celio, the premium French menswear brand, announced the opening of its very first store in Bhubaneswar at Utkal Galleria Mall Friday. The 1600 sq ft outlet aims to transform the menswear shopping experience by combining modern style with Parisian sophistication.

This store was inaugurated by BJP leader Jagannath Pradhan with manager Dulal Chandra Sahu, and National sales head Manoj Bhatija.

With this launch, Celio celebrates the opening of its 69th store in India, reinforcing its growing footprint across the country. This new store in Bhubaneswar brings Celio's signature collection to the city, offering a wide selection of stylish casual wear, elegant formals, and essential accessories.

The collection highlights 100% breathable linen outfits, co-ord sets, linen trousers, easy-going



shorts, relaxed-fit jeans, printed shirts, polos, T-shirts, and one of the largest anime-themed ranges, featuring popular titles like Naruto and Demon Slayer.

Satyen Momaya, CEO of Celio India, said, "We are delighted to bring Celio's legacy of Parisian fashion to the vibrant city of Bhubaneswar. As a hub of culture and emerging modernity, Bhubaneswar is the perfect location for our newest store. This launch reinforces our commitment to expanding our

footprint in India and offering fashion-forward, high-quality, and accessible menswear to discerning consumers. We look forward to welcoming shoppers to an elevated retail experience that merges international trends with everyday wearability."

With this launch, Celio continues to accelerate its growth in India, delivering innovation, customer-first experiences, and cutting-edge menswear trends to the modern Indian man.

nationwide.

"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.

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.

BPCL and HPCL said sufficient petrol, diesel, CNG, and LPG are available across

PSBs set record, earn ₹1.78L-crore in FY25

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 9: Public sector banks' cumulative profit rose to a record level of Rs 1.78 lakh crore in the fiscal year ended March 2025, registering a growth of 26 per cent over the previous year.

All 12 public sector banks had earned a total profit of Rs 1.41 lakh crore in FY24.

The year-on-year increase in profit in absolute terms rose by about Rs 37,100 crore in FY25.

Out of the total profit of Rs 1,78,364 crore earned during the FY25, market leader State Bank of India (SBI) alone contributed over 40 per cent of the total earnings, as per the published numbers on stock exchanges.

SBI logged a net profit of Rs 70,901 crore in FY25, 16 per cent higher than the previous fiscal (Rs 61,077 crore).



In percentage terms, Delhi-based Punjab National Bank reported the highest net profit growth of 102 per cent to Rs 16,630 crore, followed by Punjab & Sind Bank with a 71 per cent rise to Rs 1,016 crore.

During the year, all 12 public sector banks (PSBs) reported a rise in profit.

Among the banks, which recorded over 40 per cent annual jump in their net profit are Central Bank India with a 48.4 per cent growth to Rs 3,785 crore, while UCO Bank posted a 47.8 per cent rise to Rs 2,445 crore and

Satcom operators to pay 4% fee: TRAI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 9: Telecom regulator authority of India (TRAI) Friday recommended that satellite communication companies like Starlink to pay 4 per cent of their adjusted gross revenue (AGR) as spectrum charges to the government -- a rate steeper than what these firms had been paying.

Operators offering satellite-based broadband internet 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.

Elon Musk's Starlink and Amazon Inc's subsidiary Kuiper Systems had during consultations with the TRAI urged it to keep spectrum charge below 1 per cent of AGR with no other charge. 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 satellite spectrum pricing as a percentage of AGR is for both non-geostationary satellite orbit (NGSO) and Geostationary satellite orbit (GSO) based fixed-satellite service (FSS) and mobile satellite service (MSS).

NGSO refers to satellites occupying either a low-earth orbit (LEO) or medium-earth orbit (MEO). Unlike geostationary GSO satellites, LEO and MEO satellites do not occupy a stationary position but move in relation to the Earth.

TRAI said the 4 per cent of AGR spectrum charge would be subject to a minimum annual spectrum charge of Rs 3,500 per MHz. AGR is used to calculate the revenue that telecom companies share with the government in the form of spectrum usage charges and license fees. AGR based spectrum charging is the existing practice for commercial VSAT service providers and BSNL.

PSU banks shun rumours, say ATMs well stocked

New Delhi: Dismissing rumours, public sector banks including State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank 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," State Bank of India, said in a post on X.

Bank of India registered a 45.9 per cent rise to Rs 9,219 crore.

Pune-based Bank of Maharashtra posted a 36.1 per cent improvement in its net profit to Rs 5,520 crore, followed by Chennai-based Indian Bank with a 35.4 per cent rise to Rs 10,918 crore in FY25.

PSB is a turnaround story from record losses of Rs 85,390 in FY18 to record profit in FY25. The doom-to-bloom story of the public sector banking industry can be attributed to the initiatives and spate of reforms undertaken by the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with former finance minister Arun Jaitley, his successor Nirmala Sitharaman and financial services secretary Rajiv Kumar and his successors.

The government has implemented a comprehensive 4R strategy: Recognising NPAs transparently, Resolution and recovery, Recapitalising PSBs, and Reforms in the financial ecosystem.

IPL SUSPENDED FOR A WEEK

Soaring Indo-Pak tensions force IPL suspension; BCCI says national interest above all else

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 9: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) confirmed that the IPL 2025 has been suspended with immediate effect, albeit for one week in the wake of the India-Pakistan border tensions. The board added that the new schedule and venues of the tournament will be announced in due course after assessing the situation.

“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,” said BCCI Secretary Devajit Saikia in an official statement.

The decision was taken by the BCCI Friday after cross-border tensions intensified Thursday night, leading to blackouts in Jammu, Udhampur and Pathankot, as air strikes and drones from Pakistan took over the skies. It led to the game between Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals being called off at the HPCA Stadium in Dharamshala

after just 10.1 overs of the first innings was completed.

With the airport in Dharamshala and other north Indian cities closed, the players and support staff members of both PBKS and DC, along with match officials, commentators, broadcast crew members and other key IPL-related personnel were evacuated from Dharamshala by a bus taking them to Jalandhar Friday morning, where a special train organised by the tournament is now taking them to New Delhi.

The BCCI further said the decision was taken by the IPL Governing Council, comprising Saikia and IPL Chairman Arun Dhimal, after due consultation with all key stakeholders following the representations from most of the franchisees, who conveyed the concern and sentiments of their players and also the views of the broadcaster, sponsors and fans.

“While the BCCI reposes full faith in the strength and preparedness of our armed forces, the Board considered it prudent to act in the collective interest of all stakeholders. 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 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.”

With the BCCI saying IPL 2025 has been suspended for one week, it is yet to be known if an alternate window to host the rest of the tournament will be present immediately or not and what would be the venues of the remaining games. As of now, IPL 2025 has completed 58 games, with 12 matches left to play in the league stage and followed by the playoffs.

While cricket remains a national passion, there is nothing greater than the Nation and its sovereignty, integrity, and security of our 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

DEVAJIT SAIKIA | SECRETARY, BCCI

All ten franchises have been informed of the tournament’s suspension for one week by the BCCI and will start making plans to ensure the safe departure of all players, support staff and crew members once the MEA advisory comes Friday evening.

Not the first IPL disruption

IPL resumption: Why scrapping of Asia Cup is best option for BCCI

New Delhi: 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 play-



ers 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 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-heads.

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 even-

OPTIONS FOR BCCI

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 freelancers who don’t need permission) to come back and complete the assignment.

tually 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.

16th KIIT Int’l Chess Festival inaugurated



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 9: The 16th KIIT International Chess Festival 2025, organised by KIIT-DU under the aegis of the All-India Chess Federation (AICF), was inaugurated Friday at KIIT.

Inaugurating the event as Chief Guest, eminent Indian tennis star, Olympian, and Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Awardee Leander Paes said, “The vision of Dr Achyuta Samanta, Founder of KIIT & KISS, for education and sports education is truly unique. The sports infrastructure and training facilities at KIIT & KISS are excellent. Dr Samanta is a great visionary and a role model for all. His contribution to bringing global sporting events to India is immense.” He thanked Dr Samanta for creating KIIT & KISS as a leading hub for sports education, adding, “It is my responsibility to take KIIT & KISS sports to the global stage.”

In his presidential address, Dr Samanta said, “KIIT & KISS have made a remarkable contribution to promoting chess and elevating Odisha to the international chess stage. We have always supported sports and sportspersons. KIIT & KISS are the only institutions in India to have developed such vast, world-class sports infrastructure and training facilities. We aim to double this infrastructure in the coming year.”

Over 1200 players, including international arbiters, international masters, and grandmasters from 42 countries, including India, are participating in the event. This is for the first time players from 42 countries are participating in an international chess tournament. The total prize money is Rs 60 lakhs, making it the second-highest prize pool ever offered in a chess tournament in India. A total of 436 prizes will be awarded across three categories.

KHELO INDIA YOUTH GAMES

The win marked redemption for Odisha, which had to settle for silver in the 2024 edition

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gaya, May 9: Odisha girls pulled off a massive upset by beating defending champion Maharashtra in a close encounter 34-31 in Kho-kho competition of the Khelo India Youth Games 2025 Bihar at the BIPARD Sports Complex here Friday. Maharashtra, however, had sweet revenge and also maintained its dominance in the boys’ final, beating Odisha 34-25.

The girls’ final was fiercely contested. Led by an outstanding performance by Samarnika Sahu, who scored 12 points, Odisha emerged victorious. This win marked redemption for Odisha, which had to settle for silver in the 2024 edition in Tamil Nadu. This time, the team wrote a new chapter in Odisha’s sports history.

The win was hard-earned. Odisha was trailing 10-16 at one stage but showed incredible resilience and fighting spirit to come back strong to clinch the title.

The Odisha girls coach

Kho-kho: Odisha girls bag gold, boys clinch silver



Chaudhury Parthasarathi Mohapatra was jubilant after the final. “Last time we lost to them. This time, the instruction was clear to play without any pressure. We have a good bunch of junior and senior players. I am really thrilled that our team beat the formidable Maharashtra,” Mohapatra told SAI Media.

“This is a historic performance by our girls. They have shown immense determination and skill. We won

gold two years ago, and we’re back on top. The Odisha Government has been giving us great support, and this result is a testament to that,” he said. “We came with one goal -- to become champions. Our girls turned that vision into reality,” he added.

Parthasarathi Mohapatra, who coaches athletes at the High Performance Centre (HPC) in Puri, pointed out that this was not the first time Odisha had challenged Maharash-

tra’s dominance. “Over the last three to four years, Odisha has defeated Maharashtra several times. This performance proves that we’re not just contenders — we’re serious challengers.”

In contrast, the boys’ final followed a different script. Odisha’s boys, despite a strong start, couldn’t keep pace with the experienced Maharashtra team and eventually lost 34-25, securing the silver medal.

“We were aiming for two gold medals, but I’m happy the boys gave their best and won silver. It’s still a big achievement. Maharashtra is a very strong team with a great track record, but Odisha’s steady rise in Kho-kho is due to the hard work of our players and the development efforts of the Government,” he said.

The boys’ bronze went to Karnataka and Punjab. Karnataka saw off Punjab under the minimum chase rule for some extra bragging rights. The girls’ bronze went to Punjab and Delhi, with the former winning under the minimum chase rule after a 2-2 tie.

SNIPPETS

Compound mixed team in bronze play-off

SHANGHAI: The Indian compound mixed team entered the bronze medal match while Deepika Kumari and Parth Sushant Salunkhe made it to the women’s and men’s recurve individual semifinals of the World Cup Stage 2 here Friday. Madhura Dhamangaonkar and Abhishek Verma lost 156-158 to Ella Gibson and Ajay Scott of Great Britain in the compound mixed team semifinal. The Indian archers lost the opening and third series -- 38-39 and 39-40 -- while they were tied 40-40 and 39-39 in the second and fourth series. Dhamangaonkar and Abhishek Verma will face Malaysia -- who lost to Türkiye 156-157 -- in the bronze medal match Saturday. In the individual men’s recurve competition, Salunkhe made it to the semifinals after stunning Tokyo Olympics gold medalist and Paris Games bronze winner Mete Gazoz 6-5 in the shoot-off in the first round.



Shuttlers move into semifinal of Taipei Open



TAIPEI: Young Indian shuttlers Ayush Shetty and Unnati Hooda continued to impress at the Taipei Open Super 300 badminton tournament, beating their respective rivals in tough three-game contests to progress to semifinals of men’s and women’s singles events

here Friday. Taking the court first, Unnati, the 2022 Odisha Masters and 2023 Abu Dhabi Masters champion, fought hard for 52 minutes to get the better of local shuttler Hung Yi-Ting 21-8 19-21 21-19 in the women’s singles quarterfinals. Earlier, the 17-year-old Indian, ranked 53rd in the world as against her opponent’s 65th, made short work of another Taipei shuttler Lin Sih Yun 21-12 21-7 in the round of 16. She will next face top seed Tomoka Miyazaki of Japan.

Man Utd, Spurs set up all-English Europa League final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Manchester, May 9: For Manchester United or Tottenham, a miserable campaign will end in Europa League glory.

Despite both teams languishing in the bottom half of the Premier League, the Champions League is now just one game away.

That’s the reward on offer after the two troubled English clubs advanced to the final of Europe’s second-tier competition Thursday.

United beat Athletic Bilbao 4-1 in the semifinal second leg at Old Trafford and won 7-1 on aggregate. Tottenham won 2-0 away at Bodø/Glimt to seal a 5-1

aggregate victory.

It sets up an all-English Europa League final for the second time in six years after Chelsea beat Arsenal to lift the trophy in 2019.

“If we don’t win the final, it means nothing for us,” United coach Ruben Amorim said. “It’s hard to describe what it’s like to be manager of this club. You want to give them (the fans) something, because we’ve been so disappointing in the Premier League.”

United came back from 1-0 down at halftime against Bilbao, with Mason Mount coming off the bench to score twice after the break. Casemiro and Rasmus Hojlund were also on target.

Dominic Solanke and Pedro

Porro struck for Tottenham against Bodø/Glimt in Norway.

The final is in Bilbao May 21. “It’s an unbelievable feeling,” Spurs defender Micky van de Ven said. “We’ve had a tough season, but we’re one game away from winning silverware.”

A major title, alone, would be enough to salvage what has otherwise been a season to forget for both United and Spurs. But the added prize of a place in the lucrative Champions League would put the winner back among Europe’s elite next term.

That hasn’t looked likely for either team for most of the campaign as they have languished closer to the relegation zone than the top five.



United is 15th in the standings having lost a club record 16 games in the Premier League. It is also certain to record its worst-ever points total in the modern era, as well as its lowest finish.

For Tottenham, it’s even worse — sitting one place below United after a club record-equaling 19 losses in the Premier League.

Now, one of those teams has the chance to effectively erase

their woeful domestic form by winning the final, which will be the fourth time they have faced each other this season.

Spurs won all three of the previous encounters — twice in the league and also in the English League Cup.

“We are struggling, both of us, so I don’t know what is going to happen,” Amorim said. “That is a good thing and a bad thing with this team. I never know.”

It is United’s third Europa League final in eight years, having won the competition in 2017. United won the FA Cup last year and the League Cup in 2023 and this would be a third trophy-winning season in a row.