



The South Asian

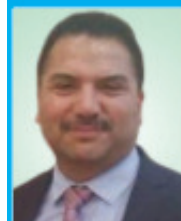


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When The Dragon Doesn't Roar: Why Pakistan Cannot Count On China In A Hot War



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India-Pakistan latest:

Trump Praises both Nations After Full Ceasefire

The US President congratulated the two countries for 'using common sense and great intelligence' after a long night of talks mediated by America in which the UK was involved

What you need to know

- India and Pakistan have agreed to a full and immediate ceasefire. President Trump said it came after a "long night of talks mediated by the US"
- The two countries earlier accused each other of targeting military airbases as tensions escalated
- A South Asia expert said that the India-Pakistan conflict had not reached this level of intensity in 40 years

Pahalgam attack was original escalation: India on counterstriking Pak systems



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Centre denies travel permission to Kerala Health Minister for US university lecture



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Reliance withdraws 'Operation Sindoor' trademark, says it was filed inadvertently

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An another Indian Student in the US has been arrested in North Carolina for Scamming Elderly



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The Dark and Sad Reality of Crossing Illegally into the United States

The Shadow of the American Dreamy for Indian Migrants at the US Border

(By Sharanjit Singh Thind) New York- "Real Humans, now, are the most profitable cargo to smuggle across borders, more precious and profitable than Drugs" It's all over news, an everyday occurrence. Children left at the border (Intentionally on instructions and, as per advise of human smugglers), Boats capsizing, people disappearing/bodies found in the Darien Jungle.

The allure of the American Dream continues to beckon, drawing people from all corners of the globe with promises of opportunity and a better life. For many Indians, this dream has become a powerful motivator, fueling a perilous journey across continents and through treacherous landscapes to reach the United States, often illegally. But the reality they encounter at the border is a far cry from the idealized vision, shrouded in darkness and punctuated by unimaginable hardship, separation, and



even death. Driven by economic hardship, lack of opportunity, or persecution in their homeland, these migrants are often lured by unscrupulous smugglers who paint a picture of easy passage and guaranteed success. They sell false hope, preying on the vulnerability and desperation of those yearning for a fresh start. The reality, however, is a brutal and unforgiving

gauntlet. One of the most immediate dangers is the environment itself. Crossing the U.S.-Mexico border often involves traversing vast deserts, unforgiving mountain ranges, and treacherous rivers. The scorching heat of the summer months can lead to dehydration and heatstroke, while the frigid temperatures of winter nights can

bring hypothermia. Many succumb to the elements, their bodies discovered later as stark reminders of the unforgiving landscape. Beyond the natural dangers, migrants face the constant threat of exploitation and violence. Smugglers, more interested in profit than human lives, often abandon their clients in remote areas without food, water, or adequate shelter. They are also vulnerable to criminal organizations operating along the border, who prey on vulnerable migrants, subjecting them to extortion, theft, and even sexual assault. Perhaps the most heartbreaking tragedy is the separation of families. In the chaos and confusion of border crossings and encounters with law enforcement, families are often torn apart. Parents are detained, while children are left to navigate the system alone, their futures uncertain. The emotional toll of this separation can be devastating, leaving lasting scars on both parents and children.

Shortly after the strikes on Pakistan, Ajit Doval, Indian National Security Advisor spoke with US NSA and Secretary of State Marco Rubio and briefed him on the actions taken.



Embassy of India Washington DC

(By our staff reporter) A press released shared with The South Asian Insider states the timeline leading to today's Indian army coordinated attacks on Terrorist targets in Pakistan and Pakistan occupied Kashmir:

1. Terrorists killed 26 civilians in Jammu & Kashmir on April 22 in a brutal and heinous attack.

2. India has credible leads, technical inputs, testimony of the survivors and other evidence pointing towards the clear involvement of Pakistan-based terrorists in this attack.

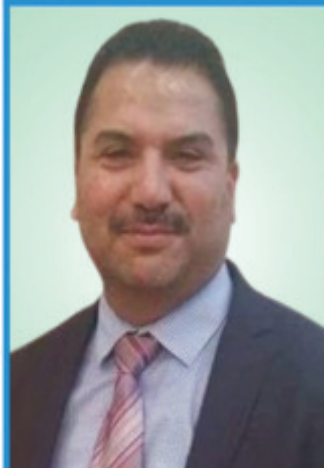
3. It was expected that Pakistan would take action against terrorists and

the infrastructure that supports them. Instead, during the fortnight that has gone by, Pakistan has indulged in denial and made allegations of false flag operations against India.

4. India's actions have been focused and precise. They were measured, responsible and designed to be non-escalatory in nature. No Pakistani civilian, economic or military targets have been hit. Only known terror camps were targeted.

5. Shortly after the strikes, NSA Shri Ajit Doval spoke with US NSA and Secretary of State Marco Rubio and briefed him on the actions taken.

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Illinois Tech to become first US university to set up degree campus in India

Illinois Institute of Technology has become the first US university to get UGC approval to open a degree campus in India.

(By our staff reporter) In a first for the country, Illinois Institute of Technology (Illinois Tech), Chicago's only tech-focused university, has received the green light from India's University Grants Commission (UGC) to set up a full-fledged degree-granting campus in India. The Illinois Tech Mumbai campus is scheduled to open in 2026, offering undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in computer science, engineering, and business. This move makes Illinois Tech the first US university to be approved for an independent

degree-awarding presence in India under the UGC's latest foreign campus regulations. Courses will follow the same experiential and industry-aligned curriculum as in Chicago, with internationally recruited faculty and visiting professors from the US.

WHAT WILL STUDENTS GET?

Students at the Mumbai campus will have access to Illinois Tech's signature Elevate programme, which blends academic learning with real-world experience through internships, research, competitions, and industry

projects.

They'll also benefit from cross-campus exposure with US faculty and opportunities to study across both countries, all without needing to relocate.

According to 2023 and 2025 rankings from the New York Times, U.S. News & World Report, and TFE Times, Illinois Tech consistently ranks high in earnings potential, mobility, and career outcomes -- especially for its STEM and business programmes. This makes it a strong fit for Indian students who want an international education at home.



FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES IN INDIA: WHAT'S HAPPENING SO FAR

Until now, no foreign university has had permission to independently offer full degrees in India. Illinois Tech is the first to achieve this

milestone since UGC notified its foreign higher education institution (FHEI) regulations in May 2023, following the 2020 National Education Policy's call for allowing top global universities into the Indian system.

Indian-origin restaurateur stabbed to death inside bank in UK

An Indian-origin man, Gurvinder Singh Johal, was stabbed to death inside a bank in the eastern England city of Derby. Police were called to Lloyd's Bank branch in St Peter's Street, Derby, at around 2.30 pm on Tuesday afternoon (May 6), and despite an air ambulance attending to Johal, he was pronounced dead at the scene, the Daily Mail reported. He was 37.

A Somali-origin man, 47, who has been identified as Haybe Cabdiraxmaan Nur, from



Normanton in Derby, was arrested and charged with his murder on Thursday.

Johal was a restaurateur. He was the owner of Hen and Chickens Bar and Grill restaurant in

Shelton Lock. He is survived by three children and a wife.

JOHAL WAS A 'GOOD FRIEND AND A SMILER': FAMILY FRIEND

Johal had just returned from a

family trip to India with his wife, children and extended family, a family friend of Johal told the BBC. The friend also said that Johal was "a good friend" and "a smiler". A friend said Johal had visited the Lloyds branch to deposit his restaurant's weekend earnings, as he couldn't do it on Monday due to the bank holiday. Samanatha Shallow, Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutor in the East Midlands, said, "After a review of the evidence provided by Derbyshire Constabulary, we have authorised criminal charges

in relation to the death of 37-year-old Gurvinder Johal. "A second suspect, a man in his 30s, was arrested but later released without charge or further action in connection with the incident.

ACCUSED APPEARED BEFORE THE COURT

The accused appeared at Southern Derbyshire Magistrates' Court via video-link on Thursday, where he spoke only to confirm his identity with the assistance of a Somali interpreter.

Two children drown to death as Indian family tries to enter US illegally

Tragedy struck an Indian family of four trying to enter the US illegally as the boat they were travelling in capsized off the coast of San Diego, California. A 14-year-old boy from the family has been declared dead and his 10-year-old sister, still missing, is presumed dead. Though



their parents were rescued by coast guard personnel, the father is in a comatose condition in hospital.

The boat capsized on May 5, and the boy was declared dead on May 7 even as details emerged of the tragedy and the Indian family. The family was among other illegal immigrants, and three people have been confirmed dead in the boat

tragedy. Five people have been charged in the case. The 10-year-old girl from the Indian family still remains untraced, and thereby, presumed dead, according to a report by the Associated Press, citing the US Attorney's Office in San Diego's statement. The children's father, who was one of the four people, including his wife, was rescued and taken to hospital and is in a coma. His wife remained hospitalised. Two others who were rescued were taken into custody and later arrested by the police. The other two killed were from Mexico, including an 18-year-old boy and another man, according to the Mexican consulate, AP reported. According to the consulate, the 18-year-old's girlfriend, 16, is being treated after water filled her lungs. The consulate is working with the families in Mexico to send the mortal remains of those who died.

Two Mexican nationals were arrested at the beach near where the boat capsized early Monday morning (May 5). They were charged with human smuggling resulting in death, a crime that carries a maximum penalty of death or life in prison, according to the report.

An another Indian Student in the US has been arrested in North Carolina for Scamming Elderly

(By our staff reporter) dupe a 78-year-old woman. New York-So far 3 Indian Kishan Kumar Singh is the third students, including one Kishan Indian student to be arrested in Kumar Singh, have been the US in two weeks for trying arrested for serious scams to scam senior citizens.

targeting the elderly in the United States.

These incidents involve impersonation, fraud, and cryptocurrency transfers. Legal and immigration repercussions are severe—loss of student visas, deportation, and lasting travel bans—prompting universities and authorities to issue warnings and enhance preventive education.

21-year-old Kishan has been arrested in the US for posing as a federal agent and trying to



On May 2, 2025, two Indian students, M u h a m m a d Damora and Ali, both 24, were arrested in El Paso County, Colorado. They were studying at East West University in Chicago ??? on student visas.

In another case, 23-year-old Indian student Varun Nallure Balaji was arrested in Massachusetts. Reports say he tricked a 78-year-old woman by pretending to be a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agent.

Jaish chief's brother critically injured in strikes under Op Sindoor: Sources



Parliament attack, which killed nine people and brought India and Pakistan to the brink of war. In 2016, the JeM deputy head orchestrated the Pathankot airbase attack. That same year, under his leadership, Jaish facilitated the Uri attack that claimed the lives of 19 Indian soldiers.

Three years later, Rauf is believed to have overseen the planning of the Pulwama suicide bombing that killed 40 CRPF personnel, even though the group used other operatives to claim responsibility.

WHY INDIA STRUCK BAHAWALPUR

In a swift and coordinated blitz lasting just 25 minutes, India carried out its most expansive cross-border strikes since Balakot, targeting nine terror facilities in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) early on Wednesday. The assault was launched in response to the Pahalgam terror attack, in which 26 civilians — mostly tourists — were killed by Pakistan-backed terrorists.

include Azhar's elder sister, her husband, his nephew and his wife, another niece, and five children, along with Azhar's mother and three key aides.

WHO IS ABDUL RAUF ASGHAR

Sometimes referred to as the de-facto chief of JeM, Abdul Rauf Asghar masterminded the hijacking of Indian Airlines Flight IC-814 in 1999. This act led to the release of his brother Masood Azhar and other terrorists from Indian custody. Asghar has long played a key role in the group's planning and execution of terror attacks against India. He was a key coordinator of the 2001 Indian

(News Agency)-Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief Masood Azhar's brother Abdul Rauf Asghar was critically injured in precision strikes carried out by India under Operation Sindoor in Pakistan's Bahawalpur, according to intelligence sources.

Asghar, who is also the terror group's second-in-command, is currently undergoing treatment at a Pakistani military hospital, the sources added.

The development follows the JeM chief's statement that 14 members of his family and four close aides were killed in the Indian strikes. According to a report by BBC Urdu, the dead

Russia-made S-400 defence system thwarted Pak's midnight drone-missile attack



(News Agency)-The Indian Air Force deployed its S-400 air defence systems on Wednesday night and foiled an aerial attack by Pakistan in retaliation for Operation Sindoor, sources said today. According to defence officials, Pakistan attempted to strike multiple military targets across northern and western India using drones and missiles. The targets included bases in Awantipora, Srinagar, Jammu, Pathankot, Amritsar, Ludhiana, and Bhuj. The projectiles were intercepted and neutralised by the S-400 air defence systems, dubbed "Sudarshan Chakra". The Russian-made S-400 systems used in the interception

are among the most advanced in the world, capable of tracking targets up to 600 kilometres away and intercepting threats at ranges of up to 400 kilometres. India has deployed four squadrons so far—one positioned in Pathankot for the defence of Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, and another covering strategic areas in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

Meanwhile, in a calibrated response on Thursday morning, Indian armed forces struck Pakistani air defence radars and systems, destroying an installation near Lahore. Sources said the Indian response was "in the same domain and with the same intensity."

India destroys China-made missile shield in Lahore. What are Pak's HQ-9, HQ-16?

India countered an aerial attack by Pakistan on the night of May 7 and hit its air defence system. India's strike destroyed the HQ-9P and HQ-16 missile defence systems, built by China and customised for Pakistan. China uses the HQ-9 system, with a longer range of surface-to-air missiles, for its defence.

(News Agency)-Indian counter-strikes after Pakistan's attack on the intervening night of May 7-8 destroyed the air defence units guarding Lahore and left the key Pakistani commercial hub exposed. Pakistan's attack came after India hit terror infrastructure in its territory and in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK) as part of Operation Sindoor.

An integrated air defence system (IADS) helps in detecting, tracking, intercepting, and destroying aerial threats like aircraft, drones and missiles. Such systems use a combination of various military assets like radars, command centres and missile systems.

Israel's Iron Dome is one of the most heard air defence systems. India has the S-400 missile defence system



Pakistan uses a variant of the Chinese HQ-9 air-defence system as a shield for Lahore, according to sources. The China-supplied version of HQ-9 to Pakistan is called HQ-9P and has been customised for Pakistan. The P likely stands for Pakistan. The HQ-9 or HQ9P is the mainstay of Pakistan's layered air defence system.

"The HQ-9 is a Chinese version of Russia's S-300 missile system. It forms the upper tier of Pakistan's air defence umbrella," Sandeep Unnithan, senior defence correspondent and expert, told India Today Digital. "The Indian strike has degraded Pakistan's ability to detect and defend itself from air attacks," said Unnithan.

He also discussed how Pakistan's air defence system was destroyed.

"Military targets were chosen and destroyed. An HQ-9 missile battery, Pakistan's most capable air defence system was destroyed in a Suppression of Enemy Air Defences (SEAD) mission," said Unnithan.

"SEAD missions punch holes in enemy air defences and imply that more Indian air strikes could follow if needed," he explained. It was in the Pakistan Day Parade of 2024 when the long-range HQ-9P surface-to-air missile (SAM) system was displayed in public for the first time.

"The Chinese-supplied HQ-9P entered service in 2021... and has a range of 125 kilometers. That falls short of the 250-

kilometre-range of HQ-9 variants in Chinese service," says a Defense News report on Pakistan Day Parade of 2024.

The Belgium-based Army Recognition Group says that Pakistan has tried to build an aerial shield against Indian air superiority.

"Pakistan now relies on a layered network composed of the HQ-9P, HQ-9BE, FD-2000, HQ-16FE, as well as older systems such as the LY-80 and FM-90," its says in an April 2025 report.

The LY-80 and LY-80N are the export versions of China's HQ-16 and its variant HQ-16A.

The LY-80 (HQ-16) Long Range Air Defence Weapon System was inducted by Pakistan in 2019, when Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa (Retd) was the Pakistani army chief.

Faith over fear: Gurdwara in J&K's Poonch reopens day after Pakistan shelling

Prayers have resumed inside the gurdwara, even as signs of yesterday's destruction, the shell marks and the spots where lives were lost, remain fresh.



(News Agency)-In a bold and defiant response to Pakistan's unprovoked aggression, the people of Poonch have reopened the Gurdwara that was shelled just yesterday. Refusing to bow to fear, the Gurdwara has once again opened its doors to devotees. Prayers have resumed inside,

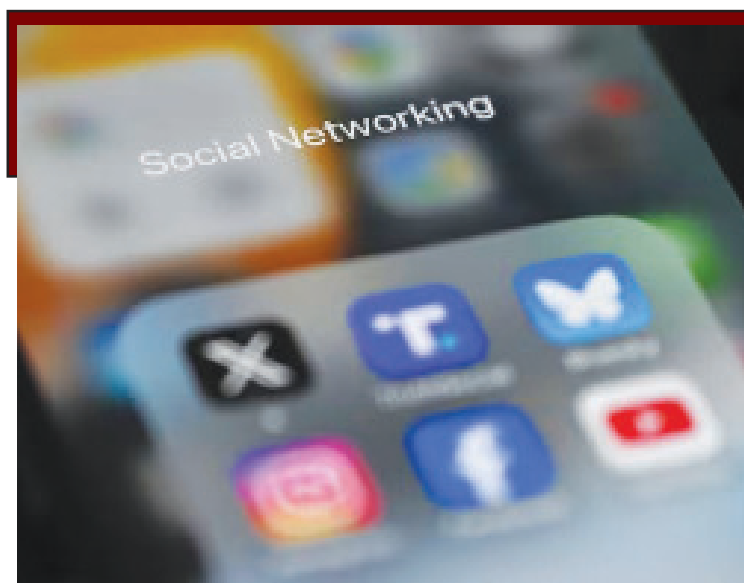
even as signs of yesterday's destruction, the shell marks and the spots where lives were lost, remain fresh. But amid the echoes of blasts and gunfire, it is the unwavering faith and resilience of the people that is giving a powerful answer to Pakistan. Their devotion

stands tall against terror. The building of the gurdwara was damaged as Pakistan launched heavy shelling in the Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir. Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) chief Sukhbir Singh Badal condemned the "attack" on a gurdwara in Poonch by Pakistani forces during cross-

border shelling that led to the death of three Sikhs. At least 31 people, including four children, were killed and 57 others injured as the Pakistan Army carried out heavy artillery and mortar shelling on forward villages along the LoC. The intense shelling from

across the border started shortly after Indian armed forces carried out missile attacks on nine terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir to avenge the April 22 terror attack in south Kashmir's Pahalgam that had left 26 civilians dead.

Centre directs states to crack down on anti-India propaganda after Op Sindoor



Amid deepening tensions with Pakistan, the Ministry of Home Affairs has directed states to immediately block social media accounts found disseminating fake propaganda against India.

The MHA directed states to immediately block social media accounts found disseminating fake propaganda against India from anywhere in the country or abroad.

Under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, the government has the power to restrict access to online content in the interest of national security or public order. In addition, the MHA stressed the need for close coordination between local administration, armed forces, and paramilitary units in border regions. It also called for enhancing communication links between the Centre and states, especially those with vulnerable zones.

The directive follows Operation

Sindoor, India's most expansive military operation in recent years. Launched moments after midnight on Wednesday, the joint strike by the Army and Air Force targeted nine terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in response to the Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives. According to the Centre, more than 90 terrorists were killed in the strikes, which targeted infrastructure linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed and Hizbul Mujahideen, and used to launch attacks on Indian soil.

As Pakistan condemned the strike as an "act of war," a wave of misinformation began flooding social media. Several

pro-Pakistan accounts posted false claims, including assertions that Indian jets were downed and soldiers captured—claims that were systematically debunked by India.

One viral post claimed the Pakistan Army had shot down an Indian Rafale near Bahawalpur, but the accompanying image was from an unrelated 2021 incident. Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif also falsely claimed that Indian soldiers had been taken prisoner, a statement he later retracted.

The MHA has also instructed states to raise public awareness and prevent panic by countering rumours swiftly and effectively.

In the aftermath of governments and union Operation Sindoor, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has directed all states to intensify surveillance of anti-national propaganda on social and digital platforms and take swift action against the spread of misinformation, sources said on Thursday.

The advisory to state

territories comes amid a rampant disinformation campaign by Pakistan following India's missile strikes on terror camps across the border. The Home Ministry has asked authorities to crack down on accounts spreading fake narratives about the operation or India's security situation.

What might have gone into making Operation Sindoor a success

Operation Sindoor's success can be attributed to the culmination of the seamless integration of satellite, drone, and human intelligence with precise strikes by the IAF's fighter jets, executed under tight inter-service coordination. This is what might have happened in the days leading up to Operation Sindoor, and how it was executed.

(News Agency)- In the early hours of May 7, Indian armed forces executed Operation Sindoor, a meticulously planned air-to-ground mission targeting nine terrorist training camps and their headquarters across Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK).

The operation, in retaliation for the April 22 Pahalgam carnage attack that killed 26 civilians, was a resounding success. Key infrastructure of terror outfits like Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (Hizb) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), that carried out multiple terror attacks at the behest of the Pakistani establishment, were destroyed and around 80 terrorists were eliminated. On Thursday, at an all-party meeting, the government said that 100 terrorists had been killed, sources told India Today TV. On April 24, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed to "identify, track and punish every terrorist



and their backers", Operation Sindoor marked just the first phase of India's retaliation. The spectacular turnaround by the Indian armed forces in just 15 days opens the door for a closer look at the nitty-gritty, from intelligence gathering to execution, that may have driven Operation Sindoor's success. PHASE 1: INTELLIGENCE GATHERING. [APRIL 22 – MAY 6, TWO WEEKS]

The foundation of Operation

Sindoor's success was probably laid in the two weeks following the Pahalgam attack. Indian intelligence agencies, led by their external intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), would have employed a multipronged approach to gathering actionable intelligence. First, high-resolution satellite imagery and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) would have been used to collect real-time reconnaissance of terrorist camps

in diverse terrains, from urban areas like Bahawalpur to mountainous regions in POK. This would have enabled precise mapping of targets, including JeM's headquarters in Bahawalpur and the LeT's hub in Muridke. This would have been assisted by the R&AW assets on the ground supplying critical details about camp structures, movements of personnel, and operational patterns. This human intelligence is the key in confirming the presence of high-value targets, such as training facilities linked to terrorists like Masood Azhar and Hafiz Saeed. Using Geographic Information System (GIS) tools, the analysts in India's defence forces have studied terrain elevation, access routes, and potential obstacles to ensure unobstructed glide paths of cruise missiles like SCALP. This is important to minimise the risk of missile deviation and ensure precision.

The integration of satellite data, drone footage, and ground intelligence is the key that allowed India to classify targets based on threat level, size, and potential for collateral damage.

PHASE 2: STRATEGIC MISSION PLANNING [APRIL 30 – MAY 7] The week leading up to the strikes would have been dedicated to crafting a flawless mission plan by leveraging advanced technology and inter-service coordination of the three armed forces. Then the strike packages might have been composed. The Indian Air Force (IAF) deployed its Rafale fighter jets, armed with SCALP cruise missiles (range: over 250 km) for deep strikes and HAMMER precision-guided bombs (range: up to 70 km) for tactical targets. These weapons, known for their stealth and accuracy, were ideal for penetrating hardened bunkers and minimising collateral damage during Operation Sindoor.

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Op Sindoor is ongoing; 100 terrorists killed, all parties told, say sources

Operation Sindoor: At the all-party meeting, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said 100 terrorists were killed in 'precise' attacks on nine terrorist hideouts in Pakistan.

(News Agency)- Union Minister Kiren Rijiju asserted that Operation Sindoor was still on, while Defence Minister Rajnath Singh told an all-party meeting that 100 terrorists were killed in the strikes on Pakistani terror camps on Wednesday, sources said. This is the first time that the government has confirmed the death toll in the cross-border strikes.

Speaking to reporters after the all-party meeting, Rijiju said, "The Defence Minister informed leaders that this was an ongoing operation, hence can't give a technical briefing." On Thursday, a series of loud explosions were heard in Pakistan's Lahore and some other cities, local media and Reuters reported. The government has not commented on the incident.

Rijiju said leaders cutting across party lines unanimously congratulated the armed forces on the success of Operation Sindoor and assured their full support to the government.

"Each leader expressed their views with



responsibility and maturity, recognising the major challenge the country is currently facing... The Defence Minister said, 'We don't form the government just to rule,' Rijiju said. **INSIDE SCOOP ON ALL-PARTY MEET**

Meanwhile, at the all-party meeting, Rajnath Singh said 100 terrorists were killed in "precise" attacks on nine terrorist hideouts in Pakistan and

Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). However, he clarified that India wouldn't back down if Pakistan retaliated. "About 100 terrorists were killed. There is no concrete information yet. The counting is still on. We do not want to escalate the matter. If Pakistan does so, we will not back down either," Singh told the all-party meeting, according to sources. In response to Operation Sindoor, the

Pakistani army opened artillery fire along the Line of Control in the Poonch-Rajouri area, killing 15 civilians.

Sources said while Rajnath spoke for 5 minutes, other leaders were given 4-5 minutes each to share their views. While the opposition were fulsome in their praise of the armed forces and backed the government, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge questioned the absence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The issue of the Prime Minister's absence was also raised by the Aam Aadmi Party and the Samajwadi Party. Sources said Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi also extended full support to the government. "We are here together and, from the beginning, we have been with the government," Gandhi said at the meeting.

Even though PM Modi didn't attend the meeting, he sent a message to the opposition: Every Indian citizen needs to stand united.

US, UK, others urge citizens to avoid J&K travel amid rising Indo-Pak tensions



(News Agency)- In view of the heightened tensions between New Delhi and Islamabad, especially after Operation Sindoor was launched by the Indian Army to target terror bases in Pakistan, several countries, including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and Singapore have issued a travel advisory, urging their citizens to avoid visiting Jammu and Kashmir. The US Embassy in New Delhi issued a security alert advising American citizens to leave areas of active conflict, saying it is "closely monitoring developments". "US citizens are reminded of the 'Do Not Travel' advisory for areas in the vicinity of the India-Pakistan border and the Line of Control due to terrorism and the potential for armed conflict, and

the US Department of State's 'Reconsider Travel' advisory for Pakistan generally," the advisory read.

The UK Foreign Office has cautioned its citizens against all but essential travel to Jammu & Kashmir and areas within 10 km of the India-Pakistan border, citing high threats of terrorism, civil unrest, kidnapping, and spontaneous violence. "FCDO advises against all travel within 10km of the India-Pakistan border. The Wagah-Attari border crossing is closed. FCDO advises against all travel to the region of Jammu and Kashmir (including Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Sonamarg, the city of Srinagar and the Jammu-Srinagar national highway)," the notice stated.

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India repels Pak attack on targets in 15 cities, neutralises Lahore's air defence



The government said Pakistan's drones and missiles were neutralised by the Integrated Counter UAS Grid and the Russia-made S-400 Triumf air defence systems.

(News Agency) - The armed forces targeted air defence radars at a number of locations in Pakistan and destroyed the system in Lahore on Thursday after Islamabad attempted to strike 15 military targets in India in response to Operation Sindoor.

Sources said Pakistan's HQ-9 missile defence system units, developed by China, were hit by Israeli-made HARPY kamikaze drones, effectively rendering the Pakistani army defenceless in Lahore.

The government's statement came shortly after Pakistan claimed one drone crashed near Lahore, while 12 others were taken down close to Gujranwala, Chakwal, Bahawalpur, Miano, Karachi, Chhor, Rawalpindi, and

Attack.

Pakistan claimed that four army personnel sustained injuries in Lahore while one civilian was killed in Miano, Sindh.

The incident comes a day after India struck terror camps in Pakistan, in an operation named 'Sindoor', in response to the Pahalgam terror attack, which claimed 26 lives. INDIA'S S-400 DOWNS PAK DRONES

In a statement, the government said on the intervening night of May 7-8, Pakistan attempted to target a number of military installations in Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Pathankot, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Adampur, Bhatinda, Chandigarh, Nal, Phalodi, Uttarlai, and Bhuj, using drones and missiles.

However, the drones and missiles were neutralised by the Integrated Counter UAS Grid and the Russia-made S-400 'Sudarshan Chakra' air defence systems.

The S-400 air defence system can track aerial threats up to 600 km away and intercept fighter jets, ballistic missiles, and drones, making it a vital cog in India's security arsenal.

"Indian armed forces targeted air defence radars and systems at a number of locations in Pakistan. The Indian response has been in the same domain with the same intensity as Pakistan. It has been reliably learnt that an air defence system at Lahore has been neutralised," the government said.

"The Indian armed forces reiterate their commitment to non-escalation, provided it is respected by the Pakistani military," the statement further said.

The government also said that heavy artillery and mortar shelling by Pakistan along the

LoC killed 16 civilians, including three women and five children. "Here too, India was compelled to respond to bring mortar and artillery fire from Pakistan to a halt," the statement said.

EXPLOSIONS IN LAHORE

In Lahore, sirens went off and people ran out of their homes as a series of loud explosions were heard near Walton airport, Reuters and local media reported. Visuals showed people running out of their houses in panic and reported seeing clouds of smoke.

The area adjoins Lahore's posh central business district and the Lahore army cantonment. Local reports said flight operations at Sialkot, Karachi and Lahore airports have been temporarily suspended.

No casualties or damage to civilian infrastructure have been reported so far.

OPERATION SINDOOR: TERROR CAMPS STRUCK IN PAK

On Wednesday, a joint operation by the Army and the

Indian Air Force (IAF) destroyed terror camps in nine locations in Pakistan linked to banned outfits Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) under 'Operation Sindoor'.

While the IAF carried out air-to-surface missile attacks using Rafale jets, the Army simultaneously launched surface-to-surface missiles, sources said. The precision strikes killed 100 terrorists in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, sources said.

The government, however, maintained that no Pakistani military infrastructure was attacked, and the selected sites were chosen with care to prevent the loss of civilian lives. In his first reaction to Operation Sindoor, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif termed it an "act of war" imposed by India. Even though India provided ample visual proof of terror camps being targeted, Pakistan claimed that the strikes killed civilians, including women and children.

Stop Pakistani content immediately: Centre to OTTs, media streaming platforms

(News Agency) - The government on Thursday directed online streaming platforms to immediately cease all Pakistan-origin content, marking the latest in a series of security measures following the April 22 Pahalgam attacks, in which Pakistan-based terrorists killed 26 civilians in Jammu and Kashmir.

The order, issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, asked "all OTT platforms, media streaming services, and intermediaries operating in India to immediately discontinue web series, films, songs, podcasts, and other streaming content originating from Pakistan", whether offered through subscription-based models or otherwise.



The decision has been made in the "interest of national security", the notification said. "Several terrorist attacks in India have been established to have cross-border linkages with Pakistan-based State and non-State actors. Recently, on 22.04.2025, the terrorist attack in Pahalgam led to the killing of several Indians, one Nepali citizen, and injuries to a

number of others," the ministry said, explaining the rationale behind the move.

The government's directive came a day after Indian forces struck terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, amid escalating tensions between the two countries in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack. Earlier, India banned over 15

Pakistani YouTube channels -- including those of major media outlets like Dawn and Geo News, as well as journalists such as Irshad Bhatti, Asma Shirazi, and Umar Cheema -- for allegedly spreading provocative, communally sensitive content and false narratives against India. YouTube channel of former cricketer Shoaib Akhtar, which had over 3.5 million subscribers, was also taken down. Collectively, the banned platforms had a subscriber base of approximately 63 million.

India has undertaken a series of punitive measures against Pakistan in recent days, following accusations that Islamabad is fostering cross-border terrorism. These measures include cancelling

visas for Pakistani nationals, closing land borders, banning Pakistani carriers from Indian airspace, downsizing diplomatic missions, halting trade and business ties, and suspending the Indus Waters Treaty, among other actions.

In a meticulously planned counter-operation on Tuesday night, codenamed Operation Sindoor, the Indian armed forces destroyed nine terrorist installations in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, eliminating at least 100 terrorists. On Thursday, India also thwarted Pakistan's attempted missile and drone attacks on 15 locations across northern and western India, and went on to destroy a Pakistani air defence system in Lahore.

India's Operation Sindoor Against Terrorists In Pakistan Is All About Geopolitical Timing

Wars are not to be fought with hot heads. They are won with cold precision and planning, and timing is paramount.

India's first military response to the Pahalgam Islamic terror attack on April 22 in which non-Muslim tourists were screened and massacred came whistling through the night breeze in the shape of missiles in the wee hours of Wednesday. Nine terror camps in Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan's Punjab province have been pulverised. Moot here is the timing. The Indian counterstrikes come at a time of a Trump tariff-induced uncertainty and hectic global trade deals to tide over it. They come riding on India's frenetic diplomatic reach out to the major powers and also in its neighbourhood. And the reprisals, just two weeks after the Pahalgam attack, give the jolted Indian domestic audience immense confidence in its government. Just a day before the missile strike on the Pakistani terror camps, New Delhi reportedly proposed Washington to charge zero-for-zero tariffs on steel, auto components and pharmaceuticals from the US. The reciprocal tariffs offer will hold up to a certain quantity of imports from the US beyond which imported industrial goods would attract regular duties. An India-US trade deal is expected to be closed by autumn this year, the Bloomberg report said quoting sources. With the current urgency even in the US to negotiate new deals like these, steps in trade will come packaged with the understanding that America will not meddle in India's right to protect its own safety and sovereignty. India's retaliation also comes hours after it inked a free trade agreement (FTA) with the United Kingdom. It comes as a statement of India's global intent to carry out trade at a time of rising regional tensions and a world drifting back toward trade barriers and tariff wars. The spectre of Trump-era protectionism makes the timing perfect. British automobiles, whiskies, and machinery will gain, while Indian exporters get better access to UK markets for garments, leather goods, jewellery, and food products. More importantly, the FTA binds India and the UK in a closer embrace and makes it difficult for one to work against the other's interests. The response of Russia, perhaps India's closest global ally, was initially confusing. Right after the April 22 attack, Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov called both Indian

external affairs minister S Jaishankar and Pakistani foreign minister Ishaq Dar and asked them to resolve disputes through political and diplomatic means. He brought up the 1972 Shimla Agreement and the 1999 Lahore Declaration as frameworks for engagement.

Some in New Delhi viewed this approach as monkey-balancing and not Russia's traditional unequivocal support for India, especially given the barbarity of the Pahalgam attack.

But Russia's top boss soon moved into damage control. President Vladimir Putin spoke to PM Narendra Modi on Monday, strongly condemning the Pahalgam attack and offering full support in punishing the perpetrators. The Kremlin's statement made no mention of mediation and aligned fully with India's counterterrorism stand. Putin also accepted PM Modi's invitation to visit India later this year. Perhaps the most interesting has been China's stance after the missile strikes. In a statement on Wednesday, it called on India and Pakistan to exercise maximum restraint.

Trying to assuage its neighbourhood lackey, Pakistan, it said: "China finds India's military operation early this morning regrettable."

But in the same breath, it said: "China opposes all forms of terrorism."

"We are concerned about the ongoing situation. India and Pakistan are and will always be each other's neighbours. They are both China's neighbours as well. We urge both sides to act in the larger interest of peace and stability, remain calm, exercise restraint and refrain from taking actions that may further complicate the situation," read the Chinese foreign ministry statement, pulling China subtly and deftly out of a partisan commitment.

India and China have been silently and gradually coming closer since the Galwan skirmish. Diplomatic back-channels have been extremely busy. China wants trade with India to partly offset the effect of Trump tariffs. It is unlikely to destabilise the region and sacrifice its self-interest at the altar of Pakistani adventurism.

India has also sent a quiet but strong message to troublemakers in neighbouring Bangladesh that any misadventure by state or non-state actors may lead to outcomes it would like to imagine. Overall, Bharat has chosen the time for military reprisal wisely. Whether it snowballs into much bigger geopolitical changes in the region is to be seen.

By : Abhijit Majumder

Amazon says it's a 'myth' that robots kill jobs. Here's the reality

Stefano La Rovere, director of global robotics, mechatronics and sustainable packaging at Amazon, has the unfortunate task of trying to convince the public that Amazon is not in fact automating away human labor with its robotics deployments.

"It is a myth that technology and robots take out jobs," La Rovere told CNBC last year. He said robots assisted workers "by reducing walking distance between assignments, by taking away repetitive motions, or by helping them to lift heavy weights. In turn, our employees can learn new skills."

La Rovere added that in recent years, "more than 700 new categories of jobs have been created by the use of technology".

Still, Amazon has also bragged that warehouse automation has reduced costs by 25%, and one has to exercise willful disbelief to conclude that those savings are not in labor costs.

But Amazon employs so many people that it can be difficult to get a sense of just what automation means for its human workforce. The company's official total employee count has dipped from a 2021 high of 1.61 million workers to 1.56 million in 2024, but this could be attributed simply to a leveling off of e-commerce demand after the Covid-19 pandemic surge.

To get a better sense of how automation is affecting the Amazon workforce, we need to differentiate by facility type: Amazon fulfillment centers, where orders are picked and packaged, are the key targets of automation deployments. The Kiva robots that move stacks of goods around warehouse floors, and the robotic arms that allow for automated picking and stowing of goods, are primarily used in fulfillment centers. By contrast,

Amazon delivery stations, where packages are loaded on to trucks bound for your doorstep, are not subject to the same robotics wizardry and do not look significantly different from UPS or FedEx facilities.

From 2022 to 2024, the total package delivery count of Amazon Logistics, the company's delivery service, jumped from 5.1bn to 6.1bn, according to Pitney Bowes, an increase of roughly 20%. In that same period, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (Osha) injury tracking application data, the average number of employees at Amazon delivery stations went from 208 to 250, also an increase of roughly 20%. This coincidence is not accidental: if you want to deliver 20% more packages, you need 20% more workers to get them on to trucks.

The story is quite different for fulfillment centers. In 2022, the average number of employees at an Amazon Robotics Sortable (ARS) fulfillment center, the most automated of Amazon's operations, was 3,328; in 2024 it was 3,069, a decrease of about 8%, per Osha figures. If we exclude any ARS fulfillment centers that opened in that period – which artificially lower the 2022 number – the average number of employees in 2022 is 3,634, and in 2024, it's 3,256, a more than 10% drop. If we projected fulfillment center employment to grow as delivery station employment has, ARS fulfillment centers would have employed an average of 4,361 workers in 2024. Thus, accounting for growth in productivity, there's been a roughly 25% decrease in fulfillment center employment levels in just a two-year period. That's a shocking and precipitous drop at Amazon's primary large employment nodes.

By Benjamin Y Fong



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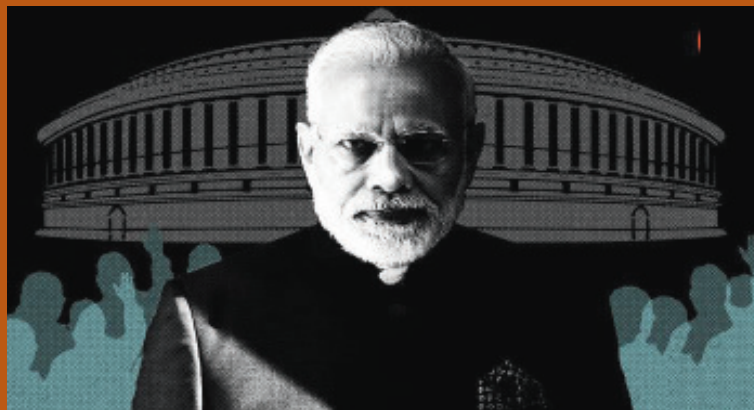
We can defeat Pakistan without war. Operation Sindoor's India's strongest reply to Pahalgam

By R JAGANNATHAN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi seldom gets his political and emotional messaging wrong.

In Wednesday's post-midnight retributive missile attacks on nine Pakistani terror hubs, including Bahawalpur and Muridke, home bases of the Jaish-e-Muhammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba respectively, he has sent multiple messages that will resonate both at home and abroad.

Named Operation Sindoor, it is clearly a message to the Hindu women who were widowed in Pahalgam's jihadi massacre of last month: Modi has just told them that the government shares their pain. In theory, the operation, which involved missile strikes by the Indian army and the air force without crossing into Pakistani territory, could have been named anything. But Modi chose the word Sindoor because it has resonance all over India, barring perhaps the south, and communicates restorative justice to the bereaved. The message to



Pakistan, which was clearly behind the Pahalgam outrage, could not have been clearer. No amount of Chinese help with military equipment and political support can save you from us when we are determined to hit back. Especially since Pakistan thought it was better prepared for retribution this time than after Uri and Pulwama.

The third message is to the world community at large, which has been queasy about the prospect of a full-blown war between two nuclear powers. By restricting the targets to known terror hubs, India has clearly shown that it has

exercised maximum restraint.

In a post-Sindoor official statement, the defence ministry made this explicit: "Our actions have been focused, measured and non-escalatory in nature. No Pakistani military facilities have been targeted. India has demonstrated considerable restraint in selection of targets and method of execution." Translated, this means if Pakistan does anything terrible and retaliates beyond acceptable levels of formal retaliation, which India can take on the chin, the world will be responsible for the consequences.

The US and European powers should take note.

The fourth message is for China, and this messaging involves not only the Sindoor strikes, but the trade deal signed with the United Kingdom. It is not a coincidence that both India and the UK concluded the deal just a few hours before the missile strikes.

Few people are in any doubt that China may have egged Pakistan to get Indians angry enough to start a full-scale war without thinking through the consequences. Any such wider war would have damaged India's growth prospects. China has been seriously worried not only about the general rise of India, but the willingness of the US, UK and the European Union to sign trade deals with India, possibly at the cost of China in the long run. In the short run, the world needs China since it has become over-dependent on cheap Chinese imports to keep consumer prices down. The fifth message is to our own opposition

parties, which have been given adequate video footage on the missile strikes in Pakistan, including live coverage of areas where the damage was done. They can not demand "proof" like they did after Uri and Balakot.

To be sure, the Sindoor strikes are not going to deter Pakistan from pursuing its terror ops in India. If at all anything does deter, it will be the Indus Water Treaty, in which India holds the high cards as an upper riparian state that can control water flows by building a few more dams and diverting supplies elsewhere in the short term. On the other hand, it is worth acknowledging that India had fewer kinetic options this time as Pakistan would have been more prepared. It would have fully war-gamed our responses, and, moreover, had China's full backing, complete with real-time intelligence sharing, military supplies and diplomatic support.

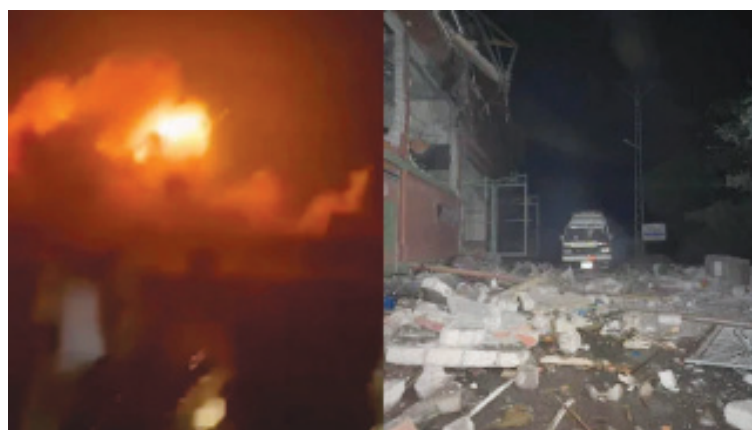
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come packaged with the understanding that America will not meddle in India's right to protect its own safety and sovereignty.

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better access to UK markets for garments, leather goods, jewellery, and food products. More importantly, the FTA binds India and the UK in a closer embrace and makes it difficult for one to work against the other's interests.

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"We are concerned about the ongoing situation. India and Pakistan are and will always be each other's neighbours. They are both China's neighbours as well. We urge both sides to act in the larger interest of peace

How 'Precision Planning' Defined India's Operation Sindoor

By Tuhin A. Sinha

On April 24, 2025, in the wake of the horrific Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives, including 25 Indian citizens and one Nepali national, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a solemn vow in Bihar's Madhubani: "India will identify, track, and punish every terrorist and their backers. We will pursue them to the ends of the earth."

Less than two weeks later, on May 7, 2025, India delivered on this promise with "Operation Sindoor", a meticulously planned military operation targeting terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoK). This operation not only showcased India's resolve to combat terrorism but also demonstrated its strategic foresight in anticipating and preparing for Pakistan's response. By coupling military precision with diplomatic and economic measures, including the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, India has positioned itself to inflict maximum damage on Pakistan's terror ecosystem and its broader strategic interests.

Fulfilling The Promise

The Pahalgam attack, executed on April 22, 2025, was a brutal assault on India's sovereignty, targeting innocent tourists in the popular resort town. The attack, attributed to an offshoot of Pakistan-based terror group, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), was a direct challenge to India's narrative of stability and peace in Jammu and Kashmir. PM Modi's response was unequivocal, and Operation Sindoor was the manifestation



of his commitment to justice. Launched in the pre-dawn hours of May 7, 2025, Operation Sindoor involved precision missile strikes on nine terror camps—four in Pakistan and five in PoK—targeting the operational hubs of LeT, JeM, and Hizbul Mujahideen. The operation was described by the Indian Ministry of Defence as "focused, measured, and non-escalatory," with no Pakistani military facilities targeted to avoid broader conflict escalation. The strikes utilised advanced weaponry, including BrahMos missiles and loitering munitions, reflecting India's technological prowess and strategic restraint. The operation's precision planning was evident in its targeting of key terror infrastructure linked to two of India's most wanted terrorists: Hafiz Saeed, the mastermind of LeT and the 2008 Mumbai attacks, and Masood Azhar, the founder of JeM, responsible for numerous attacks, including the 1999 IC-814 hijacking and the 2019 Pulwama bombing. Muridke, 30 km from Lahore, has been LeT's headquarters since 1990, while

Bahawalpur in Pakistan's Punjab province serves as JeM's operational base. Reports indicate that a madrasa linked to Azhar in Bahawalpur was among the targets, suffering significant damage. The operation was the culmination of weeks of intelligence-gathering and coordination among India's armed forces, overseen by PM Modi himself. High-level meetings involving Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, and the three service chiefs ensured meticulous planning. The Indian Air Force, Army, and Navy worked in tandem, leveraging credible intelligence and technical inputs confirming Pakistan-based terrorists' involvement in the Pahalgam attack. PM Modi's hands-on approach was evident as he monitored the operation throughout the night, ensuring all nine targets were successfully neutralised.

Strategic Foresight

Pakistan's response to Operation

Sindoor was on predictable lines. Immediately after the strikes, Pakistan violated the ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC), engaging in indiscriminate firing that killed three civilians. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called the strikes an "act of war", signalling a potential escalation.

India, however, had anticipated such a response and factored it into its strategy. The government's decision to grant the armed forces "complete operational freedom" to decide the mode, targets, and timing of the response ensured flexibility to counter any Pakistani aggression. The Indian Air Force is conducting a two-day mega military exercise along the border, involving frontline fighter jets like Rafale, Su-30, and Jaguar, signalling readiness for any escalation.

Beyond Military Strikes

India's strategy extends beyond the battlefield, leveraging diplomatic and economic measures to maximise pressure on Pakistan. The suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, announced shortly after the Pahalgam attack, is a masterstroke in this regard. The treaty, signed in 1960, allocates 80% of the Indus Basin's water to Pakistan, making it critical to its agriculture and economy. By suspending the treaty, India has signalled its intent to use water as a strategic tool, a move Pakistan has called an "act of war". India's long-standing desire to renegotiate the treaty, coupled with its post-attack resolve, gives it leverage to disrupt Pakistan's water security.

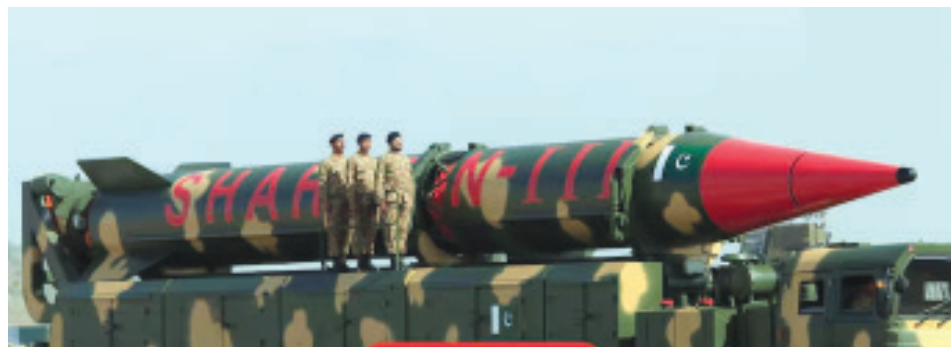
Operation Sindoor and The Myth of Nuclear Deterrence

By Kamlesh Singh

For decades, the world has been fed the rather tiresome narrative that nuclear weapons are the ultimate guardrail preventing all-out war between India and Pakistan. The logic is simple: both nations possess enough warheads to destroy each other, so neither would dare provoke the other too far.

Yet, once again, India has called Pakistan's nuclear bluff with a series of audacious strikes on terrorist camps deep inside Pakistan. Unlike the 2016 surgical strike and the 2019 Balakot airstrike, the strikes this time also targeted locations in Pakistan's Punjab where Pakistanis did not expect the Indian Air Force to pay a visit.

If Pakistan's generals thought their nuclear arsenal was an all-access card for sponsoring terrorism, they might want to reconsider that strategy, preferably over a strong cup of tea.



With an estimated 170 nuclear warheads in Pakistan's arsenal and roughly the same in India's, according to SIPRI 2024 estimates, the stakes are undeniably high. Yet, India's decision to strike terror camps signals a continuance in the Modi Era strategic thinking: if Pakistan's military establishment isn't quaking in its boots at the thought of India's nuclear might, why should New Delhi tie its own hands?

Pakistan's Never-Ending Obsession with India

Since the partition of British India in 1947, Pakistan has harboured an almost pathological fixation on "besting" its larger neighbour. The results, however, have been less than stellar. The 1947-48 war over Kashmir ended with Pakistan controlling a sliver of the region, now POK, but little else to show for it. The 1965 war was a spectacular misadventure, with Operation Gibraltar collapsing under the weight of its own hubris. The 1971 war? Well, that one saw the Two-Nation Theory acquiring an unintended

meaning: the birth of a nation, Bangladesh. The 1999 Kargil misstep, Pakistan's covert incursion into Indian territory, ended with a humiliating withdrawal. One might think these repeated drubbings would prompt some introspection in Pakistan, where the military calls the shots. However, the generals seem to have a peculiar fondness for picking fights they can't win. Instead of conventional wars, Pakistan has increasingly relied on asymmetric warfare, nurturing terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) to wage a proxy war against India. These groups, often operating with the backing of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), have been responsible for attacks ranging from the 2001 Indian Parliament assault to the 2008 Mumbai attacks. It's almost as if Pakistan's military believes that sponsoring terrorism is a personality trait.

Donald Trump Has Won Another Election - Australia

By Tim Harcourt

Donald Trump has won another election ... for the centre-left. First came Canada, where Prime Minister Mark Carney's centre-left Liberal Party secured victory, and now Australia has returned Anthony Albanese's Labor government with a commanding second-term majority, sweeping across the country from coast to coast, from Darwin to the southern tip of Tasmania.

Remarkably, both the Canadian Liberals and Australian Labor were, just a year ago, staring down the barrel of electoral defeat. In Canada, fortunes were reversed by switching leaders from Justin Trudeau to Mark Carney. In Australia, Labor simply slogged it out. But the re-election of Donald Trump in the US and his revived trade war gave both Carney and Albanese the opportunity to present themselves as providers of stable leadership in an increasingly volatile global environment. Carney leveraged Canadian patriotism, presenting himself as a level-headed economist and former central banker. Albanese campaigned on core Australian values: openness to the world, national security, and the preservation of Medicare and strong labour protections.

In both countries, conservative opposition parties had led comfortably in the polls - by more than 20 points in Canada. But the Trump factor unsettled them. Unsure whether to embrace MAGA-style tactics or distance



themselves from Trump's unpredictability, they floundered. Trump's controversial treatment of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy - alongside Vice President JD Vance - shocked even conservative voters. Canadian Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre, once riding high against the unpopular Trudeau, tried to brand Carney as a remote "globalist", but the Liberal campaign - with help from Mike Myers and other celebrities - turned patriotic and punchy. In Australia, Peter Dutton was also gaining ground, but faltered badly after the election was called. His campaign was hampered by news that Trump operatives were advising the Liberal-National Coalition. In a historic blow, Dutton even lost his own seat and will exit politics.

While Carney secured only a minority, Albanese achieved a significantly

increased majority - an historic feat, considering Labor only narrowly defeated Scott Morrison in 2022.

Albanese's win is significant for several reasons:

First Labor PM in Decades to Win a Second Term: Albanese becomes the first Labor Prime Minister to win a second term since Bob Hawke in 1984.

First to Increase a Majority After First Election: He is the first Labor PM to increase his majority after winning government-John Curtin achieved a similar result in 1946, but was initially appointed PM by Parliament, not elected.

Decimation of the LNP in Urban Areas: The Liberal-National Coalition was nearly wiped out in metropolitan Australia, now clinging mainly to rural seats. They failed to reclaim any urban

strongholds from the 'Teals'-wealthy, climate-focused independents funded by Simon Holmes à Court.

Collapse of the Greens: The Greens saw a sharp decline after framing the election around Gaza rather than environmental policy. Their stance alienated Jewish voters in Sydney and Melbourne. Party leader Adam Bandt may even lose his long-held seat of Melbourne to Labor.

A Surge in Female, Community-Driven Candidates: Labor had success with grassroots female candidates, particularly in Queensland, resonating strongly with younger voters.

What's Next for the Albanese Government?

There's reason for optimism:

Trade Policy Clarity: The end of Trump's and Xi Jinping's failed tariff wars frees Labor to focus on innovation and skills, without being boxed in by populist demands.

Global Partnerships: Australia can deepen ties with ASEAN, India, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the EU-plus its close allies in the UK, New Zealand, Canada, and the Pacific.

Productivity with a Human Touch: Re-elected Treasurer Dr Jim "Sunny Jim" Chalmers emphasised improving productivity through investment in skills, exports, and innovation-rejecting the harsh rhetoric of past reformers. Dutton's attacks on working from home backfired, with flexible work now seen as potentially boosting both productivity and quality of life.

India-UK Trade Deal Shows Globalisation Is Ticking Along

By Mihir Sharma

President Donald Trump may say "tariffs" are his favorite word, but the rest of the world doesn't have to agree. With or without America, trade deals continue to be signed: On Tuesday, India finalised a pact with the UK after three years of negotiations.

This agreement clearly reflects the importance of political momentum and compromise. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his UK counterpart, Keir Starmer, probably had to push their officials over the finish line themselves. As recently as a few days ago, stories about how many issues remained to be resolved filled the papers. It is still possible, even in an uncertain world, for countries to take a punt on economic integration.

But it can only happen if politicians are willing to surrender some control. India's famously tetchy negotiators had to give up on several long-standing demands. Previous attempts at trade agreements with Britain had foundered over labor migration: New Delhi wanted more visas



for Indian workers and students. But the political climate in the UK no longer allows that - the anti-migrant Reform Party made stunning gains in local elections last week - and such provisions have been drastically watered down in the final deal.

Perhaps India found it easier to drop tariffs with the UK because neither is good at making things anymore. Manufacturing is not globally competitive in either India

or Britain. Both have world-beating services sectors, though. It will be interesting to see if the fine print exposes powerful interest groups like New Delhi's law firms to competition. Officials in Whitehall are proud of themselves, claiming that it will increase UK GDP by £4.8 billion (\$6.4 billion), and real wages by 0.2%. Their press release also promised Britons will gain access to cheaper shrimp. That's no small thing.

The agricultural sector has been a third rail in such negotiations for so long that it's a shock to hear of a pact that centers trade in food. More than that, it is refreshing in today's climate to hear people in power talk up the benefits that consumers gain from trade.

And they will definitely do well out of this deal. Scotch whisky and Jaguars will get cheaper in India, and we will consume more of both (hopefully not at the same time). Meanwhile, Indians in Britain will wish this means they can finally buy proper mangoes in their local supermarket, instead of shamefacedly ordering smuggled cartons from bootleggers in Slough.

India and the UK aren't alone in trying to give consumers a better deal in recent years. Canada, which has so much to lose from an autarkic America, is implementing a new economic partnership with Indonesia. It is also chasing one with the entire Asean bloc, and trade representatives have "agreed to work towards concluding negotiations" for a free-trade agreement this year.

What Pakistan Really Wanted From The Pahalgam Attack

By Kamal Davar

Pakistan, the globally acknowledged epicentre of terrorism, once again and successfully carried out a major terror strike on April 22, 2025, in the beautiful Pahalgam meadows of the Anantnag district in Jammu & Kashmir, killing in cold blood 26 innocent unarmed tourists and injuring many more. These tourists were first asked about their religion, and subsequently, all those who were non-Muslims were slaughtered with their wives and children wailing and helplessly looking on. That such an inhuman act of targeting civilians and on the basis of their religion was perpetrated for the first time in Jammu & Kashmir in decades is a cause of great concern for the entire nation. Though Jammu & Kashmir has been the victim of Pak-sponsored terror for decades, this massacre also points clearly to a serious intelligence-cum-security failure. It just goes to show that security is a 24/7 responsibility and one's guard can never be down.

The Modi government's Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) has,



reportedly, given freedom of action to the Indian Armed Forces to exercise whatever option they deem fit to answer Pakistan's dastardly terror act. It's been nearly two weeks since the incident, and India has unleashed varied multi pronged non-kinetic actions in reprisal against Pakistan, which surely would hurt the country diplomatically, economically, and, to some extent, politically. The "holding in abeyance" of the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), the ceasing of

trade with Pakistan, the stoppage of visas to visit Pakistan, the closure of the Indian air space to Pakistani civil flights, the suspension of important Pakistani internet connections, the ban on their ships to enter Indian ports, the closure of the Attari-Wagah border posts, the reduction of High Commission staff, and many other restrictions, are among the array of non-kinetic measures enforced against Pakistan's highly condemnable behaviour. However, it also appears from

reliable media sources that a major punitive reprisal from India is in the offing. How The World Has Reacted

India has done well to sensitise the global community about Pakistan's evil act and has since then drawn virtually total globe support in the counter-terror actions being contemplated. On the other hand, Pakistan's recent actions have been supported to some extent only by China , Turkey and Azerbaijan. That China never misses an opportunity to stand by its all-weather friend Pakistan to embarrass India is a foregone conclusion. As the Indian Armed Forces would certainly be putting the finishing touches to their contingency plans, coordinating additional security measures and vigilance on the ground, all the three services would be, in all likelihood, getting ready for any major kinetic initiative to be taken by them. The entire nation, including all political parties, populations from all religions, and, especially, Muslims, including locals from Jammu & Kashmir, have vociferously condemned Pakistan's inhuman perfidy.

How 'Precision Planning' Defined India's Operation Sindoor



By Tuhin A. Sinha

On April 24, 2025, in the wake of the horrific Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives, including 25 Indian citizens and one Nepali national, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a solemn vow in Bihar's Madhubani: "India will identify, track, and punish every terrorist and their backers. We will pursue them to the ends of the earth."

Less than two weeks later, on May 7, 2025, India delivered on this promise with "Operation Sindoor", a meticulously planned military operation targeting terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoK). This operation not only showcased India's resolve to combat terrorism but also demonstrated its strategic foresight in anticipating and preparing for

Pakistan's response. By coupling military precision with diplomatic and economic measures, including the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, India has positioned itself to inflict maximum damage on Pakistan's terror ecosystem and its broader strategic interests.

Fulfilling The Promise

The Pahalgam attack, executed on April 22, 2025, was a brutal assault on India's sovereignty, targeting innocent tourists in the popular resort town. The attack, attributed to an offshoot of Pakistan-based terror group, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), was a direct challenge to India's narrative of stability and peace in Jammu and Kashmir. PM Modi's response was unequivocal, and Operation Sindoor was the

manifestation of his commitment to justice.

Launched in the pre-dawn hours of May 7, 2025, Operation Sindoor involved precision missile strikes on nine terror camps-four in Pakistan and five in PoK-targeting the operational hubs of LeT, JeM, and Hizbul Mujahideen. The operation was described by the Indian Ministry of Defence as "focused, measured, and non-escalatory," with no Pakistani military facilities targeted to avoid broader conflict escalation. The strikes utilised advanced weaponry, including BrahMos missiles and loitering munitions, reflecting India's technological prowess and strategic restraint.

The operation's precision planning was evident in its targeting of key terror infrastructure linked to two of India's most wanted terrorists: Hafiz Saeed, the mastermind of LeT and the 2008 Mumbai attacks, and Masood Azhar, the founder of JeM, responsible for numerous attacks, including the 1999 IC-814 hijacking and the 2019 Pulwama bombing. Muridke, 30 km from Lahore, has been LeT's headquarters since 1990, while Bahawalpur in Pakistan's Punjab province serves as JeM's operational base. Reports indicate that a madrasa linked to Azhar in Bahawalpur was among the targets, suffering significant damage.

The operation was the culmination of weeks of intelligence-gathering and coordination among India's armed

forces, overseen by PM Modi himself. High-level meetings involving Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, and the three service chiefs ensured meticulous planning. The Indian Air Force, Army, and Navy worked in tandem, leveraging credible intelligence and technical inputs confirming Pakistan-based terrorists' involvement in the Pahalgam attack. PM Modi's hands-on approach was evident as he monitored the operation throughout the night, ensuring all nine targets were successfully neutralised.

Strategic Foresight

Pakistan's response to Operation Sindoor was on predictable lines. Immediately after the strikes, Pakistan violated the ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC), engaging in indiscriminate firing that killed three civilians. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called the strikes an "act of war", signalling a potential escalation. India, however, had anticipated such a response and factored it into its strategy. The government's decision to grant the armed forces "complete operational freedom" to decide the mode, targets, and timing of the response ensured flexibility to counter any Pakistani aggression. The Indian Air Force is conducting a two-day mega military exercise along the border, involving frontline fighter jets like Rafale, Su-30, and Jaguar, signalling readiness for any escalation.

Spain's Huge Power Blackout Is A Wake-Up Call For India



By Mihir Mishra, Bloomberg

For Spain and Portugal, last week's nationwide blackout may have felt unprecedented. But in India, we have lived through these already. In July 2012, a grid collapse caused 400 million Indians to lose access to power, many of them for days. Most assume that, as the country grows richer and energy becomes more abundant, such problems won't recur.

But, as Europe has learned, preventing grid collapse is a constant endeavor, not a battle that you only fight once. India's government has prioritized energy access, vastly expanding availability to households and building more generation capacity. It is now time for it to work on grid stability as well.

As your energy choices change, your grid and how you manage it must too. We don't yet know what caused the initial disruption to Spain's grid that made it to lose its connection to France's more stable electricity network, but the additional variability introduced to its system by renewables - particularly on a sunny day - probably did not help. That should worry India's regulators.

This is not an argument against renewable energy, especially not in India. Politicians in New Delhi have correctly noted that solar and wind power meet three requirements they view as crucial. First, they might end our crippling dependence on imported fossil fuels; second, grid-scale solar energy is now quite cheap; and third, off-grid renewables can sometimes reach where the regular grid does not. As a consequence, they have prioritized building out renewable energy capacity. Of the 34 gigawatts of generation added last year, 85% was

renewables, with 24 gigawatts from solar power alone. Another 300 gigawatts is planned by the end of the decade.

Much of this is driven by private capital and entrepreneurial energy at every level. At one end of the scale, street markets in the poorest states are full of cheap rooftop solar sets. And at the other, highly valued companies like ReNew Power Pvt. and Tata Power Co. have soaked up investor dollars, promising to benefit from the nation's vast solar ambitions. This week, the United Arab Emirates-led green private capital fund ALTERRA and Brookfield Asset Management Ltd. announced plans to invest \$100 million in the solar project developer Evren. All of this sounds great. India does best on those tragically few occasions when its consumers and companies are left to make the right choices, and are given access to capital and supportive regulations. That is how the country became an IT superpower that now has the cheapest high-speed data in the world.

Yet the government has responsibilities, too. It has to ensure the grid can manage the additional requirements - both new consumers and new sources. This will cost money, but not even the government knows how much. Predictions vary from \$107 billion to \$500 billion, and even the lower end seems unaffordable at the moment. New Delhi hates spending money, but it is going to have to construct a workable plan for investment into the grid, and soon. The government's tasks don't stop there. It must also try and figure out what's actually

getting installed in terms of solar power, and who is doing the building. Self-consumption electricity systems of various kinds - whether off grid, or the sort that can provide power to the grid as well as taking it out - come with very special issues that must be addressed. As BNEF Research has pointed out, one of the problems that Spain faces is that authorities there don't know enough about solar power generation in the country; it may have 10.5 gigawatts more photovoltaic modules installed than official data suggest.

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Chinese chatter on Operation Sindoor and what it says about nuclear conflict



By Antara Ghosal Singh

India's Operation Sindoor, targeting key terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, was closely monitored in China, which otherwise calls Pakistan its "iron-buddy". The late-night strike by India created quite a buzz on the Chinese internet, where observers debated and discussed how the situation in South Asia might evolve from here. So, how is China viewing these developments? 1. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in an official statement: "China regrets India's military action this morning and is concerned about the current developments. India and Pakistan are inseparable neighbours and are also China's neighbours. China opposes all forms of terrorism. We call on both India and Pakistan to prioritise peace and stability, remain calm and exercise restraint, and avoid actions that further complicate the situation."

2. Chinese coverage of the development mostly reiterated Pakistani talk points like how "Pahalgam was a false-flag operation", how "Pakistan has shot down six Indian fighter jets", how "many Indian soldiers have been captured", and how "the Indian leadership and the Indian Army are having a crisis of trust".

3. Meanwhile, some Chinese assessments highlighted that Pakistan does have a short-term tactical advantage. It can perform well in small-scale conflicts with the help of the J-10CE, the JF-17 Thunder Block III, and Turkish drones. The PL-15 missile can also have a significant deterrent effect on Indian Rafale fighter jets. Pakistan's propaganda war, the Chinese side

argued, is also highly effective.

4. But they acknowledged that Pakistan has the problem of long-term resource shortages. Pakistan's economy and military expenditure are not at par with India, making it difficult for it to sustain a full-scale war. Its army's equipment is outdated, and it will face disadvantages if the conflict expands to a ground war. Its dependence on external aid (China, Turkey, and Middle-Eastern countries) also limits its strategic autonomy.

5. Some saw external forces or the great power game, and nuclear deterrence as key variables in this conflict. They argued that China's intervention, Turkish drones, and Middle-Eastern oil capital (Saudi Arabia, etc) may provide a strategic buffer for Pakistan. Its nuclear arsenal, they noted, is also an important deterrent.

6. India, they asserted, has much to lose from the conflict. In the short term, military action may fail to achieve the goal of deterrence and instead might expose its combat capability deficiencies. International public opinion may shift from "anti-terrorism sympathy" to "criticism towards the trouble-maker". In the medium term, India's economic transformation plans may get hit. In the long run, they argued, there will be no solution to the Kashmir issue, and periodic conflicts will continue to consume resources from India's rise.

7. They argued that historical experience dictates that there can be no winner in the India-Pakistan confrontation. Therefore, the ultimate solution, they said, has to come from political dialogue and international

mediation.8. Chinese scholars, professor at Fudan University. In his view, India and Pakistan have played the "war" game for decades and are very clear about the bottom line.

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Op Sindoor, India-Pak, And What Sahir Or Faiz Can Tell Us About Wars

By Nishtha Gautam

It is a truth universally acknowledged that war, or a prospect of war, puts limits on language and imagination. To rescue both from these limits when the war drums roll in India and Pakistan today, therefore, is an act of rebellion. Holding their fort when the warmongers go on an overdrive, people in both countries have been indulging in these acts of rebellion since 1947. As an inescapable sense of foreboding envelopes us now, let's refresh our memory and keep the continuum of free language and imagination alive.

Pakistan's Masculinist Imagination

To begin with, Kishwar Naheed's 1992 poem, 'Girti hui Diwar-e Berlin, Günter Grass aur Main', is a timely reminder of what silence around traumas and mythmaking do to a country's national imagination. Like Grass, Naheed was sceptical of the fall of the Berlin Wall — it meant little more than a frenzied collective act without offering any resolution or reconciliation. The traumas of the India-Pakistan partition, often writ large on women's bodies, have found little expression in Pakistan's masculinist national imagination. Thus the bellicist nature of its nationhood. When we forget about the wounds of war, we don't think twice before waging a war. Naheed's poem is a jolt to such public amnesia. Faiz Ahmad Faiz's 'Subah-e-Azadi' talks about the aftermath of waging war in the milieu of this collective amnesia. Composed in



the wake of the India-Pakistan partition, the poem talks about the evanescence of manufactured utopia. The dawn of independence described by Faiz is nothing like the idea sold to the masses by the communal leadership in both countries. The "dagh dagh ujala" gets grimmer with West Pakistan's 1971 crackdown on East Pakistan. Faiz marked this with another poem, 'Hum Ke Thahre Ajnabi', reflecting pensively on the shadow lines that divide people despite manufactured consent around religious homogeneity. His 'Hazar Karo Mere Tan Se' is a lament on the Indo-Pak war of 1971, where the poet is upset about the inadequacy of his body in quenching the prevailing thirst for blood.

The Land Of Ram And Gautam

Ibn-e-Insha's lyrical poem 'Aman ka Akhri Din', composed in 1952, ends with the

poet's frustration at people's inability to draw lessons from the horrors of history. "Ye wo yaadein hain ke dhundlayein na mitne payein, aur hum jung ki dehleez pe phir aa nikle". In India, a similar sentiment was expressed by Gyanpith awardee Ali Sardar Jafri in couplets like "Ram-o-Gautam ki zamiñ hurmat-e-insañ ki ameen/Baañjh ho jayegi kya ?huun ki barsaat ke baad" — "will the land of Ram and Gautam turn infertile after this rain of blood?" Even the rousing poetry of Ramdhari Singh Dinkar sees mercy and peace as the end products of a righteous war. In his 'Kurukshetra', Dinkar conceptualises righteous war against injustice as a tool to establish the world order based on "sahansheelta, kshama, daya", that is, tolerance, mercy, and compassion. Agha Shahid Ali's poems, such as 'Lenox Hill', blend the intensely

personal and ubiquitously public griefs, exploring their same point of origin: imminent death and loss. War doesn't differentiate between public and private. 'Qayamat Ka Shor'

Sahir Ludhianvi makes this personal grief the leitmotif for his anti-war magnum opus, 'Parchhaiyan'. "Tumhaare ghar mein qayaamat ka shor barpaa hai/Mahaaz-e-jang se harkaaraa taar laayaa hai/Kay jiska zikr tumhein zindagii se pyara thaa/Vo bhaai narga-e-dushman mein kaam aayaa hai" — "unbearable wails have prevailed in your home/The messenger has brought a letter from the battlefield/Whose mention for you was dearer than your life/That brother has got killed in the enemy encirclement". By bringing the truths of war home, Sahir questioned the national consciousness that conceptualises war in abstract terms. These lines puncture the idea that war is something that happens to other people. Many may think it to be an act of treason to talk about poetry — pacifist poetry at that — when the spilt blood of innocents has not even dried up, and when India has conducted air strikes on terrorist camps in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and parts of Pakistan in response to the Pahalgam attacks. The point of this exercise, however, is simple: it is important to remember at a moment like right now that the price and pain of war is immense. It's cowardice to bow to injustice, yes. But irresponsible warmongering is an even bigger evil.

How China is seeing Operation Sindoor



By SANA HASHMI

Operation Sindoor may be unfolding on the ground, but the battle of narratives is already playing out online, with Pakistan dominating the discourse in China. On Weibo, the hashtag #Pakistan_shoots_down_6_Indian_jets garnered over 9 crore views within hours. Chinese news outlets like Guancha and 163 carried bold headlines:

"Pakistan shot down 6 Indian military aircraft, including 3 Rafales" and "Pakistan's victory in the first battle". This framing marks a clear shift. Pakistan is no longer seen as a fragile state on the brink of collapse, but a capable military power increasingly viewed as India's equal. Since the Pahalgam terror attack, Chinese analyses of India's military posture have intensified,

with a notable change in tone. Pakistan, once the weaker rival, is now seen as ready for conflict. The deployment of Chinese-made systems, such as PL-10 missiles on JF-17 jets, acts as a proxy showcase for Beijing's defence capabilities, reinforcing confidence in China's military-industrial strength despite its lack of recent combat experience. This narrative does not exist in isolation. Chinese scholars such as Long Xingchun, Hui Suisheng, and Liu Zongyi consistently characterise India as the destabilising actor in South Asia, casting Pakistan's moves as defensive. Citing "Modi's aggressive rhetoric", Lin Minwang, vice president at Fudan University's Institute of International Studies, described Operation Sindoor as inevitable. "Tensions had peaked—inaction

would have meant losing face," he wrote. While India views the attack as targeting Hindus, Lin questioned the Pakistan link. He called the Kashmir Resistance Front a local insurgent group, ignoring the group's links to Lashkar-e-Taiba. A stronger Pakistan? On multiple Chinese platforms, Pakistan is now depicted not just as resilient but modernising. A Weibo hashtag, #India_opens_fire_on_Pakistan_without_provocation, sparked intense debate and reinforced the idea that Pakistan is preparing for escalation. Pakistani officials, including its ambassador to Russia, have openly declared readiness to escalate to nuclear conflict if needed. "Pakistan will use all types of capabilities, including conventional and nuclear," the ambassador warned in an

interview with Chinese media. As the discourse evolves, key questions surface: Would China back Pakistan in a wider conflict? Some commentators highlight India's unresolved border disputes with both Pakistan and China, arguing India's actions are calculated provocations. "Has India forgotten the lessons of 1962?" a commentator wrote. Such views underscore the perception that China's support is helping Pakistan close the military gap. Despite its smaller size, Pakistan's forces are increasingly seen as technologically advanced and strategically agile, posing a credible challenge to India's might. In contrast, India's large military—14 lakh active troops and a Rs 6.81 lakh crore defence budget in 2025—is portrayed in Chinese commentary as fragmented.

Trump is wrong about Operation Sindoor. Not an ancient battle, it's a war on terror

By VIR SANGHVI

Does he not know, we have wondered, that there was no Pakistan a century ago?

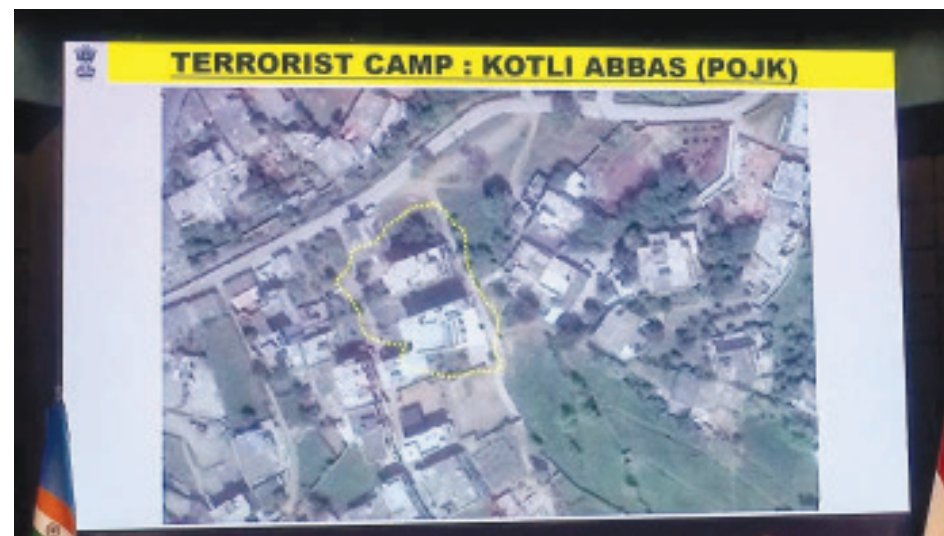
Chances are, Trump is not really aware of the region's history. But his remarks are no laughing matter because, unfortunately, they sum up many Western reactions to the recent tensions between India and Pakistan. If you read Western commentaries on the subject, you will find that they are all about Kashmir and how Pakistan disputes that it is an integral part of India. The massacre of civilians in Pahalgam is treated as just another episode in a long-running conflict.

This is a perspective that may suit Pakistan. But it totally misrepresents India's position and ignores the real reason we had to launch strikes against Pakistan.

Our problem with Pakistan is simple: terrorism.

It is certainly not about Kashmir

Rare is the Kashmiri who thinks the state would be better off as part of today's troubled, collapsing Pakistan. Nor is the problem historical baggage. Until a fortnight ago, Pakistan had almost completely disappeared from the



consciousness of most Indians. Pakistan may be obsessed with India and with Kashmir (it's so-called "jugular vein," if you believe their army chief), but India is too busy carving out a place for itself in the global order of the 21st century to worry about a neighbour crippled by economic problems and distracted by a political system where jailing every former Prime Minister at the military's behest is standard practice.

The only reason we care about Pakistan is because it has become a state that promotes terror and sponsors terrorists who murder Indians.

If you look back over the past 25 years, the only times we have had to concern ourselves with Pakistan have been when it sent terrorists to India to kill our people. The bloody hijacking of IC 814 was an ISI operation aimed at freeing murderous terrorists who then found safe haven in Pakistan. Nobody, including the US, disputes that terror groups based in Pakistan were responsible for the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, in which innocent civilians were slaughtered. It is just as clear that the Pulwama massacre was the work of Pakistani-sponsored terrorists. And the Pahalgam killings were

carried out by terrorists trained and armed by Pakistan.

None of this has anything to do with any dispute over Kashmir. How does it affect Kashmiris any differently than other Indians if Pakistani terrorists shoot hostages at luxury hotels in Mumbai or open fire on innocent commuters at a Mumbai railway station?

This is terrorism aimed only at murdering Indians. Like most major terrorist attacks around the world (think of 9/11, for instance), it is motivated only by hatred and a lust to kill. What political purpose is achieved by slaughtering Hindu tourists in Pahalgam? Just as Osama bin Laden justified 9/11 as a way to kill Americans — a desirable outcome in itself, from his perspective — Pakistani terrorists justify their attacks purely as a way to kill Indians, which they regard as a desirable objective. (Can it be a coincidence that after he had delighted in the mass murder in New York, bin Laden found safe haven in Pakistan?) India's many 9/11s and yet... There are two ways to view the current tension between India and Pakistan. You can see it as an ancient battle over Kashmir that still carries on — which is how Pakistan wants the world to see it.

Lines not crossed even during Kargil War have been crossed with Op Sindoor. The gloves are off

By Manvendra Singh

An afterburner takeoff with two engines at a little after 0400 hours is a roar unlikely to be forgotten anytime soon. From an advanced air base, the thunder may well have reached Pakistan even before the aircraft appeared on their radar. In the murky world of combat, particularly the kind revolving around the grisly spectre of terror and counter-terror, truth is a certain casualty. But the Pakistani Defence Minister has, for once, been honest. After decades of denial, he is the first senior Pakistani official to admit that the country has been supporting terror groups. India's totally expected retaliation for the heinous massacre in a Pahalgam meadow in Kashmir on 22 April crossed a number of lines—not visible on the ground, but etched into diplomatic drawing boards and military operational charts. These lines serve as markers for permissible actions and the subsequent responses that are, from many perspectives, avoidable. Chief among these perspectives is the global space afforded to retaliatory measures between two nuclear-armed neighbours. The ultimate nightmare scenario, of course, is the escalatory ladder where someone pulls the forbidden nuclear trigger, consuming entire communities. India has been crossing the Line of Control

since the Jammu and Kashmir insurgency began in early 1990. What was unacknowledged for years became public with the announced surgical strikes of 2016, though those remained within a zone of acceptable lines. The first time the lines were truly crossed was in 2019, when India launched stand-off missile attacks on terrorist infrastructure in Balakot following the 14 February bombing of a CRPF convoy in Pulwama. The 2025 missile strikes represent a massive instance of lines being crossed, as the targets included four sites in the Pakistani province of Punjab—Pakistan's centre of gravity.

Pakistani politics and its Army are overtly run from Punjab. From the province's northern tip to its southern boundary, Indian missile strikes have landed—an unprecedented escalation. All selected targets were as predictable as India's retaliation. Most notably, Bahawalpur—the headquarters of Jaish-e-Mohammed, whose attacks have ranged from blowing up General Pervez Musharraf's bullet proof limousine to the Pulwama convoy bombing. India had no need to expose Pakistani denials, with a statement reportedly attributed to JeM chief Masood Azhar confirming the deaths of his family members.



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Leave safely: US advisory for personnel, citizens in Lahore after drone explosions

US citizens who find themselves in an "area of active conflict" have been advised to leave if they can do so safely. "If it is not safe to leave, they should shelter-in-place," the US asked its citizens in Lahore and Pakistan's Punjab Province.

The United States has directed all its consulate personnel in Pakistan's Lahore to seek shelter-in-place after "reports of drone explosions, downed drones and possible airspace incursions in and near Lahore".

"The Consulate has also received initial reports that authorities may be evacuating some areas adjacent to Lahore's main airport," the US advisory read.

US citizens who find themselves in an "area of active conflict" have been advised to leave if they can do so safely. "If it is not safe to leave, they should shelter-in-place," the US asked its citizens in Lahore and Pakistan's Punjab Province.

The US has also mentioned action that US citizens in the conflict zone should take. This includes:

Seek secure shelter

Have evacuation plans that do not rely on US government assistance



Have travel documents up to date and easily accessible

Monitor local media for updates

Carry proper identification and cooperate with authorities

This comes amid rising tensions between India and Pakistan. India targeted terror camps in Pakistan and

Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in the early hours of May 7. The attacks--codenamed Operation Sindoor-- on terror infrastructures were in response to the April 22 Pahalgam attack that claimed 26 civilians.

India has said it has no intentions to escalate but is prepared to retaliate

resolutely should Pakistan decide to do so.

INDIA FOILS PAK ATTACK

The armed forces on Thursday targeted air defence radars at a number of locations in Pakistan and destroyed the system in Lahore after Islamabad attempted to strike 15 military targets in India in response to Operation Sindoor.

The government said on the intervening night of May 7-8, Pakistan attempted to target a number of military installations in Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Pathankot, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Adampur, Bhatinda, Chandigarh, Nal, Phalodi, Uttarlai, and Bhuj, using drones and missiles.

However, the drones and missiles were neutralised by the Integrated Counter UAS Grid and the Russia-made S-400 'Sudarshan Chakra' air defence systems

Pakistan's forex is slipping fast. More trouble ahead for already debt-ridden economy?

(News Agency)-Pakistan shut its airspace to India after the government took strict diplomatic actions following the Pahalgam terror attack in Kashmir. Pakistan's move was aimed at hurting India but seems to have hit its already debt-ridden economy further, losing out on crucial forex. Several major global airlines, including Lufthansa and Air France, have started rerouting flights to steer clear of Pakistani airspace, as shown by flight tracking data. Lufthansa confirmed to Reuters that it would avoid Pakistani airspace for the foreseeable future, resulting in longer travel times to destinations in Asia. These changes are increasing fuel costs and travel time for airlines, while also reducing Pakistan's earnings from overflight fees, typically based on aircraft weight and route distance. Flight data also showed British Airways, Swiss, and Emirates adjusting their routes, flying further north and bypassing Pakistan after crossing the Arabian Sea. While BA and Emirates have not issued statements yet, Air France said it would stop flying over Pakistan indefinitely, citing growing regional tensions between India and Pakistan. The country had only just started to see some signs of recovery



after coming close to defaulting on its debt in 2022. A bailout by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), including a loan of \$2 billion in March this year, gave Pakistan some breathing room. But the current situation could undo much of that progress. Kranthi Bathini, Equity Strategist at WealthMills Securities Pvt Ltd, said, "Pakistan's economy is not doing well. The economy is running on debt from various global agencies. Any rise in the ongoing geopolitical tensions will definitely put more pressure on the economy. Moody's has also said that any further escalation by Pakistan will worsen

its economic condition."

FOREX TROUBLES GROW AS AIRSPACE EMPTIES
Pakistan's decision to block Indian aircraft has not just affected Indian airlines but also impacted many global carriers. As tensions grow, several international airlines are also choosing to avoid Pakistani airspace. This means Pakistan is losing out on overflight fees, a key source of foreign exchange. Rajeev Mantri, founder and managing director of Navam Capital, said on social media that Pakistan's move will badly hit its fragile economy. "Loss of overflight fees will be a very meaningful forex loss

for a forex-starved country like Pakistan, which has no export competitive industries at all," he said.

His remarks were made in response to a journalist's post showing live radar data with fewer flights using Pakistani airspace. With Indian carriers like Air India and IndiGo taking longer routes to avoid Pakistan, the cost for Pakistan is far greater in terms of lost revenue than the extra expense for the airlines.

Entrepreneur Arun Pudur also noted that global airlines were steering clear of Pakistan. In a tweet on May 5, he said only about 15 flights were now using Pakistan's airspace. "Top airlines — Air France, BA, Emirates, Lufthansa — are avoiding it. Huge blow to Islamabad's forex from overflight fees worth hundreds of millions," he wrote. India is the third-largest aviation market in the world and continues to grow quickly. This makes overflight fees from Indian carriers an important income source for Pakistan. With Indian airlines now avoiding Pakistan's airspace, that income has dropped sharply. A Pakistani user recently shared a video showing an Indian flight taking a longer path due to the airspace closure.

Blatant lie: India on claims of attack on dam near Neelum-Jhelum project in POK

Pakistan on Wednesday alleged that India had "deliberately targeted" the Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project, calling it "violation of international conventions". India today thoroughly junked the allegations, calling them "an absolute and complete fabrication."

India has strongly rejected allegations that it targeted a dam near the Neelum-Jhelum project in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK), calling the claims a "blatant lie." Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri called the allegations "an absolute and complete fabrication."

Misri reiterated that India's military actions have been focused exclusively on terrorist infrastructure. "India has targeted only and only terrorist infrastructure, and the details of that infrastructure, along with the precise locations, were shared yesterday," he said, refuting Pakistan's claims regarding Operation Sindoor. He then warned, "If this kind of a claim is a pretext of targeting Indian infrastructure of similar nature, then Pakistan



will be solely responsible for the consequences that will undoubtedly follow."

The response comes amid rising tensions between India and Pakistan after New Delhi targeted terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir following the deadly attack on civilians in

Pahalgam on April 22.

The government said the attacks in the early hours of Wednesday targeted terror infrastructure at nine sites-- Sawai Nalla, Sarjal, Muridke, Kotli, Kotli Gulpur, Mehmoona Joya, Bhimber and Bahawalpur -- in Pakistan and POK.

Pakistan's aftermath of the Pahalgam government's attack, India, which had on security committee on Wednesday alleged that India had "deliberately targeted" the Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project, calling it "violation of international conventions". India today thoroughly junked the allegations.

INDIA-PAK TENSIONS

The relationship between India and Pakistan deteriorated following the terror attack at scenic Baisaran meadow in J&K's Pahalgam last month. The attack claimed the lives of 26 civilians- 25 Indians and one Nepali citizen. In the

On Thursday, Vikram Misri also

spoke about the Indus Waters Treaty suspension and the disinformation Pakistan is spreading on the matter. Misri said, "Pakistan is the one acting in violation of the Indus Waters Treaty, creating roadblocks in India exercising its right on western rivers."

Karnataka government plans unity march to honour Operation Sindoor's soldiers



(News Agency)-In a symbolic gesture of solidarity, the Karnataka government will lead a unity march in Bengaluru on Friday morning to honour the nation's soldiers engaged in Operation Sindoor. The event, described as a non-partisan initiative, will begin at 9.30 am from KR Circle and conclude by 10 am at the KSCA Circle.

The unity march will be held under the national tricolour and is being led by the Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar. All senior government officials, including the Chief Minister and cabinet ministers, are expected to participate in the procession, which aims to express

collective gratitude and support for the armed forces.

"This is not affiliated with any party, it's an initiative for everyone," said Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar.

He said, "Tomorrow morning at 9.30 am, we will begin a march with our tricolour national flag from KR Circle to KSCA Circle to show respect and support for our nation's soldiers. We extend the invitation to all political parties. We invite private companies, students, party members, artists, craftsmen, industry professionals, and members of the chamber of commerce to join us."

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AARP

Pahalgam attack was original escalation: India on counterstriking Pak systems

The deadly Pahalgam attack that claimed 26 lives was the original escalation, the government said on Thursday, hours after Pakistan's key air defence systems were destroyed by India in a counterstrike. Islamabad attempted to strike 15 military targets in India, and in response, India destroyed the air defence radar systems in Lahore on Thursday.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, during a press briefing this evening, said,

"The attack of April 22 in Pahalgam is the original escalation, and the Indian Armed forces responded to that escalation yesterday."

He then moved on to The Resistance Front, the group that claimed responsibility for the deadly Pahalgam attack. Hitting out at Pakistan, Misri said that when the terror attack was brought up at UNSC, Pakistan opposed the TRF's role.

He also reiterated that only terror

infrastructure was hit in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, and that India's precision strikes under Operation Sindoor were "non-escalatory, precise, and measured" in nature. He also said that 16 civilians were killed in Poonch and other areas due to Pakistan's strikes.

A point-by-point breakdown of what Misri said:

"The attack of April 22 in Pahalgam is the original escalation, and the Indian Armed forces responded to that escalation yesterday."

"What is interesting is that when talks on Pahalgam were ongoing at the UNSC, guess which country opposed to the TRF's mention? It was Pakistan."

"India's response is non-escalatory, precise, and measured. Our intention is not to escalate matters, and we are only responding to the escalation. No military targets have been selected. Only terror infrastructure has been hit".

"Pakistan's reputation as the epicentre of global terrorism is rooted in a number of instances... You must have seen in the last few days, their Defence

minister and former foreign minister accepted their country's involvement with such terror groups."

"It's also odd that funerals of civilians are being carried out by coffins wrapped in their national flag, and state honours are being awarded."

On Wednesday, videos from Pakistan and POK showed funerals being held after India's strike on terror camps. The funeral was attended by Pakistan Army personnel, police, civil officials, and members of the banned Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD), founded by Hafiz Saeed. Over 100 terrorists were killed under India's Operation Sindoor in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, sources told India Today TV.

A day later, Pakistan attempted to target Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Pathankot, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Adampur, Bhatinda, Chandigarh, Nal, Phalodi, Uttarai, and Bhuj.

In response, India destroyed an air defence system at Lahore using S-400 'Sudarshan Chakra' air defence system and other surface-to-air missile systems.

Reliance withdraws 'Operation Sindoor' trademark, says it was filed inadvertently



Reliance Industries has withdrawn its trademark request for the term 'Operation Sindoor', saying the application was filed by mistake. According to the company, a junior employee submitted the request without proper approval.

The company said in a statement, "Reliance Industries has no intention of trademarking Operation Sindoor, a phrase which is now a part of the national consciousness as an evocative symbol of Indian bravery."

"Jio Studios, a unit of Reliance Industries, has withdrawn its trademark application, which was filed inadvertently by a junior person without authorisation," the statement mentioned. It further stated, "Reliance Industries and all its stakeholders are incredibly proud of Operation Sindoor, which came about in response to a Pakistan-sponsored terrorist attack in Pahalgam. Operation Sindoor is the proud achievement of our brave Armed Forces in India's uncompromising fight against the evil of terrorism. Reliance stands fully in support of our Government and Armed

Forces in this fight against terrorism. Our commitment to the motto of 'INDIA FIRST' remains unwavering."

WHY WAS A TRADEMARK FILED?

On May 7, four different applications were made to trademark the phrase 'Operation Sindoor' under Class 41 of the Nice Classification. This category includes services like films, shows, online content, education, cultural events and more. It is commonly used by OTT platforms, broadcasters, and filmmakers. This meant the phrase could have been turned into a movie, web series or other entertainment product. Reliance, through its Jio Studios unit, was the first to file an application that morning. Others who followed included a resident of Mumbai, a retired Air Force officer, and a lawyer based in Delhi.

WHAT IS 'OPERATION SINDOOR'?

'Operation Sindoor' is the name being used to describe India's recent military action in Pakistan after a terror attack in Pahalgam. The term has quickly become a symbol of courage and patriotism, widely recognised across the country.



When The Dragon Doesn't Roar: Why Pakistan Cannot Count On China In A Hot War

In the icy shadows of the Himalayas, where guns have fallen silent only to speak again, Pakistan's military establishment seems to have forgotten an age-old truth — wars are not won by illusions. With the Pahalgam terror attack once again attempting to provoke the Indian state into retaliation, Pakistan's assumption that China will leap to its defence in a hot war is not just naive — it's suicidal.

General Asim Munir, with this calculated act of terror in Pahalgam, may have fired the first shot not just at India — but at the foot of his own army's strategic posture.

The Faulty Premise: 'China Will Save Us'

or decades, Pakistan has leaned on China as a strategic counterweight to India. Infrastructure investments under CPEC, shared antagonism toward New Delhi, and defence cooperation gave the Pakistani establishment a false sense of security. But when it comes to actual war, China's silence may be louder than its slogans.

1. Economic Realpolitik Trumps Brotherhood

India-China bilateral trade in 2023 stood at over \$136 billion. Despite skirmishes in Galwan, both sides kept economic engines running. This isn't just pragmatism — it's survival. China has built its entire global posture on economic supremacy. Any disruption to India-China trade routes — especially during a war where Pakistan is the provocateur — would harm China's strategic interests more than help Pakistan's.

2. China's New Doctrine: Wars are Bad for Business

Post-COVID, Beijing has become

increasingly inward-looking. Its focus is on stabilising internal dissent, reviving the slowing economy, and expanding soft power via trade. Military adventurism, especially on behalf of a volatile and diplomatically isolated client like Pakistan, would be a strategic own-goal.

In fact, if India retaliates to another Pahalgam-style attack, China's best interest lies in playing the mediator, not the military ally. It wants to keep its investments in both countries safe, not choose sides.

Putin: The Unexpected Kingmaker in South Asia

Vladimir Putin's Russia has historically enjoyed good relations with India, but today, the relationship is not just good, it's strategic.

1. The India-Russia Defence Umbrella

From S-400 systems to naval cooperation and BrahMos, Russia has directly contributed to India's warfighting capability. Moscow may be close to Beijing, but its ties with New Delhi are time-tested and steeped in mutual respect. In contrast, Pakistan remains on the periphery of Russian strategic calculus. 2. Putin's Pivot to India: A Sanctions Workaround

As Western sanctions bite, Russia needs India more than ever, for oil exports, rupee-ruble trade corridors, and alternative tech partnerships. If China attempts to supply Pakistan in wartime, Russia's logistical chokehold over Central Asia and key transport routes could be used to delay or deny supplies.

Putin doesn't need to make bold declarations; he can quietly slow down Chinese logistical support,

because he knows who his more reliable partner is.

The Ill-Timed Blunder: Munir's Misfire at Pahalgam

The Pahalgam attack wasn't just an act of terror; it was a premature escalation by Pakistan's Army Chief, General Asim Munir. The timing and optics reveal more than Islamabad intended.

1. Pakistan Army is Logistically Unprepared

With inflation crossing 40 per cent, a tanking rupee, and an IMF leash tighter than ever, Pakistan's military readiness is at an all-time low. Fuel is rationed, spare parts are in short supply, and even border outposts have reported electricity cuts. In this scenario, triggering a potential Indian military response, especially under a government seeking re-election, was reckless at best.

2. Domestic Fragility Exposed

The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is resurgent. Baloch insurgency is gathering steam. Gilgit-Baltistan is seeing murmurs of rebellion. Munir is fighting fires at home and playing with matches abroad. The Pahalgam provocation was meant to distract from this internal chaos, but it may just bring the war home.

Global Optics: Terrorism vs. Territorial Integrity

India today is not the India of Kargil or even Balakot. It is a rising global power with partnerships in QUAD, a favourable perception in the West, and a growing role in shaping Indo-Pacific security. The world knows the difference between a sovereign state retaliating against terror and a rogue military spilling blood across borders.

1. No Appetite For Terror

Apologists

Pakistan's credibility is in tatters. FATF may have temporarily removed them from the Grey List, but every new attack like Pahalgam reinforces the perception that Rawalpindi runs with the terrorists and guns for peace. India, meanwhile, has invested deeply in multilateral forums and global narratives. Its voice today is not just heard—it is believed.

2. Arab World No Longer Blindly Loyal

Saudi Arabia and UAE, once Islamabad's financial safety nets, have reoriented their diplomacy towards India. From strategic oil reserves to defence tech, India's clout in the Middle East now exceeds Pakistan's Islamic rhetoric. The OIC's lukewarm responses to Kashmir resolutions are proof.

The Supply Chain Gamble: China Can't Afford Disruption

If China attempts to arm Pakistan during war, it exposes its supply chains to Indian interdiction. Indian Navy's dominance in the Indian Ocean can choke CPEC lifelines and maritime routes from the Gulf to Gwadar.

1. Sea Denial is India's Trump Card

With the INS Vikrant commissioned and a growing submarine fleet, India controls chokepoints like the Strait of Malacca and the Gulf of Aden far more decisively than China does. Beijing cannot afford another bottleneck — especially not in waters where India is a natural gatekeeper.

2. From Galwan to Galore: India Won't Fight China's War

New Delhi has proven it can hold

the Line of Actual Control (LAC) without spiraling into full-scale war. Galwan was a message: "You try something, we'll respond — but we won't start what we can finish later."

In a hypothetical India-Pakistan conflict, China's interests lie in containment, not escalation.

The Munir Doctrine: Provocation Without Strategy

Munir's misstep lies not in his provocation, but in his presumption. He assumed that India would hesitate, that China would back him, and that the West would intervene with diplomatic platitudes. Instead, he has created a triad of problems:

India's retaliation will be swift and public. China will stay neutral or even passive.

Global sympathy will flow toward India, not Pakistan.

A war at this point would leave Pakistan isolated, economically shattered, and diplomatically cornered. Munir may have wanted to look strong, but in trying to provoke a stronger enemy, he exposed his own army's hollow core.

The Outcome: Pakistan is Alone, Unready, and Out of Time

If Pakistan dares escalate into hot war, here's what will likely happen: India will strike decisively, leveraging Rafales, Pinaka rockets, BrahMos, and ISR superiority.

China will issue vague statements, but stop short of intervention—protecting its trade interests with India. Russia will remain neutral publicly, but subtly delay Chinese support via Central Asian routes. The West will back India, citing the right to self-defense and Pakistan's history of harboring terrorists.

Centre denies travel permission to Kerala Health Minister for US university lecture

The Centre has denied travel permission to Kerala Health Minister Veena George, who was invited to speak at Johns Hopkins University in the United States.

According to her office, the minister had applied for political clearance three weeks ago but was informed of the denial just

three days ahead of her planned departure.

This isn't the first time Kerala ministers have faced travel blocks. In March, the Centre denied permission to Industries Minister P Rajeev and his team to attend a public administration conference in Washington, where they were

scheduled to present Kerala's 'Year of Enterprises' initiative. Just days ago, George warned that Kerala could see a rise in dengue, rabies, and water-borne infections due to shifting climate patterns, and directed that a micro-level health action plan be finalised by May 15. George instructed local bodies

to step up mosquito control efforts, identify high-risk areas and ensure timely interventions as per the state's health alert calendar. Emphasising accurate disease reporting, including by private hospitals, she cited the Public Health Act as a mandate for coordinated responses.

She stressed vigilance against dengue and leptospirosis as well. "Leptospirosis deaths often occur due to not being treated in the initial stage," she said, urging those who come into contact with contaminated water to take prophylactic medication as advised by health workers.

Who wants to keep India busy in war, apart from a mad Pakistan General?



Many historians believe the West partitioned India to create Pakistan as a buffer state but ended up creating a duffer state. This analysis sounds even more plausible in view of the current stand-off between India and Pakistan, with many suspecting that Islamabad is being played as a brainless proxy to keep India embroiled in a conflict. So far, the chief of Pakistan's armed forces, General Asim Munir, has been given credit (or blamed) for dragging India into a conflict, and then further escalating it. Munir, of course, had his reasons for itching for a confrontation. Unlike some of his predecessors, Munir is believed to have a jihadist mindset reinforced by an orthodox ideology that sees India as an ideological as well as a geopolitical rival.

In addition to his medieval-era psychology that sees India as a Hindu nation against whom a ghazwa, military expedition, is mandated by Islam, Munir also faces tough challenges at home. The recent attack on the Jaffar Express by Baloch insurgents, and the Talibani shadow on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have portrayed Munir as a weak leader. To bolster his image and to distract from his own failures, Munir could have thrust a confrontation upon India by greenlighting the Pahalgam terror attack.

But, who else could be interested in keeping India engaged in a conflict other than this Mad Mullah kind of General? Could the Pahalgam attack and its aftermath be part of a

wider conspiracy against India?

Speaking to India Today on Friday, strategic affairs expert Tara Kartha argued that New Delhi needs to know its real enemy. "You have to know why he's doing what he's doing, because the series of events is illogical. It's illogical even for Pakistan." Asking India to figure out who that enemy is, she said, this enemy wants you to go to war. That, she asserted, is the basic message of this conflict.

So, who is this enemy? Who benefits from India's confrontation with its neighbours?

THE DRAGON IN THE ROOM

Evidence from the dog-fights between Indian and Pakistani aircraft, and the debris of fallen missiles and drones reveals that Pakistan is fighting India primarily with weapons made by China. In response to the Indian strikes on terror infrastructure in Punjab and parts of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, Islamabad had deployed the PL-15E missiles integrated with JF-17 Block III and J-10CE fighter aircraft. Later, in its attack on Indian targets, Pakistan used the HQ-9 missile system. The HQ-9, and the PL-15 E missiles and their platform J-10CE are all Chinese products. Their use against India was the first reported deployment in a real military confrontation. The JF-17, similarly, were jointly developed by China and Pakistan.

This tacit support to Pakistan serves many Chinese interests. Apart from bolstering Pakistan,

often derided as China's southernmost province, it helps Beijing assess Indian capabilities. It is important to recall that soon after the conflict began, stocks of Chinese defence manufacturers soared. This implies the markets believe Beijing will continue to supply weapons to Pakistan if the conflict escalates.

THE GREAT GAME

On Friday (May 9), Chinese President Xi Jinping attended a grand parade at the Red Square in Moscow marking the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War. According to the Global Times, during their joint meeting with the press, President Xi emphasised that "China and Russia should uphold longstanding friendship and be true friends of steel that have been through a hundred trials by fire; pursue mutual benefit and win-win outcomes, and be good partners that help each other succeed."

Since Russia started its war with Ukraine, China has been vocal in its support for the Kremlin. Beijing sees itself as the axis of an anti-US alliance that would shape geopolitics and economics. Though India has been balanced in its approach towards Russia, its oldest ally, China sees New Delhi as part of the US-led camp because of its membership of the Quad.

To counter the presumed US influence in the region, China would like India to remain locked in regional conflicts that would bleed its financial and military resources.

So, a prolonged military confrontation between India and Pakistan is a "win-win" situation for Beijing that the Global Times refers to. If Pakistan suffers, China doesn't care much. And if India suffers heavy losses, China emerges as the undisputed regional hegemon.

THE BUFFER THAT'S A DUFFER

In his book, *Pakistan — The Garrison State: Origins, Evolution, Consequences (1947–2011)*, Dr Ishtiaq Ahmed, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the Stockholm University, argues that Pakistan was born to serve the purpose of its masters. Ahmed claims the British agreed to Jinnah's demand for a separate country because the Muslim League promised "to give them Karachi Port and also an airfield in the north."

The British believed they would need Pakistan and its (Muslim) army to shield the looming threat from northwest India, i.e. the Soviets. And they convinced the US of the benefits of a potential ally against Russia and India.

Once a stooge, always a stooge. So, even though the dynamics of politics have changed, Pakistan continues to serve the interests of its real masters — this time ironically, China.

WHAT BEIJING WANTS

There are many strategic benefits for China if India continues to grapple with Pakistan. It reduces India's ability to challenge China along their shared border, especially Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh. It undermines India's role in the Quad, the alliance with Japan, Australia and the US which counters China's Indo-Pacific ambitions, because of its pre-occupation with Pakistan. And, of course, it diverts India's military resources from the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.

Finally, as a trade war looms with the US, China would want to expand its market. A less competitive India enables China to dominate trade and investment in the region, including control over critical infrastructure like ports and trade routes, such as those in the Belt and Road Initiative.

So, there could indeed be a hidden enemy that wants to draw India into a war—not with itself but the duffer state that refuses to understand that it is just an expandable puppet for its masters.

Isolating on a desert island

Polish YouTube star skips lockdown

It's 5.30 a.m. on Yemen's remote island of Socotra, a 3,625 square kilometer desert paradise 60 miles east of the Horn of Africa. The sun barely reaches over the island's towering sand dunes and rocky cliffs, but Eva zu Beck is out of her tent and at the water's edge.

Armed with a snorkel mask and a long piece of wood topped with a fierce-looking metal hook, she dives into the calm Indian Ocean in search of her breakfast: Socotran lobster.

Remote island life has become the new normal for the 29-year-old, an adventure YouTuber and travel documentary host from Poland.

While the rest of the world stays inside, Zu Beck, who grew her social media following to over 1 million with her travel vlogs on off-the-beaten path destinations like Pakistan, Bangladesh and Syria, has spent the last two months wild camping on deserted white-sand beaches, fishing for grouper in the open ocean and climbing 10 story-high sand dunes as she waits out the pandemic on one of the world's most isolated islands.

The only catch? She has no idea when she'll be able to leave.

A marathon stay on a desert island

Zu Beck arrived on Socotra -- an island with an ecosystem so unique it's often referred to as the "Galapagos of the Indian Ocean" -- on a weekly commercial flight from Cairo on March 11.

The travel vlogger, along with 40 other international tourists, arrived that day to take part in Socotra's first-ever marathon event and was due to stay for two

weeks.

Unbeknownst to Zu Beck and her fellow marathon runners, however, the world was quickly shutting down due to the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus. On March 15, after she and the other participants had completed the race, Socotri officials announced that the island would be closing its borders, and that the marathon runners should return home as soon as possible.

"We were woken up in the middle of the night in our tents," says Zu Beck, "and told that we should make our way to the airport immediately."

She was faced with a difficult decision: should she leave Socotra, and risk contracting the virus on her 5,000 kilometer journey back to Europe? Or should she stay in paradise, and accept the possibility of being stuck on a desert island for the foreseeable future?

Zu Beck knew almost immediately what her decision was. "I have so much love for the island," she says. "I'd visited last year and I swore I'd return one day for an extended stay. I took what was happening as a sign."

With permission from Socotri officials, Zu Beck and four other tourists decided to stay. The rest, including Zu Beck's Canadian boyfriend, returned to Cairo on the last flight out of Socotra.

She says she didn't realize how serious the coronavirus outbreak was when she arrived in March, and medical screening upon entry reassured her that she wasn't introducing the virus.

But not everyone agrees with Zu Beck's decision to visit a remote

and potentially vulnerable island as the pandemic took hold. Since this story published early on May 19, Zu Beck has heard from a number of critics via social media through the campaign #Respect_Socotra, who argue that her presence is endangering the local community.

In a May 19 Instagram post, she said that the situation in Socotra has evolved.

"Thank you to everyone who has been so concerned about my stay on the island. #Respect_Socotra, You have given me a new perspective and I apologize if I sent the wrong message before," she said.

"My intention was never to encourage active travel to remote places during a pandemic. Rather, I wanted to share the beauty of a place I was already in, a place that's little-known and needs to be protected," Zu Beck wrote in the post.

Local hospitality makes an extended stay possible

With the last flight gone and with no signs of borders reopening, Zu Beck settled right into island life in mid-March.

"Life on Socotra is slow," she says. "I spend most days outside reading a book, writing in my journal or hiking in the mountains."

While Socotra's most comfortable hotels are in the capital, Hadibu, she spent much of her first two months wild camping or renting basic guest rooms from local goat-herder families in Socotra's less populated rural villages, only returning to Hadibu for Wi-Fi, laundry services and electricity to

charge her devices.

"Hadibu is chaotic and noisy," says Zu Beck. "I prefer to be out in nature and living alongside rural communities, who have been kind enough to welcome me into their homes."

Local hospitality has allowed her to keep costs down while living in Socotra, a destination which, due to its remote location and lack of tourist infrastructure, is notoriously expensive to visit.

"There's a code of hospitality in Socotra called Karam," she says. "It dictates that guests should be welcomed unconditionally, so traditional hosts are very reluctant to take money from guests."

Despite this, Zu Beck says she insists that her hosts accept \$150-200 per month to cover her food and accommodation.

'Parallel universe': Movement has been largely unrestricted

Zu Beck's close contact with the local community was facilitated by Socotra's lack of lockdown restrictions. She isn't aware of any reported cases of coronavirus, and the island is one of the few places on earth that continued to operate as normal. "There are no social distancing or lockdown measures on Socotra," Zu Beck said in a recent interview. "We are free to visit friends and move around as we please. It's as if we're in a parallel universe."

But that freedom has decreased over time, Zu Beck reported via Instagram on May 19.

"Before, it felt safe to travel to different places around the island, but that's no longer the case. Over the last 3 weeks, I've been spending the majority of my time

in a family home in one village and intend to keep it this way," she wrote.

Before increasing concerns over coronavirus slowed movement from place to place, Zu Beck spent her 29th birthday riding her new 150cc motorbike -- Socotra's ubiquitous form of transport imported from Al Mukalla in mainland Yemen -- across the island's southern region, a windswept, sparsely populated area known for its alien-like dragon blood trees, an endangered plant species endemic to Socotra.

Being stuck in paradise hasn't all been smooth sailing.

Zu Beck was admitted twice to the hospital in Hadibo, first for a nasty cut on her leg she acquired while hiking the island's steep cliffs, and later for suspected heat stroke and a viral infection.

"I've been very impressed with the professional care offered by the hospital staff on Socotra," she says.

Unlike mainland Yemen, which has been devastated by the ongoing civil war, Socotra's healthcare system is supported by the UAE, meaning care for minor illnesses and injuries is relatively good.

But Socotra isn't immune to clashes. A recent armed conflict there between the Saudi-backed government forces and UAE-backed southern separatists was deescalated in early May.

Missing loved ones is the hardest part. Aside from recovering from her recent illness, missing loved ones -- and a lack of internet to connect with them -- has been Zu Beck's toughest challenge.

Selfless acts of kindness makes you feel happier

Kindness is good for your brain, may activate reward areas of the brain and make you feel happier, says a new study.

The glow of kindness is real — altruism — where there's nothing in it for them — and even if it has nothing in it for you. Psychologists at the University of Sussex have confirmed the same by undertaking a major analysis of existing research showing the brain scans relating to over 1,000 people making kind decisions.

For the first time, they split the analysis between what happens in the brain when people act out of genuine altruism — where there's nothing in it for them — and when they act with strategic kindness — when there is something to be gained as a consequence.

Many individual studies have hinted that generosity activates the reward network of the brain but this new study from Sussex is the first that brought these studies together, and then split the results into two types of kindness — altruistic and strategic.

The Sussex scientists found that reward areas of the brain are more active — i.e. use up more oxygen — when people act with strategic kindness when there is an opportunity for others to return the favour. But they also found that acts of altruism, with no hope of personal benefit, activate the reward areas of the brain too, and more than that, that some brain regions were more active during altruistic



generosity, indicating that there is something unique about being altruistic with no hope of gaining something in return.

Lead author Dr Daniel Campbell-Meiklejohn said, "We know that people can choose to be kind because they like feeling like they are a 'good person', but also that people can choose to be kind when they think there might be

something 'in it' for them such as a returned favour or improved reputation." "The finding of different motivations for giving raises all sorts of questions, including what charities and organisations can learn about what motivates their donors. Some museums, for example, choose to operate a membership scheme with real strategic benefits for their customers, such as discounts," said co-author Jo Cutler.

Single and ready to mingle? Here's how to find a date without dating apps

Online dating may seem like the norm with modern relationships, but that's not the case. Here's how some millennials find dates offline. You may be able to relate, or you may get ideas on new places to meet people.

Like them or not, dating apps have become an acceptable way for younger generations to meet a potential love interest. As of 2016, Tinder, a popular location-based mobile dating app, had a staggering 9.6 million daily active users, accounting for some 1.4 billion swipes per day.

Tinder has been operating in India since 2013. On Wednesday, US-based dating app Bumble, Tinder's fierce rival, said it will foray into the country by the end 2018. The company has roped in actor Priyanka Chopra as an investor, she will also act as an adviser to the app. Yet, no matter how common dating apps and sites have become, they're not necessarily for everyone. Though definitely convenient for busy people, who don't have the time to look for a significant other in real life (IRL), online dating can

be tiring for some.

22-year-old Pritha Ghosh, an engineering student at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, finds the idea of internet dating a "tricky little business" and has no plans of being a part of it. Some of my friends have tried the infamous dating app, Tinder, and have gone on a few first and only dates. They found people very flaky on the apps. I prefer meeting future dates in person, without the help of an app," Pritha says.

After being addicted to them for almost a year, Sourav Chatterjee, 28, deleted all his dating apps and ended up loving it. As efficient as some dating apps are — you can message someone one minute and literally be out on a date with them the next — going to a friend's birthday party and hitting it off with somebody IRL is even more so, says the IT professional.

The biggest advantage of meeting potential dates in real life, according to him, is getting to experience their vibe right away, which is something no online dating platform can deliver. "There's no better way to gauge attraction and chemistry than to be physically present with someone," Sourav says.

Kolkata-based psychologist Aparna Sengupta agrees that while meeting people as potential partners is possible on digital applications or social media, meeting people in person tends to yield better results. That's because physicality can help you figure out whether or not there are sparks.

"When meeting someone in real life, you have the benefit of eye contact, viewing nonverbal cues, and judging a connection," Aparna explains. That's hard to



gauge from just a few words on a screen.

All the above said, the question is, how do people who don't like online dating actually go about meeting people?

Entrepreneur Abhinav Singh, 30, says he's had the most success while meeting up with friends from years ago. His two most meaningful connections with women he dated happened with old friends; in fact, he is currently dating a girl he knew in college, and it's going really well.

"Different lifestyles causes people to grow apart. After a random, 'What have you been up to?' message, we hung out and something clicked. Dating someone you've known for years has the advantage of skipping over the initial small talk. of meeting people. Since you have been friends for a while, you already have built-in mutual interests. I have found that generally, knowing the person from before can accelerate the relationship. This is good and bad at the same time, but if handled

well, it can lead to a good, meaningful relationship," says Abhinav. For Shruti Shah, a 19-year-old college student from St. Xavier's college, Kolkata, online dating sites are appealing because there's not as much stress as talking in person. But she thinks having a good conversation with someone in person, suits her better.

"It's nice to be able to go to a place where I can meet a lot of people I have things in common with. Many of the people I've ended up dating, or having a romantic relationship with, I've met through mutual friends at events. I like going to musical gigs and a lot of the times, I end up meeting people over there. Sometimes, it can be really hard to go out and find people with similar interests, so going to a gig, where we already have something in common makes it easier. Being in a group setting with friends who also share these interests has helped a lot in the past, too, since it makes it a lot easier to talk," says Shruti.



Eli Lilly's weight-loss drug Zepbound could treat sleep apnea

Eli Lilly said Wednesday that its weight-loss drug Zepbound improved symptoms in two late-stage trials of patients with obstructive sleep apnea.

Why it matters: If treating sleep apnea ultimately earns an FDA green light, it could expand insurance coverage for the drug and reshape treatment for a dangerous sleep condition affecting more than 20 million Americans. Lilly shares jumped more than 2.5% on the announcement, before settling to close up 0.5%. Shares of ResMed, a maker of CPAP machines used in existing positive airway pressure (PAP) therapy, closed down 6%. Between the lines: Obstructive sleep apnea is closely associated with obe-



sity, as fat deposits in a person's tongue and upper airway can restrict airflow to the lungs during sleep. Loud snoring is the most obvious symptom, but people

suffering from OSA will repeatedly stop and start breathing during sleep. Those diagnosed with severe cases can experience more than 30 such breathing

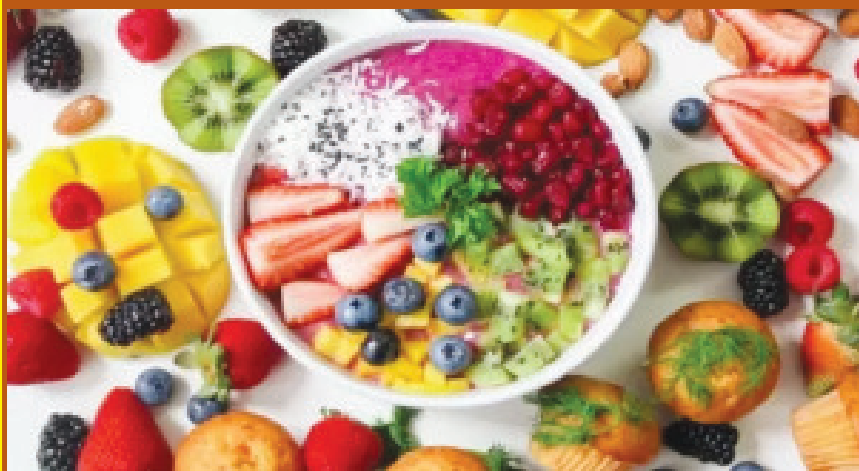
events per hour. What they found: Eli Lilly today said that a group of patients in the trial taking tirzepatide — the drug Lilly brands as Zepbound — suf-

fered 27 fewer breathing events per hour than the baseline.

A second group of patients that combined Zepbound with existing PAP therapy suffered 30 fewer events per hour.

The big picture: Adding OSA to the list of things Zepbound can treat would likely increase insurance coverage for the drug. States and corporate health plans have been tightening access to drugs like Ozempic and Zepbound, the popular class of weight-loss and diabetes drugs known as GLP-1s, as a surge in usage has led to soaring costs for plan providers, Axios' Tina Reed has noted. Lilly said it plans to submit data to the FDA and global regulators beginning mid-year in hopes of gaining approval for OSA treatment.

Indians up their spending on dieticians by 125 pc in FY24: Report



Indians have increased their spending on dieticians by a remarkable 125 per cent in FY24, indicating a strong commitment to healthy eating habits, a new report revealed on Tuesday. According to the full-stack financial services platform Razorpay, health coaching also saw a notable 45 per cent jump in transactions, showing a clear interest in fitness guidance.

"There's a noticeable emphasis on holistic well-being, as evidenced by a 39 per cent uptick in products related to preventive healthcare," said Shashank Kumar, MD & Co-founder, Razorpay.

"This signals a collective shift towards expanding horizons while prioritising health, affirming the adage that 'health is truly wealth,'" he added.

The report analysed more than a billion transactions between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024, to know the spending habits of Indians. Moreover, the report found that mutual fund investments increased by an impressive 86 per cent, insurance payments saw a significant 56 per cent growth and trading experienced a remarkable 62 per cent jump in value in FY24.

Payments for air travel surged by 2.4 times while spending on travel accommodations soared by 29 per cent in the same period.

Multiplex transactions witnessed a staggering 42 per cent increase in volume. Ticket agencies also reported a remarkable 2.7 times surge in sales.

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Is the worst over for global economy as Trump eases stance on tariffs?

Even as Trump suggests deals are near with countries like India, Japan, and South Korea, and China reviews a fresh proposal from Washington, the global economy isn't breathing easy yet.

US President Donald Trump's tariff crusade sent shockwaves through the global economy. Once defined by smooth trade flows and predictable rules, the world market has grown jittery and pulled into a cycle of uncertainty that's been hard to shake off.

But now, with Trump signalling a possible softening of his stance, is the worst behind us? The simple answer: not quite. While there's growing hope that Washington and Beijing might find middle ground, the long shadow of tariffs still looms over global business.

From global conglomerates to small e-commerce players, the pain is real. In just the past week, companies like Electrolux, Volvo Cars, and Diageo have downgraded sales targets or shelved business plans, citing the unpredictable tariff landscape, reported news agency Reuters.

Many smaller businesses, especially those relying on cross-border trade, are folding altogether—overwhelmed by a sudden spike in duties.

"Going from zero to 145% tariffs is simply unsustainable for most firms," said Cindy Allen, CEO of Trade Force Multiplier, a consultancy that helps businesses navigate global trade. "We're

seeing many small and mid-sized companies exit the market entirely," Allen told the news agency.

Even as Trump suggests deals are near with countries like India, Japan, and South Korea, and China reviews a fresh proposal from Washington, the global economy isn't breathing easy yet.

The uncertainty itself has become a drag. Financial markets may still bet on eventual compromise, but economists warn that any resolution could be slower—and costlier—than previously thought.

"US tariff policy is a serious negative shock for the world in the near term," said Isabelle Mateos y Lago, group chief economist at BNP Paribas. "The endgame may be further away and harsher than expected."

TARIFF TURMOIL ACROSS THE GLOBE

The impact is already showing up in data. In April, China's manufacturing activity shrank at its fastest pace in over a year. In the UK, export orders are falling at their sharpest rate in nearly five years. Even Germany's factories, which posted a surprisingly strong performance, may have simply rushed shipments ahead of looming tariffs—a



short-term fix that could lead to a slump later. The Bank of Japan, for one, isn't waiting to find out. It recently cut its growth forecast, citing global trade tensions. Similar downgrades have followed in the Netherlands and across the Middle East and North Africa.

WHAT ABOUT INDIA?

Not everyone is losing. India, which faces lower tariffs than China, may be emerging as an unlikely beneficiary. With US tech giant Apple already shifting some of its supply chain there, and Indian manufacturing hitting a 10-month high, analysts believe the country is well placed to step in as a supplier of choice. "India is well positioned to be an alternative to China," said Shilan Shah, economist at Capital Economics. "With US tariffs on China likely to stay, India has a clear opportunity," he told Reuters.

Despite the gloom, there is a glimmer of hope. Higher tariffs mean pricier imports for American consumers and businesses—dampening demand globally. But that also means less inflation pressure, giving central banks more room to cut interest rates and support their economies. The Bank of England, for instance, is widely expected to do just that this week.

But some big questions remain. Will Trump's tough-love strategy finally push countries like China to boost domestic demand? Will Europe finally dismantle internal trade barriers within its own market? The answers could shape the post-tariff world economy.

Until then, global markets and economies remain caught in limbo. The tone may be softening, but the tariff era isn't over just yet.

Kamikaze 'suicide' drone maker's stock jumps after 'Operation Sindoor'

Shares of Israeli defence firm Elbit Systems surged this week following reports that India used SkyStriker kamikaze drones—co-developed with Adani Group's Alpha Design Technologies—in its recent cross-border



strikes dubbed Operation Sindoor.

Listed on the NASDAQ under the ticker ESLT, Elbit's stock rose 3.62% over two sessions, jumping from \$400.00 on May 6 to \$414.47 by May 8. The rally coincided with the precision missile and drone strikes carried out by Indian forces across Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. This marked the SkyStriker's most prominent known use in active combat. The SkyStriker is a loitering munition, often called a "suicide drone," designed for pinpoint strikes with minimal

collateral damage. It can stay airborne for up to two hours, strike with a 5 kg or 10 kg warhead, and can be recalled or re-engaged within seconds of impact. Its silent electric engine allows it to fly deep into enemy territory undetected—critical

for missions demanding stealth and accuracy. Originally built by Elbit in Israel and adapted to Indian requirements under the Make in India initiative, the drone is manufactured in Bengaluru at a facility operated by Alpha Design Technologies, now part of Adani Defence. India ordered over 100 units of the SkyStriker in 2021,

following the Balakot airstrikes, but Operation Sindoor represents its most decisive battlefield deployment so far. Military officials have hailed the drones as effective in eliminating terrorist infrastructure while reducing risk to Indian personnel. Analysts say the real-time coordination and surgical precision offered by SkyStrikers made them a key component of the strike package. The market's reaction reflects both the strategic importance of the weapon system and its growing commercial relevance.

India-Pak tensions lift Chinese jet maker's stock by 36% in 2 days

(News Agency)- The stock of Chinese jet maker Avic Chengdu Aircraft Co Ltd has gone up by over 36% in just two days. This sudden rise comes as tensions between India and Pakistan have increased following India's recent military action.



Avic Chengdu Aircraft is a Chinese defence company. It makes fighter jets such as the JF-17 Thunder and the J-10C Vigorous Dragon, which are used by the Pakistan Air Force. As of Thursday, the company's share price rose by 16.37% to reach 80.68 yuan. This was after a 17% jump on Wednesday. In total, the stock has gained 36.21% in two days and has gone up 44% in the past one month. This jump in the company's stock

price comes at a time when there have been many reports following India's recent strikes. Some reports on social media claimed that Pakistan had shot down Indian fighter jets. However, these were later debunked by fact checkers. The Indian Embassy also warned the

Chinese state-run Global Times not to share unverified news about India's military operations.

India carried out what it called Operation Sindoor, a missile attack on nine terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) on May 7. These included targets in Bahawalpur, Kotli, Muzaffarabad, and Muridke,

according to a statement from Pakistan's foreign ministry. Other places reportedly hit by Indian missiles included Gulpur, Bhimber, Bagh, Chak Amru, and Sialkot. This was the first such missile operation by India since the 1971 war. It was a joint action by the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force. Following the strikes, Pakistan's Karachi 100 stock index dropped by 3,559.48 points, or 3.13%, closing at 1,10,009.03 on Wednesday.

Dry Gujarat has a drunk driving problem. 'How many more accidents will it take?'

Despite prohibition, Gujarat sees a steady rise in alcohol-fuelled crashes. Luxury SUVs are mowing down families while survivors are pushed into perpetual nightmares.



Rameshbhai was rolling up the shutter of his small shop near Himalaya Mall in Gujarat last month when he heard it—the screech of tyres, followed by a loud crash. A white Thar had ploughed into a row of parked vehicles before he could even turn around.

“Bas dekhta reh gaya main (I watched it speechlessly),” he said later, his voice shaking. But the real chaos hadn’t even begun.

The driver—24-year-old Haresh Thakor, shirt half undone, eyes glassy—stumbled out of the SUV not with regret, but with rage. He was wasted. According to Rameshbhai, he looked around like he owned the world and it had wronged him. Then he charged—at a teenager filming the wreck. People screamed and scattered.

“He was drunk, no doubt. And violent. Like he’d brought the bar fight to the street,” said Rameshbhai.

It was just another day of drunk driving in dry Gujarat. As such accidents rise, police watch helplessly. But the numbers won’t tell you that.

In the March incident, the SUV driver first collided with a two-wheeler, then rammed into three cars, including one belonging to Prerak Modi, who was traveling with his father and wife. Modi’s vehicle was badly damaged. When he confronted Thakor, the latter began hurling abuses and assaulting both him and his father, who lost a mobile phone worth Rs 15,000 during the altercation. As a crowd

gathered, Thakor pulled out a knife, picked up stones from the street, and began attacking people nearby. In videos that emerged later, the crowd could be seen beating him before police arrived—but not before Thakor had injured several bystanders.

Gujarat is a prohibition state, but the people—and the crashes—tell another story. According to the state’s transport department, Ahmedabad recorded 2,081 cases of drunk



driving in 2024. But the actual number is likely much higher. In just the first two months of 2025, 580 people were caught driving under the influence in Ahmedabad alone—an average of nine arrests per day, up from five the previous year. Vadodara, too, has seen a sharp rise in such cases, with 31 drivers booked in a single night during Holi.

And yet, after every crash, people go back to the age-old question: How many accidents will it take to realise that prohibition isn’t really working in Gujarat? Drunk and fearless ruining lives

In March this year, a law student in Vadodara, allegedly under the influence of alcohol and marijuana, drove a car into a crowd of two-wheeler riders in the busy Karelbaug area. A woman named Hemali Patel died on the spot; several others—including children—were badly injured.

As bystanders rushed to the scene, trying to make sense of the chaos and pull victims from under the wreckage, the driver, Rakshit Chaurasia, stepped out.

He raised his arms, swayed slightly, and with a twisted grin shouted, “Another round!” He repeated it five more times, before proceeding to chant ‘Om Namah Shivay.’

The ‘another round’ wasn’t just a drunken slur. It was a toast. A declaration. A moment so chilling that even hardened witnesses stood frozen. In that instant, the road wasn’t just a crash site—it became a theatre of intoxicated arrogance, immune to consequence.

In another horrifying case from December 2024, a drunk truck driver in Ahmedabad crushed a man and his three-year-old

granddaughter to death, a moment caught on CCTV.

Yet despite such grim incidents, not every drunk driving case is recorded under Section 185 of the Motor Vehicles Act. Experts say this results in a severe gap between ground reality and official data, allowing the true scale of the problem to remain hidden in plain sight.

“There is a possibility of misreporting or underreporting in alcohol-related accident cases,” said Dr Priyank Trivedi, an expert in road safety and transportation. “The available data does not always reflect the actual situation on the ground, especially in high-impact crashes.”

To address this, Trivedi suggests a technological fix.

“A mobile-based application can be developed, allowing citizens to report alcohol consumption, delivery, or evidence at accident sites.

These reports can help build a more accurate data pool,” he said.

Lights out, nightmares in Twenty-year-old Mizan sleeps through the day and wakes at night—his way of dodging the nightmares. But even in daylight, the dreams chase him. In them, he is standing on a road. A car comes hurtling toward him. Blinding lights. Screams.

“Bachao, bachao,” he yells, jolting awake, drenched in sweat—the taste of trauma still raw, even two years later.

“I hear screams in my dream. Sometimes it’s me, sometimes

someone else,” Mizan said, sitting on the edge of his bed—the place he now spends most of his time. “Whenever I see news of a road accident, the dreams return. It feels like a curse—one that hasn’t left me, even after two years.”

I hear screams in my dream. Sometimes it’s me, sometimes someone else. Whenever I see news of a road accident, the dreams return

The accident he was referring to is one of Gujarat’s deadliest—the July 2023 Iskcon flyover crash. The accused, Tathya Patel, allegedly ran over his Jaguar on the Iskcon bridge, killing nine people on the spot and injuring ten others. Mizan was one of the survivors. He had been commuting for two days straight and was exhausted when Patel’s Jaguar, speeding at over 140 kmph, tore through a crowd gathered on the bridge to help victims of an earlier crash between a car and a truck. Mizan’s spine and legs were crushed. His family spent nearly Rs 10 lakh on surgeries and treatment. He was forced to quit school midway. Among the dead were two police constables. Witnesses at the scene alleged Patel was drunk. “He left home with two friends and stopped to help people in an accident. Who knew that moment of kindness would become a curse for our family,” said Rehana, Mizan’s mother, wiping her tears as she sat cross-legged on the floor beside his bed.

AI job loss: Fiverr CEO says AI will replace humans, Duolingo and Shopify are already doing that

Fiverr CEO recently predicted that AI will soon replace human jobs. While it may have not become the common practice, his prediction is already coming true starting with companies like Duolingo and Shopify.

By Nandini Yadav

There has long been a conversation that AI will soon do a lot of mundane tasks that humans have to do right now. This includes some of the daily tasks at work, including coding, research, etc. India Today Tech interviewed the former HCL CEO Vineet Nayar in March 2024, who had then predicted that IT companies will soon need 70 per cent fewer people because of AI. Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang has on a number of occasions prophesied that AI will replace coders in the future. Earlier this week, Fiverr CEO Micha Kaufman was a little more blunt in his prediction when he said that “AI is coming for your jobs”. “It doesn't matter if you are a programmer, designer, product manager, data scientist, lawyer, customer support, salesperson or a finance person - AI is coming for you,” he said in an email he shared with his employees.

In line with the predictions of other tech leaders, Kaufman also says that AI will soon be taking over the “easy tasks” and turn them into automated processes. And the harder tasks will also be simplified with the help of AI. While these predictions sound like they are in a somewhat distant future, looking at the industry trends, that future is much closer than we realise. The recent update to Duolingo and Shopify's hiring policy is



the best Aexample of that. Last month, Shopify CEO Tobias Lutke shared an internal memo setting up a new direction for the company. Lutke said that going forward, AI will be central to the company's work. Lutke said, here on, if anyone in the company hires a human employee, they will have to first prove why AI can not do that job. “Before asking for more headcount and resources, teams must demonstrate why

they cannot get what they want done using AI,” he wrote. “What would this area look like if autonomous AI agents were already part of the team?” Lutke wrote in his memo that AI has led to a shift in how work is done faster than anything he has seen before. And to keep up with it, he asked his employees to look at AI as a partner for everything, whether it is writing code, doing research or in case they need an assistant. In fact, Lutke told his employees that AI usage will also be used as a factor in employee performance and peer reviews. He wants his employees to show how they are using AI, what they are doing to get better at it, etc. Duolingo recently did a similar thing. “Duolingo is going to be AI-first”, announced the company's CEO Luis von Ahn. “We'll gradually stop using (human) contractors to do work that AI can handle,” he said. “AI

use will be part of what we look for in hiring.” While the Duolingo CEO insists that the shift in strategy is not about job cuts in order to save cost, but to overcome creative bottlenecks. However, the fact of the matter is that the practice will eventually lead to lesser number of human employees being hired, which will in turn lead to job loss. “Headcount will only be (increased) if a team cannot automate more of their work,” Ahn said. The solution? The common solution offered by almost all leaders is that professionals need to rapidly adapt, reskill, and adopt AI into their workflows. Replit CEO Amjad Massad recently said that with “AI agents getting better, it would be a waste of time to learn how to code”. He suggests that to combat the new trend in the job market, employees need to “learn how to think, learn how to break down problems. Learn how to communicate clearly [with AI], as you would with humans,” he said.

'Sindoor' Versus MEA: The Curious Difference Between India's Narratives on Pakistan Strikes

By Sarayu Pani

Two curiously different narratives have been offered in parallel to the Indian public with respect to the recent strikes on Pakistan. The first, as reflected in the name of the operation, “Sindoor”, is designed to both reiterate the religious nature of the Pahalgam killings and draw on distinctly gendered Hindu imagery in the response. The second – a carefully crafted more secular nationalist narrative – was reflected in the Ministry of External Affairs' briefing. It was led by two female officers – one Hindu and one Muslim – and included a statement by the foreign secretary, Vikram Misri, reiterating that while the aim of the Pahalgam attack had been



to divide the nation on communal lines, the Indian government and its people had risen to the challenge and refused to be divided. One narrative – typically the more religiously polarising one – is enthusiastically run for supporters of the ruling party, led by online influencers and the

Indian television media, and usually takes its cues directly from the rhetoric of the Bharatiya Janata Party. The second, usually a more sober sounding narrative, is run by the Ministry of External Affairs through their official diplomatic channels. For example, in the aftermath of the October 7

attacks, Prime Minister Modi, in a strongly worded post on X called the attacks terrorism and offered solidarity with Israel. This was the position that Indian news rooms and influencers ran with, together with graphic anti-Palestinian imagery. The Ministry of External Affairs meanwhile barely deviated from their historical, more neutral position, including by remaining noncommittal on Israeli demands to recognise Hamas as a terrorist organisation in India, and urging both sides to resume diplomacy. But while typically the more polarising narrative is the only one offered for domestic consumption, the inclusion of a more secular nationalist narrative in the public domestic discourse in the

aftermath of the strikes, suggests that the BJP does not believe that religious nationalism alone will be enough to manufacture consent for armed conflict. The feminisation of territory The female body plays a critical role in the imagination of any modern nation state. It is the female body which transforms the cold cartographic form of territory into the living, breathing nation that people are inspired to protect or even die for. For example, a country is termed a “motherland” or its language a “mother-tongue”, implying that its citizens are born into brotherhood and fraternity. Without this imagery being internalised, we remain just inhabitants of a territory.

Pakistan's Moment of Reckoning: Why This Could Be India's 1971 Redux



By : Sanbeer Singh Ranhotra

PM MODI HAS THE CHANCE TO BREAK PAKISTAN'S SPINE
In 1971, India broke Pakistan into two. A beaten and bruised Pakistani army was brought to its knees. 93,000 Pakistani soldiers were taken as prisoners of war. Despite the fact that India had broken Pakistan's spine back then, Indira Gandhi chose not to reclaim Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan.

Also, for reasons best known to her, she chose to return all the Pakistani prisoners of war. Perhaps, the assumption back then was that Pakistan had been neutered, and that it would not threaten India in the future. Obviously, that assumption proved wrong almost immediately as Pakistan adopted a strategy to "bleed India with a thousand cuts." This began with Pakistan fuelling the Khalistani movement in Punjab, and almost parallelly, the jihadi movement in Kashmir. In hindsight, one can argue that India squandered a perfect opportunity to solve the Pakistani nuisance for once and for all. Now, India has been presented with another historic opportunity. In the aftermath of the heinous Pahalgam terror attack, in which Pakistani terrorists racially profiled and executed Hindu men, national tempers are running high. There is a genuine desire to see Pakistan getting punished. Prime



Minister Narendra Modi has the opportunity to go down in history not just as the leader who contained Pakistan, but as the one who finally broke its spine. Since 2014, Modi has systematically dismantled the pillars on which Pakistan's asymmetric warfare against India stood. From the abrogation of Article 370 to surgical and air strikes across the LoC, and from neutralising separatist funding to turning Pakistan into a global laughing-stock, a lot has been achieved since 2014. There are also umpteen reports of "unknown men" knocking off dreaded terrorists within Pakistan.

Yet, one must recognise that terrorism is Pakistan's de-facto mindset. Even though the Islamic Republic is bankrupt, it has continued supporting, funding and training anti-India terror groups. In fact, India suspects that parts of Pakistan's international bailout packages –

whether they be from the IMF, the World Bank, China or even the Gulf Cooperation Council – are being used to fund terror in India.

Not surprisingly, India has now decided to asphyxiate Pakistan economically. Pakistan is an agriculture-intensive country, and 80% of its farming depends on water supplied by the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab. India has begun disrupting the flow of all these rivers. While India does not have the necessary infrastructure to completely shut the taps on Pakistan presently, in a few years, it will. Until then, even a controlled 15-20% fluctuation in normal water flow would devastate Pakistan's Kharif and Rabi crops like rice, wheat, cotton and sugarcane. Already, the government has begun fast-tracking several hydropower projects in the Indus River Basin. So, the clock is ticking for Pakistan.

Pakistan is in no position to

survive India's economic offensive. Currently, India's forex reserves exceed \$688 billion, while Pakistan's have barely crossed \$15 billion. Today, Pakistan is caught in a vicious debt-cycle. As of December 2024, Pakistan's external debt stood at \$131.1 billion.

Over the next four years, Pakistan has to cough up over \$100 billion in debt repayments. Pakistan today is the fifth-largest debtor to the IMF, which recently extended a \$7 billion loan to the rogue state. Then there is China, which is Pakistan's biggest external lender. Pakistan owes its "all-weather ally" approximately \$30 billion. China's Export-Import (Exim) Bank has been hesitant to offer additional concessional loans, pointing to concerns over repayment risks. Pakistan's request in February 2025 to restructure \$3.4 billion in debt, along with its appeal to increase the current 30-billion-yuan currency swap line by an extra 10 billion, is yet to receive a response. India has begun taking steps to ensure that Pakistan is starved of IMF and World Bank funds, and if successful, this will ring the death-knell for the Pakistani economy. New Delhi is also ready to fight Pakistan at the FATF, where it is pushing for Pakistan to be greylisted. This will curb the flows of foreign

investments, while also triggering an exodus of investors out of Pakistan.

TIME TO END PAKISTAN'S STORY FOR GOOD

Pakistan is on the brink. Its economy is in the ICU, kept alive only by last-minute bailouts from the IMF. Inflation is rampant, forex reserves are dangerously low, and its debt-to-GDP ratio is unsustainable. Internally, it is torn by civil-military tensions, Islamic radicalism, and regional separatist movements in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh. All of these fronts stand the chance of blowing up as Pakistan diverts its forces to fight India on its eastern border. The deep state—the military-intelligence establishment that orchestrates terrorism abroad to sustain legitimacy at home—is losing its grip. But it still seeks war with India to survive.

This is where Modi's opportunity lies. Senior BJP leaders have hinted at a strategy more ambitious than deterrence: to permanently weaken Pakistan to the point of irrelevance. Senior BJP MP Nishikant Dubey – considered close to both the PM and HM – has claimed Pakistan will be split into four entities by the end of 2025. Such a strategy does not require a full-scale war. A limited but precise military engagement, calibrated to avoid global escalation, combined with sustained economic, diplomatic and intelligence operations, could be enough to push Pakistan over the cliff.

Another potent tool in India's arsenal is a naval blockade. Pakistan's economy is heavily dependent on seaborne trade, especially through the Karachi and Gwadar ports. Over 95% of its imports, including essential fuel and food supplies, come via sea routes. In the event of a limited conflict, a tightly enforced naval blockade—even for a few weeks—could cripple Pakistan's supply chains, paralyse its energy sector, and trigger widespread panic. The Indian Navy, with its significant dominance in the Arabian Sea, is well-equipped to execute such a manoeuvre swiftly and effectively.

Piku and its healing powers: How a film becomes so much more...

'Piku' was everything that cinema can and should stand for. The Shoojit Sircar-directorial, featuring Amitabh Bachchan, Deepika Padukone and Irrfan, remains a subtle, loving film about a father-daughter relationship. But, honestly, everything about the film - right from its story, the casting, the cinematography and even the costumes - stood for so much more. In hindsight, in fact, 'Piku' was more relevant than it turned out to be. It still is.

The film's biggest win was not in presenting a thoughtful story, but in becoming this wholesome experience of life at its fullest. Essentially the journey of a girl, it reflects the kind of romance that you find in poetry - the slow exchange of gazes, and the feeling that you know something is brewing, but you don't want to rush it. The romance in which the journey is more unforgettable. Her relationship with Rana (Irrfan) acted as a



metaphor for how, sometimes, emotional support doesn't have to be dramatic or all-consuming. 'Piku' acted like a balm. It kind of healed a generation trying to deal with toxicity in a relationship, the burden of perfectionism in performing every role, and spending ages trying to find the right balance between acing at work and managing family duties.

How Piku finds herself during the road trip with her father and the man who's just a 'driver' until then -- is not just life-affirming but also a gentle reminder that self-discovery often unfolds in the most ordinary, inconvenient moments of care, conflict, and a quiet connection.

Piku makes vulnerability her strength, evolving into a more

radiant version of herself. The journey, her time with Rana, and learning from her father the art of letting go become the new virtues she carries forward. When her father dies, she is prepared to deal with the emotions with quiet grace - letting go of her daughter-ly duties, finding something beautiful in the memories she

created with him, and focussing on the life that he lived - resilient and expansive. Being Piku was being able to understand life at both its beautiful and worst. It was about introspection and navigating through it, without having a roadmap, really. It was also about knowing that the relationships we build and the memories we create, are what we treasure when the wheel of time finally stops.

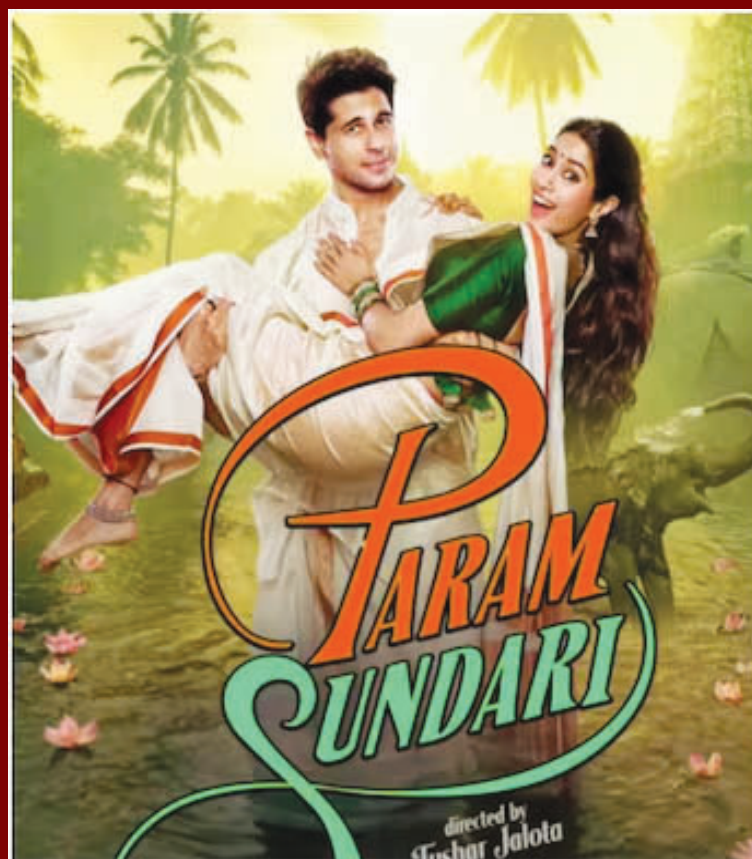
A film like 'Piku' uplifts cinema, and becomes way more than just a piece of entertainment. It, in a way, looks like life itself. Every time you watch it, you carry a chapter from it with you, cherishing it for a lifetime. It's like that moment when you feel proud of yourself for reconstructing who you are, piece by piece, after an emotional breakdown. The ultimate comfort and joy, 'Piku', is what the very threads of your heartbeats are made of. No?

Nostalgia alert! Saif Ali Khan, Rani Mukerji's Hum Tum to re-release on May 16



Actors Saif Ali Khan and Rani Mukerji's classic rom-com 'Hum Tum' is all set to re-release in the theatres on May 16. Originally released in 2004, the Kunal Kohli directorial was widely embraced for symbolising the OG romantic comedy of Bollywood. The film showcases an engaging love story between Karan Kapoor, a cartoonist, and Rhea Prakash, who cross paths on a flight. Though they don't connect at first, luck brings them together to kindle a beautiful romance. Other than Saif and Rani's emotional performances, the film's songs and narrative cemented 'Hum Tum' as a beloved rom-com among the viewers. The film was inspired more by Annie Hall, directed by Woody Allen. 'Hum Tum' drastically altered the career of lead star Khan, who not only won commercial and critical acclaim for his act but a National Award too.

Sidharth-Janhvi's Param Sundari teaser to be attached with Bhool Chuk Maaf



The highly-awaited teaser of 'Param Sundari' will release on May 9, but there is a catch. The promo will not be available for immediate viewing anywhere on the internet.

a glimpse into a heartfelt tale of love, where two worlds collide, and sparks are bound to fly. The film is scheduled for release on July 25, 2025. Meanwhile, Rajkummar Rao returns with 'Bhool Chuk Maaf', a heartwarming romantic comedy directed and written by Karan Sharma. Co-starring Wamiqa Gabbi, the film promises a delightful mix of charm, chaos, and small-town romance.

Filmmaker Dinesh Vijan and Maddock Productions will be releasing the highly-awaited teaser for their upcoming movie 'Param Sundari' on May 9. However, there is a catch. The promo will not be released on social media platforms, but will first screen directly in theatres as the audience line up to watch their upcoming movie 'Bhool Chuk Maaf', a romantic-comedy, starring Rajkummar Rao and Wamiqa Gabbi. Directed by Tushar Jalota and

produced by Dinesh Vijan under Maddock Films, 'Param Sundari' is set against the stunning backdrop of Kerala's picturesque backwaters. The story follows a 'North ka munda' who unexpectedly falls in love with a 'South ki sundari'. As two contrasting worlds come together, the film unfolds into a heartwarming tale of love that transcends boundaries, enriched with Maddock's signature blend of emotion and entertainment. The 58-second teaser will offer

Rajkummar Rao's Bhool Chuk Maaf theatrical release cancelled amid security drills



The theatrical release of 'Bhool Chuk Maaf', starring Rajkummar Rao and Wamiqa Gabbi, has been cancelled after heightened security drills across India. The announcement, which was made by its makers a day ahead of the release, followed India's Operation Sindoor targeting terror camps in Pakistan. The film will now premiere on OTT. Maddock Films, 'Bhool Chuk Maaf's' official production house, released the statement a day ahead of its release on May 9. It read, "In light of recent events and the heightened security drills across the nation, we at Maddock Films and Amazon MGM Studios have decided to bring our family entertainer, Bhool Chuk Maaf, directly to your homes on May 16—only on Prime Video, worldwide. While we were eagerly looking forward to celebrating this film with you in theaters, the spirit of the nation comes first. JAI HIND (sic)." The heartwarming romantic comedy directed and written by Karan Sharma, co-stars Wamiqa Gabbi. It promises a delightful mix of charm, chaos, and small-town romance. Set in the vibrant lanes of Varanasi, the film follows Ranjan, a hopeless romantic who lands a government job to win back his love, Titli. But just before the wedding, fate throws a curveball, turning his world upside down in the most unexpected ways. What follows is a hilarious yet touching journey of love, destiny, and second chances. The film will now premiere on Prime Video on May 16.



Taapsee Pannu's Haseen Dillruba 3 in works: Report

Following the success of Haseen Dillruba and its sequel Phir Aayi Haseen Dillruba, Taapsee Pannu is set to return with the third installment of the hit Netflix franchise. Much like the previous parts, the third part is also expected to be written by Kanika Dhillon.

According to a Mid-day report,

the scripting for the third installment is officially in progress. Sources close to the project have revealed that Rani and Rishu's story will pick up once again, heading into an even more thrilling, seductive, and chaotic narrative. "It is one of the most successful titles for the platform. So, the aim is to create a more fun, juicy, and

thrilling third part," the source said.

The buzz surrounding the next part erupted after Taapsee shared a nostalgic clip from 'Phir Aayi Haseen Dillruba' a few weeks ago with the caption, "Missing the pagalpan, Pandit ji. What say?", a direct question to the film's writer, Kanika Dhillon.

Kanika then replied to the post and wrote, "The wait won't last

that long, Rani ji! Panditji is already onto the agli kitaab (next book). Iss wali mein there is Pagalpan x 3 (This one will be triple the madness)."

Though the plot of the third film remains closely guarded, one thing is certain, expectations are running high.

As Haseen Dillruba has become one of Netflix India's most beloved thriller franchises, the creative team appears poised to take the drama to the next level.

Meanwhile, Taapsee is gearing up for her next release, 'Gandhari', directed by Devashish Makhija. It also stars Ishwak Singh in the lead.

Filmmakers rush to secure Operation Sindoor title, 15 studios seek registration



Several top Bollywood production houses are vying for the rights to the title 'Operation Sindoor,' Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE) president BN Tiwari confirmed

to India Today that, after India carried out precision strikes on terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, a

number of producers applied for the Operation Sindoor title. He shared that close to 15 filmmakers and studios filled in their applications at the Indian Motion Picture Producers Association (one of the associations that works towards registration of film titles).

According to sources, this development is fairly common in the film industry. "Whenever a big national event occurs, filmmakers tend to call dibs on the title. Even if a film will not be made, it's safer to have the title registered. However, after the success of Uri, War, or Fighter, filmmakers have

understood that war films continue to be a favourite genre, and hence they would want to someday work on a film on Operation Sindoor also," the source added.

When asked about registering the title 'Operation Sindoor', Ashoke Pandit told India Today, "Yes, I've applied to register the title 'Operation Sindoor'. Whether a film will be made on the topic is still far-fetched, but as filmmakers and producers, we often register titles the moment something interesting happens — it's the first and important step, because without a title,

you can't even begin planning a film. Everyone who has applied for the title has done so after the incident occurred. That doesn't necessarily mean all of them will make a film, but registering gives them the option to explore it further. I can identify with this subject very well. I know what this country has gone through — we've been fighting this battle as victims for 30–35 years. So I know the integrity of this terrorist country. It is a very important subject for me as someone who has suffered because of Pakistan directly. We suffered the worst genocide at their hands."