

THINKING OF BUYING /SELLING?

 * Honesty
 * Integrity
 * Experience
 * Knowledge
Sharanjit Singh Thind
 WHITESTONE REAL ESTATE
 Phone : 646 875 8495
(Licensed New York State Real Estate Broker)

Deadly Kashmir attack risks India military escalation against Pakistan

- ← The question, analysts say, is not whether there will be a military response - but when, and how calibrated it will be, and at what cost.
- ← "The Beginning Of The First Water War Between India And Pakistan"?
- ← India Calls Global Diplomats, Briefs Them On Pahalgam Terror Attack.
- ← India says it has evidence to prove Pakistan was behind the attack, the worst on Indian soil since February 2019, when 40 soldiers were killed in Pulwama.
- ← High time India cuts Pakistan's 'jugular veins': Former Pentagon official Michael Rubin said of the Pahalgam attack.



Story on Page 23-24

India's home minister Amit Shah pays his last respects to 26 people killed in the Pahalgam terror attack, in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. (X/@AmitShah)

'Vladimir, STOP!'
 Trump writes after Russia launches deadliest strikes on Kyiv since last summer



Story on Page 21

AR Rahman breaks silence on trolling after split: Even God gets reviewed, who am I?



Page 22

' Hamas Leaders Visited PoK': Israel Envoy On Link With Pak-Based Lashkar



Story on Page 21

Five cards China holds in a trade war with the US



Story on Page 22

India will reduce tariffs, says Donald Trump amid ongoing trade talks

(News Agency)- US President Donald Trump on Wednesday indicated he has received confirmation suggesting India intends to lower tariffs on certain goods. Trump's remarks came after Vice President JD Vance, during his visit to Jaipur, said India and US have finalised terms for trade negotiations.

"I understand that India will reduce tariffs," Trump stated while speaking to reporters in the Oval Office. However, further details regarding specific products, timing, or confirmation were not provided. This follows ongoing trade discussions between the two nations.

India and China are two of the 15 largest US trading partnerships that the Trump administration is targeting for negotiations to lower the US trade deficit.

Indian and American officials will start formal negotiations on a planned bilateral trade agreement



(BTA) in Washington on Wednesday (US time) to sort out trade issues and move the talks forward, according to news agency PTI.

The three-day meetings are the first in-person exchange according to agreed terms of reference with 19 chapters involving tariffs, non-tariffs, and facilitation of customs. According to the office of the US

Trade Representative, the pact will give opportunities to employees, farmers, and businessmen and women from the two nations as well as further access to US products in marketplaces abroad. The US aims to achieve more access, a reduction in tariffs, and pledges of assurance of longer-term benefits. US, INDIA RECIPROCAL TRADE

TALKS GET GREEN LIGHT
Earlier, in a press release by the Office of US Trade Representatives, Ambassador Greer confirmed that India and the US are making strides toward a new Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) after the announcement of the finalised Terms of Reference (TOR) for the deal. He said, "I am pleased to confirm that USTR and India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry have finalised the Terms of Reference to lay down a roadmap for the negotiations on reciprocal trade."
"There is a serious lack of reciprocity in the trade relationship with India. These ongoing talks will help achieve balance and reciprocity by opening new markets for American goods and addressing unfair practices that harm American workers," he added.

This came after US Vice President JD Vance met Prime Minister Modi on Monday evening (IST). He is on a four-day official visit to India from April 21 to 24.

Usha Vance On Husband JD Vance's Kitchen Skills: 'He's An Experimental Cook'



(News Agency)-US Vice President JD Vance is an experimental cook who tries various dishes, including Indian cuisine and desserts, his wife Usha Vance said. As JD Vance visited India alongwith his wife Usha Vance whose parents are from Andhra Pradesh, she reflected on the amazing cuisines in the country.

JD Vance was a "meat and potatoes man" until he met her, and her mother taught him how to cook, she said. Now, he likes to try everything from chenna masala to desserts and various lamb dishes, she added.

Sharing what a traditional Indian meal

in her home looks like, Usha Vance said that it can be simple, like sambar and rice, or more elaborate with dishes like palao. As the Vance household is vegetarian, there is a huge influence on their meals of Indian cuisine, she said. Usha Vance also shared how chutneys are a huge part of Andhra Pradesh cuisine and that her grandmother makes wonderful chutneys, managing to find all the necessary ingredients at nearby Indian stores in the United States.

Usha Vance also noted that her mother, grandmother, and even her father are excellent cooks, mentioning her father's skill in making dosa and pesaratu.

THINKING OF BUYING /SELLING?




Sharanjit Singh Thind
Real Estate Broker

**Ask us how to buy Bank Foreclosures,
Short Sale Properties,
Bank Auction Homes and to
Sell/Buy your Business.**

WHITESTONE
Real Estate

Serving Community Since 2009

Phone : 646 875 8495 Email : whitestone1979@gmail.com

We specialize in Income Producing & Investment Properties.

(Whitestone Real Estate & Asset Management Corp.
DBA Nlight Real Estate is a licensed Real Estate Broker, New York State)

New York City Hall Honors Sri Sathya Sai Baba with Centennial Proclamation

NEW YORK, NY – A significant ceremony unfolded at New York City Hall today as the city officially declared April 24th, 2025, as Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centennial Celebration Day. This special proclamation, presented during the centennial birth year of the globally revered spiritual leader and humanitarian, recognizes his enduring impact through universal love, peace, and selfless service. The event marked a rare and profound occasion within the halls of New York City's government. Deputy Commissioner Dilip Chauhan, representing Mayor Eric Adams, bestowed the official



proclamation upon Council, New York, spoke at the event, Mr. R.J. Rathnakar, Managing Trustee of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, conveyed his profound appreciation to New York City for honoring the Centennial Year of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba through this gracious proclamation. Deputy Commissioner Dilip Chauhan conveyed Mayor Adams' warm

welcome and highlighted New York City's diverse population and its embrace of various faiths. Setting the stage for the historic nature of the event in this iconic city, Deputy Commissioner Chauhan stated, "New York City is home to 8.5 million people; it is not just a cultural capital - we are the 9th largest economy in the world, and last year alone, we welcomed over 63 million tourists. Our city's greatest strength lies in its diversity." He lauded the Sri Sathya Sai volunteers for their unwavering commitment to selfless service, providing aid, education, and support during crises.

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS ANNOUNCES TWO KEY LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

Kenra Ford, FABC, MBA, MT (ASCP) Appointed Senior Vice President of Clinical Services Operations, a new role for the health system
Divya Pathak, MS, MBA Appointed Vice President and Inaugural Chief Data and Artificial Intelligence Office for the health system



(New York, NY) – NYC Health + Hospitals today announced two key leadership appointments that were approved by its Board. Kenra

Ford, FABC, MBA, MT (ASCP) was appointed Senior Vice President of Clinical Services Operations for NYC Health + Hospitals, a new role for the

health system that will focus on implementing strategies that that improve operational and clinical efficiency and financial health. Divya Pathak, MS, MBA, was appointed Vice President and Chief Data and Artificial Intelligence Officer for NYC Health + Hospitals, where she will lead the advancement of data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), and digital innovation. Ford's position is effective today, and Pathak's position was effective March

27, pending Board confirmation. "Today we recognize two leaders who have already built an impressive record within our health system," said NYC Health + Hospitals President and CEO Mitchell Katz, MD. "I look forward to working with them in their new roles to help our system build a stronger future." "I am most excited to continue to build on all the great work that happens every day!" said NYC Health + Hospitals Senior Vice

President of Clinical Services Operations Kenra Ford, FABC, MBA, MT (ASCP). "While creating a new, unified division housing clinical operations and support services, we will be able to further integrate strategically our clinical and operational teams both at the facility and system level, ultimately positively improving access to care. Areas of focus include further expanding clinical shared services in the areas of GI and Sleep services."

AAPI Legislative Day Planned For May 8th on Capitol Hill

(Washington, DC: - Healthcare continues to be the center of the nation's focus, especially with changes in policies on immigration, Medicare/Medicaid, and Medical Education. AAPI's annual Legislative Day comes to be a vital part of AAPI's growing influence and having its united voice heard in the corridors of power. "We are excited to announce that our next Legislative Day is on Thursday, May 8th, in Washington, DC," said Dr. Satheesh Kathula, President of AAPI. "We expect to have the participation from dozens of key Congressmen and Senators. The annual Legislative Day will be a

unique opportunity for AAPI to be part of the decision making process on matters related to healthcare."The day-long event will begin at 10:00 am and will conclude in the afternoon at 3 pm, giving participants the opportunity to meet with their own Congressman / Senators on their own time. AAPI represents the interests of over 100,000 physicians and 40,000 medical students and residents of Indian heritage in the United



States. Dr. Sunil Kaza, Chair of AAPI BOT said, "The mission AAPI, the largest ethnic organization of physicians, is to provide a forum to facilitate and

enable Indian American physicians to excel at inpatient care, teaching and research, and to pursue their aspirations in professional and community affairs. The Executive Committee is working hard, enabling AAPI's voice to be heard in the corridors of power, and thus taking AAPI to new heights."During the annual Legislative Conference, among others, AAPI will discuss Medicare and Medicaid Reimbursements,

Prior Authorization, Immigration Reform, Increased Residency Slots, Addressing Physician Shortage, and Scope of Medical Practice Issues. "AAPI Legislative Day is a flagship annual event that is eagerly awaited to rekindle and renew our energy in bringing up the issues that we need to bring to the attention of national policy makers and leaders of the US Congress on Capitol Hill," said Dr. Amit Chakrabarty, president-elect of AAPI. "It is a tradition of nearly three decades, which has brought many important transformations in National Healthcare policies that have helped Physicians of Indian Origin.

Harvard South Asian Association Hosts Spectacular Andaaz Gala- Honoring Global Icons of Excellence



Cambridge, MA – The Harvard South Asian Association (SAA), representing over 600 undergraduates of South Asian heritage, hosted its annual cultural gala, Andaaz, on April 11, 2025, at the Smith Campus Center. This vibrant celebration brought together students, alumni, and faculty from Harvard’s prestigious institutions—including Harvard Business School, Harvard Medical School, and Harvard Kennedy School—to honor South Asian heritage and extraordinary achievement.

The evening’s centerpiece was the recognition of Michelin-starred chef Vikas Khanna as the Harvard SAA Person of the Year 2025. Celebrated for his transformative influence on global South Asian representation, Chef Khanna has elevated culinary arts through his renowned New York restaurant, Bungalow. By blending traditional South Asian flavors with innovative techniques, he bridges cultures and fosters unity. His work as a filmmaker and philanthropist further amplifies his role as a

global ambassador, promoting compassion and cultural understanding. The Harvard SAA proudly honors his contributions to art, cuisine, and humanity. Equally celebrated were Shivangi Gupta Singh and Shashank Gupta, recipients of the Harvard SAA Designer of the Year Award. They are the founders of Nazranaa, the largest and most renowned South Asian bridal boutique in the U.S. With over 10,000 brides styled, Singh has set new standards in luxury ethnic fashion, earning global acclaim.

Meanwhile, Gupta has left his mark on South Asian menswear and built bridges in textile trade between India and the U.S. Together, they created the widely acclaimed TV series *Nazranaa Diaries*, which has garnered over 77 million views. They introduced the exclusive Fall/Winter collection “Dhruva,” uniquely designed for Harvard students to symbolize leadership, elegance, and confidence. “Andaaz reflects the strength and diversity of South Asian culture while honoring those who inspire

us to dream bigger,” said a Harvard SAA spokesperson. “We are thrilled to celebrate Chef Khanna, Singh, and Gupta for their remarkable contributions to the global stage.” The event’s success was elevated by exceptional partners: Aria Events for flawless planning, Vidhi Beauty for stunning beauty services, Alankaar Decor for breathtaking ambiance, Nirvanaa for exquisite catering, and Mabruuk Fashions for standout fashion contributions. Their artistry brought Harvard’s tradition of excellence to life.

RESORTS WORLD NEW YORK CITY AND CUNY/YORK COLLEGE ANNOUNCE NEW INTRO TO GAMING OPERATIONS COURSE THIS SPRING TO MEET INCREASED DEMAND

Resorts World, CUNY’s York Also Celebrates Latest Cohort to Graduate from Free, Six-Week Course on the Nuances of the Gaming Industry

Queens, NY – Resorts World New York City (RWNYC) and CUNY York College today announced that the college will hold a second Intro to Gaming Operations Course this spring to proactively prepare tomorrow’s workforce for thousands of jobs set to be created in the casino industry. This additional course comes as RWNYC and York celebrate the graduation of the latest group to complete the free, six-week class. “With thousands of career opportunities expected to come online as soon as next year, Resorts World New York City remains committed to making this workforce as prepared as possible,” said Robert DeSalvio, President of Genting Americas East. “Intro to Gaming Operations has helped scores of current and prospective employees understand the full picture of this industry since it began three years ago. We are so grateful to our partners at York College for working to enhance New Yorkers’

ability to succeed.” “York College’s mission is to prepare our students for productive and purposeful lives,” said Claudia V. Schrader, Interim President of CUNY/York College. “With partners like Resorts World New York City in our backyard, we’re creating pathways to ensure our graduates are ready to pursue rewarding careers in the gaming industry right here in Queens.” Intro to Gaming Operations first launched in May 2022, built around a mission to train students for careers in the gaming industry. RWNYC executives helped design the course in partnership with the business and economics department at York College. The product is a unique view into casino operations focusing on slots and table games, information technology, marketing, hotel operations, and security. Such an approach recognizes the multiple disciplines that make up the gaming industry and an abundance of diverse career pathways.

The latest course kicked off on March 11th with a cohort of three dozen students, including current employees at RWNYC. The final class was held this Saturday, April 12th, with a tour of New York City’s only casino, followed by a graduation ceremony at RWNYC. Interest for Intro to Gaming Operation was so strong this year that RWNYC and York decided to offer a second course this spring. To meet this demand and continue preparing the workforce of tomorrow now, RWNYC and York agreed to hold a second series this spring that will begin May 8th and run through June 14th. To learn more and register, click here. Preparing employees for careers in gaming has never been more essential, as more jobs in this field are expected to grow as soon as next year. Resorts World has pledged to increase its workforce fivefold, from 1,000 current union workers to 5,000 permanent employees, as part of a \$5 billion expansion.

Mayor Adams Co-Signs Disappearances Instead of Due Process



New York, NY—Today, New York City Mayor Eric Adams refused to condemn the disappearance of Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia, instead alluding to “gangs” and “bad people” as a justification. The Supreme Court of the United States, in a 9-0 decision, reaffirmed a lower court’s order that Abrego Garcia be returned to the U.S. from El Salvador. Murad Awawdeh, President and CEO, New York Immigration Coalition: “Once again, Mayor Adams made clear that he believes in due process only when it benefits himself. By co-

signing the disappearance of Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia—a father and husband—to Bukele’s notorious CECOT torture camp, Adams has aligned himself with the same authoritarian tactics Trump used to vanish New Yorkers to El Salvador. Instead of standing up for the rights of all New Yorkers, the Mayor repeats fiction and nonsense. Adams owes the Abrego Garcia family, who is fighting tooth and nail to be reunited, and our city an apology—and a commitment to defend the Constitutional rights he swore to uphold.”

Mumbai on high alert, sea vigilance stepped up after Pahalgam terror attack

(News Agency)- Mumbai and its adjoining areas have been put on high alert following the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, which killed 26 people. All beaches around Mumbai have been put on alert.

The Maharashtra Home Department has instructed the Mumbai Police to increase vigilance at sea and tighten security at public places in the aftermath of the Pahalgam carnage - the worst since the Pulwama attack in 2019.

The heightened security measures were aimed at enhancing coastal surveillance and preventing any spillover risks in the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack.

Meanwhile, Pakistan, fearing retaliation from India, is likely to test a new missile in the Arabian Sea region. The range of this missile is said to be 480 kilometres. The missile test can be conducted on Thursday or Friday.

Following the terror attack, Pakistan alerted its air force and issued a no-fly zone in the Arabian Sea and warned of live fire on aircraft if it crossed its airspace. Unusual activities of Pakistani Air Force planes were observed, which allegedly included flying AWACS aircraft near the Indian border. Sailors and fishermen have been advised to stay away from the region. In Tuesday afternoon, five to six terrorists opened fire on a group of tourists at the Baisaran meadow, which is around six kilometres from the Pahalgam town. The meadow is accessible only by foot or horseback. The Resistance Front, an offshoot of the



Lashkar-e-Taiba, has claimed responsibility for the attack. The carnage sent shockwaves across the country and triggered a mass exodus of tourists from the Kashmir Valley.

Earlier today, Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed that the terrorists and conspirators behind the attack will get a punishment beyond their imagination. PM Modi switched from Hindi to English to reiterate his message during a rally in

Bihar's Madhubani to send out the message to the world that India will not spare those who attempt to attack its spirit.

"Today, on the soil of Bihar, I say to the whole world, India will identify, trace and punish every terrorist and their backers. We will pursue them to the ends of the Earth. India's spirit will never be broken by terrorism," he said.

PM Modi, who was in Saudi Arabia

on a two-day visit when the attack took place, cut short his trip and returned to Delhi on Wednesday morning. After the Prime Minister held a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) in the aftermath of the attack, the government announced a five-pronged diplomatic strike on neighbouring Pakistan.

India announced the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism. Other measures include the closure of the Attari-Wagah border, reducing the strength of respective High Commissions and declaring Pakistani diplomats in Delhi persona non grata.

Besides, Pakistani nationals will not be permitted to travel to India under the Saarc visa exemption scheme. Escalating its diplomatic offensive, New Delhi today revoked all visas, including medical ones, issued to Pakistani nationals.

Effective April 27, 2025, all valid visas issued to Pakistani nationals have been cancelled. Even the medical visas - often extended on humanitarian grounds - have been given a limited window. They will remain valid only until April 29, 2025.

India has completely suspended visa services for Pakistani nationals and no new visas will be processed or issued until further notice. Additionally, India has also asked its citizens to avoid travelling to Pakistan and those already in the neighbouring country have been advised to return to India at the earliest possible.

"Many Who Helped": Pahalgam Hero Who Carried Injured Boy On His Back



(News Agency)-The massive terror attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, while spreading shock and horror, also threw up hope, with multiple heroes stepping forward from among the locals.

One such was Sajjad Ahmed Bhatt. A video of him carrying a boy, injured when the terrorists opened fire on a group of tourists, killing 26 people, has been widely circulated. The video shows Mr Bhatt running

downhill over the rocky terrain, his steps never faltering. The boy was on his back, clad in Mr Bhatt's orange jacket to keep him warm. "I was just one person whose video was taken and circulated. There were many people who were doing the same," Mr Bhatt told NDTV. Pahalgam has no proper hospital and anyone injured has to be taken to the Anantnag district hospital 40 km away. Mr Bhatt said he was nearby that day to attend the funeral of his aunt, when he heard of the terror attack and the call to locals for help. He made his way to the spot, where a huge number of people had gathered to help the many

injured. Those who could sit were placed on ponies and moved to the hospital. He had carried the boy who had blood over his face and body, without stopping to ask for name. "The boy's mother was being carried by a pony handler who was right behind me," he said. That man was not photographed, he said. Asked if he was scared, he said, "We would not have been able to help if we were scared. We were a bit scared of course, but it was a matter of humanity. One is human first, religion comes later... They murdered humanity there that day". Twenty-six people had died on

Sunday afternoon as terrorists from a Lashkar-e-Taiba offshoot, unleashed havoc on the scenic meadows of Baisaran and left a bloodbath. Among the 25 tourists who died, one was a Nepali national. The rest came from 14 states across India. The government has vowed retaliation and already taken several non-military action that includes indefinite suspension of the Indus Water Treaty, shutting the Attari border and revoking visas of all Pakistan nationals currently in India. From Sunday, all visas, including medical visas become invalid and the people have 72 hours to leave the country.

India briefs envoys of select nations on J&K attack as it moves to isolate Pak

Envoys of select G20 countries, including China and Canada, were briefed by the MEA on the Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives.

India rallied support from world leaders, including Pakistan's all-weather friend China, as it sought to isolate Islamabad after the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam which claimed 26 lives on April 22. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday briefed envoys from select G20 countries on the attack claimed by an offshoot of the Pakistan-based terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba. Ambassadors of several G20 countries, including China, Canada, Germany, Japan, Poland, the UK and Russia, arrived at the MEA office on India's invitation. The envoys were briefed about the Pahalgam terror attack in a meeting that lasted for about 30

minutes. The high-level diplomatic meeting followed a powerful statement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who issued a stern warning to the perpetrators and their sponsors. "India will find, track, and punish every terrorist... The attackers and their backers will face consequences beyond their imagination," PM Modi declared, switching from Hindi to English during his address from Bihar's Madhubani to ensure the message resonated globally. Within minutes, the international media picked up his remarks, amplifying India's stance against terrorism. The Pahalgam massacre drew swift and unequivocal

condemnation from global powers, including the United States, China, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, Japan, the UAE, and Israel. Global leaders echoed India's outrage. Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President Emmanuel Macron, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak were among those who extended solidarity with India and condemned the attack in strong-worded statements. US President Donald Trump personally called PM Modi to express support, after tweeting, "The United States stands strong with India against terrorism." US Vice President JD Vance, who was in India with his family



when the attack took place, also extended condolences to the families of the victims. India, with words, actions and diplomatic offensives, has sent a loud and clear message to anyone attempting to attack India's spirit will not be spared. India was quick to launch a diplomatic offensive against Pakistan, closing the Attari border, suspending the Indus Waters Treaty, and declaring

Pakistani diplomats 'persona non grata'. India also revoked the visas of all Pakistani nationals and reduced the strength of their respective High Commissions. The decisions were taken after PM Modi chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) in the aftermath of the attack. India has made it clear that the diplomatic offensive will persist until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism.

WORKING CAPITAL R US

EIDL/PPP Money Gone?

Talk to us for Funding Options for your Business

SOLUTIONS

SBA FINANCING

ASSET BASED LOANS

EQUIPMENT FINANCING

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLES

BUSINESS LINES OF CREDIT

We look forward to your valued inquiry for our Business Solutions.

Call (646) 897 3016

info@workingcapitalrus.com
www.workingcapitalrus.com

When you want to read **News that matters**

The South Asian Insider Weekly

Uncompromised and Unbiased

*21 Glorious Years *Always a Step Ahead
 *Journalism of Courage
 *Fearless Voice of the Community

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

Indus Waters Treaty paused, Attari border shut: India responds to J&K attack

India has unleashed a sweeping diplomatic offensive on Pakistan after the Pahalgam terror strike by suspending Indus Waters Treaty, sealing Wagah border and shutting border checkpoint.

(News Agency)- In the wake of the deadly terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam that claimed 26 lives, India on Wednesday announced a series of sweeping diplomatic and strategic countermeasures against Pakistan. Framing the response as a decisive stand against "cross-border terrorism", the Ministry of External Affairs outlined multiple steps, including the indefinite suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty that had endured three wars, and an immediate shutdown of the Integrated Check Post at the Attari-Wagah border - a crucial link for trade and people-to-people engagement between the two nations.

In a further blow to bilateral ties, Pakistani nationals have been barred from travelling to India under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme, with all previously issued visas declared void. Those



already present in India have been directed to leave the country within 48 hours. Here are 5 major announcements made by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA):

Suspension of Indus Waters Cooperation: India has suspended the Indus Waters Treaty, under which 39 billion cubic meters of water from the

Indus River system flows from India into Pakistan annually. The treaty, which governs the sharing of river waters between the two countries, has long been considered a symbol of cooperation even amid years-long conflict.

Closure of Attari-Wagah Border: The Integrated Check Post Attari-Wagah

border, a critical point for trade and people-to-people contact between India and Pakistan, has been shut down with immediate effect. Those who have crossed with valid papers have been asked to return back to Pakistan before May 1, 2025.

Restricting SAARC Visa exemption scheme: Pakistani nationals are barred from travelling to India under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme, with all previously issued visas deemed cancelled. Those already in the country are given 48 hours to leave.

Expulsion of Military Advisors: New Delhi has declared the Defence, Naval, and Air Advisers at the Pakistani High Commission persona non grata, giving them a week to exit India. In a similar move, New Delhi will also withdraw its own Defence, Navy, and Air officials from the High Commission in Islamabad.

Assam MLA Arrested For Pulwama, Pahalgam "Government Conspiracy" Comment



media. "On the basis of a misleading and instigating statement by Dhing MLA, Sh Aminul Islam in public, which went viral and had potential to create an adverse situation, NagaonPS Case 347/25 was registered for offences u/s 152/196/197(1)/113(3)/352/353 BNS. He has been arrested accordingly," the Assam Police said in a post on X.

On the basis of a misleading & instigating statement by Dhing MLA, Sh Aminul Islam in public, which went viral & had potential to create an adverse situation, NagaonPS Case 347/25 was registered for offences u/s 152/196/197(1)/113(3)/352/353 BNS. He has been arrested accordingly. pic.twitter.com/ytMHv9D5AJ — Assam Police (@assampolice) April 24, 2025

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the AIUDF MLA faces treason charges.

"We are trying to take action against anyone who is trying, directly or indirectly, to defend Pakistan after the terror attack. We found the statement and videos of MLA Aminul Islam on social media, and he has been found to be supportive of Pakistan, so we filed a case," Mr Sarma told reporters.

(News Agency) -An MLA in Assam has been arrested over his comments on the terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam and Pulwama. Aminul Islam, an MLA of the opposition party All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), yesterday claimed the suicide bombing of a convoy of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Pulwama in February 2019, and the killing of 26 tourists in Pahalgam were "conspiracies by the government". The Assam Police filed a case on their own (suo motu) against Mr Islam after a video of his comment went viral on social

Ready

FEMA

ad

PROTECT YOUR LEGACY
PLAN FOR EMERGENCIES TODAY

VISIT READY.GOV/PLAN

MAKE A family communications plan	SIGN UP For local weather & emergency alerts	PREPARE An emergency kit
---	--	------------------------------------

Lost Rs 1 lakh on tickets: Indian woman married to Pakistani on deadline to leave

(News Agency)- As India tightens its stance on cross-border movement following the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam that claimed 26 lives, Indian women married in Pakistan are among the worst hit. Many of them, Indian passport holders with families across the border, have been forced to abruptly pack their bags and return to Pakistan, leaving behind parents and homes in India. "We are told to leave within 48 hours. How is it possible? Attari is 900 km from Jodhpur. We weren't getting buses. My husband had to bear a loss of Rs 1 lakh for the tickets," said one woman. "My passport is Indian but I am half-Pakistani. I feel guilty for the terror attack, but what is the fault of the common people? They are not my cousins. For me, both India and Pakistan are important. God will punish those responsible," she said.



The woman said she was in India for just four days but was rushing back after hearing the government's order. "Only the perpetrators must be punished. The common people must not be punished. We left our crying parents behind. Whoever did this attack has not read the Quran. Islam does not teach this."

Several such women have now gathered at the Attari-Wagah border, stuck in limbo. Many of them have lived in Pakistan for decades, raising families there, while maintaining ties with their birthplaces in India.

A man, who reached the Attari border to drop off his sister, said she had a 40-day visa but had to leave due to the situation. "We had to hire a car for her immediate return. We had to bear unnecessary expenses... There should be peace," he said.

Another Pakistani national who had been living in India, said that the situation on

both sides of the border was "normal". He, however, said that he was returning to Pakistan as India suspended all visas for Pakistani nationals. "I don't know about the attack. We were told that we must leave, so we are going back," he said.

In response to the Pahalgam terror strike, which killed 26 people, mainly tourists, in Jammu and Kashmir, India suspended all visa services for Pakistani nationals with immediate effect.

The government also withdrew the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) for Pakistani passport holders,

cancelling all existing exemptions and ordering those in India under the scheme to leave within 48 hours. An April 27 deadline has been set for most Pakistani nationals, while those on medical visas may stay until April 29.

Pakistan responded with reciprocal action, suspending its own visa exemption schemes for Indians, expelling Indian diplomats, and shutting its airspace to Indian flights.

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Police has launched a state-wide drive to identify Pakistani nationals who arrived on valid visas but failed to return after expiry. Acting on instructions from the Centre and the DGP, district police chiefs and local intelligence units have begun verifying identities and collecting data.

Officials estimate around 1,000 Pakistani nationals are staying illegally in Uttar Pradesh. Many reportedly arrived through family connections and later went off the radar, with some allegedly changing their identities. Instances of illegal entry via the Nepal route have also been flagged. Police believe there are 35 such individuals in Bareilly, 30 in Rampur, 18 in Bulandshahr, and 10 in Varanasi.

10th-ANNUAL VAISAKHI 5K RUN
SUNDAY APRIL 27, 2025 @ 8:30 AM • VICTORY FIELD • WOODHAVEN, NY

Supporting **KHALSAAID**

REGISTER NOW! Online at VAISAKHI5K.COM Every Sunday at most New York area Gurdwaras by phone at 8-44 VAISAKHI

AMERICAN PUNJABI SOCIETY (APS)
AVTAR SINGH TINNA, D.D.S. 718-291-1200
SUMIT PARHAR, D.M.D. 718-440-3543

PEARL

SATNAM SINGH PARHAR
A Victory Point 212-763-9110

PARAMJIT SINGH BEDI

SUNRISE TOURS AND TRAVEL

NEW YORK LIFE
kuldeep (516) 448-3393

VAN WYCK

MINT

Jatinder Singh SinghSellsNY.com
516-445-1300

BJ SINGH

jus punjabi

SureDrugs Pharmacy
Liberty Rock Pharmacy, Inc.

Dr. Avtar Singh Tinna 718-291-1200
Satnam S. Parhar 917-440-3543
Gurbhinder Singh Brar 718-558-0256
Sabi Singh 559-242-6545
Manvir Jaswal 516-416-5416

Organized by Vaishakhi 5K, Inc. © 2025 All Rights Reserved. "Vaishakhi 5K" is the trademark of Vaishakhi 5K, Inc. Vaishakhi 5K, Inc. is a Non-Profit 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Organization.

universacare

SINGH'S TEAM
Jaspreet Singh 347-953-0809
Jaspreet Singh 718-831-1299

TaxRaja
Sarabji Singh Sawhney, (718) 680-1992

Dr. Daljeet Singh, MD
Pediatrician, (718) 206-2400
87-81 168 St, Jamaica, NY 11432

Daljeet Singh Sidhu, DDS
43-09 Broadway, Astoria, NY 11103
(718) 284-8045

Amrik S. Minhas
(718) 937-1629

हम हिंदुस्तानी

Kanwar Thind
99 Acres Realty
(516) 580-2203

A.S. Arora CPA PC
Certified Public Accountant
(718) 739-3094

All City Expediting, Inc.
Satwant Minhas, President
(718) 577-0424

Preet & B Construction Corp.
Bishan S. Ghotra
(917) 849-9091

Paramjot S. Parmar
(732) 664-1068
Punjabi Brother Catering 917-572-6527

RELIABLE INSURANCE SERVICES
(718) 441-2627

VIKRAM CONSTRUCTION INC.
Harjeet S. Manj
(917) 295-7297

CUSTOMBUILT HOME INC.
Mandeep S. Sahi, President
(917) 214-0067

Richi Rich Palace

OMNI MORTGAGE

Kapurthala Sports Club

United BUILDING SUPPLY NY INC.
TEL : 718-577-0600

APNA PUNJAB

Sant Baba Nidhan Singh Ji Cultural Society Inc.
Mohan Singh (Tea Sewa)

Dr Ashok Dogra
Dr Mridula Dogra

BOLLYWOOD

INDIAN PANORAMA

CHARDIKLA TIME TV

GLOBAL PUNJAB

The South Asian Times

INSIDER

NIRI

पंजाबी दर्शन

Vaisakhi 5K

Organized by Vaishakhi 5K, Inc. © 2025 All Rights Reserved. "Vaishakhi 5K" is the trademark of Vaishakhi 5K, Inc. Vaishakhi 5K, Inc. is a Non-Profit 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Organization.

Will punish Pahalgam culprits beyond their imagination: PM



(News Agency)-In his first public remarks after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said India will pursue the perpetrators of the dastardly act to the ends of the earth, break their backs and raze them to the ground. The PM termed the attack as an assault not just on the innocent tourists, but the very soul of India and said the "perpetrators and conspirators of the act would get a punishment they would never have imagined".

Sending out a firm warning to Pakistan, the PM, addressing the country and the world from Madhubani in election-bound Bihar, said India would identify, track and punish every terrorist and his backer and none would go unpunished.

"Today, from the soil of Bihar, I say to the whole world that we will pursue them to the ends of the earth. India's spirit will never be broken by terrorism. Every effort will be made to ensure justice is done. The entire nation is firm in this resolve. Everyone who believes in

humanity is with us. I thank the people of various countries and their leaders who have stood with us in these times," said the PM, switching to English in between as he spoke on the occasion of a National Panchayati Raj Day event. The tone and tenor of Modi's maiden public statement on the Pahalgam attack was a strong reiteration of India's policy of zero tolerance to terror and a signal that the country would employ whatever was deemed necessary to send out a befitting national response. "Hear me loud and clear. The perpetrators and conspirators of this attack are in for a punishment beyond their imagination. Time has come to raze the remaining ground of terror operatives forever," he said in the presence of Bihar Chief

Minister Nitish Kumar and ruling NDA partners in the state. The PM's remarks followed a similar assertion by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh yesterday as he said "India would not just track terrorists, but also those who operated behind the curtains". It was a clear message to Pakistan. Rajnath has already stated that India would offer a befitting response to the Kashmir terror attack in the near future.

The PM, in his tributes to the terror attack deceased, said they came from different parts of the country and spoke different languages. "The killing of innocent tourists by terrorists has pained the entire country," he said, adding the government was doing its best to bring succour to the survivors.



Air India, IndiGo issue travel advisory after Pakistan bans its airspace

(News Agency)-International flights, especially from Delhi and other northern cities, will take a longer time to reach their destinations and fares are also likely to rise in the range of 8-12 per cent in the near term, with Pakistan closing its airspace to Indian airlines in retaliation for India's response to a deadly Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 tourists lost their lives.

Airlines like Air India and IndiGo have issued travel advisory for passengers and have warned them of service disruptions following Pakistan closing its airspace to Indian airlines.

Air India announced on X that due to newly imposed restrictions on Pakistani airspace for all Indian carriers, several of its flights to and from North America, the UK, Europe, and the Middle East may need to take longer, alternative routes. Passengers are advised to expect potential delays and plan accordingly.

"Due to the announced restriction of Pakistan airspace for all Indian airlines,



it is expected that some Air India flights to or from North America, UK, Europe, and Middle East will take an alternative extended route. Air India regrets the inconvenience caused to our passengers due to this unforeseen airspace closure that is outside our control. We would like to reiterate that at Air India, the safety of our customers and crew remains top priority," Air India posted. Another Indian airline, IndiGo, also issued a travel advisory for their passengers.

"In view of the ongoing situation and Pakistan airspace closure, a few international flight schedules may be impacted. We're working to minimise the inconvenience," IndiGo posted on X. Pakistan on Thursday closed its airspace to Indian-owned or operated airlines in retaliation for India's response to a deadly Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 tourists lost their lives. With this decision, the Pakistani airspace cannot be used by India-

registered aircraft as well as planes owned or leased by Indian operators.

PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK

On Tuesday afternoon, five to six terrorists opened fire on a group of tourists in the Baisaran meadow, which is around 5 kms from Pahalgam. The meadow - also known as 'mini Switzerland' - is accessible only by foot or by horseback. The Pahalgam carnage was one of the deadliest civilian attacks in the Kashmir Valley in recent years.

The Resistance Front (TRF), an offshoot of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Eyewitnesses said the terrorists emerged from the surrounding pine forests and fired at people picnicking, riding ponies, or eating at food stalls. Most of the victims were tourists, including two foreigners from the UAE and Nepal, and two locals.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah called the attack "much larger than anything we've seen directed at civilians in recent years".

Clarion call for action against Pakistan

The shocking massacre in Pahalgam that claimed 26 lives — including visitors from the UAE and Nepal — is not merely another tragic incident; it marks a calculated escalation in Pakistan's ongoing proxy war against India, explicitly incited by that nation's military leadership.

Executed by four heavily armed terrorists, including three operatives identified as Pakistani nationals, the assault was meticulously orchestrated to maximise casualties and attract global attention. The attackers employed advanced weaponry such as M4 carbines and AK-47 rifles, chillingly segregating victims on the basis of religious identity. Disturbingly, they documented their brutality using helmet-mounted body cameras, emphasising their intent to amplify terror and spread propaganda globally.

This attack notably follows provocative statements by Pakistan Army Chief Gen Asim Munir. Addressing a gathering at the Overseas Pakistanis Convention last week, Gen Munir reiterated Pakistan's claim over Kashmir, invoking Muhammad Ali Jinnah's controversial two-nation theory. His inflammatory rhetoric, explicitly designed to fuel religious animosity and incite extremist elements, served as a dog whistle, directly contributing to the heinous violence witnessed in Pahalgam. Pakistan's swift denial, delivered by Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, labelling the attack as merely "local resistance," starkly contrasts with intelligence data meticulously gathered by Indian security agencies. The incontrovertible evidence identifies the attackers as members of The Resistance Front (TRF), a terrorist outfit established in 2019 by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). TRF was created to evade international scrutiny, particularly from bodies like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), by masquerading as a secular, indigenous resistance group in contrast to overt religious groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

Such strategic rebranding is not unprecedented. Throughout my tenure commanding critical counter-terror operations in Kashmir, I have witnessed Pakistan's consistent deployment of proxy organisations to escape international accountability. From the LeT's involvement in the 2008 Mumbai attacks to Jaish-e-Mohammad's devastating strike in Pulwama, Pakistan repeatedly leverages terror groups to destabilise Jammu and Kashmir, aiming to internationalise the conflict and distract from its domestic crises. The 2016 terror attack on the Pathankot airbase, for instance, revealed how these groups, prepared and trained by the ISI and the Pakistan Army, operated and conducted

their operations. There is nothing grey about Pak-sponsored attacks — it is all dark black. Operating under direct command from ISI handlers in Rawalpindi and Muzaffarabad, TRF's operational structure demonstrates the sophistication and extensive resources of Pakistan's intelligence apparatus. TRF militants undergo rigorous training in guerrilla warfare, evasion tactics and psychological operations. The use of helmet-mounted cameras during the Pahalgam massacre exposes ISI's calculated strategy to magnify psychological terror and propagate their extremist narrative digitally.

However, the attack has severely undermined Pakistan's false narrative of indigenous resistance. Kashmiris across religious and social lines unitedly condemned this savage act. Spontaneous protests, candlelight vigils and unequivocal denunciations from loudspeakers at mosques in Doda and neighbouring areas clearly indicate widespread rejection of Pakistan's claims. This local outcry unequivocally demonstrates that genuine resistance movements neither involve foreign militants nor target innocent civilians. Strategically, Pakistan continues supporting terror proxies like TRF to maintain pressure on India in Kashmir, internationalise the issue and divert attention from internal turmoil, including economic collapse and insurgencies in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Gen Munir's incendiary remarks further bolster this dangerous strategy, exacerbating regional instability and deepening Pakistan's international isolation. The global community, increasingly alert to Islamabad's deceit, must urgently confront the tangible threat posed by Pakistan's unabated state-sponsored terrorism. India's diplomatic strategy should be assertive and multifaceted. On the international stage, India must present comprehensive evidence at forums like the FATF and the UN Security Council, directly implicating Pakistan's ISI and military leadership, notably Gen Munir, in orchestrating and financing terror operations, thereby pushing for stringent sanctions and renewed FATF oversight. Moreover, strengthening intelligence-sharing partnerships with strategic allies, including the US, UAE, Israel and the European Union, is imperative. Implementing technologically advanced surveillance systems, AI-driven monitoring, drone interception and fortified border security measures will significantly disrupt infiltration routes and weapon-smuggling networks.

LT GEN DUSHYANT SINGH RETD

The Blood-Stained Silence: Targeted Killings And The Constitutional Conscience Of India

Dharma: Our shared moral foundation translates not only into personal conduct but into public policy and law. It is visible in our Constitution, in our criminal codes, and above all, in the State's duty to protect life. But when citizens are targeted and killed purely for their religious identity, it becomes even more important to ask: who is upholding dharma?

A MASSACRE WITH INTENT

On April 22, 2025, Pahalgam's Baisaran Valley witnessed one of the worst civilian massacres in recent years. 26 people were gunned down by terrorists from The Resistance Front, a Lashkar-e-Taiba offshoot. According to survivors, the victims were asked their names and caste before being executed. This included Lieutenant Vinay Narwal, a 26-year-old Indian Navy officer on leave.

This was not a general act of terror. It was deliberate communal targeting. What deepens the tragedy is the geopolitical context. The attack coincided with US Vice President JD Vance's visit to India and Prime Minister Modi's diplomatic trip to Saudi Arabia. In fact, the first quarter of 2025 had seen over half a million tourists visiting Kashmir, a sign of increasing stability in the region. This massacre was intended to disrupt that progress.

LAW AND ORDER: A SHARED CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Under India's Constitution, states handle "public order" (State List, Seventh Schedule), but Jammu and Kashmir, as a Union Territory post the 2019 Reorganisation Act, is different. The Central government, through the Lieutenant Governor, calls the shots on law and order, including the J&K Police. Agencies like IB and R&AW

answer only to the Union, not the elected National Conference-led UT government.

Still, the UT administration isn't off the hook. It oversees tourism and local governance, which tie into security, like ensuring safe tourist spots or sharing community insights with central forces.

EXTERNAL COMPLICITY AND INTERNAL DECAY

The fingerprints of Pakistan's ISI were unmistakable. Just days before the attack, Pakistan Army Chief Gen. Asim Munir delivered a venomous speech branding Kashmir as Pakistan's "jugular vein" and invoking anti-Hindu bigotry. The attackers included two Pakistani nationals trained by SSG commandos, armed with M4 carbines, AK-47s, and body cameras to record their brutality. The ideological groundwork for such attacks is often laid domestically. Politicians like Srinagar MP Aga Ruhallah, who described J&K's tourism growth as a "cultural invasion," provide ideological justification for terror groups who view India's developmental push as an existential threat to Kashmiri identity.

But the greatest danger lies in what we refuse to acknowledge—the existence of Over-Ground Workers (OGWs) and White-Collar Terrorists (WCTs) within our own institutions. OGWs assist terrorists with logistics, safehouses, and surveillance, while WCTs, embedded in bureaucracies, media, or academia, enable radicalisation, funding, and the spread of separatist propaganda. This internal subversion is a constitutional threat. It erodes our right to life (Article 21), undermines equality before law (Article 14), and breeds institutional bias that violates Article 15's guarantee against discrimination.

By Yawar Khan & Ravi Gupta



ISSN No. 1554 06X

Editor in Chief & Publisher

Sharanjit Singh Thind

Tel: 646 875 8495

Email: editor@thesouthasianinsider.com

Mailing Address:

NuWay Media Group Inc.

223, 38th Street, Suite 4

Manhattan, New York 10018

For General and Advertising Inquiries:

thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

Disclaimer The South Asian Insider is a weekly newspaper published every week by The South Asian Insider. It's available in community & religious centers, ethnic grocery stores and also available by mail, email & online to subscribers. The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various writers, authors and forum participants in The South Asian Insider do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of the Editor. All advertisers advertising in The South Asian Insider assume responsibility for accuracy of their advertisements. The South Asian Insider and/or people associated with it are not responsible for any claims made by the advertisers and don't endorse any product or services advertised in The South Asian Insider. We strongly urge consulting your lawyer before buying/contracting/hiring through the ads published in the newspaper. We are in the business of selling space and claims made by the advertisers are not authenticated or confirmed by an independent source

Pahalgam aftermath, Chance for India to hit back at Pakistan

The Pahalgam terror attack is an act of sheer desperation that bears the stamp of the usual suspect — Pakistan. A nation itself being lacerated by terrorism is persisting with its nefarious policy of bleeding India with a “thousand cuts” through state and non-state actors. The Resistance Front, a proxy of the banned Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba, has claimed responsibility for the dastardly assault on civilians, mostly tourists. The audacity of it all is a chilling throwback to the Lashkar-plotted carnage that rocked Mumbai — and India — in 2008.

It's no coincidence that the attack comes in the wake of 26/11 accused Tahawwur Rana's extradition from the US and Pakistan Army Chief Gen Asim Munir's anti-India tirade. Gen



Munir virtually prepared the ground for the April 22 horror when he described Kashmir as his nation's “jugular vein” last week. Even as Baloch insurgency is giving him and his military sleepless nights, he

chose to rake up the two-nation theory and claimed that Hindus and Muslims had nothing in common. Targeting of non-Muslims — and that too during US Vice-President JD Vance's India visit — makes it obvious

that the terrorists and their handlers have thrown down the gauntlet at the BJP-led government. Notably, Pakistan has condoned the deaths of tourists, but stopped short of condemning the attack.

The terror incidents in Uri (2016) and Pulwama (2019) were followed by a fierce cross-border retaliation from India. Will the Pahalgam massacre trigger a similar enough-is-enough response? The Modi government, which prides itself on its muscularity, is under intense pressure to teach Pakistan a lesson all over again. On the diplomatic front, it's a big opportunity for New Delhi to name and shame Islamabad in the international arena. Rana's interrogation is expected to reaffirm India's consistent stand that Pakistan is an incorrigible epicentre of terrorism. The outcome of the Pahalgam probe will lend even greater weight to Delhi's argument. But the moot point is when or whether Pakistan will see the error of its destructive ways.

What Has JD Vance's India Visit Achieved?

By Nishtha Gautam

Apr 22 Apart from the minor detail that the US is India's largest trading partner, there's this critical matter of matrimony. The second lady of the US, Usha Vance, is of Telugu descent and like a good girl from a good family, she's prevailed on her husband to be his charming self and visit the 'in-laws'. And that's precisely what he's doing.

It is quite likely that the visiting Vances may achieve more for the North-South unity in India than any well-intentioned political action ever will. After all, despite Mrs Vance's roots in Andhra Pradesh and the presence of extended family in the southern state, the Vance family has only the northern delights on their itinerary. However, it must be said that April is not the best time to go sightseeing in Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur. But when you are busy and important, you indulge in brutal rationing of your travel time. Only the most critical items on the to-do list get checked. Visiting the Taj Mahal



is important. As is the visit to 7 Lok Kalyan Marg, the official residence of the Indian Prime Minister.

Whether the tariff talk happened between the US Vice President and PM Narendra Modi, the visit is already a success, as reported by the former's office. In fact, talking business would be off-colour in a milieu where the PM of the largest democracy of the world becomes a congenial grandfather figure to the three

little Vances. Until there's an expected unexpected bombshell of an announcement from the White House around bilateral trade, this familial interaction will become the leitmotif for the two countries' relationship. Just like the enthusiastic hugs between President Barack Obama and PM Modi.

PM Modi has redefined India's foreign policy by making personal gestures a part of the plan. The decorated swing at

Ahmedabad for Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit, bear hugs with the French President Emmanuel Macron, and the immortal Team Melodi moment with the Italian PM Georgia Meloni are some of the examples of PM Modi's on-brand personalisation of geopolitics. Whether these gestures have translated into the gains that India hopes for is a contested matter. After all, the Galwan standoff happened within a few

months of the Modi-Xi summit in Mahabalipuram in October 2019. It can be successfully argued that PM Modi's show of bonhomie with the world leaders is aimed primarily at domestic consumption. One of the biggest reasons cited by voters election after election is PM Modi raising India's profile on the world stage.

But if anyone thinks that the optics of the present visit are only furthering PM Modi's reputational agenda, they'd be missing a critical point. With the rise of Indian Americans' political profile in the US, both Democrats and Republicans actively wooed the community. While the presidential candidate of the Democratic party, Kamala Harris, invoked her Indian mother, the Republican campaign matched it by highlighting the vice presidential candidate's Indian American wife. There is no evidence yet whether the 'desi' card worked for either but not playing it would have meant ceding some political ground.

Analysis: Why Quacks Survive And Thrive In India

By Bharti Mishra Nath

Quacks or jhola chaps are usually known to operate in rural areas or outskirts of towns. That an Unlicensed Medical Practitioner (UMP) could practise as a cardiologist in a large, reputed hospital is unthinkable.

Narendra John Camm, a "cardiologist" at a Missionary Hospital in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district, was arrested recently for the deaths of seven patients who allegedly died after being treated by him. This fake 'doctor' had performed angioplasty on 15 heart patients in January-February 2025.

Hundreds of lives are lost in India at the hands of UMPs every year. In September last, there were reports of three lives lost back-to-back in Bihar due to quacks. Mohi Yadav, a middle-aged man, died after a surgery for piles by a 'fake surgeon' in Jehanabad, Bihar.

Krishna Kumar, 15, died after a failed gallbladder surgery performed by a fake doctor who allegedly learned the procedure from YouTube videos. Lakshmi Devi, a resident of Bihar's Saharsa district, died after being administered the wrong injection by a so-called doctor operating out of a pharmacy in her neighbourhood.

In 2023, 33 people tested positive for HIV in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao district after a fake 'doctor' injected what he called 'magic treatment' for Rs 10 to all 33 with the same syringe.

The list, unfortunately, is endless.

There are two issues facing the public healthcare system across India. First, the lack of doctors or reliable and affordable healthcare. Second, the flourishing business of quacks or UMPs, who have exploited ignorant patients and continue to fill the gaps in healthcare.

Healthcare In Shambles

The dearth of doctors, both in the urban and rural areas, push people towards UMPs. It is more rampant in small towns and rural areas where these imposters are readily available, respond quickly and charge nominal fees. The UMPs exploit the ignorant and the impoverished, who cannot afford treatment in urban centres. Some operate from pharmacies or small clinics. Some establish fake hospitals operating out of large buildings, which pretend to be reputable institutions but often turn fatal for those seeking treatment.

The strange case of Narendra John Camm now raises the question about unqualified Registered Medical Practitioners (RMPs) in established hospitals.

"People like Narendra John Camm



infiltrate big hospitals by exploiting lax verification systems, forged credentials, and the desperation of patients. Unlike unqualified RMPs, these imposters operate under the guise of legitimacy, leveraging hospital reputations," says Amulya Nidhi, the National Convenor of the Jan Swasthya Abhiyan India based in Madhya Pradesh.

"This trend now extends to urban hospitals due to unchecked private sector growth and doctor shortage. The government must enforce the Clinical Establishment Act, mandate rigorous credential checks, and set uniform treatment rates," he adds.

In healthcare, the doctor-patient ratio is a key indicator of medical access, quality of care, and system efficiency. According to the National Medical Commission (NMC), the doctor to patient ratio in the country is around 1:836, which, though better than the WHO standard of 1:1,000, is deplorable. The distribution of healthcare professionals in India is extremely lopsided - mostly urban centred.

The report 'Health Dynamics of India 2022-23' put out by the Union health ministry in September flags a nearly 80% shortage of specialist doctors at community health centres across rural India. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports of various states have also consistently highlighted the crisis in public health infrastructure.

A CAG report on public health infrastructure and management of health services in Madhya Pradesh - where Narendra John Camm operated - exposed several failings. It was based on an audit done from 2017-18 to 2021-22. Among others, the CAG report pointed at a shortage of 22,845 healthcare workers due to unfilled sanctioned posts across public health centres.

Such a shortfall leaves a wide chasm in healthcare services, particularly in the poorer, interior regions of the country

where primary health centres continue to be short of doctors, medical staff and resources. Specialists are even more scarce. General Practitioners and specialists in private hospitals in towns and cities are unaffordable, not just for the rural population but also for many in urban areas. The quacks end up filling a considerable gap in the healthcare system.

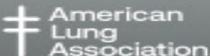
Why Do Quacks Exist?

Throughout the country, there have been

numerous cases of unqualified individuals registered as doctors with State Medical Councils using forged documents and certificates of doctors from other states. Many are practising, undetected. That quacks only thrive in rural areas because of the lack of qualified doctors is belied by ground realities. In Telangana, according to a report, 75 per cent fake doctors operate in urban centres like Hyderabad, which have top government and private hospitals. There is a complex symbiotic relationship between unregistered medical practitioners, the community they operate in, and public health services in rural areas. Any plan to improve healthcare in these areas will need to factor this in. In states like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Bihar, the shortage of qualified health professionals, coupled with poor road connectivity, dense jungles, and the palpable fear of attacks by the Naxals and anti-social elements, prevent people from leaving the safety of their villages. Here too, unqualified RMPs fill the gap.

Quitting smoking was hard.
Screening for lung cancer is easy.

If you smoked, you may still be at risk, but early detection could save your life.
Get **SavedByTheScan.org**

American Lung Association.  

A Day in Pahalgam Before Terror Struck



By Ashutosh

As my plane descended on the runway at Srinagar, my memory took me back to 35 years ago when I had gone to cover Kashmir as a cub reporter. Kashmir then was burning. Many people speculated that days were not far when Kashmir would not be part of the country. I took a taxi to go to Centaur hotel. When I realised that I was one of the two guests staying in that hotel, I was petrified and very next day I decided to leave and stay in Ahdoos near Lal Chowk, which was not fully occupied but had enough travellers, mostly journalists, to give me comfort.

I walked through the narrow streets of Srinagar and could see only BSF pickets at every 500 meters and an armed jawan at every hundred meters. Srinagar then was literally a ghost town. Defiance and rebelliousness were etched prominently on their faces. Yet, not once was I abused or threatened. After spending a week there, I returned to write a story for Saptahik Hindustan: "Lamhon ne khata ki, sadiyon ne saza paayi" (centuries of punishment for moments of sin)

Last week, when I arrived at the hotel with my wife, I was pleasantly surprised by the vibrancy of the city. In Srinagar, the roads were bustling with people. Tourists like me were greeted with traffic jams and slow-moving vehicles. While security measures were present, they were neither overt nor intrusive.

This was in stark contrast to my visit in 1990-91, when buses and taxis were stopped every kilometre or two for thorough security checks. Kashmiris were subjected to full-body frisking, often with two or three jawans pointing guns at travellers. This time, however, I could walk

freely, and taxis moved across the city with minimal security interruptions. The atmosphere was cheerful, people seemed happy, tourists were savouring every moment of their stay, and markets were thriving. Shops, restaurants, and cafes were packed, and tourists were everywhere. Srinagar felt like a joyous town.

I also covered the Kashmir assembly elections in 1996, during Narasimha Rao's tenure as prime minister. At that time, the political process in Kashmir had resumed after nearly a decade, but the tension in the air was palpable. Conversations were hushed, and the city felt dangerous. We were advised to return to our hotels before sunset and avoid unnecessary risks.

This time, no such warnings were issued. We had the freedom to dine out late at night without fear. Yet, my journalistic instincts told me that the calmness in the air might be deceptive. Kashmir seemed almost too normal and peaceful to believe, though I had no reason to doubt what I was witnessing.

The next day, when we visited the Tulip Garden, it was almost impossible to walk without bumping into other tourists. People of all ages—young and old, men and women, boys and girls—were capturing memories with the vibrant tulips. Young couples and newlyweds were revelling in the moment, their spirits undeterred even by the rain. A friend of mine, who has travelled to some of the world's finest destinations, remarked that he had never witnessed so much happiness in one place.

Along Dal Lake, vehicles crawled at a snail's pace, turning what should have been a short journey into a half-hour

ordeal. On Sunday, we visited Pahalgam, where the warm weather welcomed us. The meadows were brimming with tourists, many eager to hire ponies to explore the picturesque upper areas. At Betab Valley—named after the film *Betab*, which was shot there—young Kashmiri boys played cricket. Visitors posed with sheep adorned in quirky decorations, including sunglasses, while women competed to be photographed in traditional Kashmiri attire. Local photographers were thriving, their business booming. Kashmir was on full display, showcasing its heavenly beauty. I could never have imagined that within 48 hours, the same place would transform into a graveyard. Devils seemed to descend from hell, unleashing terror and killing innocent men after identifying their religion. The thought that it could have been us was terrifying.

I had visited Kashmir many times during its worst phases, yet apart from the initial hours of my first visit, I was never scared or concerned about my safety. I never felt threatened or intimidated. Kashmir always welcomed me. Tourists were rarely targeted, barring a few isolated incidents. It was beyond my comprehension that terrorism in Kashmir could take such an ugly turn, claiming the lives of innocent tourists.

According to a Reuters report, tourist footfall in the Kashmir Valley reached its highest in 2024, with over 3 million visitors. The numbers have been steadily rising since 2022. The tourism industry was enjoying its best season in 2025, with projections suggesting that footfall would surpass the 2024 figures. A journalist is always a journalist. Even though I wasn't there on a professional assignment, my

conversations with people from all walks of life—and even with friends in the security establishment—revealed a peace that felt both intriguing and, at times, unsettling. It was difficult for me to believe that the valley could be so happy and peaceful. This question became even more compelling in the context of the abrogation of Article 370 and the transformation of the state into a union territory. After a six-year gap, Kashmir has an elected government, with over 60% voter turnout. Yet, a question kept coming: if Kashmir appeared so normal, what would happen Pakistan-sponsored terrorism?

There was an answer when an old Kashmiri friend shared his perspective: "This calmness is artificial. Kashmir is a ticking bomb. It's true that local Kashmiris are not happy, but they have to survive, and tourism is their lifeline. Tourism gives them the money to live a better life in a high-pressure situation." His words resonated deeply with me. Kashmir has been living in an abnormal state since 1987, when terrorism first took root following the assembly elections.

During my stay, I could sense that Kashmiris are exhausted from living in turmoil. No one knows when a bullet might claim their life or that of their loved ones. A new generation has grown up under constant tension, never having experienced peacetime. They don't know what it means to live outside a war zone. For them, a knock on the door in the dead of night is routine. It's normal to witness loved ones being dragged away by security personnel or falling victim to a terrorist's bullet.

Pakistan just had a close shave. Can it afford to fight India?



India-Pakistan relations have nosedived after the terror attack in Pahalgam. Two local operatives from Jammu and Kashmir were reportedly trained in Pakistan for the terror attack. India has responded to the attack with several retaliatory measures: Suspension of the 1960 Indus Water Treaty Closure of the Integrated Check Post at Attari with immediate effect Revocation of all SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) visas issued to Pakistanis; holders have been given 48 hours to leave Capping diplomatic staff strength in both missions to 30 personnel by May 1, down from 55.

defence minister Rajnath Singh had assured the nation of a "loud and clear" response to the Pahalgam terror attack, which indicates a military response could be in the works. Meanwhile, Pakistan has also assumed a hard posture. It has issued a notification to carry out surface-to-surface missile test from its Karachi coast along its coastline within its exclusive economic zone on April 24-25, news agency ANI reported citing sources.

As India plans a military response, the war clouds hover over the two countries which have already fought four wars. A speech by Pakistan's army chief General Asim Munir, a few days before the attack, glorified Pakistan's Islamist ideology as well as emphasised Pakistan's support to terror in J&K. This indicates the Pakistani military establishment will not adopt a reconciliatory approach.

Also Read: India acts tough after Pahalgam attack: Military options on table, However, at this stage, Pakistan hardly affords a military conflict with India. It has been back from the brink of bankruptcy and is still not out of danger. Its economy, which broke down after the pandemic, is barely recovering while the country survives on loans. A military conflict with India, even if short and

contained, will spell doom for Pakistan's economy.

When Pakistan went nearly bankrupt The years post covid saw Pakistan's economy unravel. Pakistan, the richest country in South Asia 50 years ago, was reduced to the poorest due to bad governance, military dictatorships and adoption of promoting cross-border terror as state policy. Just as it witnessed political turmoil over the jailing of its former Prime Minister Imran Khan and a virulent insurgency in Balochistan, bankruptcy stared it in the face.

Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal urged Pakistanis to cut down on tea because the country imported tea and for that it had to borrow money. The statement highlighted the precarious condition of Pakistan's foreign reserves.

Pakistan's \$350 billion economy struggled as inflation rose to record high of 38.50% in May 2023, with growth turning negative, reserves shrinking to barely a couple of weeks of controlled imports, and interest rates jumping to 22%. It had reserves of just \$3.7 billion remaining. For nearly five years, it remained on the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) for terror funding which made access to loans difficult.

The economic crisis was the most prolonged, pushing the country to the brink of a sovereign default in the summer of 2023. With Pakistan's debt-to-GDP ratio in a danger zone of 70%, and between 40% and 50% of government revenues earmarked for interest payments in 2023, only default-stricken Sri Lanka, Ghana and Nigeria were worse off.

What pulled it back from the brink of sovereign default was a \$3 billion short-term financial bailout package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Long-time allies Saudi Arabia, the UAE

and China also rolled over billions of dollars in loans.

Pakistan's economy is still limping Last month, the IMF staff reached a deal with Pakistan for a new \$1.3 billion arrangement and also agreed on the first review of the ongoing 37-month bailout program.

Pending board approval, Pakistan can unlock the \$1.3 billion under a new climate resilience loan program spanning 28 months, the IMF said. It will also free \$1 billion under its \$7 billion bailout program, which would bring those disbursements to \$2 billion. "Over the past 18 months, Pakistan has made significant progress in restoring macroeconomic stability and rebuilding confidence despite a challenging global environment," the IMF said in a statement. However, Pakistan's external financing needs will remain significant in the coming year, despite progress in rebuilding its foreign exchange reserves, Fitch Ratings said in February. It needs to repay over \$22 billion in external debt in the fiscal year 2025, including nearly \$13 billion in bilateral deposits, Fitch

said. "Securing sufficient external financing remains a challenge, considering large maturities and lenders' existing exposures," said the credit ratings agency. The World Bank on Wednesday lowered Pakistan's GDP growth forecast to 2.7 per cent for the current fiscal year, citing continued economic stabilisation but persistent constraints from tight monetary and fiscal policies. For its economy to emerge out of the crisis, Pakistan needs to implement several reforms which are often impeded by the political compulsions of the ruling elite. A few days ago, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb reassured the IMF that his country would stay the reform course under its \$7 billion bailout program.

The suspension of the Indus Water Treaty by India might hamstring Pakistan's rural economy if India partly diverts the flow of water. In such an economic scenario, when it is surviving on back-to-back loans and struggles to implement reforms as required by the IMF, a military conflict will be suicidal for Pakistan.

On it.

Ending racial injustice requires all of us to work together and take real action.

What can you do to help?



Educate yourself about the history of American racism, privilege and what it means to be anti-racist.



Commit to actions that challenge injustice and make everyone feel like they belong, such as challenging biased or racist language when you hear it.



Vote in national and local elections to ensure your elected officials share your vision of public safety.



Donate to organizations, campaigns and initiatives who are committed to racial justice.



Let's come together to take action against racism and fight for racial justice for the Black community. Visit lovehasnolabels.com/fightforfreedom



Why We Need To Wake Up From Induced Amnesia



cruelty. His empire was not modelled on administrative brilliance but built atop the bloodied bones of his family, his enemies, and the very soul of India. He imprisoned his father, Shah Jahan, murdered his brothers, and ascended the throne through a web of betrayal. To call him a religious ruler is an affront to the very concept of religion.

Aurangzeb's reign marked an era aimed at breaking the back of Bharatiya dharma. His rule was not merely politically oppressive but spiritually corrosive, embodying a zealous disdain for the pluralistic ethos that defined Indian civilization for millennia. As nationalist historian Jadunath Sarkar observed, "neither age nor experience of life softened Aurangzeb's bigotry... The orthodox measures of Aurangzeb were an insidious attempt to establish an Islamic state in India, which in effect implied the conversion of the entire population to Islam and the extinction of every form of dissent."

One of Aurangzeb's most sinister tools was the reimposition of the jizya tax in 1679—a humiliating levy on non-Muslims. This tax was not simply a fiscal burden; it was ideological warfare, branding Hindus as second-class citizens in their own land—kafirs to be subdued, humiliated, and controlled. It was part of a broader vision: to dismantle Sanatan Dharma and establish an Islamic empire on its ruins. Claims portraying Aurangzeb as a temple builder or an art patron are either tragically uninformed or deliberately deceitful. Such narratives are not mere historical inaccuracies—they are moral betrayals. Records of temple patronage attributed to Aurangzeb are often forged, exaggerated, or politically motivated actions. These isolated events pale in comparison to the documented destruction of hundreds of temples under Aurangzeb's explicit orders.

Aurangzeb's barbarity extended to executing Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru,

for refusing to convert to Islam, and killing Sambhaji Maharaj. He tortured his father and slaughtered his three brothers. Is such a ruthless figure deserving of admiration?

In his court documents and farmans, Aurangzeb issued explicit orders to destroy Hindu temples with a clear motive: to crush the spiritual resilience and cultural identity of Bharat. Eminent historians like R.C. Majumdar and Satish Chandra have affirmed that this destruction was not incidental but methodical. It was a state policy designed to instil fear and assert dominance through desecration. These were not the acts of a ruler devoted to art but of a bigot bent on erasing the past and enslaving the future. Equally farcical is the effort to portray Aurangzeb as a patron of music or a connoisseur of culture. The truth is starkly opposite. He banned classical music, closed down dance halls, and persecuted artists who refused to conform to his orthodox interpretation of Islam.

By **Rajiv Tuli, Prashant Barthwal**

History is not merely a record of bygone eras; it is the moral compass of a civilization. It shapes the consciousness of a people, informs their present, and influences their collective destiny. A society that forgets its heroes and glorifies its oppressors is not just misguided—it is complicit in cultural self-destruction. In modern India, this tragic distortion of memory is neither accidental nor subtle. On one hand, we celebrate the towering legacy of Chhatrapati Shivaji and his son Sambhaji—guardians of dharma, protectors

of culture, and pioneers of Hindavi Swaraj. On the other, we witness an insidious campaign to whitewash the crimes of Aurangzeb, one of the most tyrannical, bigoted, and barbaric rulers to have ever walked the sacred soil of Bharat.

Aurangzeb, the sixth Mughal emperor, was neither a man of spiritual integrity nor a beacon of justice. He was intoxicated by power, blinded by fanaticism, and driven by a compulsive hatred for all that did not submit to his theological orthodoxy. Styling himself as Zil-e-Ilahi—the Shadow of God—he ruled not with divine mercy but with unrelenting

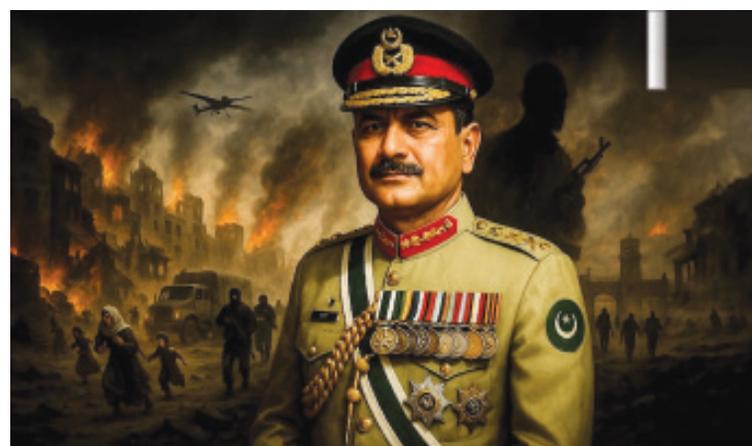
Why Pak army chief Asim Munir is desperate for a mini-war with India

By **Yudhajit Shankar Das**

India's top leadership, including PM Narendra Modi, has vowed a befitting reply over the Pahalgam massacre. Pakistan's role is undeniable, and India has both diplomatic and kinetic options on the table, like after the Uri and Pulwama attacks. This is why Pakistan's army chief, General Asim Munir, might be risking a limited war with India.

Nothing unites a country like war does. With its economy in the doldrums, armed rebels running riot in two of its four provinces and the popularity of its army at a new low, Pakistan might be itching for a military confrontation. Since the 1971 split, this is the closest Pakistan has come to breaking up. A mini-war could fix multiple problems, and the Pahalgam attack could be intended for that.

That India will respond with might to the Pahalgam massacre has been made clear by the country's top leadership. The questions are how and



when. There is also another important question -- Why has Pakistan Army Chief Gen Asim Munir risked a military confrontation with India? That despite witnessing India's resolve after the Uri and Pulwama terror strikes.

India has been at the receiving of Pakistan's terror export ever since its formation in 1947. However, the Pahalgam attack was unlike anything that Pakistan-backed terrorists have carried out in India.

Twenty-six people were massacred in south Kashmir's Pahalgam on April 22. The

Resistance Front, indeed a front for the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), claimed responsibility for the attack on holidayers. A top LeT commander, Saifullah Kasuri, is reportedly the mastermind.

It is the targeting of tourists, the toll and the singling out of non-Muslims that make the Pahalgam attack unlike any other in recent years.

The attack seemed well-planned and timed even as tourism received a major boost, with the overall security scenario in Jammu and Kashmir improving in recent years.

Though Islamabad is denying its link to the massacre, it is a given that no terror attack of this scale in Jammu and Kashmir would have been carried out without the support of Pakistan's military establishment. Experts aren't debating that.

"This has been unleashed by the Pakistan army. SSG commandos of Pakistan are posing as terrorists and carrying out these attacks," SP Vaid, former DGP of Jammu and Kashmir, said.

The cross-border involvement was underscored at the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said on Wednesday.

The communal line in the attack also comes after the recent dog-whistling by General Asim Munir. "Our forefathers believed that we were different from Hindus in every possible aspect of life. Our religion is different. Our customs are different... That was the foundation of the Two-Nation

Theory," said General Munir on April 16.

This was perceived as a signal to the Pakistani terror assets, according to reports, and the Pahalgam attack came within a week of that speech.

While Pakistani military chiefs have historically made anti-India remarks, it isn't usual for them to make anti-Hindu remarks.

"It's not a coincidence that Asim Munir utters illogical words two days back, and such an attack takes place where the religion of the victims is asked, and they are asked to recite the Kalima," Vaid said.

Munir's anti-Hindu remarks and the singling out of non-Muslim tourists by terrorists was meant to provoke a massive outrage in India and New Delhi to react. INDIA HAS MADE ITS INTENTIONS CLEAR ON TERROR

Though Pakistan's Defence Minister Khwaja Asif said his country had nothing to do with the Pahalgam terror attack, India isn't buying that.

Am I Indian Enough? - By Derek O'Brien



By Derek O'Brien

Many of us have never had to ask ourselves this question. And maybe that's the privilege we need to confront first. Because for millions of Indians, especially those from our minority and marginalised communities, this is not a rhetorical question. It's a lived reality. It is a quiet burden. It is a deep suspicion cast on their belonging. Their being. Every legislation. Every policy. And now, with the Waqf Amendment Bill, 2024, ironically named "Umeed". Is hope being turned into hopelessness? Are we making legislation for greater good or for cynical pigeon holing? All this is not just about land or law. It is about dignity. About whether our Constitution still holds

meaning for all of us or only for some of us.

Five-Year Criteria

The Bill introduces a five-year requirement of practicing Islam before someone can create a Waqf. This is not only arbitrary but also deeply discriminatory. No such restriction exists for other religious endowments (Violation of Right to Equality). A Hindu, Christian, or Sikh can donate property to their religious institutions at any time. Why and how should Muslims alone prove the longevity of their faith before making a charitable endowment?

Removal of 'Waqf by User'

Another serious issue with the Bill is the removal of "Waqf by user", a concept

that allows property that has been used for religious or charitable purposes for a long time to be considered Waqf even without formal documentation. Similar concepts exist and are protected under laws governing Hindu temples and Christian institutions. For example, the Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act, 1959 recognises temples that have functioned for long periods, even in the absence of formal deeds.

By stripping Muslim institutions of this same recognition, the government is creating a legal hierarchy among religious communities. This is a clear violation of Article 14 of the Constitution, which guarantees equality before the law. Waqf-alal-aulad

Waqf-alal-aulad, created through a written deed, permanently dedicates property for charitable purposes while initially benefiting family members. It is not inheritable. The government's move to let descendants claim ownership contradicts the core principle of Waqf and creates confusion in inheritance law, especially affecting women's rights already protected under Muslim law. Such interference undermines both legal clarity and religious tradition.

Composition of Waqf Boards

The Bill changes the composition of the Central Waqf Council and State Waqf

Boards to allow a majority of non-Muslim members. For instance, up to 12 of 22 members of the Central Waqf Council can now be non-Muslims. This is unprecedented. Waqf Boards are meant to administer Islamic charitable endowments. Placing control of these institutions in the hands of individuals who do not belong to the faith defeats the purpose of Articles 25 and 26, which ensure that religious denominations manage their own institutions.

Moreover, the Bill shifts the selection process from election to nomination, giving the government undue power to appoint board members. This transformation of Waqf Boards into government-controlled bodies undermines their autonomy and invites majoritarian influence over minority religious affairs.

Centralisation of Power

By assigning power to a Designated Officer (a government employee) to declare whether a property is Waqf or not, the Bill empowers the state to act as judge, jury, and plaintiff. This violates the principle of natural justice: no one should be a judge in their own cause. Further, by removing the finality of Waqf Tribunal decisions, it opens up endless litigation, weakening Waqf Boards and creating bureaucratic hurdles.

Ramdev at it again

TRUE to form, yoga guru Ramdev has got entangled in yet another controversy. His knack for making misleading claims has got him a well-deserved dressing-down from the Delhi High Court. Going overboard in a bid to hard-sell Patanjali's 'Gulab Sharbat', he accused the makers of a popular rival drink of perpetrating 'sharbat jihad'. He didn't



name Hamdard or its top brand Rooh Afza, but it was easy to put two and two together when he alleged that the money earned from that sharbat was being used to build madrasas and mosques. The fact that several places with a Muslim/Mughal connection were renamed recently in Uttarakhand, the state where the Patanjali business empire has its headquarters, might have spurred Ramdev to pursue the tried-and-tested path of polarisation. Or maybe he was inspired by the "bulldozer

justice" being meted out in UP and some other BJP-ruled states in violation of the Supreme Court's guidelines on demolitions. Either way, the high court was quick to see through his divisive ploy. Justice Amit Bansal observed that Ramdev's "indefensible" action had shocked the conscience of the court.

Ramdev's warped business sense made him believe that he could poison Rooh Afza — which has always lived up to its "naturally refreshing" tagline — with the venom of communal hatred. After the court rap, he has promised to immediately remove videos and social media posts relating to his controversial remarks. However, it's naïve to expect that he will mend his ways anytime soon. Barely eight months ago, the Supreme Court had closed contempt proceedings against him after accepting his undertaking to stop issuing misleading advertisements regarding the efficacy of Patanjali Ayurved products. The SC, however, had warned that it would "come down heavily" if there was any violation of its order. Ramdev might be lying low on that front, but he has laid bare his intolerance by targeting Hamdard, a trusted name that has stood the test of time for almost 120 years.



**Taking care of you
takes care of everyone.**

Love,
Your Mind

P.S. Find mental health resources
LoveYourMindToday.org



India revokes Pakistanis' visas, advises citizens to return as it ups offensive

(News Agency)- In a sweeping diplomatic retaliation to the recent deadly terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, the Indian government on Thursday revoked all visas issued to Pakistani nationals and suspended all categories of visa services for Pakistan.

In an official statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the move followed decisions taken by the Cabinet Committee on Security or CCS in the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack.

Effective April 27, 2025, all valid visas issued to Pakistani nationals have been cancelled. Even the medical visas — often extended on humanitarian grounds — have been given a limited window. They will remain valid only until April 29, 2025.

Moreover, India has completely suspended visa services for Pakistani nationals and no new visas will be



processed or issued until further notice. "All existing valid visas issued by India to Pakistani nationals stand revoked with effect from 27 April 2025. Medical visas issued to Pakistani nationals will be valid only till 29 April 2025," the MEA statement read.

"All Pakistani nationals currently in India must leave India before the expiry of visas, as now amended," it added. Additionally, the Indian government has also asked its citizens to avoid travelling to Pakistan and those already in the neighbouring country have been

advised to return to India at the earliest possible.

Terrorists attacked tourists at Baisaran meadow in Pahalgam on Tuesday, killing as many as 26 people, mostly tourists, while leaving several injured, in one of the deadliest attacks in the Valley since the 2019 Pulwama strike in which 40 personnel of the Indian Army were killed.

INDIA BUILDS ITS CASE

As part of its diplomatic outreach, India summoned ambassadors from multiple countries, including Germany, Japan, Poland, the United Kingdom, Russia and China to brief them on the Pahalgam attack.

The Ministry of External Affairs conveyed details of the strike, responsibility for which was claimed by The Resistance Front (TRF), an affiliate of Pakistan-based and banned terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba.

Pak pauses Simla accord, shuts airspace for India after Delhi's diplomatic strike

Pak pauses Simla accord, shuts airspace for India after Delhi's diplomatic strike



(News Agency)A day after India launched a major diplomatic offensive against Pakistan following the deadly Pahalgam terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir, Islamabad has announced a series of retaliatory measures, including shutting down the Wagah border, suspending all SAARC visas for Indian nationals, and closing its airspace for Indian airlines.

Invoking the Simla Agreement, Islamabad said it would hold all bilateral pacts with India in abeyance unless New Delhi desists from non-adherence to "international law and UN resolutions on Kashmir".

The move came less than 24 hours after India announced a five-pronged diplomatic response following the Pahalgam carnage — one of the

deadliest civilian attacks in the Valley in recent years — which included suspending the Indus Waters Treaty and scaling down diplomatic presence on both sides. On Thursday, in a statement issued after a meeting of the National Security Committee chaired by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Islamabad termed India's steps as "unilateral, unjust,

politically motivated and devoid of legal merit".

PAKISTAN'S COUNTERMEASURES

Among the key decisions taken by Pakistan: The Wagah border will be closed with immediate effect. All transit from India through this route is suspended. Indian nationals who entered Pakistan through Wagah with valid endorsements must return by April 30. All bilateral agreements, including the Simla Agreement, are put on hold. All visas under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) issued to Indian nationals have been cancelled with immediate effect, barring Sikh religious pilgrims. Indians currently in Pakistan under the scheme have been asked to leave within 48 hours.

Pakistan's airspace is now closed for all Indian-owned or Indian-operated airlines. All trade with India, including via third countries, has been suspended.

The Indian Defence, Naval and Air Advisors in Islamabad have been declared persona non grata and must leave the country by April 30. Their positions in the High Commission stand annulled. The strength of India's High Commission in Islamabad will be reduced to 30 staff members by the end of the month.

Pakistanis On Medical Visas Told To Leave Country Within 5 Days

India on Thursday announced that medical visas issued to all Pakistanis will be valid only till April 29, as it stepped up measures against the neighbouring country in the wake of the terror attack in Pahalgam in Anantnag district of Jammu & Kashmir that killed 26 people.

In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the government has decided to suspend all visa services to Pakistani nationals with immediate effect. All existing valid visas issued by India to Pakistani nationals stand revoked with effect from April 27. Medical visas issued to Pakistani nationals will be valid only till April 29, the MEA said, giving the foreigners three-days time to leave the country. Click here for Pahalgam terror attack live updates

"All Pakistani nationals currently in India must leave India before the expiry of visas, as now amended," it said.



The developments came as India downgraded diplomatic ties with Pakistan and announced a raft of measures in retaliation to the April 22 attack that claimed the lives of 25 Indians and one Nepali citizen.

The attack took place at Baisaran, dubbed 'mini Switzerland' for its meadow. The Resistance Front (TRF), a shadow group of the banned Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba

(LeT) terror group, claimed responsibility.

On Wednesday, India announced the expulsion of Pakistani military attaches, suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 and immediate shutting down of the Attari land-transit post, among other measures.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said Pakistani nationals will not be allowed to travel to India

under the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Visa Exemption Scheme. Any Pakistanis in India on such visas will also have to leave the country within 48 hours. Another major announcement was that the defence/military, naval and air advisors in the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi have been declared "persona non grata" and have a week to leave India.

New Delhi will also withdraw such advisors from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. Pakistan hit back at India over the measures, on Thursday. It blocked its airspace for Indian airlines, closed the Wagah border crossing, suspended all trade with India, and said any attempt to divert water meant for Pakistan under the Indus Water Treaty will be considered an Act of War.

"Any threat to Pakistan's sovereignty and to the security of its people will be met with firm reciprocal measures in all domains. India should refrain from its reflexive blame game and cynical staged, managed exploitation of incidents like Pahalgam to further its narrow political agenda," the Pakistan Prime Minister's Office said in a statement. The announcements were made after a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to formulate the country's response to India's measures.

British Tourist Crosses Into Afghanistan for 'Extreme' Holiday, Claims Romantic Fling with Taliban Member



(News Agency)-A British tourist has sparked headlines after claiming he crossed one of the world's most dangerous borders to spend his holiday in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan — and ended up in a "fling" with a member of the group, reported THE New York Post.

Toyosi Osideinde, a 30-year-old financial adviser from Bath, UK, says he has visited 69 countries in pursuit of "extreme travel" since falling in love with thrill-seeking adventures two years ago. With previous trips to Iraq, Syria, and Belarus behind him, he set his sights on what he calls his most daring destination yet: Afghanistan.

During the 11-day trip, the 30-year-old flew into Islamabad, Pakistan, and drove to Peshawar near the Afghan border. There, he entered the Afghan embassy and was interviewed by armed Taliban officials before beginning his travels across the country — visiting villages, local markets, and even enjoying biryani with locals. He described seeing women working and wearing makeup in public, challenging some of his assumptions about life under Taliban rule. Toyosi also claims he developed a romantic connection with a Taliban member working as hotel security, saying they spent time together throughout his stay.

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE

Start planning at ThisIsPretirement.org



Anti-Hamas protests on rise in Gaza as group's iron grip slips

"Out! Out! Out!"

The voice in the Telegram video is insistent. Loud. Sometimes musical.

And the message unambiguous. "All of Hamas, out!"

On the streets of Gaza, more and more Palestinians are expressing open defiance against the armed group that's ruled the strip for almost 20 years.

Many hold Hamas responsible for plunging the tiny, impoverished territory into the worst crisis faced by Palestinians in more than 70 years.

"Deliver the message," another crowd chants, as it surges through Gaza's devastated streets: "Hamas is garbage."

"The world is deceived by the situation in the Gaza Strip," says Moumen al-Natour, a Gaza lawyer and former organiser of the 2019 anti-Hamas "We Want to Live" movement.

Al-Natour spoke to us from the shattered remains of his city, the flimsy canvas side of the tent which now forms part of his house



billowing behind him.

"The world thinks that Gaza is Hamas and Hamas is Gaza," he said. "We didn't choose Hamas and now Hamas is determined to rule Gaza and tie our fate to its own. Hamas must retreat."

Speaking out is dangerous. Hamas has never tolerated dissent. Al-Natour seems undaunted, writing a furious column for the Washington Post at the end of March.

"To support Hamas is to be for Palestinian death," he wrote, "not

Palestinian freedom".

Wasn't it dangerous to speak out in this way, I asked him.

"We need to take a risk and speak out," he replied without hesitation.

"I'm 30 years old. When Hamas took over, I was 11. What have I done with my life? My life has been wasted between war and escalating violence for nothing." Since Hamas took control of Gaza in 2007 by violently ousting political rivals, a year after winning national elections, there have been three

major wars with Israel and two smaller conflicts.

"Humanity demands that we raise our voices," al-Natour said, "despite suppression by Hamas". Hamas may be busy fighting Israel, but it's not afraid to punish its critics.

At the end of March, 22-year old Oday al-Rubai was abducted by armed gunmen from a refugee shelter in Gaza City.

Hours later, his body was found covered in horrific wounds.

The Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights said Oday had been tortured, calling his death "a grave violation of the right to life and an extrajudicial killing". Al-Rubai had participated in recent anti-Hamas protests. His family blamed Hamas for his death and demanded justice.

Days earlier, a frightened al-Rubai posted a dark, grainy video on social media in which he expressed his fear that Hamas militants were coming for him.

"Gaza has become a city of ghosts," he said, glancing over his shoulder.

"I'm stranded in the street, not knowing where to go. I don't know why they're after me. They destroyed us and brought ruin to us."

At his funeral, a small crowd demanded revenge and repeated demands for Hamas to get out of Gaza.

Last summer, Amin Abed almost suffered the same fate, following his decision to speak out against Hamas. Masked militants beat him senseless, broke bones all over his body and damaged his kidneys. Abed survived but had to seek medical treatment abroad. Now living in Dubai, he's still involved in the protest movement, and believes that Hamas' authority is diminished.

"Hamas' power has begun to fade," he told me. "It targets activists and civilians, beats and kills them to scare people. But it's not how it was before."

Trump crypto soars as president offers dinner to top holders



The price of Donald Trump's cryptocurrency has soared after the US president promised to host two special events for its top investors.

The website for the \$Trump

meme coin says its 220 biggest holders will be invited to a private gala dinner with the president on 22 May, describing it as the "most EXCLUSIVE INVITATION in the world."

According to crypto trading platform Coinbase, \$Trump jumped by more than 70% after the announcement. But it remains well below the record high of more than \$74 (£42.40)

reached shortly after its launch in January.

The digital currency is one of several crypto-related ventures launched by businesses linked to Trump, who has called himself the "crypto president".

As well as the gala dinner, which will be held at the Trump National Golf Club in Washington DC, there will be "an ultra-exclusive private VIP reception with the President" for the top 25 coin holders, the coin's website said.

Trump tokens in circulation are currently worth a total of around \$2.5bn. They were first released just days before his inauguration on 20 January.

The move was criticised by several people in the crypto industry, with some calling it "a stunt".

First lady Melania Trump also launched a cryptocurrency on the eve of the inauguration. Meme coins are often used by speculators to make money or to allow fans to show support to a celebrity or moment in internet culture.

Shortly after returning to the White House this year, Trump signed an executive order to create a presidential working group tasked with proposing new crypto laws and regulations.

He has also signed an order to create a Strategic Bitcoin Reserve as well as a Digital Asset Stockpile, which will include other digital currencies.

Those funds will be stocked with coins forfeited to the federal government as part of criminal or civil proceedings. This week, Trump's media company announced plans to launch exchange traded-funds (ETFs).

The financial products to be launched by Trump Media & Technology Group, owner of the Truth Social platform, and its partners will include digital assets as well as stocks with a "Made in America focus".

ETFs are investment funds that hold multiple assets. They can be bought and sold in a similar way to shares.

Patriotism surges in Quebec as Trump rattles Canada

In Quebec, the issue of independence from Canada has long simmered. But faced with US tariffs and President Donald Trump's comments about making Canada the 51st US state, many voters are now seeking unity.

Suzanne Dumont knows who she will vote for in Canada's election, though it's a decision made "not from my heart, it's from my head". The 70-year-old from Quebec City considers herself a sovereigntist, but hopes when Canadians go to the polls on Monday they'll elect a majority government to take on Trump.

The Bloc Québécois, a federal party that supports independence and only runs candidates in the predominantly French-speaking province, can't deliver on that, she says. Supporting the Conservatives is "unthinkable" to Ms Dumont, so this time she will be voting Liberal. In Montreal, Louis Plouffe is picking up groceries at the city's Jean-Talon market. He tells the BBC that he thinks the Bloc "defends Quebec's interests well" as an opposition party in Parliament.



Still, "it's not being in power", the 65-year-old says, and he wants a government with a strong mandate "ready for the wave that's coming" from the US. And while Mr Plouffe has reservations about the Liberal leader, he believes Mark Carney has come across as credible and confident in interviews. He too will vote for the party. "Canadian patriotism is on the rise in Quebec", said Émilie Foster, an adjunct professor in

politics at Carleton University. "We prefer to be part of Canada instead of being part of the United States, if we have to choose," she says. Sébastien Dallaire, a pollster with Léger, puts it this way: "It's hard to say now is the time to talk about Quebec sovereignty, or now is the time to do things specifically to defend Quebec, when clearly there's a national crisis and everybody is staring not at

Ottawa as the adversary, but as Washington as the clear opponent." A recent Léger survey suggests that almost 40% of voters for the Bloc believe an independent Quebec would have less influence than Canada as a whole in dealing with the US.

The Liberals are currently polling at about 46% in the province, with the Bloc a distant second at 25%, slightly ahead of the Conservatives, who have long

struggled to gain real traction there. Quebec can be a wildcard in general elections, and winning the province - which holds 78 seats of the 343 in the House of Commons - can propel a party to power. The abandonment of smaller parties - like the Bloc, the left-leaning New Democrats or the Green Party - is a trend seen nationwide as Canadians rally around either the Liberals or the Conservatives in the face of a new threat from their neighbour. Carney, a former central banker for Canada and the UK, is seeking to paint himself as the leader most able to help the country navigate the crisis.

Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre is billing himself as the change candidate who can restore the "Canadian promise". It has been a remarkable election campaign, one sparked by the resignation of longtime Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and then overshadowed by an unprecedented intervention from an American president which transformed the state of the race.

Australian politician fined for supplying cocaine



(News Agency)- An Australian politician has been convicted of supplying drugs after he initially dismissed a video showing him snorting a white substance as a "deepfake". Former South Australian Liberal party leader David Speirs was fined A\$9,000 (£4311; \$5,720) and ordered to complete 37.5 hours of community service by an Adelaide court on Thursday. Speirs was arrested in September after footage of him snorting off a plate was published by News Corp. He initially denied wrongdoing and reportedly told the news outlet it was a "deepfake" and that he had never used cocaine. However, he later admitted that was a lie and the ensuing scandal and charges led to his resignation from

parliament. Last month, Speirs pleaded guilty to supplying cocaine to two men in August. Speirs' defence said he used drugs "as a form of escapism" from the stress of his work, but the offences did not occur in a work capacity. The case had sparked intense media scrutiny, with prosecutors arguing that it was in the public's interest given Speirs' senior position in politics. His lawyer had previously asked the court not to record the conviction so his client could travel overseas, but the magistrate said the offences were "too serious". "The need for public denunciation for this type of offending and the need for general deterrence is too great to refrain from recording a conviction," magistrate Brian Nitschke said on Thursday.



Trump writes 'Vladimir, STOP!' after Russia launches deadliest strikes on Kyiv since last summer

US President Donald Trump said he is "not happy" after Russia launched its deadliest wave of attacks on Kyiv in nine months, telling President Vladimir Putin to "STOP!" as he attempts to push Ukraine to agree on a contentious ceasefire proposal. Moscow sent 70 missiles and 145 drones toward Ukraine, mainly targeting Kyiv, in an attack that leader Volodymyr Zelensky said was aimed at pressuring the United States.

"I am not happy with the Russian strikes on KYIV. Not necessary, and very bad timing. Vladimir, STOP! 5000 soldiers a week are dying. Let's get the Peace Deal DONE!" Trump wrote on Truth Social on Thursday.

Elaborating on the comments in the Oval Office later, Trump pledged that "things will happen" if Russian attacks continue.

At least 12 people died in the strikes with 90 injured, according to Ukraine's emergency services, and more casualties may be trapped under rubble. The emergency services said Moscow's assault struck 13 locations in Kyiv, including residential buildings and civilian infrastructure.

It was the costliest attack on the city since July 2024, when 33 people were killed in an aerial barrage that targeted a hospital and residential districts.

Zelensky said during a trip to South Africa that the bombardment was "first and foremost" aimed at "pressuring the US." He sought to push back against Trump's efforts to corral Kyiv into making concessions, telling reporters: "The fact that Ukraine is ready to sit down at a negotiating table after (a) full ceasefire with terrorists... is a big compromise." And Zelensky, who was speaking to reporters shortly before Trump's social media post, sought to highlight imbalances in the administration's stances towards Kyiv and Moscow.

"This is (an issue of) our survival. We are very direct and transparent in this matter," the Ukrainian leader said. "I don't see strong pressure against Russia and new strong sanctions packages against the Russian

aggression for now."

Speaking in the White House on Thursday, Trump acknowledged "a lot of hatred" between Ukraine and Russia, but insisted: "I think they both want to make peace, I do believe so." "We are thinking very strongly that they both want peace, but they have to get to the table — we're waiting a long time, they have to get them to the table, and I think we're going to get peace," Trump told reporters in response to a CNN question during a lunch meeting with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre.

Zelensky said Moscow's latest attack was "one of the most complex, most daring attacks coming from Russia." Russia's defense ministry said it carried out "a massive strike with high-precision long-range air, land and sea-based weapons, unmanned aerial vehicles on enterprises of the aviation, missile and space, mechanical engineering and armored industries of Ukraine, production of rocket fuel and gunpowder."

"The strike objectives were achieved. All targets were hit," Moscow said.

A search and rescue operation is underway to find people caught under rubble, according to Ukrainian local and national authorities.

Preliminary information suggested the Russians used a missile manufactured in North Korea, Zelensky said on social media, with Ukrainian special services verifying the details. If confirmed, "this will be further proof of the criminal nature of the alliance between Russia and Pyongyang," the Ukrainian leader said.

Following the attacks on Kyiv, Zelensky announced he was cutting short his visit to South Africa, where he landed late on Wednesday, to return to Ukraine.

"It is extremely important that everyone around the world sees and understands what is really happening" he said, adding that Ukraine would immediately contact its international partners regarding its requests to strengthen air defenses.

French President Emmanuel Macron strongly condemned the attacks, saying Putin needs to "stop lying."

"He says 'I want peace' and continues to bomb and kill in

Ukraine," Macron told reporters during a visit to Madagascar.

The French leader said it was important to reiterate to the US that there is "one aggressor: Russia and one aggressed: Ukraine," saying that "America's anger should be focused on one person: President Putin."

'The first thing I felt was fear' Air raid sirens blasted through Kyiv for six hours in the early hours of Thursday, as the Russian barrage gripped the city in fear. A CNN producer said they waited in a corridor with their child as missiles rained on the city, with a drone flying audibly outside their window.

Sirens are a near daily occurrence in Kyiv, but Thursday's strikes served as an unwelcome reminder of the anxiety that pulsed through the capital in the early phases of the war. Images provided by the emergency services showed buildings engulfed in flames at some of the sites struck in the attacks.

"The first thing I felt was fear," Iryna Dzen, a resident of an affected neighbourhood, told CNN on Wednesday. "You don't understand anything when you wake up at night from an

explosion. You are alive, but your parents, children, you don't know if they are alive, where was the hit."

"We went to the corridor, it was safer there, and started calling our relatives (to find out) whether they were alive or not," she said. "And when we came (outside) and saw everything, it was a horror." Engineers, rescue workers and recovery dogs were searching on Wednesday for people believed to be trapped under the rubble of a home destroyed by the strikes in the Sviatoshyn district, said Ukraine's Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko.

"Rescuers are doing everything they can to clear the rubble as quickly as possible," the mayor Vitali Klitschko said on Telegram. "We are currently clearing the rubble manually, we are not using any equipment because there may still be people under the rubble." Klymenko said eight regions of the country were targeted in what he called "a massive combined Russian attack" that also hit Zhytomyr, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Poltava, Khmelnytsky, Sumy and Zaporizhzhia.

' Hamas Leaders Visited PoK': Israel Envoy On Link With Pak-Based Lashkar

Israel's Ambassador to India, Reuven Azar, today compared the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam to the October 7, 2023 Hamas strike on Israel, citing similarities in their targeting of civilians and warning of growing coordination among terrorist groups.

"The terrorists are collaborating at all levels and trying to be copycats of each other. I am sure the intelligence agencies are working together to defeat them," Mr Azar told NDTV.

Referring to the killing of tourists by Pakistan-linked terrorists in Pahalgam, he drew parallels to the Hamas-led assault that killed over 1,400 people in Israel. "Unfortunately, we must confess, these terrorist groups are inspiring each other. There are simi-

larities between the Pahalgam attack and what happened on October 7 (2023) in Israel. Innocent tourists were enjoying their vacation in Pahalgam, while in Israel, people were celebrating a music festival," he told news agency PTI.

He linked the Pahalgam attack's timing to the recent visits by Hamas leaders to Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK), where they reportedly met with Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists and a few others, suggesting possible coordination.

The Israeli ambassador praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's response to the Pahalgam attack, particularly his speech at a gathering in Bihar's Madhubani today, where he promised to "hunt down" those responsible for

the killings.

"I'm very encouraged by not only the strong condemnation but also the strict measures taken by the Indian government," Mr Azar told PTI Videos, referring to India's diplomatic moves, including the suspension of the Indus Water Treaty of 1960 with Pakistan and immediate shutting down of the Attari land-transit post in view of the cross-border links to the attack in Pahalgam. Mr Azar asked the global community to expose state sponsors of terrorism, emphasising that the problem extends much beyond individual terrorists. "Terrorism has to be exposed because terrorists enjoy a series of deeds by countries that supply money, intelligence inputs and weapons (to

them), which is unacceptable," he said.

India today said it had suspended visa services "with immediate effect" and ordered all Pakistani nationals to leave the country, with the exception of remaining diplomats. Experts say a military response may still be in the pipeline, with some speculating that a response may come within days while others say weeks. Pakistan also held a rare national security meeting today after New Delhi's punitive diplomatic measures. The killings have shocked India because they were a dramatic shift targeting civilians and the area's vital tourism industry, rather than more common smaller-scale attacks against security forces.

Five cards China holds in a trade war with the US

A trade war between the world's two biggest economies is now in full swing.

Chinese exports to the US face up to 245% tariffs, and Beijing has hit back with a 125% levy on American imports. Consumers, businesses and markets are braced for more uncertainty as fears of a global recession have heightened.

Chinese President Xi Jinping's government has repeatedly said it is open to dialogue, but warned that, if necessary, it would "fight to the end".

Here's a look at what Beijing has in its arsenal to counter US President Donald Trump's tariffs.

China can take the pain (to a point)

China is the world's second-largest economy, which means it can absorb the impacts of the tariffs better than other smaller countries.

With more than a billion people, it also has a huge domestic market that could take some of the pressure off exporters who are reeling from tariffs.

Beijing is still fumbling with the keys because Chinese people are not spending enough. But with a range of incentives, from subsidies for household appliances to "silver trains" for travelling retirees, that could change.

And Trump's tariffs have given the Chinese Communist Party an even stronger impetus to unlock the country's consumer potential.

The leadership may "very well be willing to endure the pain to avoid capitulating to what they believe is US aggression", Mary Lovely, a US-China trade expert at the Peterson Institute in Washington DC, told BBC Newshour earlier this month.

China also has a higher threshold for pain as an authoritarian regime, as it is far less worried about short-term public opinion. There is no election around the corner that will judge its leaders.

Still, unrest is a concern, especially because there is already discontent over an ongoing property crisis and job losses.

The economic uncertainty over tariffs is yet another blow for young people who have only ever known a rising China.

The Party has been appealing to nationalist sentiments to justify its retaliatory tariffs, with state media calling on people to "weather storms together". President Xi Jinping may be worried but, so far, Beijing has struck a defiant and confident tone. One official assured the country: "The sky will not fall."

China has been investing in the future. China has always been known as the world's factory - but it has been pouring billions into becoming a far more advanced one.

Under Xi, it has been in a race with the US for tech dominance.

It has invested heavily in homegrown tech, from renewables to chips to AI.

Examples include the chatbot DeepSeek, which was celebrated as a formidable rival to ChatGPT, and BYD, which beat Tesla last year to become the world's largest electric vehicle (EV) maker. Apple has been losing its prized market share to local competitors such as Huawei and Vivo.

Recently Beijing announced plans to spend more than \$1tn over the next decade to support innovation in AI.

US companies have tried to move their supply chains away from China, but they have struggled to find the same scale of infrastructure and skilled labour elsewhere.

Chinese manufacturers at every stage of the supply chain have given the country a decades-long advantage that will take time to replicate.

That unrivalled supply chain expertise and government support have made China a formidable foe in this trade war - in some ways, Beijing has been preparing for this since Trump's previous term.

Lessons from Trump 1.0

Ever since Trump tariffs hit Chinese solar panels back in 2018, Beijing sped up its plans for a future beyond a US-led world order. It has pumped billions into a contentious trade and infrastructure programme, better known as the Belt and Road initiative, to shore up ties with the so-called Global South. The expansion of trade with South East Asia, Latin America and Africa comes as China tries to wean itself off the US. American farmers once supplied 40% of China's soybean imports - that figure now hovers at 20%. After the last trade war, Beijing ramped up soy cultivation at home and bought record volumes of the crop from Brazil, which is now its largest soybean supplier.

"The tactic kills two birds with one stone. It deprives America's farm belt of a once-captive market and burnishes China's food security credentials," says Marina Yue Zhang, associate professor at the University of Technology Sydney's Australia-China Relations Institute.

The US is no longer China's biggest export market: that spot now belongs to South East Asia. In fact China was the largest trading partner for 60 countries in 2023 - nearly twice as many as the US. The world's biggest exporter, it made a record surplus of \$1tn at the end of 2024.

That doesn't mean the US, the world's biggest economy, is not a crucial trading partner for China. But it does mean it's not going to be easy for Washington to back China into a corner.

Following reports that the White House will use bilateral trade negotiations to isolate China, Beijing has warned countries against "reaching a deal at the expense of China's interests".

That would be an impossible choice for much of the world

"We can't choose, and we will never choose [between China and the US]," Malaysia's trade minister Tengku Zafrul Aziz told the BBC last week.

China now knows when Trump will blink. Trump held firm as stocks plummeted following his sweeping tariffs announcement in early April, likening his staggering levies to "medicine".

But he made a U-turn, pausing most of those tariffs for 90 days after a sharp sell-off in US government bonds. Also known as Treasuries, these have long been seen as a safe investment. But the trade war has shaken confidence in the assets.

Trump has since hinted at a de-escalation in trade tensions with China, saying that the tariffs on Chinese goods will "come down substantially, but it won't be zero".

So, experts point out, Beijing now knows that the bond market can rattle Trump. China also holds \$700bn in US government bonds. Japan, a staunch American ally, is the only non-US holder to own more than that.

Some argue that this gives Beijing leverage: Chinese media has regularly floated the idea of selling or withholding purchases of US bonds as a "weapon". But experts warn that China will not emerge unscathed from such a situation. Rather, it will lead to huge losses for Beijing's investments in the bond market and destabilise the Chinese yuan. China will only be able to exert pressure with US government bonds "only up to a point", Dr Zhang says. "China holds a bargaining chip,

AR Rahman breaks silence on trolling after split: Even God gets reviewed, who am I?

Oscar-winning music composer AR Rahman has addressed the public discourse surrounding his recent separation from wife Saira Banu. In a candid interview, Rahman also reflected on being subjected to intense public scrutiny. The couple decided to part ways in November 2024.

In a conversation with Nayandeep Rakshit on his YouTube channel, Rahman shared, "The choice of being in public life is intentional, so everybody gets reviewed. Right from the richest person to even God gets reviewed — so who am I? As long as we stay together and are not conceited or toxic. Even the people who criticise us — they are all family."

Speaking on the online trolling that followed the separation news, Rahman brought up the idea of karma: "The thing is Karma. If I say things about someone's family, someone will say things about

not a financial weapon."

A chokehold on rare earths What China can weaponise, however, is its near monopoly in extracting and refining rare earths, a range of elements important to advanced tech manufacturing.

China has huge deposits of these, such as dysprosium, which is used in magnets in electric vehicles and wind turbines, and Yttrium, which provides heat-resistant coating for jet engines.

Beijing has already responded to Trump's latest tariffs by restricting exports of seven rare earths, including some that are essential for making AI chips.

China accounts for about 61% of rare earths production and 92% of their refining, according to estimates by the International Energy Agency (IEA).

While Australia, Japan and Vietnam have begun mining for rare earths, it will take years before China can be cut out of the supply chain.

In 2024, China banned the export of another critical mineral, antimony, that is crucial to various manufacturing processes. Its price more than doubled amid a wave of panic buying and a search for alternative suppliers.

The fear is that the same can happen to the rare earths market, which would severely disrupt various industries from electric vehicles to defence.

"Everything you can switch on or off likely runs on rare earths," Thomas Kruegger, director of Ginger International Trade and Investment, told the BBC previously. "The impact on the US defence industry will be substantial."

mine. And we, as Indians, believe in this. Nobody should speak unnecessarily because everyone has a sister, a wife, and a mother. Even when I feel someone has said something hurtful about my family, I often pray, 'Please God, forgive them and guide them onto the right path.'"

AR Rahman and Saira Banu announced their separation after 29 years of marriage, citing deep emotional strain. The couple, who married in 1995, are parents to Khatija, Raheema, and Ameen. In a joint statement issued through their lawyer, they requested privacy and acknowledged the emotional challenges that led to their decision.

Despite their enduring love and mutual respect, they admitted that unresolved tensions had created a rift they are currently unable to bridge. Their lawyer added that both parties are working towards an amicable divorce.

Deadly Kashmir attack risks India military escalation against Pakistan



Tuesday's bloodshed in Pahalgam - where at least 26 tourists were killed in a hail of gunfire - marks the deadliest militant attack in Indian-administered Kashmir since 2019.

The victims weren't soldiers or officials, but civilians on holiday in one of India's most picturesque valleys. That alone makes this strike both brutal and symbolic: a calculated assault not just on lives, but on a fragile sense of normalcy the Indian state has worked hard to project in the disputed region.

Given the fraught history of Kashmir - claimed in full by both India and Pakistan but ruled by each only in part - India's response is likely to be shaped as much by precedent as by pressure, say experts.

For starters, Delhi has swiftly taken a series of retaliatory steps: closing the main border crossing, suspending a critical water-sharing treaty, and expelling diplomats.

More significantly, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has vowed a "strong response," pledging action not just against the perpetrators but also the masterminds behind the "nefarious acts" on Indian soil. The question, analysts say, is not whether there will be a military response - but when, and how

calibrated it will be, and at what cost.

"We are likely to see a strong response - one that signals resolve to both domestic audiences and actors in Pakistan. Since 2016 and especially after 2019, the threshold for retaliation has been set at cross-border or air strikes,"



military historian Srinath Raghavan told the BBC.

"It'll be hard for the government to act below that now. Pakistan will likely respond, as it did before. The risk, as always, is miscalculation - on both sides." Mr Raghavan is alluding to two previous major retaliations by India in 2016 and 2019.

After the deadly Uri attack in September 2016, where 19 Indian soldiers were killed, India launched what it called "surgical

strikes" across the de facto border - also known as the Line of Control (LoC) - targeting what it said were militant launch pads in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. And in 2019, after at least 40 paramilitary personnel were killed in Pulwama, India hit an alleged militant camp in Balakot with airstrikes - its first such strike deep

and the targeting of Indian civilians in the latest attack "suggests a strong possibility of an Indian military response against Pakistan, if Delhi determines or merely assumes any level of Pakistani complicity".

"The chief advantage of such a reaction for India would be political, as there will be strong public pressure for India to respond forcefully," he told the BBC.

"Another advantage, if a retaliation successfully takes out terrorist targets, would be restoring deterrence and degrading an anti-India threat. The disadvantage is that a retaliation would risk a serious crisis and even conflict."

What are India's options? Covert action offers deniability but may not satisfy the political need to visibly restore deterrence, says Christopher Clary of the University at Albany in the US. That leaves India with two possible paths, he notes. First, the 2021 LoC ceasefire has been fraying, and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi could greenlight a return to cross-border firing. Second, airstrikes or even conventional cruise missile strikes, like in 2019, are also on the table - each carrying the risk of a retaliatory spiral, as seen in

the air skirmishes that followed then.

"No path is without risks. The US is also distracted and may not be willing or be able to assist with crisis management," Mr Clary, who studies the politics of South Asia, told the BBC.

One of the gravest risks in any India-Pakistan crisis is that both sides are nuclear-armed. That fact casts a long shadow over every decision, shaping not just military strategy but political calculations.

"Nuclear weapons are both a danger and a restraint - they force decision-makers on both sides to act with caution. Any response is likely to be presented as precise and targeted. Pakistan may retaliate in kind, then look for an off-ramp, says Mr Raghavan.

"We've seen this pattern in other conflicts too, like Israel-Iran - calibrated strikes, followed by efforts to de-escalate. But the risk is always that things won't go according to script." Mr Kugelman says that one of the lessons of the Pulwama crisis is that "each country is comfortable using limited counter retaliation". "India will need to weigh the political and tactical advantages of retaliation with the risk of a serious crisis or conflict."

Hussain Haqqani, a former Pakistani ambassador to the US, believes escalation is possible this time, with India likely to consider limited "surgical strikes" like in 2016.

"The advantage of such strikes from India's point of view is they are limited in scope, so Pakistan does not have to respond, and yet they demonstrate to the Indian public that India has acted," Mr Haqqani, a senior fellow at Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy and Hudson Institute, told the BBC.

"But such strikes can also invite retaliation from Pakistan, which argues that it is being blamed in a knee jerk reaction, without any investigation or evidence."

Whatever course India chooses - and however Pakistan responds - each step is fraught with risk. The threat of escalation looms, and with it, the fragile peace in Indian-administered Kashmir slips further out of reach.

Is Pahalgam Attack The Beginning Of The First Water War Between India And Pakistan?

India has announced five major diplomatic steps against Pakistan in the aftermath of the deadly Pahalgam terror attack, the most significant being keeping the Indus Waters Treaty 'in abeyance', with several experts calling it the beginning of the first water war between the neighbours.

India has very carefully used the word 'Abeyance', which keeps the option open for the treaty to be restored if Pakistan stops cross-border terrorism and brings the perpetrators to book. India's decision does not mean gates will be closed and no water will flow from either side. Simply put, it is a big step towards regulating water. Till now, the Indus Waters Treaty was sacrosanct and April 2025

marks the first time that India has changed the rules of the game.

Keeping the treaty 'in abeyance' also means cooperation mechanisms will not move forward—there will be no free flow of information and data between the two sides, which could have a serious impact on Pakistan's river management, leading to a major water crisis in the years to come.

Last month, the Indus River System Authority (IRSA) warned Punjab and Sindh—two major bread baskets in Pakistan—of 35 per cent water shortage in the last leg of the current crop season. The country has experienced an extended dry spell, with rainfall levels falling well below

average. The decision of the Indian government could make the situation worse for Pakistan as now, there will be no information and data served to them by the Indian side, which may lead to bad river management.

This is the first major step in the direction of stopping free flow of water to Pakistan. By doing this, India has warned its neighbour that it has two options—either it stops cross-border terrorism and gets the treaty restored or continue with its ways and force India to stop the free flow of water.

Pakistan is one of the world's driest countries, with an average annual rainfall of about 240MM. It is a single-basin country and its dependence on extreme water

resources is 76 per cent. About 90 per cent of Pakistan's total agricultural production occurs on arable land supported by the Indus Basin irrigation system. Agriculture and hydropower from Indian rivers drive 24 per cent of Pakistan's GDP, 45 per cent of its employment and more than 60 per cent of its exports. The treaty, which protects Pakistan from India's upstream control of river flows, was signed in 1960 after nine years of negotiations between India and Pakistan with the help of the World Bank, which is also a signatory.

Despite multiple wars and ongoing political tensions between India and Pakistan, the treaty has largely remained intact for over six decades,

often cited as a successful example of trans-boundary water management. The treaty's wording does not provide for a unilateral withdrawal or revocation by either party and this is the reason India has made the smart move of using the word 'Abeyance' instead of suspension or revocation. It is expected that Pakistan will knock on the doors of international organisations against the decision, calling it a breach of the treaty.

Get breaking news, top headlines, and live updates on politics, weather, elections, law and crime, much more. Stay informed with real-time coverage and in-depth analysis of current events across India with News18.

India Calls Global Diplomats, Briefs Them On Pahalgam Terror Attack

The government has briefed senior diplomats from the United States and European nations, including the United Kingdom, Italy, France, and Germany, on the Pahalgam terror attack.

Diplomats from Japan, Qatar, China, Canada, and Russia were also present.

They were briefed on India's position and events of the past 48 hours, as well as Delhi's first response - diplomatic measures that include revocation of visas and suspension of the Indus Water Treaty.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri led the 30-minute meeting that included sharing of material indicating Pakistan's involvement in the worst terror attack on civilians in decades. Pak's involvement was also flagged by Major General Yash Mor (retd.), a defence expert who told NDTV the attack needed military-level training and bore the hallmark of the ISI. The Thursday briefing came hours after a strong statement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The PM, at a government event in Bihar, put terrorists worldwide on notice when he said, "I am telling the world that India will

identify and punish every terrorist, and those behind them."

The real message, though, was not in the words itself.

It was in the Prime Minister switching from Hindi to English to deliver these lines.

The switch was seen as India telling the world this brutal attack will have consequences. In earlier comments he also vowed vengeance, telling Indians his government will track down and bring to justice the terrorists who pulled the triggers and those who planned the attack.

Twenty-six people, many tourists and civilians, were killed in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam Tuesday afternoon. The attackers - five, according to security agency sources - were hiding in forested areas bordering the picturesque Baisaran Valley and began the attack at 1.15 pm.

As tourists and locals panicked, caught in the open, terrorists went from group to group and shot 26 men in the head, in some cases asking questions about their religion before executing them.

Disturbing videos emerged after the attack of women, with blood on their faces, sitting next

to the bodies of their husbands or partners and pleading for help. One woman said she had been told by a terrorist, who had just shot her husband dead, to "go tell (Prime Minister) Modi". Among those killed was a Navy officer on his honeymoon and a 70-year-old man from Andhra Pradesh.

A 35-year-old Karnataka man was shot begging to be spared for his three-year-old son.

Indian security agencies have said they have evidence to prove Pakistan was behind the attack, which is the worst on

Indian soil since February 2019, when 40 soldiers were killed in Pulwama.

That attack was by the banned Jaish-e-Mohammed terror group. This attack has been claimed by The Resistance Front, a proxy of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, another banned, Pak-based outfit.

Sketches have been released of some of the terrorists who carried out the attack.

However, more than 48 hours after the strike, they remain on the run.

As news of the attack broke, the

world put out messages of support and condolences. Apart from the US and the EU, Brazil, Israel, Russia, and even China united in condemning the killings.

Meanwhile, on Thursday evening Pakistan responded to India's diplomatic rebukes. In a 10-point response Islamabad focused on Delhi's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty and said any attempt to stop or divert water, or usurp rights of the lower riparian state, will be considered an "act of war"

High time India cuts Pakistan's 'jugular veins': Ex-US official on Pahalgam attack

Former Pentagon official Michael Rubin on Thursday called Pakistan Army Chief Asim Munir's remarks about Kashmir being their "jugular vein" a direct provocation to India in the days leading up to the Pahalgam attack that claimed 26 lives. The ex-US official went a step ahead and said that India needs to go ahead and cut "Pakistan's jugular", reported news agency ANI. "Certainly that speech seemed to green light terror. Asim Munir said that Kashmir is the jugular vein. What India now needs to do is to cut Pakistan's jugular. There's no ifs, ands, or buts. There are no shortcuts anymore. Asim Munir gave the green light," Rubin was quoted as telling ANI.

Saying that Pakistan is "playing the West for fools," Rubin said that Islamabad has now opened a new front against India in Bangladesh.

"But we also know, based on geography, based on precedent, and based on ideological swamp, that it is Pakistan's ISI, that they are logistically and ideologically the only country that is the suspect right now," Rubin continued.

Questioning the timing of the attack, Rubin said that Pakistan's intention was to draw the world's attention away from US Vice President JD Vance's visit to India. He further urged the US to not "let Pakistan get away with it." Rubin further compared the attacks on Pahalgam to the October 7 Hamas attacks on Israel. Addressing the Convention for Overseas Pakistanis last week, General Munir said, "Our stance is absolutely clear, it was our jugular vein, it will be our jugular vein. We will not forget it. We will not leave our Kashmiri brothers in their heroic struggle."

'100% tariffs create anxiety': Tesla says still weighing when to enter India

Tesla has lobbied India for years to cut its sky-high duties, with Elon Musk calling them among the steepest in the world. Despite no breakthrough yet, Tesla has recently leased showroom space and listed over two dozen job openings in India.

Tesla is still undecided on when to start operations in India despite calling it a "very hot market," with steep import duties continuing to cloud the company's plans, CFO Vaibhav Taneja said on Tuesday.

Speaking after Tesla's dismal Q1 results—net profit plunged 71% year-on-year—Taneja pointed to India's 100% import tariffs as a key hurdle. "The same car which we're sending is 100% more expensive than what it is," he said during the earnings call. "So that creates a lot of anxiety. People feel they're paying too much."

Tesla has lobbied India for years to cut its sky-high duties, with Elon Musk calling them among the steepest in the



world. Despite no breakthrough yet, Tesla has recently leased showroom space and listed over two dozen job openings in India.

Shipment records also show the

company imported a Model Y from Germany in March at a declared value of \$46,000.

Talks are ongoing between Indian officials and the Trump administration

on a broader trade deal, under which the US has requested that India eliminate import tariffs on electric vehicles.

But any sweeping reduction is likely to face pushback from domestic automakers like Tata Motors and Mahindra, who argue that easing tariffs too quickly could erode India's local EV industry.

Tesla came close to announcing a major India entry last year, with Musk expected to unveil a \$2–3 billion investment that included plans for a local factory. That trip was called off at the last minute, but Musk now says he plans to visit India in 2025 following a conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi about tech collaboration.

Middle-class stuck in debt trap, says Marcellus Investment's Saurabh Mukherjea

(News Agency)- India's middle class is falling into a dangerous pattern of debt-fuelled consumption, warns Saurabh Mukherjea, founder of Marcellus Investment Managers. The dream of upward mobility is increasingly being financed through easy credit, and the fallout has already begun.

Using data from the Reserve Bank of India, Mukherjea estimates that 5-10% of middle-class households are now stuck in a debt trap. These are not isolated incidents, he says, but symptoms of a larger shift driven by



social media-fuelled aspiration, cheap loans, and pandemic-era mindset changes. "After two years at home during Covid, people were utterly convinced that whatever their financial means are, it doesn't matter—they too can live the good life," Mukherjea said in a podcast with The Federal. From luxury vacations to designer gadgets and upscale homes, the illusion of affluence is now just an EMI away. Consumption, once tied to income, is being decoupled through credit.

"You're told every minute that you should have the lifestyle of an IPL cricketer. You don't have to work for it—you can get it on credit," Mukherjea pointed out. Fuelling this shift is the India Stack—Jandhan, Aadhaar, and Mobile—which has made credit more accessible than ever before. While a success story in financial inclusion, Mukherjea argues it has also removed key friction points that once forced consumers to think twice before borrowing.

Vaping can cause irreversible lung damage.

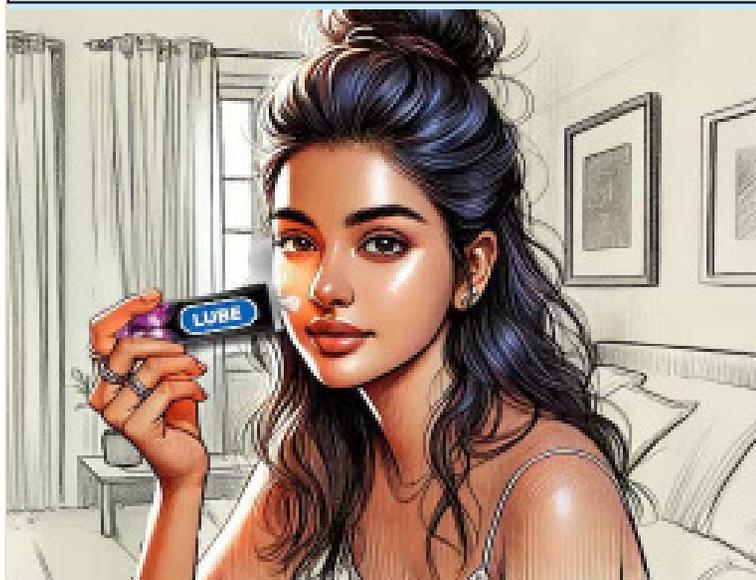
Talk About Vaping.org

Get the facts about youth vaping.

American Lung Association. ad COUNCIL #DoTheVapeTalk

Why are influencers applying lube on their faces?

In a now viral video, an influencer explains how lube has worked for her acne-prone skin and doesn't cause irritation, since it is designed for the most intimate areas of the body.



"I've been using lube as a primer for three months now. I saw a comment on Instagram about using lube as a primer for acne-prone skin because it is water-based," says Arnakshi Patgiri (@arnakshi_kashyap on Instagram), a beauty content creator and influencer.

Over the last few years, the beauty industry has seen a slew of crazy hacks and tricks for both skincare and makeup (as a lifestyle writer, I've come across plenty). Last year, we saw an influencer using their own poop as skincare. Now, within just the first month of this year, we are witnessing a bizarre trend: using lube (yes, that) on the face as a facial

primer. The concept of using a facial primer—the first step in applying makeup to ensure pores are minimised and makeup goes on smoothly—isn't new. In fact, in the West, people have been using lube as a primer for quite some time. However, for many Indians, it became a crazy new idea when Arnakshi posted about it on Instagram. In her video, she explains how it has worked for her acne-prone skin and doesn't cause irritation since it is designed for the most intimate areas of the body. The video soon went viral. While some were confused, others 'sexualised' the content and cracked jokes about it. However, there were those who agreed that lube could indeed

double as a primer.

A trend from the West

As we told you, the concept of applying lube on your face as a primer is not new. In fact, makeup artist and TikToker Lukas Kohutek first used lube as a primer in February 2019. By 2021, #lubepimer had millions of views on TikTok. But it took some time to catch up, even in the West. Now, it seems like the trend has finally arrived in India, with a lot of people becoming curious about the trend.

What are experts saying?

Even though the idea of using lube might be appealing, as it's cheaper (no pink tax), it seems like experts are not happy with the idea of using it on our faces.

Dr Trupti Agarwal, consultant, dermatology, Sir HN Reliance Foundation Hospital, explains that while lubricants, particularly those with silicone or water-based formulas, might mimic the texture of some commercial primers, they are not formulated for this purpose.

"Silicone-based lubes create a smooth, slippery texture, resembling primers used for makeup or skin smoothing. However, their effectiveness depends on the type of lube and skin type. They may offer a temporary solution, but they are neither reliable nor designed for long-term use," she says.

Dr Sarita Sanke, senior consultant, dermatology de-

partment, Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital, tells India Today, "Makeup primers are formulated to be non-comedogenic and safe for prolonged facial application. Lubricants are intended for intimate use and may contain ingredients that irritate or compromise the skin barrier."

Dr Mikki Singh, medical director and founder of Bodycraft Clinics, further adds that while lubricants may temporarily create a smooth base for makeup, they lack the benefits of true primers. "Ingredients like glycerin and hydroxyethylcellulose might create a smoother surface, but lubes are not designed for facial skin and can trigger adverse reactions," she says.



Nita Ambani flaunts ethnic glam in traditional sarees at Trump's inauguration events



Mukesh and Nita Ambani attended Donald Trump's Inauguration Day ceremonies in Washington, where the latter proudly showcased her Indian heritage through her sartorial choices.

Nita Ambani did what she does best, put her best fashion foot forward over the weekend as she attended a special dinner held in honour of now-President Donald Trump. Draped in an exquisite jamewar (Kashmiri fabric) saree by ace designer Tarun Tahiliani, she embraced traditional roots with complete flair.

The saree, crafted over 1,900 meticulous hours, features intricate aari work and delicate French knots, creating a stunning interplay of texture and detail. She paired it

with a modern tapered collared blouse, accented at the neckline with a chunky diamond brooch. The ensemble showcased Tahiliani's signature style - a seamless amalgamation of tradition and contemporary elegance. To achieve its flawless drape, heritage jamewar shawls were embroidered by skilled craftsmen, hand-painted, printed, and further enhanced with intricate embroidery. Her saree was a modern interpretation of the traditional jamewar, adorned with the finest kashidakari, a traditional

Kashmiri embroidery technique that uses thread and beads to create intricate patterns and designs.

Her look was completed with a pair of pearl-and-diamond-studded chandbalis. Simple and effortless, yet undeniably striking. Earlier, ahead of the Inauguration Day, Nita and Mukesh Ambani attended a private reception hosted in honour of President Trump. For the reception too, Nita Ambani chose the traditional route. She wore a custom-designed Kanchipuram silk saree by Swadesh.

Can two spoons of rum at night cure your winter cough?

Many believe drinking rum or brandy with warm water can help deal with coughing during winter. But what do doctors say?

By Medha Chawla

"When my father brought home a bottle of rum this winter, I was a bit surprised because he doesn't drink. When I asked him about it, he said it was to keep his cough under control," says Vansh, a 27-year-old businessman from Delhi, to India Today.

"This incident also took me back to my childhood, as my father would give me a teaspoon of brandy at night during peak winter whenever I had a cough or cold," he adds.

Vansh's father is not alone in believing that a bit of rum or brandy can help cure a winter cough. It, in fact, is a popular home remedy in India as well as in the West. Remember when Shah Rukh Khan offered cognac (a type of brand) to a shivering Kajol in the film 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge'? So did Rishi Kapoor to Sridevi in 'Chandni'.

The most common way to drink rum for a cough involves making a sort of Hot Toddy (a cocktail). Boil water with spices like cinnamon, cloves, and star anise, add a bit of rum (30 ml), and sip it slowly.

What doctors say

It is believed that drinking rum or brandy

can soothe a sore throat and clear cold-induced congestion. Regardless of what age-old remedies suggest, doctors do not recommend consuming any kind of alcohol as a treatment at all.

Drinking rum with hot water, doctors say, only provides symptomatic relief. The consumption risks outweigh any benefits.

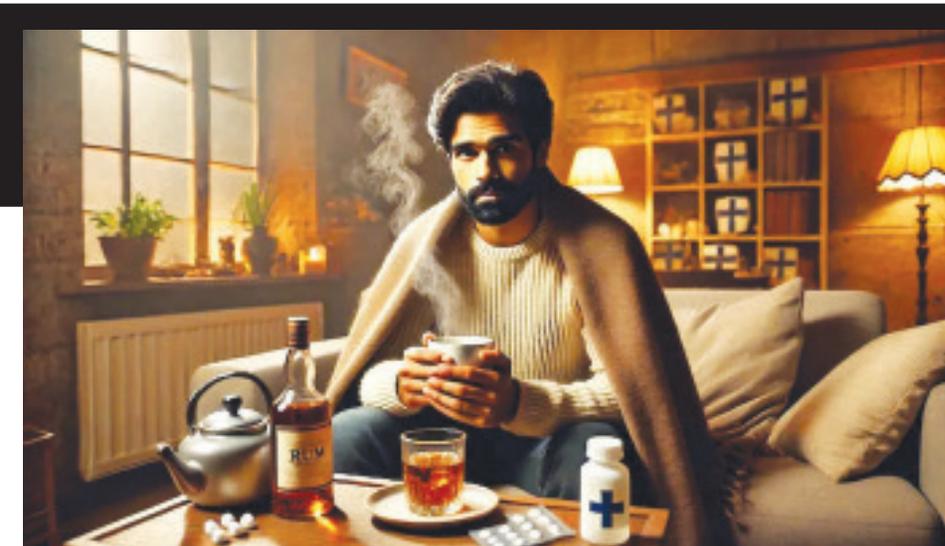
"It gives you a little warmth which provides symptomatic relief. It is not used for treating any viral infections like a cold and cough. Using rum on a regular basis can lower the immunity," Dr Atul Kakar, Chairperson of Medicine, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi.

Dr Mriganka Bohra, General Physician, Apollo Spectra Hospital, Jaipur, explains that alcohol found in rum dilates the blood vessels, resulting in a sensation of warmth.

"It may have a mild numbing effect on a sore throat. When combined with ingredients such as honey, lemon, or spices, it could provide some comforting benefits. Nonetheless, these benefits are only surface-level and do not offer a genuine remedy," adds Dr Bohra.

Impact on health

The impact of consuming alcohol, even



in small quantities, is significant.

"Alcohol, including rum, puts a considerable strain on the liver, which is tasked with processing it. Even minimal consumption can lead to inflammation, particularly in those who already have liver issues like fatty liver disease. Consistent use, even in what seems to be harmless amounts for 'therapeutic purposes,' can result in liver damage over time," Dr Saad Anwar, Senior Consultant Gastro, Gastro Surgery, GI Onco Surgery and Advance Laparoscopic Surgery, Apollo Spectra Hospital, Kanpur.

Since alcohol can impair the immune system, it increases the risk of infections rather than offering protective benefits. Health experts also highlight

more risks of consuming alcohol to treat winter cough and cold; it can disrupt sleep, irritate the stomach lining, and lead to dehydration.

"These conditions can further aggravate cold symptoms. Alcohol can also negatively interact with medications often used to treat colds, such as antihistamines or pain relievers, which can result in adverse side effects," adds Dr Bohra.

What to do instead?

On the contrary, drinking herbal tea, doctors say, can provide similar comfort. Research also suggests this. In a study conducted in 2008, participants reported immediate relief from symptoms of cough, runny nose, and sneezing upon consuming a hot beverage.

The good kind of shots

Ever done shots that are good for health? Try out these nutrient-packed drinks that can be made at home

Can a shot a day keep the doctor away? It can help, if you're taking the right kinds of shots - wellness boosts packed with antioxidants, minerals, vitamins and nutrients. The most popular are ginger shots, but you can also shoot turmeric, cinnamon or apple cider vinegar. Some have anti-inflammatory properties, others help strengthen your bones. And they can all be made at home. Here's how.

GINGER SHOTS

Take a 1-inch piece of fresh ginger root, grind and strain it to extract about 1 tsp of concentrated juice. Add lemon or orange juice, turmeric, pepper and honey to taste.

"Ginger contains gingerol, a substance that aids in digestion, and can help treat many forms of nausea, especially morning sickness in pregnant women," says Bhakti Samant, chief

dietician at Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital, Mumbai.

CINNAMON SHOTS

Soak a cinnamon stick in water, add a bit of honey, and sip (ideally, don't down this in one go; it's absorbed better in small quantities). "Cinnamon influences the manner in which sugar is metabolised, helping to cut fat accumulation," says Samant. This shot can help ease menstrual cramps, adds Seema Singh, chief clinical nutritionist at Fortis Hospital, Delhi.

TURMERIC SHOTS

The curcumin in turmeric is a very strong anti-oxidant. "This makes turmeric shots a great anti-inflammatory. It helps ease joint pains, and boosts immunity," says Singh.

Mix 1 tsp haldi in a cup of coconut water; add ginger, honey and lemon to taste. A pinch of freshly ground black pepper

will help the body absorb the curcumin better.

CHIA SHOTS

"Chia is rich in Omega 3 fatty acids. They are a source of antioxidants, which are believed to have cardiac, anti-ageing and anti-carcinogenic characteristics," says Samant.

Soak 1 tsp chia seeds in water for at least 10 minutes. Down like a shot; it's so filling, you can have it in place of a snack.

APPLE CIDER VINEGAR SHOTS)

Popularly known as ACV, apple cider vinegar is an alkaline, probiotic-rich ingredient known to reduce muscle pain, headaches, and boost digestion.

For an ACV shot, mix 1 tsp of apple cider vinegar in 100ml of water and add ice cubes. Restrict to one



Can India turn off Indus tap and leave Pakistan high and dry?

The suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty by India is more of a pressure tactic on Pakistan to force it to rein in terror groups and stop infiltration. Here is why India can't stop Indus waters to Pakistan overnight.



"Pakistan will die out of thirst". "Pakistan will face a severe water crisis this summer". "Pakistan will be left high and dry" - As India decided to turn off the tap on the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty following the horrific Pahalgam attack, an avalanche of posts flooded X on how it will impact Pakistan. While in the long run it will have astronomical implications for Pakistan, for now it is more of a psychological pressure tactic. Firstly, we need to understand the contours of the Indus Waters Treaty and the rivers at play.

UNDERSTANDING THE INDUS WATERS TREATY

The treaty, signed in September 1960 after years of

negotiations, was to manage the waters of the shared rivers between India and Pakistan. Both the countries being agrarian economies, are heavily dependent on the rivers for irrigation and agriculture. As per the treaty, India has unrestricted use of all the water of the "eastern rivers" of the Indus system - Sutlej, Beas and Ravi. Pakistan, meanwhile, was allowed to receive water from the "western rivers" - Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab. Now, Pakistan, being the lower riparian country, as the rivers flow downstream, is at a disadvantage. Upper riparian is the place where the river originates and lower riparian is where it ends.

Thus, since the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab do not originate in Pakistan, the country is heavily reliant on the treaty as it receives about 80% of the total water flow from these rivers. It is vital for agriculture and irrigation in the Pakistani provinces of Punjab and Sindh. In fact, the Punjab province produces 85 per cent of the country's food. Moreover, being an agrarian economy, the agricultural sector contributes nearly 25% to Pakistan's coffers and is the only source of income for 70% of its rural population. With Pakistan already facing groundwater depletion and cities like Karachi relying on private water tankers, any interruption to water flow from the Indus

rivers will affect crop yields, leading to food shortages and possible economic instability. WHY PAKISTAN WON'T FEEL THE IMPACT IMMEDIATELY

However, all the impact will not be felt immediately as India's decision to hold the treaty in abeyance doesn't mean an immediate halt to water flowing to Pakistan. This is so because India presently doesn't have the infrastructure to stop the flow of water from the Indus rivers into Pakistan, or divert it for its own use. At most, India can cut water flows by 5-10%.

The treaty restricts India from building reservoir dams on the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab. India could, however, develop hydroelectric "run-of-the-river" projects. This means that the

projects cannot alter the flow of water or obstruct it. Suspending the treaty means India may not adhere to these restrictions, and begin constructing reservoir dams to plug water flow. However, building large reservoirs on these rivers will take years, if not a decade. It would require extensive surveys and funding for such a thing to fructify considering the ecological impact. Thus, at this point, India's move is more a pressure tactic on Pakistan to rein in terror groups and stop infiltration. A user on X summed up the situation perfectly. "This is not about turning off the water tomorrow... The tap is still open. But the restraint behind it has been lifted," the user tweeted.

Why Zelensky can't and won't give up Crimea

Vladimir Putin initially denied having anything to do with Russia's capture of Crimea in February 2014, when mysterious masked commandos in unidentified green uniforms seized the local parliament and fanned out across the peninsula.

Those "little green men" marked the start of Russia's war on Ukraine, which culminated in the 2022 full-scale invasion.

The future of Crimea is now at the centre of President Donald Trump's peace plan and has prompted Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky to rule out recognising Russian control of the peninsula.

The exact terms of his plan have not been published, but reports suggest it would include the US recognising Crimea as a legal part of Russia - *de jure* in Latin.

For Trump, Ukraine's southern peninsula was "lost years ago" and "is not even a part of discussion" in peace talks.

But for Zelensky to renounce Crimea as an indivisible part of Ukraine would be unconscionable.

Follow latest updates on Ukraine war

In the words of opposition MP Iryna Gerashchenko "territorial integrity and sovereignty is a red line for Ukraine and Ukrainians".

Trump made the point that "if [Volodymyr Zelensky] wants Crimea, why didn't they fight for it 11 years ago when it was handed over to Russia without a shot being fired?"

Few shots were fired, but Crimea was seized at gunpoint during a power vacuum.

Putin later admitted hatching the land-grab in an all-night meeting with his officials days after Ukraine's pro-Russian leader was ousted in Kyiv.

Crimea a stumbling block for Trump

For a US leader in a hurry to secure a peace deal, Crimea could become a big stumbling block.

Trump is correct that there is little chance of Ukraine regaining Crimea in the foreseeable future, and it is in reality - *de facto* - under Russian control. But that is a far cry from recognising it as legal.



Zelensky points to a 2018 "Crimea declaration" by Trump's then secretary of state, Mike Pompeo.

Pompeo said the US rejected "Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea" and pledged to continue until Ukraine's territorial integrity



was restored.

Trump criticises Zelensky over Crimea

US intensifies bid to end war Zelensky's implication is that Trump backed Ukraine on Crimea then, and should stick to that now.

If a landgrab unrecognised by the international community is approved by the US as legal, what would that mean for international law and the principles of the UN charter? Weeks after Russia's full-scale war began, there was an initial proposal in Istanbul to park the issue so that Russia and Ukraine would aim to resolve it in the next 10-15 years.

The idea did not take hold but it was a way of getting over that stumbling block.

The idea did not take hold but it was a way of getting over that stumbling block.

Zelensky constrained by Ukrainian constitution

Zelensky was adamant that he has no power to give up Crimea: "There's nothing to talk about here. This is against our constitution."

Article 2 of the constitution states that Ukraine's

sovereignty "extends throughout its entire territory" which "within its present border is indivisible and inviolable".

Any change to Ukraine's territory has to go to a national referendum, which must be authorised by the Ukrainian parliament.

It is not just President Trump that has problems with Kyiv. Russia also sees the Ukrainian constitution as an "obstacle" to peace efforts.

Constitutions can be changed, but not while Ukraine is under martial law.

Approving Russia's illegal annexation would not just be a red line for Ukraine but would be a terrifying precedent for countries such as Romania that border the Black Sea. The

precedent would be felt far beyond the Black Sea.

Does Russia have a claim to Crimea?

For historical reasons, Russians have long seen Crimea as part of their territory and Putin has spoken of a "living and unbreakable bond" with the peninsula, with its Black Sea resorts and balmy summer climate.

But Crimea along with the rest of Ukraine voted for independence from the collapsing Soviet Union in 1991. It had the status of autonomous republic within and Kyiv allowed Russia to lease the port of Sevastopol as a base for the Black Sea Fleet.

After its annexation in 2014 Putin sought to cement Russia's control over Crimea, first with a 12-mile bridge built over the Kerch Strait in 2018 and then by capturing a land bridge along the Sea of Azov

coast in 2022.

Putin felt he was righting a wrong inflicted on Russia when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev transferred Crimea to Ukraine in 1954. Russia, he said, was "not simply robbed, it was plundered". Crimea was first annexed by Tsarist Russia under Catherine the Great in 1783 and largely remained part of Russia until Khrushchev's decision.

Russia and Ukraine were both Soviet republics so it was not a big deal for the Kremlin in 1954.

More than half the population of Crimea was Russian, mainly because the original majority population of Crimean Tatars were deported under Soviet

dictator Joseph Stalin in 1944.

Tatars were only able to return to Crimea from exile from 1989 as the Soviet Union fell apart, and they now make up about 15% of Crimea's population.

Russia quickly organised a referendum in March 2014 but it was rejected as a sham by the international community and the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution backing Ukrainian sovereignty.

The International Criminal Court ruled that Russia's activity in Crimea amounted to "ongoing occupation".

Refat Chubarov, Chairman of the Mejlis, a body representing Crimean Tatars, has insisted that Ukraine must categorically reject any territorial concession in exchange for peace.

"Crimea is the homeland of the indigenous Crimean Tatar people and an integral part of Ukraine," he said.

Crimea may not be only problem

Trump's peace plan has not yet been published, but according to various reports and remarks by US officials, Ukraine would be required to adhere to other difficult conditions.

Russia's occupation of almost 20% of Ukraine would be *de facto* recognised behind existing front lines, in effect freezing the conflict in four Ukrainian regions: Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia.

That would be backed up by a "robust security guarantee", according to US outlet Axios, presumably backed up by a "coalition of the willing" involving the UK, France but not the US.

There would be a promise not to admit Ukraine into Nato, although it could join the EU.

All US sanctions would be lifted and economic co-operation with the US enhanced. Axios also suggests

Russia would return a small occupied area of the Kharkiv region and allow Ukraine "unimpeded passage" on the Dnipro river, while the US would

take charge of the nuclear power plant in Zaporizhzhia, seized by Russia in 2022. And then there is a US-Ukraine deal to share minerals profits, which Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal is expected to seal with the US by Saturday.

What Is The Simla Agreement And How Pak Has Violated It In The Past



India has ramped up its response to the Pahalgam terror attacks, revoking all visas issued to Pakistani nationals, including medical visas, and suspending visa services for Pakistanis. Islamabad has tried to mirror New Delhi's decisions and has taken several measures as the diplomatic standoff escalates.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chaired a rare National Security Committee (NSC) meeting today and took several decisions, during which the committee said it "shall exercise the right to hold all bilateral agreements with India, including but not limited to the Simla Agreement in abeyance." The Simla Agreement brought into existence the Line of Control, a boundary demarcating the positioning of the armies of both sides, which resulted from the December 17, 1971, cease-fire following the 14-day war and India's decisive victory. The agreement has been violated in the past by Pakistan. Click here for Pahalgam terror attack live updates

What Is The Simla Agreement?

On December 16, 1971, over 90,000 Pakistani troops surrendered in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) following decisive battles fought on the eastern and western fronts over two weeks. The surrender in the east led to a ceasefire in the western sector too, resulting in

the end of the war and Indian victory and the birth of Bangladesh. The next day, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced a unilateral ceasefire. The Simla Agreement was a peace treaty signed between Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistan Prime

Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh. The treaty aimed to "put an end to the conflict and confrontation that have hitherto marred their relations and work for the promotion of a friendly and harmonious relationship and the establishment of durable peace in the sub-continent."

The agreement was signed on July 2, 1972 and came into force on August 4. After over 50 years, Pakistan has said it "shall exercise its right to hold the Simla Agreement". However, there is a significant clause in the agreement related to the Line of Control (LoC) between India and Pakistan, which runs from Manawar in the south, north to Keran and to the glacier areas. Subsections 1 and 2 of clause 4 of the Simla Agreement state: In order to initiate the process

of the establishment of durable peace, both the Governments agree that:

(1) Indian and Pakistani forces shall be withdrawn to their side of the international border.
(2) In Jammu and Kashmir, the line of control resulting from the cease-fire of December 17, 1971, shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognised position of either side. Neither side shall seek to alter it unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations. Both sides further undertake to refrain from

the threat or the use of force in violation of this Line.

(3) The withdrawals shall commence upon entry into force of this Agreement and shall be completed within a period of 30 days thereof.

Clause 5 of the agreement states: "This Agreement will be subject to ratification by both countries in accordance with their respective constitutional procedures, and will come into force with effect from the date on which the Instruments of Ratification are exchanged." The Line of Control was established from the cease-fire line that came into effect on December 17, 1971.

1949 Karachi Agreement

Following Independence and Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India, Pakistan-backed tribal raiders attacked the region, leading to a war that lasted for almost two years from October 1947 to 1949.

Pakistan's announcement is

of the Resolution of 13 August 1948, and as a complement of the suspension of hostilities in the State of Jammu and Kashmir on 1 January 1949, a cease-fire line is established."

"The cease-fire line runs from Manawar in the south, north to Keran and from Keran east to the glacier area."

Siachen To Kargil - When Pakistan Violated Simla Agreement

The 1949 Karachi Agreement clearly stated the demarcation of the cease-fire line. The wording of the agreement is as follows: "From DALUNANG eastwards the cease-fire line will follow the general line Point 15495, ISHMAN, MANUS, GANGAM, GUNDERMAN, Point 13620, JUNKAR (Point 17628), MARMAK, NATSARA, SHANGRUTH (Point 17531), CHORBAT LA (Point 15700), CHALUNKA (on the SHYOK River), KHOR, thence north to the glaciers."

East of Chalunka, NJ9842 was the last demarcated point on the cease-fire line, and the agreement states that it would run north to the glaciers. Pakistan tried to take control of the Siachen glacier, an Indian territory as demarcated by the Karachi agreement, and tried to alter the provisions of the Simla Agreement. India launched Operation Meghdoot in 1984, gaining full control of the glacier. Indian Air Force and the Indian Army jointly operate in the icy heights of Siachen, and the Operation is the longest-running military operation in the world.

Almost a decade later, Pakistan crossed the Line of Control and took control of heights over a 150 sq km area of land in Kargil, which overlooked National Highway-1. The decision to unilaterally alter the LoC led to a brutal conflict in which India successfully took control of the territory occupied by Pakistan.

In 2003, India and Pakistan agreed to a ceasefire along the Line of Control, four years after the Kargil Conflict. From 2003 to 2006, not a single bullet was fired but since 2006, Pakistan has violated the agreement several times.



significant because the Simla Agreement makes provision for the ceasefire line to be known as the Line of Control. Should Pakistan suspend the Simla Agreement, it will put a question on the validity of the Line of Control.

In 1949, the military representatives of India and Pakistan met together in Karachi for a UN-brokered ceasefire.

The India and Pakistan Delegations authorized the establishment of a ceasefire line.

"Under the provisions of Part I

A people's pontiff

Pope Francis leaves a legacy of compassion

Pope Francis, who passed away on Easter Monday at the age of 88, was not just the first Latin American pontiff, he was, in many ways, the most unconventional pope of modern times. A spiritual leader with the heart of a reformer, Jorge Mario Bergoglio embodied humility, compassion and a quiet but persistent defiance of the Vatican's ossified traditions. From the moment he stepped onto the balcony of St Peter's Basilica in 2013, rejecting papal opulence and choosing the name "Francis" after the saint of the poor, his message was unmis-



takable: this would be a papacy

focussed on mercy over judgment, inclusion over exclusion and the marginalised over the

powerful. He will be remembered as the pope who washed the feet of prisoners, lived in a guesthouse

instead of the Apostolic Palace, and embraced LGBTQ+ Catholics, migrants and climate action with moral clarity. His messages on environmental stewardship and economic inequality reframed Catholic doctrine for the 21st century. For many, he reimagined the Church not as an institution of power, but as a field hospital — meeting people where they suffer. Pope Francis notably addressed the liturgical dispute in India's Syro-Malabar Church, appointing Archbishop Cyril Vasil as his delegate to mediate.

Critics saw him as too progres-

sive, and his initial response to clerical abuse drew scrutiny. Yet, reform under Francis was real, if incomplete. Still, he reoriented the Church's moral compass towards compassion. His visit to conflict zones and his willingness to speak uncomfortable truths gave him moral authority beyond the Catholic fold. In a divided world — and often a divided Church — he stood as a figure of unity and hope. Pope Francis reminded us that true power lies in humility. His call for a "Church of the poor, for the poor" will resonate for generations.

Pope tried to change church for women, with mixed success

Pope Francis, the head of the Catholic Church, died on Easter Monday at the age of 88. On Easter Sunday, he used his message and blessing to appeal for peace in Middle East and Ukraine.

Pope Francis will be remembered as a pastoral leader who cared deeply about the environment and those impacted by migration, poverty and war.

During his Pontificate, he did make important changes to the patriarchal structure of the Catholic Church — but did he go far enough?

Throughout his papacy, Pope Francis highlighted the struggles of women in society. He took important steps to expand opportunities for women in the church and address its patriarchal structure.

This was showcased by his inclusion of women in the 2024 synod (a global meeting of the whole church, represented by bishops) and his granting of voting rights for 57 women out of a total of 368 attendees. The appointment of around 20 women to positions of authority in the Vatican by the Pope is unprecedented.

This includes the recent 2025



appointment of an Italian religious sister, Simona Brambilla, to lead a Vatican department.

During his papacy, Pope Francis also strongly supported the ongoing involvement of women in positions of leadership in the Roman Curia (the governance body of the church).

At local levels, in parishes, he made it possible for women to be formally appointed to the positions of catechist and lector — roles previously reserved for men.

He also emphasised a need for more women to study and teach theology.

However, these changes barely scratched the surface of securing full equality for women in the Catholic Church.

Pope Francis himself stated women still encountered obstacles, and opportunities for women to participate were under-utilised by local churches.

In his autobiography, published in January this year, he wrote of the "urgent challenge" to include women in central roles at every level of church life.

He viewed this move as essential to "de-masculinising" the church and removing the problem of

clericalism. Importantly, the reasoning that underpins women's limited role in the life of the church remains unchanged. In particular, Pope Francis referred to gender stereotypes and supported the theology of complementarianism (a view that women are different but equally valued, where their central contribution is to motherhood, femininity and pastoral care responsibilities).

While Pope Francis was genuinely committed to dialogue about and with women, his legacy remains contradictory.

Women have been appointed to

administrative and management positions, but decision making and the ministry still largely rest with clergy men.

Pope Francis' emphasis on the "feminine nature" women bring to roles, rather than their gifts and talents, limited women.

And although he called out discrimination against women in broader society, he expressed opposition to contemporary feminism, which he titled "gender ideology" and "machismo with a skirt." Moreover, despite ongoing discussions, Pope Francis appeared to be unresponsive to calls for a greater role for women in the ministry. Women cannot preach during Mass or be ordained to the priesthood or diaconate, despite multiple attempts by Catholic reform groups to advocate for women's inclusion. The 2023 International Survey of Catholic Women, which surveyed more than 17,000 Catholic women from 104 countries and eight language groups, found women across the world were keen for church reform that recognises women's leadership capacities and ongoing contribution to church communities.

Fawad Khan's *Abir Gulal* won't be allowed to release in India: Government sources

Fawad Khan and Vaani Kapoor's upcoming film 'Abir Gulal' will not be allowed to release in India, as per government sources. The film was slated for release on May 9. It has faced boycott calls in the wake of the recent terror attack in Pahalgam, which claimed the lives of 26 tourists and left several others injured. Directed by Aarti S Bagdi, the film has stirred controversy due to Khan's casting. The public outrage after the attack has left several social media users demanding strict action against Pakistan and questioning the Indian film industry's continued collaboration with Pakistani artists.

Although the Bombay High Court dismissed a 2023 petition demanding a total ban on Pakistani artists working in India, several political parties and film associations remain firmly opposed to such



collaborations.

After the teaser of the romantic drama was released, it faced a boycott call while many demanded a ban.

Both Vaani and Fawad faced the heat after they participated in the film's promotion on April 20 for the song launch in Dubai.

Khan condemned the brutality on social media. In his message on Instagram, Fawad Khan mentioned that his thoughts and prayers are with the victims at this hour. "Deeply saddened to hear the news of the heinous attack in Pahalgam (sic)," his message read.

Earlier, the Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE) announced a blanket ban on all Pakistani artistes. It has also said in a statement that it will take all necessary steps to ensure that 'Abir Gulal' is not released in India.

FWICE President BN Tiwari

shared that strict action would be taken against 'Abir Gulal' makers and the film would not be released in India. He also shared that the songs of the film or any visuals would not be played anywhere in the country. All platforms have been notified of the same. Henceforth, the cast and crew have been advised to not associate with any Pakistani artists in any way. No shows, songs or performances would be aired anywhere. When asked about the future of Pakistani shows on YouTube, which Indians are quite a fan of, Tiwari said that they can only restrict platforms in their sector. However, he added that the terror attack will definitely widen the gap between the countries in terms of entertainment exchange. 'Abir Gulal' was slated for May 9 release worldwide. It features Vaani Kapoor, Soni Razdan and Ridhi Dogra in key roles.

Malavika Mohanan calls out male actors for pretending to be woke, feminist allies

Actor Malavika Mohanan took a strong stand against male actors who maintain a facade of being woke and feminist. In a recent interview, the 'The Raja Saab' actor - who will soon be seen alongside Prabhas - called out the hypocrisy, saying that many men have become savvy in recent years and have learned how to project a fake feminist image. She expressed her shock and disbelief at their behaviour, calling it nothing short of hypocrisy.

During an interview with Hauterrfly, Malavika Mohanan said, "I don't think this disparity has ever ended in the film industry. I also think that men have really gotten smart, and I have seen this in a lot of male actors, suddenly, in the last 5-6 years, they know how to put on the mask of being woke."

She continued to explain, "They know exactly what lines to say that make them come across like a feminist, as a very forward-thinking person, someone who treats women as equals. And I have seen them go back from the public eye and become the most misogynistic person ever. It's hypocrisy."

During the same interview, Mohanan also talked about South film industry's 'navel obsession'. She said, "I used to be very perplexed earlier, too, because I've grown up in Mumbai. It was a completely new phenomenon that navels are obsessed over so much. And then you'd see pictures of actresses on social media, where they zoom into their bodies. Navel obsession is a very real thing." Malavika Mohanan was last seen in the Tamil film 'Thangalaan', which co-starred Chiyaan Vikram and Parvathy Thiruvothu and released last year.



Imanvi, Prabhas's Fauji co-star, denies links to Pakistani military.



Iman Esmail, known professionally as Imanvi, has issued a strong statement addressing rumours about her background following the Pahalgam terror attack. The Indian-American actor, who is set to star opposite Baahubali actor Prabhas in an upcoming period drama, 'Fauji',

condemned the attack and dismissed false claims about her family's alleged ties to the Pakistani military.

In an Instagram post, Imanvi began by offering condolences to the victims of the tragic Pahalgam incident. "First and foremost, I want to express my most sincere and heartfelt

condolences for the tragic event that took place in Pahalgam. My heart goes out to all those who lost their lives and their loved ones. Any loss of innocent life is tragic and weighs heavy on my heart," she wrote, strongly condemning the violence. Refuting the claims circulating online, Imanvi

addressed the controversy head-on. "Nobody in my family has ever been or is currently associated with the Pakistani military in any way. This and multiple other falsehoods have been fabricated by online trolls for the sole purpose of spreading hate," she clarified. She also criticised sections of

the media for amplifying unverified information without proper fact-checking. She said, "What is especially disappointing is that legitimate news outlets, journalists and those on social media failed to investigate their source material and instead have simply repeated these slanderous statements."

In the post, she further added, "I am a proud Indian American who speaks Hindi, Telugu, Gujarati and English. I was born in Los Angeles, California after my parents legally immigrated to the United States as youth." With a background in dance and choreography, Imanvi shared that she has long been influenced by Indian cinema. She concluded her post by saying, "I will work hard to ensure that this legacy carries on through my work and uplifts the experiences of my Indian heritage. Lots of love, Imanvi."

Imanvi will be seen in Hanu Raghavapudi's period film, 'Fauji', opposite Prabhas. The film is being produced by Mythri Movie Makers and it also reportedly features Mithun Chakraborty and Jaya Prada in pivotal roles.

Arijit Singh's Chennai concert cancelled after Pahalgam attack, refund promised



Singer Arijit Singh has decided to cancel his upcoming Chennai concert on Sunday, April 27, in the wake of the tragic terror attack in Pahalgam. The move comes as a gesture of solidarity and a tribute to the victims during this difficult time.

The attack took place on April 22, 2025, in the Baisaran Valley near Pahalgam, claiming the lives of at least 26 people and injuring several others.

A note by the organisers read, "IMPORTANT UPDATE. In light of the recent and tragic events, the organisers, along with the artist, have collectively made the decision to cancel the upcoming show scheduled to happen in Chennai this Sunday, April 27th. All ticket holders will receive full refunds, and the amount will be automatically refunded back to your original mode of payment (sic)." Earlier, the singer faced backlash for lending his

vocals to a song in 'Abir Gulaal', a film featuring Fawad Khan. He, along with Shilpa Rao, has been credited as the singer in the song, 'Khudaya Ishq' from the film.

Earlier, composer Anirudh Ravichander announced that the ticket sales for his Bengaluru concert had now been halted in the wake of the terrorist attack. The tickets for his Hukum Tour, scheduled for June 1, were supposed to go live on April 24. The organisers, however, decided to postpone it to another date due to the "current national situation". The new date will be announced soon.

Several other celebrities, including Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Siddharth Malhotra, Alia Bhatt, Priyanka Chopra, Katrina Kaif, and Allu Arjun also expressed shock and anger over the tragic attack.

Srinidhi Shetty on missing out Sita's role to Sai Pallavi in Ramayana



South Indian actor Srinidhi Shetty recently revealed that she had auditioned for the role of Sita in Nitesh Tiwari's 'Ramayana'. However, the part ultimately went to Telugu star Sai Pallavi. In a recent interview, Srinidhi reflected on the audition process and shared her thoughts on Sai portraying Sita opposite Ranbir Kapoor.

In an interview with Siddharth Kannan, the actor, who rose to fame with her role in the blockbuster Kannada film franchise 'KGF', recalled, saying, "Now, as the shoot is already happening, I guess I can say it. Yes, I did meet and give a screen test. I remember preparing three scenes very well, and they had a great response; they loved it." She continued, "I had heard that Yash was a part of Ramayana, and at that time, 'KGF 2' had just been released, and the pair was a hit - people were loving it."

Shetty continued to explain, "In just a month or two, this happened (the Ramayana audition). So I was thinking, he would play Raavan, I would play Sita; we would be pitted against each other. So people might not have been able to digest us against each other. So somewhere I thought, it might or might not."

Srinidhi Shetty also expressed her happiness at Sai Pallavi getting the role. "But I feel Sai Pallavi is a great choice. I would love to see her as Sita in the movie, and like I always say - when something works, it's great; when something doesn't, it's still wonderful because new doors will open for you," she said.

Srinidhi Shetty will be next seen in Telugu actor Nani's 'HIT: The Third Case'. The much-anticipated movie will hit theatres on May 1.