

Kashmir Images

www.thekashmirimages.com • epaper.thekashmirimages.com • facebook.com/thekashmirimages.com • e-mail: kashmirimages@hotmail.com • Twitter: @Dkashmirimages

Accuweather.com

Weather | Day: Mainly cloudy with a little rain in the afternoon | Rain: 3.7mm | Cloud Cover 78% | Night: Partly cloudy with a couple of showers late | Rain: 0.5mm | Cloud Cover 86% | Temp: High: 24° | Low: 10° | Sunrise: 5:34 AM | Sunset: 7:21 PM



Quick Read

Civilian flight operations to remain suspended at Sgr Airport till midnight of May 15

SRINAGAR: Authorities on Friday said the civilian flight operations will remain suspended at Srinagar International Airport till midnight of May 15 in view of the ongoing India-Pakistan confrontation.

"Please note that Srinagar Airport is closed up to 2359 hours of 14.05.2025 for flight operations," an official of the Airports Authority of India said here.

Srinagar Airport was closed for operations on May 7, soon after India launched missile strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Three cops injured as vehicle turns turtle in Ramban

BANIHAL: Three policemen were injured when a vehicle, part of the escort of a High Court judge, skidded off the road and turned turtle on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway in Ramban district on Friday, officials said.

The accident took place in the Wagan-Nachilana area when a Gypsy escorting the judge's vehicle overturned due to slippery conditions, they said.

The officials said that the injured cops were shifted to Banihal's Sub-Divisional Hospital for treatment.

All of them are reported to be stable, they added.

Several Kashmir schools switch to online mode

SRINAGAR: With tension between India and Pakistan forcing the closure of educational institutions in Kashmir, several schools have switched to an online mode of classes to ensure that students do not lose precious academic time.

As the schools have remained closed since May 7 following India's missile strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan, leading private schools in the valley started online classes for their students on Friday.

The government has closed schools, colleges and universities as a precautionary measure in view of the situation along the borders.

Drone attacks on Srinagar airport, Awantipora air base thwarted: Officials

Gol empowers Army chief to mobilise Territorial Army for support

IMAGES NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR/JAMMU/NEW
DELHI, MAY 09

Drone attacks on Srinagar airport and south Kashmir's Awantipora air base were thwarted late on Friday, officials said.

The attempted attack came a day after India thwarted attempts by the Pakistan military to attack Indian military installations using drones and missiles.

Drones were also sighted in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, officials said, adding that countermeasures had been initiated.

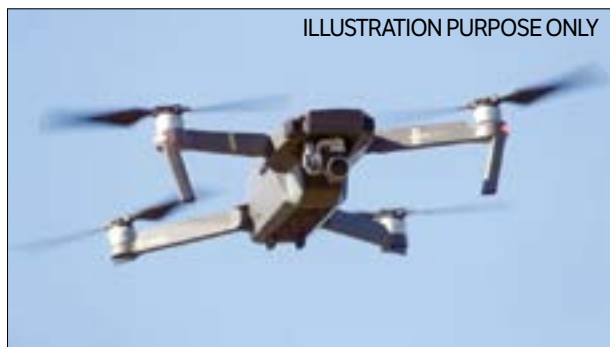


ILLUSTRATION PURPOSE ONLY

The sky was lit up in Baramulla district as the Indian military shot down Pakistani drones. Earlier in the evening, blasts were heard and sirens sounded in the Jammu region and south Kashmir as many parts of Jammu and

Infiltration bid foiled along Pak border in Jammu; 7 terrorists killed: BSF

New Delhi/Jammu, May 9 (PTI) The Border Security Force on Friday said it has foiled an infiltration bid from across the India-Pakistan International

Indian military responded to Pakistan's attempts to target Indian installations last night: FS

Blasts Pak for attempting to blame India for attacks on places of worship



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MAY 09

Indian armed forces responded proportionately and adequately to Pakistan's attempts to target Indian installations last night, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said on Friday.

The foreign secretary was addressing a press conference here.

Pakistan violated Indian airspace to target our military

Pak unleashed Turkish drones to target Indian installations last night: Indian Army

New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) Pakistan unleashed a swarm of Turkish drones to target Indian military facilities, probe air defence systems and gather intelligence last night and kept its civil airspace open during the assault endangering civilian flights, See **Pak unleashed...** on Pg-08

Pakistani troops shell areas near LoC, woman killed in Uri

Villager killed, 3 injured in Pakistani shelling in Poonch

Srinagar, May 9 (PTI) A woman was killed and two of her family members injured after Pakistani troops resorted to heavy shelling in areas near the Line of Control (LoC) in the Uri sector of north Kashmir, officials said on Friday.

They said the Indian Army has responded proportionately to the Pakistani aggression.

Officials said Pakistani troops violated the ceasefire along the LoC and resorted to heavy shelling in civilian areas in the Uri sector of

LG Sinha visits shelling-hit villages in Uri



IMAGES NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, MAY 09

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today visited the border villages of Lagama and Gingal in Uri and took an assessment of the damage to the civilian area and residential houses caused by unprovoked shelling by Pakistan.

The Lieutenant Governor interacted with the local residents and directed the district administration to provide immediate relief to the

LG interacts with soldiers at Bla, says Army ready to deal with any situation

SRINAGAR, MAY 09: The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today paid a visit to frontline soldiers in Baramulla and Uri sectors.

The Lieutenant Governor, who addressed and interacted with the soldiers stationed near the LoC, asked

"Escalation won't benefit anyone" -- CM Omar urges Pakistan to focus on de-escalation

Rushes to Jammu after Pakistan's failed drone attacks, visits camps



IMAGES NEWS NETWORK
JAMMU, MAY 09

Warning Pakistan that continued escalation from across the border would only hurt them, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah called Thursday's aerial strikes on Jammu one

CM emphasizes on ensuring public safety, maintaining unity

Reviews relief measures, preparedness with DCs of border districts

Jammu, May 09: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah held interaction with civil society members here today to discuss steps taken for public safety, state of preparedness and the importance of

India ramps up diplomatic offensive against Pakistan, says it's at war with terrorists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW YORK / LONDON, MAY 09

India has ramped up diplomatic offensive against Pakistan following the military conflict, with its Ambassador to the US Vinay Kwatra saying that the country is at war with the terrorists and will bring justice to victims of the Pahalgam terror attack by holding the "lowlifes, subhuman monsters" accountable.

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



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

"April 22 was the most heinous terrorist act," Kwatra said in an

People praise Army for interception of drones, missiles in air to protect Jammu

Garkhal, May 9 (PTI) Men and machines of the armed forces worked meticulously to ensure the interception of Kamikaze drones and missiles fired by Pakistani troops targeting Jammu, drawing widespread appreciation from people.

India on Thursday night swiftly thwarted Pakistan's fresh attempts to strike military sites with drones and missiles, including in Jammu and Pathankot, after foiling similar bids at 15 locations across the country's northern and western regions, amid

Amit Shah reviews security along Indo-Pak border, airports with top officials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MAY 09

Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday reviewed the prevailing situation along India's border with Pakistan and airports in the country amid the military conflict between the two countries, sources said.

The meeting came hours after the Border Security Force said it has foiled an infiltration bid from across the International Border in Jammu, killing at least seven terrorists and destroying a Pakistan Rangers post.

Apart from reviewing the security situation along the India-Pakistan border, Shah also took stock of the steps taken to beef up security at airports across the country, the sources said.



While the BSF guards the India-Pakistan border, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) protects the airports in the country, Metro networks and other vital installations.

Those who attended the meeting included Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Director of Intelligence Bureau Tapan Deka, Directors General of the BSF, CISF and the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security.

Nagrota land scam: ACB registers case against 3 former revenue officials, others

IMAGES NEWS NETWORK
JAMMU, MAY 09

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Friday registered a formal case against three former revenue officials for allegedly facilitating the illegal transfer of state land to private individuals in Nagrota area on the outskirts of Jammu city by misusing their official positions, officials said.

The accused include Riaz Ahmed -- the then Patwari Nagrota -- Rajesh Kumar Thakur and Nissar Ahmed Shah,

both former Tehsildars of Nagrota, along with several beneficiaries and others, they said.

The officials said the case has been registered under various sections of the Jammu and Kashmir Prevention of Corruption Act and the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC), including criminal conspiracy, cheating and forgery.

According to the ACB, an inheritance mutation dated July 25, 2017, for four kanals of land in Panjgrain village was fraudulently transferred to Sudarshan

HC asks govt to pay Rs 10 lakh to man for having illegally demolished his property

'Pay him another Rs 76 lakhs after recovering it from erring officials'

IMAGES NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, MAY 09

The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has ordered the government authorities to pay punitive compensation of rupees ten lakhs besides recompense by way of damages to the tune of Rs 76 lakhs, to be recovered from erring officials, for illegally demolishing the property of an elderly man from Jammu.

The court also directed the Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of J&K to conduct an in-depth enqui-

ry within a period of two months and take action, including penal measures, to ensure accountability of individual officers who have acted in violation of the law in the instant case.

The judicial action followed a petition by 69 year Abdul Majid whose properties, including a restaurant, at Dawara, Sambam Jammu, were demolished by the Forest Department without due process of law.



12 Kanals and 7 Marlas at Dawara, through registered sale deeds (2000-2004). Mutations were duly attested, and revenue records reflected his ownership.

In 2012, the petitioner constructed "Grand Hill" restaurant on the land after obtaining necessary permissions.

In 2020, the tehsildar concerned cancelled the mutations without notice, citing irregularities under Government Order.

The Forest Department in 2022 demolished structures constructed on it alleging encroachment on forest land.

After perusing the records and hearing the arguments of the parties, Justice W S Nargal found that the respondent authorities have acted in most clandestine manner by wrongly interpreting the true import and spirit of Government Order No. LB-6/C of 1958 after 62 years, which shocks the conscience of this Court, particularly, when the ownership

Nadda reviews health infrastructure preparedness

New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) Union Health Minister J P Nadda on Friday reviewed health infrastructure preparedness of hospitals in the country on Friday amid the ongoing India-Pakistan military conflict and directed officials to ensure all medical emergency response systems are fully equipped and functional.

An official statement said the minister stressed the need to establish ground-level linkages with all state governments, especially those with international borders, to provide immediate healthcare services in case of emergencies.

In the backdrop of a military conflict with Pakistan, Nadda said a 24x7 control and command centre in the health ministry should monitor ongoing efforts and support states.

Hospitals and medical institutions have been advised to ensure availability of essential drugs, and adequate supply of blood, oxygen and trauma care kits, among others. AIIMS-Delhi and other Central government hospitals have mobilised doctors and nurses equipped with supplies ready for deployment.

They have been advised to coordinate with state and district administrations, armed forces, private sector hospitals and charitable institutions to shore up the emergency response network.

At the review meeting, Nadda was apprised of about preparatory actions such as keeping ambulances ready for deployment, ensuring adequate availability of

medical supplies and equipment; making hospital ready for any emergency situation and BHIISHM cubes for the first line of care for all kinds of injuries and medical situations.

For capacity building in emergency healthcare, additional training modules for CPR, first aid, and basic life support are being rolled out with support from the Indian Red Cross Society, National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW), AIIMS-Delhi and online training facilitator iGOT.

"The Union Health Ministry is closely monitoring the situation and remains committed to ensuring uninterrupted healthcare services and emergency response across all regions," the statement stated.

Tension between New Delhi and Islamabad has been soaring since Indian armed forces pounded terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir in response to the April 22 Pahalgaon massacre.

Pakistan increased the intensity of its unprovoked firing across the Line of Control using mortars and heavy calibre artillery in areas in Kupwara, Baramulla, Uri, Poonch, Mendhar and Rajouri sectors in Jammu and Kashmir, killing 16 people.

Late on Thursday night, the Defence Ministry said India has swiftly foiled Pakistan's attempts to hit various key installations, including military stations at Jammu, Pathankot and Udhampur with drones and missiles.

Sitharaman asks banks to ensure uninterrupted services

New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday asked banks to remain vigilant and take all steps to ensure uninterrupted services to customers in view of heightened military conflict between India and Pakistan.

Addressing a meeting of CEO of banks and insurance companies on cybersecurity preparedness, the finance minister stressed the critical role of the banking and financial sector in ensuring economic stability in challenging times.

Banking services, both physical and digital, must function without disruption and glitches, she said, adding that emergency protocols should be updated and tested to handle any contingencies.

She advised banks to ensure the safety of bank employees and their families working at branches along the border areas.

Sitharaman also directed banks to ensure their adequate safety by effectively coordinating with the security agencies, the finance minister said in a statement after the high-level meeting.

It was attended by top officials of banks and insurance companies and senior officials from the Department of Financial Services (Ministry of Finance), CERT-In, RBI, Irdai and NPCI.

She also asked banks to ensure that citizens and businesses do not



suffer under any circumstances, and priority must be given to seamless cash availability at ATMs, uninterrupted UPI and internet banking services, and continued access to essential banking facilities.

Earlier in the day, public sector banks, including State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank, said their ATMs are fully functional, well-stocked, and that digital services are operating smoothly.

Sitharaman reiterated that the government is firmly committed to national security and economic stability, noting that the country's banking and financial system remains robust and resilient.

During the meeting, the finance minister reviewed operational and cybersecurity preparedness, including digital public-facing applications like internet banking and UPI.

Bank MDs and CEOs informed

that cybersecurity measures have been reinforced throughout the banking system. Anti-DDoS (Distributed Denial-of-Service) systems have been implemented by banks to protect against massive cyberattacks, the statement said.

To guarantee institutional readiness, mock drills have been held covering cybersecurity and disaster recovery scenarios at the highest levels, it said, adding that they appraised that phishing attempts are being actively watched, and staff members have received several internal alerts to increase awareness.

Bank officials stated that their Security Operations Centre (SOC) and Network Operations Centres are fully operational and on high alert, it said.

These centres are coordinating closely with CERT-In and the National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre

(NCIIPC), facilitating real-time data sharing and threat monitoring, it added.

To meet any eventuality, Sitharaman directed banks to conduct regular audits of their cybersecurity systems and data centres and ensure that all digital and core-banking infrastructure is fully firewalled and monitored around the clock to prevent breaches or any hostile cyber activity.

She instructed banks to designate two dedicated senior officials identified at the headquarters, one for reporting all cyber-related matters and the other to ensure operational matters, including the functioning of bank branches and the availability of cash in ATMs.

Both dedicated officers should report any incident to CERT-In/ relevant agencies and DFS on a real-time basis, the statement said.

In this regard, it said, banks were also asked to coordinate in real time with the Reserve Bank of India, CERT-In and relevant government agencies to ensure robust and agile information exchange and response.

As regards the insurance sector, the finance minister asked insurance companies to ensure timely claim settlements and uninterrupted customer service.

Sitharaman also said the Sponsor Banks should ensure that RRBs are well-supported during these times and hand-held them for any issues that they are facing.

Railway minister reviews special train services from Jammu, Udhampur

New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw reviewed the arrangements of special train services from Jammu and Udhampur to the different parts of the country for passengers stranded due to the closure of airports in the winter capital of Jammu and Kashmir and Chandigarh amid the India-Pakistan military standoff.

Four special trains were operated from Jammu and Udhampur on Friday on Vaishnaw's instructions.

According to the ministry, a special train with 12 unreserved and many reserved coaches left for New Delhi from Jammu around 10.45 am. A 20-coach Vande Bharat left Udhampur at 12.45 pm for the national capital via Jammu and Pathankot. Also, a 22-coach reserved train left Jammu for New Delhi around 7 pm.

"Another unreserved special train from Jammu has been planned for Guwahati via Uttar Pradesh and Bihar at 11.55 pm on Friday, the ministry said. Besides, a Vande Bharat special train, arranged on the request of the BCCI left from Jammu at 3 pm to ferry IPL players and officials.

"Special trains have been arranged by Indian Railways for the passengers who were stranded due to the closure of Jammu and Chandigarh airports," a press statement from the Railway Ministry said.

It added, "After taking full stock of the situation, the minister directed the railway officials to coordinate with various government agencies and operate trains to help the people in the border areas."

Special trains should be operated as per requirement along with regular trains, the ministry stated.

According to officials, many people residing closer to border areas have been moving to safer places, leading to a rise in travel demand.

"Control rooms at different locations such as Jammu, Ambala, New Delhi are monitoring the situation continuously. We are also observing the reservation pattern and passenger footfall at stations to take a call on running special trains," said Himanshu Upadhyay, the chief public relations officer of the Northern Railway.

Planned power shutdown across Kashmir for maintenance and infrastructure works

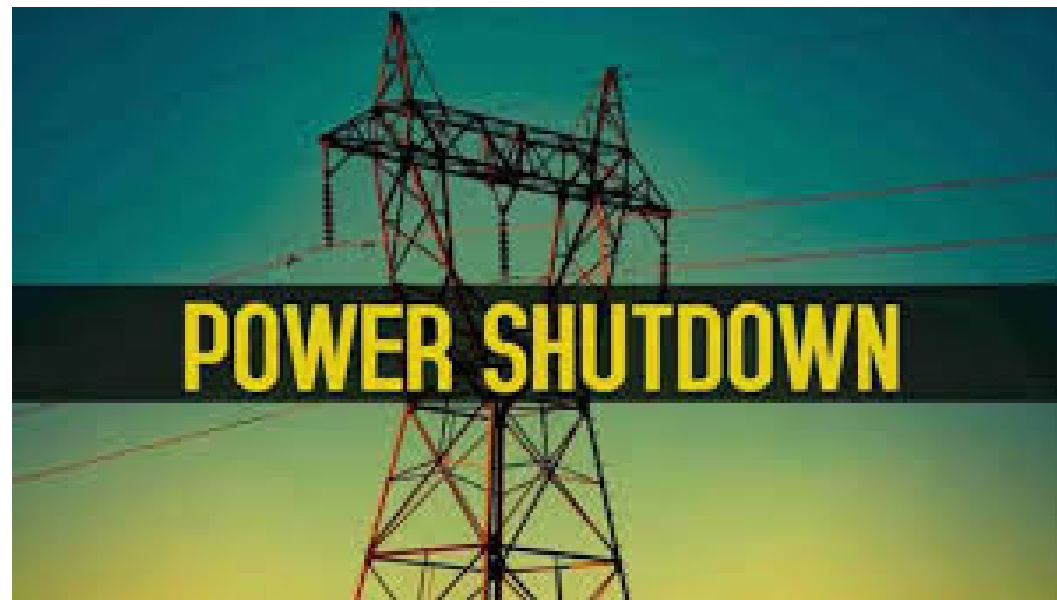
SRINAGAR, MAY 09: The Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) has announced scheduled power shutdowns across various parts of the Kashmir Valley to facilitate essential maintenance and infrastructure development work on multiple 33KV power lines.

According to the Chief Engineer, Distribution, KPDCL, in order to carry out several works, shutdown of several 33KV lines shall be carried out which will subsequently affect power supply to various areas across Kashmir.

In order to carry out Pole erection and stringing of ACSR, the shutdown of 33KV Railway/Kund Tap line shall be observed due to which 33/11KV Receiving Stations at Chowgam and Kund shall remain off while power supply to Kund, Waltengoo, Razloo, Chowgam, Lammer, Sopat and adjoining areas will be affected from 09:00 AM to 03:00 PM on 12 May, 2025.

Similarly to carry out the works of stabilization/ branch cutting and necessary maintenance of the 33 KV Watrehail line, the shutdown of 33KV Watrehail Tap line shall be observed due to which 33/11KV Receiving Stations at Waterhail, Waterwani, Charangam and Filtration plant shall remain off while power supply to Waterhail, Sholipora, Lobertal, Dadina, Prisabad, Waterhail PHE Substation, Charangam, Banet Punchgound, Uttligam and adjoining areas will be affected from 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM on 11 & 13 May, 2025.

Further to carry out the erection of ST Pole and shifting



of 33 KV Budgam Kremshore line permanently through UG Cable at village Razwan, the shutdown of 33KV Budgam-Kremshore line shall be observed due to which 33/11KV Receiving Stations at Kremshore, Khansahib, Raithan, Brenwar shall remain off while power supply to Old Kremshore, Arigam, Nunner, Shamsabad, Dreygam, Arampora, Shinipora, Yaikha, essential, Khansahib, Raithan, Bugroo, Brenwar and adjoining areas area will be affected from 10:00 AM to 02:00 PM on 12 May, 2025.

Also in this connection, the shutdown of 33KV Budgam Ichgamline shall be observed due to which 33/11KV Receiving Stations at Ichgam, Choom, Kanir, Hanjura shall remain off while power supply to Ichgam,

Ichkoot, Choon, Bubagh, Razvain, Kanir, Hushur, Wagam, Zuhama, Hanjooora, Dadaompura and adjoining areas will be affected from 10:00 AM to 02:00 PM on 12 May, 2025.

Likewise, the shutdown of 33KV Nowbugh Chadoora line shall be observed due to which 33/11KV Receiving Stations at Chadoora, Panzan, Ranger shall remain off while power supply to Sogam, Repora, Dawlatpora, Panzan, Lalgam, Chadoora Town, Chadoora, Hospital, Wathoora, Budgam areas will be affected from 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM on 11 May, 2025.

Also in this connection, the shutdown of 33KV Nowbugh Chararisharief line shall be observed due to which 33/11KV Receiving Stations at Char-I,

Char-II, Hafroo and Nagam shall remain off while power supply to Kakawring, Yousmarg, Char Town, Rakhe, ITI, Shrine, Tilsera, Alamdar Colony, Town, Bandipora, Nagam, Hayatpora, Hafroo, Bizgo and Lulipora areas will be affected from 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM on 11 May, 2025.

Moreover to carry out the installation of 33 KV isolators from GIS Tengpora, the shutdown of 33KV GIS Tengpora KP Bagh line, GIS Tengpora Exhibition Line and GIS Tengpora Narakara line shall be observed due to which 33/11KV Receiving Stations at KP Bagh, Jawahar Nagar, Rajbagh, Narkara and Gangbughand

adjoining areas will be affected from 11:00 AM to 02:00 PM on 12 May, 2025.

However, Receiving Station Exhibition and Batamalo will be charged through 33 KV Silk Factory line

Additionally, to facilitate branch cutting/pruning of trees lying in their close vicinity, the shutdown of 33KV Cheshmashahi Brein Nishat line shall be observed due to which 33/11KV Receiving Stations at Brein, Nishat shall remain off while power supply to Dalband Tap Line, Brein, Tulip Garden, Pahloo, Taj Vivanta, BSNL X-Change, Nishat, Foreshore, Pathan Bagh, Filtration Plant areas will be affected from 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM on 19 May, 2025.

Also in this connection, the shutdown of 33KV GIS Theed Shalimar line shall be observed, due to which 33/11KV Receiving Stations at Shalimar and Harwan shall remain off while power supply to SKUAST, Telibal, Ahrbal, Deewan Colony, Chandpora areas will be affected from 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM on 20 May, 2025.

Furthermore, to carry out Branch cutting and necessary stabilisation works, the shutdown of 33KV Delina Wagora line shall be observed due to which 33/11KV Receiving Stations at Sangrama, Wagora, Kreeeri, Ichloo, Kalantra shall remain off while power supply to Sangrama, Wagora, Kreeeri, Ichloo, Kalantra and adjoining areas will be affected from 10:00 AM to 03:00 PM on 13, 15, 17 and 20 May, 2025.

Government intervention sparks hope for free and fair elections in FCIK

Srinagar, May 9: In a crucial development set to restore faith in the democratic functioning of Kashmir's premier industrial body, the Chief Minister's Secretariat has responded positively to the concerns raised by the newly constituted Advisory Committee of the Federation of Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK) regarding the recent election crisis within the organisation.

The intervention comes after mounting dissatisfaction among members of the industrial fraternity with the now-dissolved Election Commission of FCIK, which was accused of serious

constitutional violations, procedural irregularities, and lack of transparency. The discontent had reached a boiling point, with multiple legal interventions and widespread resentment stalling the electoral process and severely hampering the Federation's ability to represent the interests of industrialists across the Valley.

In response to a detailed memorandum submitted on 6th May 2025 by the FCIK President Shahid Kamili and endorsed by 26 Presidents of various industrial estates and district-level units, the Chief Minister's Office has formally directed the Director,

Industries and Commerce, Kashmir to deploy neutral observers from the Industries and Commerce Department to oversee the FCIK election process.

The Director has also been asked to examine and act upon the request to place the FCIK office at Industrial Estate Barzullah under his temporary custody until the conclusion of the electoral process.

The Director has been further asked to ensure that the upcoming elections are conducted strictly as per the FCIK Constitution and bylaws.

The newly constituted Advisory Committee, formed during an

Extraordinary General Body Meeting on 4th May 2025, has been entrusted with the responsibility of steering FCIK through this transitional phase.

Entrusted with full constitutional authority by the General Body, the newly constituted Advisory Committee is empowered to establish a fresh, impartial Election Commission tasked with conducting free, fair, and transparent elections in strict accordance with the FCIK Constitution, under the oversight of external neutral observers and government-appointed representatives.

This move by the government is being widely hailed across the

industrial landscape of Kashmir as a turning point in the effort to restore credibility and legitimacy to FCIK.

Hailing the intervention, the members of the newly constituted Advisory Committee said that the Chief Minister's timely and just intervention has given new hope to the

thousands of entrepreneurs and industrialists who rely on FCIK as their collective voice. "We are fully committed to conducting free, fair, and constitutionally compliant elections under the supervision of neutral observers, and we will work closely with the Director of Industries and

Commerce to make that happen", they said.

The members of the industrial community echoed this sentiment, reaffirming their support for the newly constituted Advisory Committee and expressing confidence that the electoral process, long delayed and discredited, will now proceed with transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness.

With the government's firm backing and the Advisory Committee's commitment to constitutional values, the FCIK is poised to reclaim its central role in advocating for the region's industrial development and economic policy planning.

Dy CM reviews border situation, holds meeting with locals, officials at Rajouri

Asks authorities to prioritise civilian safety, security, ensuring swift rehabilitation



RAJOURI, MAY 9: In the wake of the prevailing situation along the border areas, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, today, chaired a high-level meeting with the district administration and prominent citizens of civil society at Rajouri to discuss public safety and seek suggestions regarding the evacuation and rehabilitation of the affected population.

Additional District Development Commissioner, Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa, briefed regarding the steps being taken by the district administration for the safety and security of people affected due to shelling

near the Line of Control (LoC).

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy CM stated that the situation has escalated due to unprovoked provocation by Pakistan, necessitating precautionary measures to safeguard civilian lives. He assured that both the UT and Central Governments are fully committed towards ensuring the safety and timely evacuation of residents living in vulnerable areas.

During the meeting, various issues were raised by the public and civil society, including direct chopper service from Rajouri to Jammu for critical

patients, deputation of officials for follow-up on patients being referred outside the UT, action against misuse of social media platforms, promotion of communal harmony and constitution of peace committees to prevent theft in vacated areas in case of migration, setting up of migrant camps in both government and private educational institutions, improvement of medical facilities at GMC Rajouri including a special ward for border shelling victims, availability of ambulances and generators at GMC, timely completion of 180-bedded hospital building at GMC and

regulation of fare for transportation vehicles during the crisis.

Prominent leaders, including MLA Rajouri, Iftikhar Ahmed, MLA Thanamandi, Muzaffar Khan, MLA Kalakote, Randhir Singh and DDC Vice Chairperson, Shabir Khan, along with several civil society members, actively participated and shared constructive suggestions.

The Deputy CM directed the authorities to prioritise civilian safety and security and ensure swift rehabilitation and assistance to the affected families. He stressed the importance of maintaining communal harmony and urged coordination between civil society and administration in these testing times.

Before the meeting, the Deputy Chief Minister visited the migrant camps set up at Thandikassi and interacted with the displaced families. He also visited GMC Rajouri, where he took stock of medical arrangements and interacted with the patients, particularly those injured or shifted due to border shelling. He issued directions for improving healthcare services and providing the best possible treatment to all affected individuals.

The meeting was attended by ACR Mohd Jahangir Khan, ACD Auqil Naveed, Principal GMC Dr A.S. Bhatia, Executive Engineer JPDCL, Mohd Rasheed, Executive Engineer Jal Shakti, Rajiv Khajuria and other senior officers from the district and line departments.

Sakeena Itoo, Javed Dar visit shelling affected areas of Bla, Uri

Direct authorities to prioritize civilian safety, ensure swift rehabilitation of affected families



BARAMULLA, MAY 09: On the directions of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, Cabinet Ministers, Sakeena Itoo and Javed Ahmad Dar, today visited the frontier district of Baramulla and took stock of the ongoing situation due to cross-border shelling.

During the visit, the Ministers visited GMC Baramulla and enquired about the well-being of citizens injured in the recent shelling incidents. They expressed solidarity with the injured victims and their family members.

The Ministers directed the medical staff of the hospital to provide immediate and effective treatment to the injured citizens. They assured the victims and their family members that the Government stands with them in these difficult times, and we are committed to their well-being.

Later, the Ministers also visited Uri and took on-spot assessment of various areas affected by ongoing shelling. They met the affected families and directed authorities to prioritise civilian safety and ensure swift rehabilitation efforts for the affected families.

The Ministers also met the grieving family of Nargis, a young woman killed during the ongoing shelling. They offered condolences to the affected family and assured them of every possible support and assistance from the government. They also met other affected families in Uri and directed authorities to prioritise civilian safety and swift rehabilitation efforts.

The Ministers, in the meanwhile, visited Sub-district Hospital Uri and met the injured civilians. They directed the hospital

administration to keep sufficient medical care stock available at the facility to deal with any kind of exigency.

Later, the Ministers also visited GDC Uri and met the victims of cross-border shelling rehabilitated in the college building. The Ministers urged the administration to keep all possible facilities available for the victims and ensure basic necessities are available round the clock for their well-being. They also directed the administration to keep sufficient doctors and medical staff available for their routine checking.

MLA Uri, Sajjad Shafi; MLA Sopore, Irshad Rasool Kar; senior officers of the district administration Baramulla and other concerned officers also accompanied the Ministers during the visit.

2nd National Lok Adalat Deferred

SRINAGAR, MAY 9: In accordance with directives from the Executive Chairman of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), the 2nd National Lok Adalat, originally scheduled for May 10, 2025, has been postponed due to the prevailing circumstances.

Consequently, the event will not take place on the scheduled date in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

JK Govt makes key appointments in Jal Shakti Department

SRINAGAR, MAY 09: In a significant development, the Jammu and Kashmir Government has approved the elevation and appointment of two senior officers in the Jal Shakti Department.

Upon their elevation, I/c Superintending Engineer, Mohammad Taj Chowdhary, has been appointed as Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Kashmir on in-charge basis, while I/c Superintending Engineer, Tirath Ram, has been appointed as Chief Engineer, Irrigation & Flood Control, Kashmir on in-charge basis.

These appointments have been made in view of the exceptional circumstances arising from significant vacancies and a shortage of senior officers at the top level in the department.

The Establishment-cum-Selection Committee had thoroughly discussed and recommended these elevations, underscoring the government's commitment to filling critical positions.

Meanwhile, Jal Shakti Minister, Javed Ahmed Rana, has ordered the elevation of five Executive Engineers to Superintending Engineers, effectively filling up all vacancies at the Superintending Engineer level in the Department.

This move is expected to bolster the implementation of vital water supply projects in Jammu and Kashmir.

Rana's proactive interventions have already begun to transform the human resource landscape in the Jal Shakti Department.

To ensure efficient project delivery, the Minister has directed that regular monitoring and evaluation of top-level officers' performance be conducted.

Cabinet Ministers visit Kupwara to assess well-being of shelling affected families

Visit shelter homes at GDC Sogam, BHSS Kupwara to enquire about welfare of displaced civilians

KUPWARA, MAY 09: On the directions of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, Cabinet Ministers, Sakeena Itoo and Javid Ahmad Dar today visited frontier district Kupwara to assess the situation in view of the cross border shelling in the district.

During the visit, the Ministers visited Government Degree College Sogam to assess the wellbeing of displaced families of Machil rehabilitated in the college building.

They also visited Government Boys Higher Secondary School (BHSS) Kupwara to enquire about the welfare of displaced families of Tangdhar, Karnah and Keran areas, currently rehabilitated in the school premises.

The Ministers, during the visit, interacted with the affected families and assured them all possible assistance from the government.



They assured them that the present government is continuously monitoring the situation and is committed towards welfare of the people displaced by cross border shelling.

Interacting with the officers of district administration on the occasion, the Ministers directed them to establish all basic facilities at these centres and ensure well being of these displaced families. They asked them to continuously monitor the facilities at these centres and deploy staff at these shelter homes.

The Ministers also asked them to keep doctors and other paramedical staff at these centres for constant care of the displaced civilians.

MLA Uri, Sajjad Shafi; MLA Lolab, Kaysir Jamsheed Lone and other officers of district administration accompanied the Ministers during the visit.

Div Com, IGP Jammu visit Nowshera to review facilities for border area residents shifted to relief camps

RAJOURI, MAY 09: Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar and Inspector General of Police Jammu, Bhim Sen Tuti, today visited Nowshera to assess the arrangements made for the residents evacuated from areas near the Line of Control (LoC) due to cross-border shelling.

Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, and Senior Superintendent of Police Rajouri, Gaurav Sikarwar were present during the visit.

The Divisional Commissioner visited relief camps where the evacuated families have been accommodated and inspected the facilities being provided to them, including shelter, food, medical care, and other essential services.

The officials at the evacuation centre



briefed the Divisional Commissioner about the efforts and arrangements being made to mitigate the hardships faced by the affected population, while ensuring their safety.

The Divisional Commissioner was apprised about civic amenities and other logistics made available for the evacuated population.

While interacting with the affected

people, the Divisional Commissioner and IGP Jammu listened to their concerns and assured all support and assistance from the Administration.

The Divisional Commissioner directed the district administration to ensure timely assistance, adequate medical facilities, and other supplies to all the camps in the sub division.

The Divisional Commissioner and IGP Jammu directed the administration to evacuate people from all vulnerable areas to safer locations on priority and ensure round-the-clock security arrangements in the affected areas.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Nowshera Pritam Lal Thapa and other district and sectoral officers were also present during the visit.

Early-morning power outage scheduled in Srinagar for flyover works

SRINAGAR, May 9: The Jammu & Kashmir Power Transmission Corporation Limited (JKPTCL) has announced a planned shutdown of key 33 kV feeders next week to facilitate the safe dismantling and de-stringing of conductors on the 132 kv Bemina-Rawalpora transmission line.

According to the Chief Engineer, JKPTCL, in order to carry out dismantling/ de-stringing of conductor between tower location no. 22 to 26 of 132 KV Bemina-Rawalpora Transmission line and allied necessary works for increasing the ground clearance of 132 KV (D/C) Bemina-Rawalpora Transmission line between Tower Location No. 24 to 26 necessitated due to construction of flyover at Sanat Nagar Chowk Srinagar, shutdown of several 33KV Silk Factory and 33 KV Rawalpura lines shall be carried out due to which all outgoing 33 KV feeders supplying areas: Allochibagh, Rambagh, Solina, Tulsibagh, Cargo, Rawalpura, Sanat Nagar, IE Sanat Nagar, Hyderpora, Majeed Bagh shall remain affected from 05.00 AM to 09.00 AM on 13 & 14 May, 2025.

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

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

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

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

"History is witness... whenever someone has challenged the self-respect and self-esteem of India, we have

given them a befitting reply," the Congress leader said in a post in Hindi on X.

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

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

"We are taking out a Jai Hind Yatra across the country today in support of our brave soldiers. We are proud of our soldiers. 'Jai Hind ki Sena'," Ramesh said.

The Congress also reit-



erated its solidarity with the government in whatever decision it takes against Pakistan. Congress spokesperson Ragini Nayak said Congress president Mallikarjun

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

"If the Indian government takes any major decision against Pakistan, then our full cooperation and support is with the government. Today, we will reiterate this message through the Jai Hind Yatra," she said during a press conference at the party's 24, Akbar Road, headquarters.

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

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

"We express our deepest

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

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

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

On Thursday afternoon, the defence ministry said the Indian Armed Forces had foiled Pakistan's attempts to

target military installations in 15 cities in the country's northern and western parts.

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

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

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

War not a solution; countries must resolve matters through dialogue: AIMPLB amid Indo-Pak tensions



New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) In the wake of the India-Pakistan military conflict, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) has asserted that war is not a solution to any issue and that countries should resolve their matters through dialogue and diplomatic means.

The board has also said it will continue with its "Save Waqf Campaign" as usual but in light of the current situation, its public meetings

and events are being postponed for the next one week, until May 16.

The AIMPLB made the assertions in a resolution passed at a special online meeting of its office-bearers on Thursday.

The board expressed concern over the increasing tension on the India-Pakistan border.

"It (the AIMPLB) supports every necessary step taken for the defence and

protection of the nation and its people and emphasises that in these critical times, the public, political parties, armed forces, and the government must come together to face these threats," a statement issued by the board said.

Noting that terrorism and the killing of innocent civilians is a matter of grave concern, the AIMPLB said there is absolutely no place for terrorism in Islamic teachings, globally recognised principles and human values.

"Therefore, countries should resolve their matters through bilateral dialogues and discussions. It is also a fact that war is not a solution to any issue - especially in the presence of nuclear weapons, India and Pakistan cannot afford a war," the statement issued by the board said.

Such a conflict could

plunge the people of both countries into insurmountable difficulties and hence, all issues should be resolved through dialogue and other diplomatic means, it added.

The AIMPLB will continue with its "Save Waqf Campaign" as usual, it said. However, in light of the current situation, its public meetings and events are being postponed for the next one week, until May 16, the board added.

Indoor programmes, such as roundtable meetings with fellow citizens, interfaith dialogues, sermons in mosques, submission of memorandums via district magistrates and collectors, and press conferences, will continue as scheduled.

The board hoped that the current grave situation will soon be resolved and normalcy will return.

Centre asks states to give emergency procurement power to civil defence authorities

New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) In view of an ongoing military conflict between India and Pakistan, the Centre has asked all states to give emergency procurement power to the heads of the civil defence authorities so that they can make the required purchases in case of an emergency situation.

In a communication to the chief secretaries of all states and Union territories, Director General of Fire Services, Civil Defence and Home Guards Vivek Srivastava said preparing the civil administration and adopting precautionary measures against hostile attacks in the states and Union territories are governed by the Civil Defence Act and Rules, 1968.

Citing the current hostile-attack scenario, the attention of the chief secretaries was drawn to section 11 of the Civil Defence Rules, 1968 that empowers the states to take certain measures deemed

necessary for the protection of people and properties from injury or damage or for ensuring the due maintenance of vital services in the event of a hostile attack.

The communication said the funds of the local authority shall be applicable to the payment of the charges and expenses incidental to such compliance, and priority shall be given to such compliance over all other duties and obligations of the local authority.

"I shall be grateful if section 11 of the CD (Civil Defence) Rules, 1968, can be invoked and necessary emergency procurement powers to the director civil defence of your state/UT may be granted so that efficient implementation of the necessary precautionary measures can be implemented," the communication said.

There has been a rising military conflict between the two neighbouring countries



following India's strikes on multiple locations in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) on Wednesday and Pakistan's attempts to hit Indian military sites on Thursday, which were thwarted by the Indian armed forces.

The Indian strikes were carried out in the wake of the April 22 terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed.

CRPF holds transfers, postpones trainings in view of hostilities with Pak

New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has deferred all transfer and posting orders and has postponed training courses for its personnel in view of the escalating military situation with Pakistan, official sources on Friday said.

The paramilitary force has also directed more than two dozen of its companies, comprising about 2,400 personnel, to be moved to Jammu and Kashmir for "bolstering" security of the border areas along with the BSF and the Army, they said.

The headquarters of the force, sources told PTI, has ordered that all transfer and posting orders be kept in "abeyance" and officers and personnel be present in their place of posting in view of the emerging security situation along the western and northern front of the country.

The CRPF has also postponed till June a number of scheduled training programmes to be held for the troops and the officers have issued directions that the manpower be "retained" at their place of deployment for any possible exigency and avoid unnecessary travel, they said.

The Union Home Ministry has already asked the CRPF and other central armed police forces (CAPFs) like the BSF, CISF, ITBP and SSB to cancel all leaves and ensure "maximum" availability of troops in view of the escalation of the military offensive against Pakistan.

The top brass of the force, including CRPF Director General (DG) G P Singh, who are presently camping in Chhattisgarh continuously for about 20 days, are also expected to travel to Jammu and Kashmir, which is one of the three main combat theaters for the force.

The two other domains for its operations are anti-Naxal duties in Left



Wing Extremism (LWE) affected states and counter-insurgency tasks in the north east.

The CRPF DG is based in Chhattisgarh's capital Raipur to monitor the biggest-ever anti-Naxal operation being undertaken along the border with Telangana since April 21, as per the officials.

"The DG is soon expected to travel to Jammu and Kashmir and review the operations and deployment of the force. He is also expected to meet the Army Commanders and top police and administration officials," they said.

The CRPF has about 65 battalions comprising about 65,000-66,000 personnel in Jammu and Kashmir for counter-terrorism duties and law and order assistance to the local police.

The chiefs of other forces like the BSF and the CISF have already travelled to Jammu and Kashmir post the April 22 Pahalgam terrorist attack in which 25 tourists and one local guide were killed.

The about 3.25 lakh personnel force is designated as the country's leading internal security force.

There is a heightened tension between New Delhi and Islamabad following India's strike on multiple locations in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on Wednesday and Pakistan's attempts to hit the Indian military sites on Thursday which was thwarted by the Indian armed forces.

'In prevailing situation, let's not bring their morale down': SC on women Army officers

New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Centre not to release from service Short Service Commission women Army officers challenging the denial of permanent commission to them asking not to "bring their morale down" in "the prevailing situation".

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh which posted a batch of pleas filed by 69 officers for hearing in August, said they should not be released till the next hearing.

"In the prevailing situation let's not bring their morale down. They are brilliant officers, you can use their services somewhere else. This is not the time that they be asked to roam around in the Supreme Court. They have a

better place to be and serve the country," Justice Kant said.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, said it was an administrative decision based on a policy to keep the armed forces young.

She urged the top court not to grant any stay on their release and said the Indian Army needed young officers and every year only 250 personnel were granted permanent commission.

Senior advocate Maneeka Guruswamy, appearing for colonel Geeta Sharma, referred to the case of Colonel Sofia Qureshi, one of the two women officers who had briefed the media on the Operation Sindoor on May 7 and 8.

Guruswamy said Colonel Qureshi had to approach this



court for a similar relief related to permanent commission and now she has made the country proud.

The bench without commenting much on the submission said the case before the top court was purely a legal one, having nothing to do with the achievements of the offi-

cers.

In its February 17, 2020, the top court said absolute exclusion of women from all positions, except staff assignments, in the Army was indefensible and their blanket non-consideration for command appointments without any justification couldn't be

sustained in law.

The apex court, which allowed permanent commission (PC) to women officers in the Army, said an absolute prohibition of women Short Service Commission officers to obtain anything but staff appointments evidently did not fulfil the purpose of granting PC as a means of career advancement in the Army.

The top court also referred to the distinctions achieved by women officers, and put out an example of Col Qureshi's achievements.

Since the 2020 verdict, the top court has passed several orders on the issue of permanent commission to women officers in Armed Forces and similar orders was passed in the case of Navy, Indian Air Force and Coast Guard.

Satellite firms like Starlink to pay 4% of revenue as spectrum charges



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

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

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

The levy recommended by TRAI is steeper than what satcom companies have been lobbying for. Elon Musk's

Starlink and Amazon Inc's subsidiary Kuiper Systems had during consultations with the TRAI urged it to keep spectrum charge below 1 per cent of AGR with no other charge.

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

The satellite spectrum pricing as a percentage of AGR is for both non-geostationary satellite orbit (NGSO) and Geostationary satellite orbit (GSO) based fixed-satellite service (FSS) and mobile satellite service (MSS).

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

TRAI said the 4 per cent of AGR spectrum charge would be subject to a minimum annual spectrum charge of Rs 3,500 per MHz.

AGR is used to calculate the revenue that telecom companies share with the government in the form of spectrum usage charges and license fees. AGR based spectrum charging is the existing practice for commercial VSAT service pro-

viders and BSNL.

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

Stating that spectrum charges should be levied as a percentage of AGR for simplification and as part of ease of doing business, TRAI said, "Overall spectrum charges do not need to be any higher than the administrative costs required to cover the allocation of spectrum. It will also facilitate investment and innovation."

DoT will process the recommendations. It can tweak them or accept in totality and send them to the Cabinet for approval. Once approved, satellite companies can apply for licenses.

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

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

Both Indian firms will offer

Starlink equipment through their network and also support customer installation and activation on devices.

Airtel-backed Eutelsat OneWeb and Jio Satellite Communication have already gotten the global mobile personal communication by satellite (GMPCS) services license needed to provide satcom services in India, while Elon Musk-led Starlink is set to soon get the license.

Over the past few months, rivals Jio and Airtel had come together to demand an auction for awarding spectrum for satellite services in India. Musk on the other hand lobbied for administrative allocation as per international norm.

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

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

Based on the recommendations of TRAI, the DoT now go to the Cabinet for pricing of satellite spectrum and

once approved any satcom wanting to offer services in India can apply.

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

Bharti already partners with Eutelsat OneWeb, the second largest LEO constellation. Similarly, Jio Platforms has a joint venture with SES, a leading global satellite-based content connectivity solutions provider.

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

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

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

Drug addiction among the Youth: A Growing Concern

Arshid Qalmi

Drug addiction has emerged as a silent epidemic among the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. Despite visible efforts by the authorities and an improved socio-political climate, the menace of substance abuse continues to take a heavy toll on the region's young population. Known for its breath-taking landscapes and rich cultural heritage, J&K is now grappling with a crisis that threatens its social fabric and the future of its youth. The growing prevalence of drug addiction raises questions about the effectiveness of existing measures and the underlying causes that perpetuate this problem.

The scope of drug addiction in J&K has reached alarming levels in recent years. Numerous reports indicate a surge in substance abuse, with young men being the most affected, though the trend is rapidly increasing among young women. Narcotics, synthetic drugs, and prescription medications, especially opioids, are readily available, making them an easy choice for vulnerable youth. This epidemic is not confined to urban areas; it has penetrated rural regions and transcends socioeconomic barriers, indicating a systemic issue that requires immediate and sustained attention.

The roots of this crisis can be traced to multiple factors, each contributing to the escalation of drug addiction among the youth. Psychological distress plays a significant role. The prolonged socio-political discord in J&K has left deep scars on its population, particularly on the younger generation. Growing up amidst instability and uncertainty has created an environment of chronic stress, anxiety, and depression. While the socio-political climate has improved in recent years, the psychological aftermath persists. Many young individuals, unable to cope with unresolved trauma and emotional pain, turn to substance abuse as a form of escape.

Unemployment and lack of opportunities further exacerbate the issue. J&K has long struggled with limited job prospects, even for highly educated individuals. The frustration and hopelessness stemming from economic stagnation and unemployment often



push the youth toward substance abuse as a coping mechanism or a way to numb their sense of failure. This despair is compounded by peer pressure and social influence, which play a critical role in initiating drug use. The desire to fit in with a certain social group, experiment with forbidden substances, or seek thrills drives many young people to try drugs, which often leads to addiction. The glorification of drug use in popular culture and its casual portrayal on social media further normalize these behaviours.

The easy availability of drugs is another significant factor. J&K's geographical location makes it vulnerable to drug trafficking, as it lies close to regions like Afghanistan, which is a major producer of opium and heroin. This proximity has turned J&K into a transit hub for narcotics, leading to an increase in their local availability. The situation is compounded by inadequate regulatory mechanisms,

making it easy for youth to access illicit substances and even prescription drugs without proper medical oversight.

Lack of awareness about the dangers of drug use is also a contributing factor. Despite some efforts to educate the public, misconceptions about certain substances persist. Many young individuals believe that prescription drugs or synthetic substances are less harmful than traditional narcotics, leading to widespread misuse. Furthermore, family dysfunction often serves as a catalyst for drug addiction. Broken families, lack of parental supervision, and domestic violence create an environment of neglect and emotional insecurity, pushing vulnerable individuals toward substance abuse. The stigma associated with mental health issues in J&K prevents many from seeking professional help, further perpetuating the cycle of addiction.

The impact of drug addiction on society is far-reaching and devastating. On an individual level, substance abuse leads to severe physical and mental health problems, including organ damage, psychiatric disorders, and, in many cases, premature death. At the societal level, addiction contributes to rising crime rates, as addicts often resort to theft, drug peddling, or other illegal activities to sustain their habits. Families of addicts face immense emotional and financial strain, with relationships often deteriorating under the weight of addiction. The social stigma surrounding addiction isolates affected families, discouraging them from seeking support and intervention.

Authorities in J&K have undertaken various initiatives to address the drug addiction crisis. Anti-narcotics campaigns have been launched to raise awareness, particularly in schools and colleges, where the youth can be directly engaged. Workshops, drug-free marathons, and community

outreach programs aim to educate young people about the dangers of substance abuse. Law enforcement agencies have intensified their efforts to curb drug trafficking, regularly seizing narcotics and arresting peddlers. Rehabilitation centres have been established to provide medical and psychological support to addicts, and the government has introduced policies to regulate the sale of prescription drugs and fund anti-drug initiatives.

Despite these efforts, significant challenges remain. The stigma surrounding addiction continues to be a major barrier, as many view it as a moral failing rather than a medical condition. This perception discourages addicts and their families from seeking help, further entrenching the problem. Rehabilitation centres and mental health professionals are insufficient to meet the growing demand for services, leaving many addicts without access to proper care.

Corruption and inefficiency within certain segments of law enforcement undermine efforts to combat drug trafficking, while a lack of post-rehabilitation support leads to high relapse rates. Addressing the drug addiction crisis in J&K requires a multi-faceted approach that goes beyond current efforts. Awareness campaigns must be expanded and made more comprehensive, targeting not only schools and colleges but also communities and families. Social media should be leveraged to disseminate accurate information about the dangers of drug use, countering its glamorization. Rehabilitation infrastructure must be strengthened, with more centres established and staffed by trained professionals who can provide holistic care, including counselling, therapy, and vocational training.

Finally, post-rehabilitation support must be prioritized to ensure long-term recovery. Follow-up programs should include mentorship, peer support groups, and assistance in finding employment. Addressing the drug addiction crisis in J&K is not just a matter of law enforcement; it is a societal challenge that requires collective action. By prioritizing mental health, strengthening rehabilitation efforts, and fostering community engagement, J&K can overcome this crisis and secure a brighter future for its youth. The stakes are high, and urgent action is needed to protect the region's most valuable asset, its young generation.

aqalmi303@gmail.com

Is Bloom's Taxonomy Still Relevant in AI-Era Education?

Dr. Reyaz Ahmad

The growing capabilities of artificial intelligence (AI) are having an impact on the quickly changing sector of education. This shift raises the important question of whether Bloom's Taxonomy, a long-tested paradigm, is still relevant in today's AI-driven world. Bloom's hierarchy of learning objectives, which begins with remembering and ends with producing, has guided educators for a long time. However, the architecture may no longer be able to meet the expectations of modern education because many of these tasks can now be readily accomplished with the help of programs like ChatGPT.

The way we think, teach, and learn is being altered by artificial intelligence. The question of whether Bloom's Taxonomy still has a place in higher education or if it has outlived its usefulness naturally emerges as colleges adjust to this change.

What Is Bloom's Taxonomy?

Developed in the 1950s by Benjamin Bloom and later revised, Bloom's Taxonomy is a framework that classifies learning into six cognitive levels:

1. Remember
2. Understand
3. Apply
4. Analyze
5. Evaluate
6. Create

Educators use it to structure curriculum, assessments, and learning outcomes. The idea is that students move from basic knowledge to deeper, more complex thinking.

The Problem in an AI-Driven World
AI tools like ChatGPT, Wolfram Alpha, and Copilot can now generate code, analyze texts, solve equations, and even create essays. This blurs the lines between the levels Bloom identified.

For example:

- A student can apply a math concept or



create a poem with AI assistance without fully understanding the underlying logic or making an independent judgment.

- Remembering facts or understanding a concept is now often outsourced to search engines or AI summaries.

So, what happens when machines can do most of the "lower" and even some of the "higher" order thinking?

Do We Still Need Bloom's Taxonomy?
Yes—but not in its traditional, hierarchical form.

Bloom's taxonomy was built in a world where knowledge was scarce and human processing was slow. In today's information-saturated, AI-assisted environment, what matters more is how learners interact with knowledge, not just what they learn or how well they recall it.

Real-World Example:

A student studying marketing uses AI to generate a campaign. They plug in data, get output, and present it. On the surface, they've "created" something. But without evaluating AI biases, analyzing data accuracy, or reflecting on audience impact, the student misses critical

thinking steps.

In this case, AI accelerates the doing but can mask the absence of understanding and judgment.

Rethinking Learning Goals

Instead of discarding Bloom's Taxonomy, we should adapt it:

1. Integrate AI literacy into each cognitive level
 - o Remember: What are the limitations of AI memory?
 - o Analyze: What bias might be in this AI-generated analysis?
2. Focus on meta-cognition and ethical thinking
 - o Knowing how to think about thinking, how to verify information, and how to use AI responsibly becomes as crucial as producing answers.
3. Emphasize interdisciplinary and project-based learning

Learning by doing—through real-world problems—lets students use AI as a tool while applying judgment, collaboration, and creativity.

- Alternative Frameworks to Consider
- Fink's Taxonomy of Significant

Learning

Includes integration, human dimension, and caring—elements that are harder for AI to replicate.

- 21st-Century Skills Models

Focus on critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity (the "4 Cs") as core competencies in an AI world.

- Design Thinking Approaches

Empathize Define Ideate Prototype Test—this non-linear model fosters innovation beyond Bloom's vertical hierarchy.

Conclusion

Bloom's Taxonomy is not obsolete, but it's not enough on its own anymore. In the age of AI, education must evolve from producing answers to cultivating questions. That means rethinking how we structure learning—not just to outpace machines, but to stay meaningfully human in how we learn, think, and create.

The writer is Faculty of Mathematics, Department of General Education, Sharjah, UAE. Email: reyaz56@gmail.com

THE RISKS OF ONLINE BETTING, GAMING

While these activities may appear to be a source of entertainment or a quick means of generating income, the reality is often far more sobering as the risks associated with these activities can lead to devastating consequences that affect not only individuals but also their families and communities.

Tahir Mustafa

In today's digital landscape, numerous young individuals are drawn to the realm of online betting and gaming. While these activities may appear to be a source of entertainment or a quick means of generating income, the reality is often far more sobering as the risks associated with these activities can lead to devastating consequences that affect not only individuals but also their families and communities.

The financial implications of online gambling are substantial. Many young individuals fall into a debt cycle that becomes increasingly difficult to escape, leaving them in a precarious financial situation. This instability can disrupt daily life and strain personal relationships. Beyond the monetary risks, the emotional and mental health toll is equally concerning. Anxiety and depression are common among those who gamble, fuelled by the stress of attempting to recoup losses. The pressure to succeed can create a sense of urgency that exacerbates these feelings, leading to a spiral of distress.

Furthermore, engaging in online betting opens the door to security risks. Personal data can be compromised, exposing individuals to identity theft and cyberattacks. These threats are not just financial; they can have long-lasting effects on one's sense of safety and security.

Socially, the repercussions of gambling addiction can be just as damaging. Relationship dynamics with family and friends can suffer under the weight of secret struggles and betrayal associated with gambling. Additionally, the stigma surrounding addiction can lead to social isolation, preventing individuals from seeking the support they need.

However, it is crucial to remember that there is hope. For those who are struggling with online betting and gaming, reaching out for help is the first step toward recovery. Professional resources, such as mental health counselors and addiction specialists, are available to guide individuals through their challenges. Support groups, like Gamblers Anonymous, provide a community of understanding and shared experiences, helping individuals to heal together.

Youth must recognize the significant risks associated with online betting and gaming and rather focus on cultivating positive and healthy hobbies that foster personal growth and well-being. If you or someone you know is facing addiction, do not hesitate to seek help. A brighter future is possible, and recovery is within reach. Remember, hope is always there, waiting for you to take the first step.

Tahirmustafa199804@gmail.com

Nipah: Six suspected cases test negative, patient condition remains serious



Malappuram (Kerala), May 9 (PTI) The Kerala government said on Friday that all six people who showed symptoms after coming into contact with a Nipah virus patient in Malappuram district have tested negative.

The news comes as a relief even as the condition of the original patient remains serious.

Health Minister Veena George said that strict preventive measures will continue across the district to ensure

public safety.

She chaired a high-level core committee meeting at the Malappuram District Collectorate to review the ongoing response.

According to an official release, a total of 49 people who had contact with the infected patient remain under observation.

Among them, five individuals with mild symptoms have been admitted to the isolation ward at Manjeri Medical College.

A nurse from Ernakulam, currently admitted to Perinthalmanna hospital, is also in isolation. Although their samples were sent for testing, all results have now returned negative.

Of the 49 people under observation, 12 are close family members. Health authorities have classified 45 individuals as high-risk contacts.

This includes three people from the Valanchery Primary Health Centre, one from a clinic in Valanchery, 25 from Perinthalmanna hospital, two from laboratories, and two from a medical store, the release said.

Additionally, four people considered low-risk are also being monitored as a precaution.

Minister George has directed the District Collector and District Medical Officer to take strict action under the Disaster Management Act and Public Health Act against anyone who fails to cooperate with the health department.

Meanwhile, a dead cat found near the patient's residence has been sent for post-mortem.

According to World Health Organisation, Nipah is a zoonotic virus that is capable of spreading from a host animal, especially fruit bats to humans.

Samples have been dispatched to a lab in Bhopal to check for the presence of Nipah antibodies. The Animal Husbandry department is overseeing this investigation, the release said.

As part of containment efforts, wearing masks in public places has been made mandatory throughout the district. A route map of the patient's recent movements has been released by the health department, based on details gathered from the patient's relatives, it said.

CCTV footage from locations visited by the patient since April 25 is also being collected.

The state government's "Ente Keralam" programme, currently being held at Kottakkunnu in Malappuram, will continue as scheduled, but with strict safety protocols in place, the release added.

Half of 2020-born could face unprecedented exposure to climate extremes: Study

New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) Over half the children born in 2020 could face an unprecedented exposure to heatwaves, compared to 16 per cent of those born in 1960, even if global warming were limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius, a new study has found.

Analysing demographic data and projections of climate extremes around the world, researchers calculated the fraction of each generation born between 1960 and 2020, who could face an unprecedented exposure in their lifetime.

The younger a person, the higher their chances of experiencing unprecedented climate extremes, including heatwaves, river floods and droughts – children in the tropics will bear the worst burden, the team said. Its findings were published in the journal 'Nature'.

"In this new study, living an unprecedented life means that without climate change, one would have less than a 1-in-10,000 chance of experiencing that many climate extremes across one's lifetime," lead author Luke Grant, a climate scientist at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium, said.

"This is a stringent threshold that identifies populations facing climate extremes far beyond what could be expected without man-made climate change," Grant said.

The authors wrote, "Under a 1.5 degrees Celsius pathway, 52 per cent of people born in 2020 will experience unprecedented lifetime exposure to heatwaves."

Further, under a scenario of 3.5 degrees Celsius warming, "over 90 per cent will endure such exposure throughout their lives," Grant said.

"The same picture emerges for other climate extremes examined, though with slightly lower affected fractions of the population. Yet the same unfair generational differences in unprecedented exposure is observed," the author said.

In a 2021 study, the team had found that children – especially in low-income countries – could see a disproportionate increase in exposure to extreme weather events.

"Now, we examined where the cumulative exposure to climate extremes across one's lifetime will far exceed that which would have been experienced in a pre-industrial climate," senior author Wim Thiery, professor of climate science at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium, said.

The team's findings also highlight the social injustice of climate change and its impacts.

Under current climate policies, almost all of the most socio-economically vulnerable children born in 2020 – 95 per cent – will endure an unprecedented exposure to heatwaves in their lifetime, compared to 78 per cent for the least vulnerable group, the authors said.

"Precisely the most vulnerable children experience the worst escalation of climate extremes. With limited resources and adaptation options, they face disproportionate risks," Thiery said.

Shingles vaccine can lower heart disease risk by 23%, new study finds



Images Monitoring Desk

One out of every three adults around the world will develop shingles—a reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus. The varicella-zoster virus is the same virus that causes chickenpox.

Adults ages 50 and older can be vaccinated against shingles. The vaccine provides more than 90% protection against developing shingles.

Past studies show that in addition to providing protection against shingles, the vaccine may also provide other health benefits, including a potentially lower risk for dementia, as well as heart conditions such as heart attack and stroke.

"Shingles has traditionally been regarded as an infectious disease," Sooji Lee, MD, researcher in the Center for Digital Health in the Medical Science Research Institute at Kyung Hee University Medical Center in South Korea, told Medical News Today.

"However, previous studies suggested an association between shingles and chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease. This points to a potential link between infections and chronic diseases. This is why further investigation into the broader impact of shingles vaccination is essential," she explained.

Lee is the first author of a new study that has found people who receive the shingles vaccine have a 23% lower risk of cardiovascular events, such as heart failure, stroke, and coronary heart disease, with this protective benefit lasting for up to eight years post-vaccination.

The findings were recently published in the European Heart Journal.

Shingles vaccine may lower risk for any cardiovascular events

For this study, researchers analyzed medical data from more than 1.2 million adults ages 50 or over living in South Korea from 2012 onward. Scientists determined whether or not participants received a live zoster vaccine for shingles, which contains a weakened form of the varicella-zoster virus.

At the study's conclusion, researchers found that participants who received the shingles vaccine had a 23% lower chance of experiencing any cardiovascular events, as well as a 26% lower risk for any major cardiovascular event, such as stroke, heart attack, or death from heart disease.

Scientists also found that the shingles

be considered."

Further research in other demographics needed

MNT had the opportunity to speak with Cheng-Han Chen, MD, a board certified interventional cardiologist and medical director of the Structural Heart Program at MemorialCare Saddleback Medical Center in Laguna Hills, CA, about this study.

"These results highlight the significant morbidity and mortality that is associated with shingles and should further drive our efforts to vaccinate as many eligible patients as possible," Chen commented.

"Varicella-zoster, the virus that causes shingles, has been shown to increase inflammation, cause blood vessel damage, and increase clotting, all of which can lead to serious cardiovascular conditions such as heart attack, stroke, and heart failure. The shingles vaccine, by preventing varicella-zoster infection, would thus decrease cardiovascular risk by preventing the adverse reactions associated with the virus," says Chen.

"The varicella-zoster virus can cause complications with many different organ systems, including the heart and nervous system," Chen continued.

"Research on the shingles vaccine can help us better understand and reduce the health effects of varicella-zoster infection. This study was performed, specifically in an Asian population. Further research will be needed to confirm whether the findings are applicable to a wider demographic," he added.

Observational findings that still need causal research

MNT also spoke with Grant Simons, MD, chief of Heart Rhythm Services at Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey, about this research, who commented that he found the results to be somewhat surprising, though not entirely unexpected.

"While a link between shingles and cardiovascular events has been established, the extent of the risk reduction associated with the shingles vaccine shown in this study is notable," Simons explained.

"The magnitude of the risk reduction (22-26%) across various cardiovascular events is higher than some might have anticipated, which is surprising. Previous studies have suggested potential benefit, but this very large study provides stronger evidence and quantifies the potential impact more definitively. The duration of protection (up to eight years) is also a positive surprise," says Simons.

"The study provides compelling evidence for the cardiovascular benefits of the shingles vaccine, with a stronger and longer-lasting protective effect than previously anticipated," Simons continued. "Although this is an observational study, its large size is somewhat compelling. While the biological mechanisms are still being investigated, the findings are significant for public health recommendations regarding vaccination in older adults."

Images Monitoring Desk

Evaluating how well the heart is doing and what changes have occurred can help doctors and people make informed decisions about heart health.

To do that, a recent study examined a way to calculate the functional age of people's hearts compared to their biological age.

The study used a model based on cardiac magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), and found that certain health conditions, such as obesity and AFib, and leading an unhealthy lifestyle, can increase the functional age of the heart.

People with certain conditions can also experience distinct heart changes that differ from healthy heart aging.

The findings were published in the European Heart Journal Open.

Using cardiac MRI to determine the heart's age

Researchers of this retrospective observational study wanted to explore a way to measure the age of people's hearts and what happens in healthy versus unhealthy aging. They note that certain modifiable risk factors, like high blood pressure, can speed up how fast the heart ages. One potential tool to look at how the heart looks and functions is cardiac magnetic resonance imaging.

Researchers used a healthy reference population of 191 participants and compared them to a testing population of 366 participants who had at least one comorbidity, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or obesity. Researchers also used another group of 25 people as a "preliminary external validation" cohort.

Participants were from five different locations across three countries. Researchers were able to look at several components of heart structure and function. They then developed a model to help determine the age of participants' hearts and also did statistical analyses.

There were distinct heart differences between the healthy and unhealthy groups. For example, the unhealthy group had a higher median stroke volume, which involves how much blood the left ventricle is pumping out when it contracts.

The final model researchers used considered left atrial end-systolic volume and left atrial ejection fraction, which both evaluate the function of the left upper chamber of the heart. These two factors were functional parameters significantly related to age among 169 healthy participants.

Health conditions linked to premature aging of the heart

Researchers found that healthy participants' heart ages were about the same as how old they were. Unhealthy participants

saw heart ages higher than their chronological age. The cardiac magnetic resonance-derived heart ages were almost five years older than the chronological age of these participants.

Obesity appeared to increase functional heart age, with more weight increasing heart years. Participants with a body mass index of 40 or higher had a functional heart age 45 years higher than their chronological age. For participants with atrial fibrillation, heart functional age was also higher than it was for healthy participants.

Functional heart age was sometimes higher for other comorbidities in certain age groups. In participants between the ages of 30 and 69, participants with high blood pressure had increased functional heart age compared to healthy participants who were in the same age category.

Similarly, diabetes increased functional heart age for participants between 30 and 69, with the greatest increase seen in the 40 to 49-year-old group. But in the seventy to 85-year-old group, participants with diabetes and high blood pressure actually had lower functional heart ages than healthy participants of the same age.

Speaking to MNT, study author Pankaj Garg, MD, PhD, Associate Professor in Cardiovascular Medicine, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK, highlighted a few key findings.

"A heart that's 5 to 45 years older than what we've discovered an equation—a simple math formula—that uses movies from heart MRI scans to figure out how old your heart looks. For healthy folks, their heart age matches their real age. But if someone has [conditions] like high blood pressure, diabetes, a wonky heartbeat, or extra weight, their heart can look way older—about 4.6 years older on average. For people with a lot of extra weight, their hearts looked up to 45 years older!" says Garg.

Study limitations

This research is a great possible step towards more effective cardiac health monitoring, but it also has limitations. First, this work involved estimations and estimated the functional age of the heart. Second, since the study was not long-term, there's a higher risk for survivor bias. This could then minimize how comorbidities truly affect older people. Thirdly, researchers did not measure how long participants had had the measured comorbidities. So, it's possible that there was variety among unhealthy participants regarding how long they had comorbidity exposure. Bias is noted in some of the calculations. Researchers also noted the possibility of selection bias. This study

did not assess certain factors like exercise and diet.

Researchers also acknowledge that there could have been variation in the unhealthy group because of medical treatments.

Researchers had certain exclusion and inclusion criteria in place, which impacted who they could include in the study. For example, they excluded people with severe chronic kidney disease, which is a contraindication for the MRI scans they used. Development of the age calculation model involved making a number of decisions, and researchers may find areas for refinement.

Patrick Kee, MD, PhD, a cardiologist at Vital Heart & Vein who was not involved in the study, noted several potential limitations of the study, including its inability to examine long-term data, lack of other measurements that could have been helpful, and use of a simple model that focused on left atrium end-diastolic volume and left atrium ejection fraction.

Long-term studies will likely be beneficial, as well as seeing how changing factors like lifestyle could help alter outcomes.

"The model was preliminarily validated on a small cohort, necessitating larger-scale validation to confirm its reliability and robustness for clinical application. Furthermore, it remains unclear whether lifestyle and therapeutic interventions will alter the trajectory of the heart age due to underlying medical conditions," Kee noted.

Test may aid early detection, promote heart-healthy actions

Cheng-Han Chen, MD, a board certified interventional cardiologist and medical director of the Structural Heart Program at MemorialCare Saddleback Medical Center in Laguna Hills, CA, who was also not involved in the study, noted that determining the functional age of the heart could be a helpful preventive measure.

"An assessment of a 'functional heart age' (either through imaging or other biomarkers) can potentially motivate patients to improve their lifestyles, identify patients at risk for future clinical events, and possibly even evaluate response to clinical therapeutics and interventions," says Chen.

Using cardiac MRI also has an appeal because of the ease of use.

"Heart MRI scans are completely noninvasive tests—meaning no cuts or needles—and for checking the heart age, only a few minutes of this test are required. If necessary, this can be done in a focused way to help lots of people quickly. That might help catch heart trouble early and stop bigger problems, like heart failure, later on," Garg explained to MNT.

Finally, there could also

From the Front page ...

Drone attacks...

Kashmir plunged into darkness, officials said. Defence officials said drones were also sighted in Jammu, Samba and neighbouring Pathankot district in Punjab and they were being engaged.

The officials said drones were also engaged in Udhampur and Nagrota of Jammu and Punjab. Blasts were heard and sirens sounded in the Jammu region as the city plunged into darkness for a second consecutive night on Friday, officials said.

They said drones were also sighted in Jammu, Samba and neighbouring Pathankot district in Punjab and they were being engaged.

The blasts come amid ongoing shelling by Pakistan following India's strike on terror hideouts in the country earlier this week as part of Operation Sindoore.

"Intermittent sounds of blasts, probably heavy artillery, can now be heard from where I am," Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said in a post on X.

He also posted a picture of the city in darkness, captioning the post as, "Blackout in Jammu now. Sirens can be heard across the city."

He said in another post, "It's my earnest appeal to everyone in and around Jammu please stay off the streets, stay at home or at the nearest place you can comfortably stay at for the next few hours. Ignore rumours, don't spread unsubstantiated or unverified stories and we will get through this together."

On Thursday evening, Indian air defence units successfully intercepted at least eight missiles fired by Pakistan towards the border areas of Jammu, including the strategically important Jammu airport, defence sources had said.

Drawing a parallel to the tactics of the Palestinian Hamas group, the sources said all "cheap" rockets directed at the Jammu region were successfully intercepted and neutralised by air defence units.

The missiles were launched from locations, including Satwari (Jammu airport), Samba, RS Pura, and Arnia.

A sudden power outage had plunged Jammu city into darkness following two loud explosions, likely resulting from the interception of the intruding drones. Immediately after, sirens echoed throughout the city, alerting residents to seek shelter.

The aerial objects had attempted to strike the strategic Jammu airport and its surrounding areas, which house army, air force, and paramilitary installations.

Sounds of blasts rattled Jammu city early Friday morning, triggering an immediate blackout, hours after India thwarted Pakistan military's attempts to target military installations in border areas.

Activity of loitering munitions was witnessed in the skies.

The blast sounds were heard between 3:50 am and 4:45 am following sounding of sirens. Security forces neutralised the threat, officials said.

Videos showed flying objects in the skies and blasts taking place as the threats were neutralised.

Overnight ceasefire violations were also reported as Pakistani troops resorted to firing and shelling in Poonch, Rajouri and Jammu districts and Indian troops retaliated.

In a post on X, the Jammu deputy commissioner urged residents to stay calm.

All schools, colleges and universities have been closed in the region in the wake of the heightened tensions between India and Pakistan.

Meanwhile, the Government of India (GoI) has empowered the Army Chief to call out "every officer and every enrolled person" of the Territorial Army (TA) to provide for essential guard or to be embodied to support or supplement the regular Army.

The move comes in the wake of the ongoing military conflict between India and Pakistan.

The Ministry of Defence's Department of Military Affairs issued a notification dated May 6 which says, "This order shall remain in force for three years with effect from 10 Feb 2025 to 09 Feb 2028".

The TA, raised on October 9, 1949, completed 75 years last year and has served the nation in times of war, and in humanitarian and environmental protection works through its eventful journey over the decades.

It is fully integrated with the regular Army. In recognition of nation-building efforts and contributions made during war or conflicts, numerous individuals have been honoured with gallantry as well as distinguished service awards in the past.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by Rule 33 of the Territorial Army Rule 1948, the Central Government empowers Chief of the Army Staff to exercise the powers under that rule to call out every officer and every enrolled person of the Territorial Army to provide for essential guard or to be embodied for the purpose of supporting or supplementing the regular army," reads the notification.

The government notification also said, "out of the existing 32 Infantry Battalions (Territorial Army), embodiment of 14 Infantry Battalions (Territorial Army) for deployment in the areas of Southern Command, Eastern Command, Western Command, Central Command, Northern Command, South Western Command, Andaman and Nicobar Command and Army Training Command (ARTRAC)".

The embodiment shall be ordered provided the funds are available in the budget or have been made available by re-appropriation of the internal savings in the budget, it added.

"For units embodied at the behest of Ministries other than the Ministry of Defence, the cost will be debited to the respective Ministries and will not be included in the budget allocation of the Ministry of Defence," the notification said.

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

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

Infiltration bid...

Border in Jammu, killing at least seven terrorists and destroying a Rangers post.

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

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

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

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

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

The force is on high alert in the wake of the current hostilities between the two countries following the Pahalgam terrorist attack of April 22 and India's strike on terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in retaliation.

Indian military...

installations on the intervening night of May 8 and 9, Wing Commander Vyomika Singh said.

She said Pakistan sent 300-400 drones in 36 locations from Leh to Sir Creek last night to target Indian military installations and the drones were shot down by Indian military.

Pakistan violated Indian airspace to target our military installations, she said.

In his remarks, Misri said the Pakistani side targeted places of worship with a particular design and it is a new low even for that country.

Misri also said that Pakistan's attack on places of worship and its "preposterous" attempts to put the blame on Indian armed forces is reflective of Islamabad's evil design and efforts to deceive and mislead the world.

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

At the media briefing, the foreign secretary blasted Pakistan's provocative and escalatory actions to try and target Indian cities and civilian infrastructure using drones last night.

Misri especially hit out at Pakistan for its "blatantly farcical denial" of these attacks saying it is yet another example of Islamabad's duplicity and the "new depths" it is plunging to in its "quest for disinformation".

Misri was severely critical of Pakistan for targeting religious places with an aim to give a communal colour to the current situation, and pointed to an incident of Pakistan attacking a gurdwara in Poonch and another religious place in Amritsar.

Instead of owning up to these attacks, Pakistan made the preposterous and outrageous claim that it was the Indian armed forces and the Indian Air Force that was targeting cities like Amritsar and trying to put the blame on Pakistan," he said.

"This is nothing but a desperate attempt by Pakistan to disown its acts of aggression; but it is also true to its efforts to deceive and mislead the world. It will not succeed," Misri said.

He said that "we would attack our own cities" is the kind of deranged fantasy that only the Pakistani state can come up with.

Perhaps they do it because they are well versed in such action as their history would show, he said.

Misri described it as a "blatant lie" Pakistan's allegations of India targeting the Nankana Sahib Gurdwara using a drone.

"This is again yet another blatant lie and part of Pakistan's disinformation campaign. As we saw in the Pahalgam attack, Pakistan is again trying desperately to impart a communal hue to the situation with an intention to create discord," he said.

Again, we are not surprised. India's steadfast unity in itself is a challenge to Pakistan," he said.

Misri said in view of the existing security scenario, the Kartarpur Sahib corridor has been suspended.

On India's strikes on Bahawalpur's Markaz Subhan Allah - the nerve centre of Jaish-e-Mohammed linked to the killing of Daniel Pearl, a journalist with The Wall Street Journal, Misri said the terror outfit was "directly or indirectly" responsible for his death.

"Bahawalpur is the headquarters of the Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist group that is proscribed by the UN. Its leader Masood Azhar, is a proscribed individual," he said, responding to a question.

"You brought up the connection with the tragic death or killing of Daniel Pearl of the Wall Street Journal. The Jem was in some way directly or indirectly responsible for the death of Daniel Pearl," he said.

"But the real connection is through Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, the British Pakistani jihadi who was held in India but was finally released in 2000 and he was the person who lured Daniel Pearl to his... murder," Misri said.

Pak unleashed...

officials said on Friday as the conflict between two militaries spiralled. Most drones were downed using kinetic and non-kinetic means, said Col Sofiya Qureshi of the Army and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh of the Air Force.

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

"On the night of May 8-9, Pakistan carried out large-scale violations of Indian airspace, attempting to target military infrastructure with 300-700 drones across 36 locations from Leh to Sir Creek," said Singh.

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

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

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

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

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

In response to the Pakistani attack, the Indian military launched armed drones on four defence sites in Pakistan.

"One of the drones was able to destroy an air defence radar," Singh said.

She said Pakistan also carried out artillery shelling across the Line of Control using heavy calibre artillery guns and armed drones at Kandhan, Uri, Poonch, Mender, Rajouri, Akur and Udhampur in Jammu and Kashmir area which resulted in some losses and injuries to Indian Army personnel.

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

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

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

The official also showed screenshots of flight movement on the website flightradar24.

"In the high air defence alert situation in the Punjab sector, the airspace on the Indian side is absolutely devoid of civil air traffic due to our declared closure. However, there are civil airlines flying the air route between Karachi and Lahore," she said.

The Indian Air Force demonstrated considerable restraint in its response, thus ensuring safety of international flights, she said.

"The Pakistani troops and the Indian troops scored significantly following India's Operation Sindoore early Wednesday and Pakistan's subsequent unsuccessful attempt to attack 15 Indian cities.

Pakistani troops...

north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Thursday night. Multiple areas of Uri, including Sillikot, Boniyar, Kamalkote, Mohra and Gingle, were targeted with heavy shelling that damaged several structures and forced people to flee.

Officials said three members of a family were injured when a shell hit their car near Mohra while they were trying to move to safety. They were rushed to a hospital where a woman, identified as Nargis Begum, succumbed to injuries, the officials said.

Later on Friday, Pakistani troops violated the ceasefire in Gouhlan and Chotali, Tournra Post of the Uri sector, the officials said.

"Heavy ceasefire violations started at Chotali, Tournra Post, and Gouhlan areas of Uri. Pakistani troops resorted to unprovoked heavy firing at Indian posts and civilian areas," they added.

However, there are no reports of any casualties so far in these areas.

Meanwhile, a villager was killed and three others were injured in shelling by Pakistan in forward areas of Poonch and Rajouri districts early Friday morning, prompting Army troops to retaliate.

A series of high-intensity blasts between 3:50 am and 4:45 am triggered an immediate blackout and sounding of sirens, officials said.

Videos from the pre-dawn hours showed drones and other flying objects in the Jammu region being neutralised by the air defence system.

The firing and shelling were directed at areas in Rajouri, Poonch, and Jammu districts, apart from Kashmir's Kupwara and Baramulla districts, overnight.

One person was killed and three others, including his wife, were injured in Pakistani shelling in different areas of Loran and Mendhar sectors of Poonch district, the officials said. The injured were shifted to hospital.

The shelling also caused significant damage to property, with many houses and hundreds of vehicles affected, they said.

The deceased has been identified as Mohammad Ahray of Loran area. Among the injured included Layauqt Hussain of Chaleray area of Mendhar.

"Indian Army remains committed to safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Nation. All nefarious designs will be responded to with force," the ADGPJ said on X.

The officials in a post on X, the Deputy Commissioner of Jammu urged residents to stay calm. "Please remain calm. Do not panic," he said.

All schools, colleges, and universities have been closed in the region in the wake of the situation arising from the attacks by Pakistan in the Jammu region.

In light of the prevailing security situation along the Line of Control (LoC), Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Vikas Kundal, and Senior Superintendent of Police, Shahek Hussain, visited the Mangar area to assess and reinforce security measures.

"They conducted a comprehensive on-ground review of force deployment, assessed operational preparedness, and engaged with field personnel to ensure seamless coordination in maintaining peace and public safety, officials said.

Scores of people have been evacuated from areas along LoC to safer areas in Poonch and Rajouri districts besides Jammu, they said adding several of them have been housed in camps.

As many as 15 Indians lost their lives and 43 were injured in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch and Tangmuh regions as Pakistan resorted to arbitrary firing and heavy shelling along the Line of Control and the International Border late on Tuesday night, the Army said.

LG Sinha visits...

affected families and ensure their safety and security.

During his visit to the safe shelter centre in Baramulla, the Lieutenant Governor met the families affected due to unprovoked firing by Pakistan and assured them that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is taking all possible measures for their safety and security, and necessary actions are being taken to protect every resident of Uri.

He also met the injured residents of Uri at the GMC Baramulla and prayed for their quick recovery. He directed the officials to provide the best possible treatment and care to the injured.

"The nation is wholeheartedly behind the affected families in all aspects. We will avenge their suffering by defeating the enemy," the Lieutenant Governor said.

LG interacts with...

them: "How is the Josh?" His question met with an energetic "High, Sahab!" from the troops, echoing the mood of soldiers' readiness to destroy the enemy.

The Lieutenant Governor said that our Soldiers have just one dream and one resolve—Destroy the enemy and its capability to attack Bharat and to safeguard our citizens and Bharat's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"I am seeing determination in your eyes and I want to tell the people across the country that they are in safe hands. Entire nation is drawing inspiration from your valour. May prabhu Shri Ram give you the strength to decimate the enemy," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that the nation, under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has vowed to neutralise terrorists, and my message is clear—if you inflict injury on any Indian citizen, we will hunt you down.

"I want to tell the people of the Union Territory of Jammu Kashmir that peace is the foundation of prosperity and our men in uniform will ensure that Jammu Kashmir and Bharat are peaceful and prosperous," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said the nation has always been proud of the armed forces and whenever the country faced any crisis, our soldiers have boosted the pride of Mother India by making the supreme sacrifice.

"Your history is full of valour and courage. India always advocated for peace. After brutal massacre of our citizens at Pahalgam, the main objective was to destroy the terrorist hideouts. "Operation Sindoore" avenged the Pahalgam terror attack by destroying terror factories inside Pakistan. But, the enemy is targeting our military establishment and our citizens. We are giving them a befitting reply," the Lieutenant Governor told the soldiers.

The Lieutenant Governor said that due to the courage and determination of our soldiers, Jammu Kashmir and the country sleep peacefully.

"If someone tries to disturb our peace again and again, then they will be taught such a lesson that their next 10 generations will remember it. The entire 140 crore Indians are standing strong with our soldiers. I pray to God to give you strength so that you can once again write the saga of India's bravery," the Lieutenant Governor said.

"Escalation won't...

of the "most serious assaults" on the city since the 1971 war.

He said that Pakistan should focus on de-escalation amid the ongoing military conflict in the wake of Operation Sindoore.

The chief minister lauded the armed forces for their swift response in neutralising aerial threats and ensuring that not a single drone reached its intended target.

"The way civilians have been targeted, and the kind of attacks carried out in Jammu city—I don't think Jammu has been targeted like this since the 1971 war," Abdullah told reporters in Vijaypur during his visit to relief camps and a hospital in Jammu and Samba districts.

He added that multiple locations in Jammu, and even an ammunition depot in Anantnag, were among the targets, but all attempts failed.

Abdullah on Thursday strongly condemned the recent wave of cross-border strikes through drones, missiles and shelling in the Jammu and Poonch districts.

Clarifying the current situation, the chief minister said, "We did not create this situation. Our people were attacked in Pahalgam, and innocent civilians were killed. We had to respond."

He warned that continued escalation from across the border would only hurt Pakistan.

"This continuous escalation from Pakistan's side benefits no one. Pakistan gains nothing from this, nor will they succeed. They should silence their guns and help normalise the situation here," he said.

He further counselled them, saying they should act wisely and focus on de-escalation rather than escalation.

Referring to the back-to-back attacks the previous night, he said "What happened last night—first around 9 pm, then again at 4:30 am—clearly shows an attempt to escalate. But they will be the ones to suffer the most."

The chief minister highlighted the situation in Poonch as the most critical. "There was heavy damage in Poonch city. Most of the casualties and injuries are from there," he said.

"I just visited the hospital in Jammu, and all the admitted patients are from Poonch. One critically injured person was shifted to PGI Chandigarh for surgery today," he added.

He said his deputy chief minister is trying to reach Poonch to meet the affected families.

During his visit to camps at Mishriwala, Nagbani, Kot Bhalwal in Jammu district and Vijaypur in Samba, he interacted with displaced families and assured them of full government support.

"I assured them that my government stands firmly with them in these difficult times," he said, adding that he had directed officials to ensure all necessary facilities are provided without delay.

"All necessary facilities have been arranged at the camps—two meals a day, tea, medical care, and sanitation, Doctors, ambulances, and transport services are all in place," Abdullah said.

Acknowledging the discomfort faced by the displaced, he added, "I know this is not an ideal situation and they want to return home. But we had no choice but to bring them here. We are doing our best to minimize their inconvenience."

He also shared a lighter moment from the visit, mentioning that some children had asked for play equipment, and "I am thankful to our minister, who brought it in his own vehicle and handed it over to them."

Later, the chief minister visited a Government Medical College Hospital in Jammu to inquire about the well-being of the injured and prayed for their swift recovery.

He also reviewed the situation following the recent drone attacks across the region.

CM emphasizes...

maintaining communal harmony during these critical times.

According to an official press release, during the interaction, the Chief Minister urged the public to remain calm and vigilant, appealing to citizens not to panic and to rely solely on verified and official sources of information.

Minister Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Senior Superintendent of Police Jammu, Director Social Welfare Department Jammu, Director Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Jammu, Regional Transport Officer Jammu, senior police officers and other concerned officers were also present during the interaction.

Stressing the importance of effective communication, he outlined a set of measures aimed at enhancing public awareness and strengthening the emergency response mechanism across the region.

The Chief Minister informed the participants that safety guidelines and verified updates would be disseminated through the Department of Information using local television, radio channels and an official WhatsApp channel.

He also emphasized the role of the Traffic Department in raising awareness about emergency alert sirens and signals. The deployment of police personnel in sensitive areas was discussed as a means to manage panic and assist with crowd control, while designated relief camps, functional bunkers, and healthcare facilities are being kept in a state of readiness.

The meeting was informed that in order to ensure the uninterrupted supply of essential commodities, the government is maintaining the supply chain and regulating prices. Fire services, ambulances, and Defence units have been placed on high alert to ensure a swift and coordinated emergency response.

The Chief Minister reiterated the administration's commitment to maintaining communal harmony and urged community leaders to play a proactive role in fostering peace and unity.

Special attention is also being given to the safety and care of livestock in affected areas. The Health Department has been directed to keep hospitals and primary health centres fully prepared for emergencies and that a dedicated helpline was now active for patients in need of life-saving drugs or dialysis. Blood donation camps are being organized in collaboration with NGOs to meet medical requirements on the ground.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah concluded the session by expressing gratitude to the civil society members for their participation and support. He reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment to protecting the lives and well-being of every citizen during this time of crisis.

The interaction saw participation from a broad spectrum of civil society members, including ex-servicemen, former police chiefs of the J&K Police, heads and presidents of industry & commerce, trade and travel associations, former ministers and representatives of various political parties, Educationists, academicians, stakeholders from the tourism sector, heads of religious organizations representing Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and Christian communities, representatives of Gujjar and Bakarwal groups, lawyers' bodies, fruit and mandi associations, transporters and NGOs were also present.

The officials appreciated the Chief Minister for convening such an interaction at a time of heightened tensions.

They pledged their full support under the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and affirmed their commitment to standing united with the government during the ongoing crisis.

Abdullah also chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the ongoing relief measures, evacuation of civilians being undertaken across border districts in the wake of recent cross-border shelling.

The Chief Minister spoke with Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bihduri, who briefed him on evacuation efforts and transport arrangements in Kashmir Division. He informed that essential commodities such as food, healthcare service and also recreation activities for children have been arranged in the shelter camps. Nodal Officers have also been deployed for seamless coordination of facilities in these camps.

Deputy Commissioners of various border districts apprised the Chief Minister about the ground situation, including evacuation plans, medical preparedness, public outreach and availability of essential supplies. It was informed that identification of vulnerable villages, number of displaced persons had been assessed and provision of shelter, food, medicines and awareness material is being provided, including use of video and audio messaging to inform and alert the public. It was conveyed that Control rooms have been made functional in the affected districts and Standard Operating Procedures are being followed. The details of security arrangements made and deployment for public safety were given in the meeting.

The Chief Minister had a discussion with the Principal Government Medical College Jammu regarding the availability of medical personnel, infrastructure and ambulance services in case of emergencies.

Emphasising the importance of swift and reliable communication with the public, the Chief Minister directed that effective communication be maintained at the grassroots level to ensure timely and accurate dissemination of vital information.

He also emphasised that solar lights in border villages be turned off during blackouts as part of standard security protocols.

He further inquired about the availability and utilisation of contingency funds at the district level and instructed that items required urgently must be procured promptly without delay and for the benefit of the affected population.

India ramps...

up interview with CNN on Thursday. He said that the case to say that these terrorists should be given a free pass, and that's precisely what we did the day before yesterday, held them accountable," Kwatra said and described India's action as "a very precise, calibrated, measured response to these terrorists."

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

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

He displayed an image live on air of US-designated Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorist Abdur Rauf leading prayers for the terrorists killed in Operation Sindoore, also presented during a briefing by Foreign Secretary Vikram Mistry in New Delhi.

"Everybody knows that for the last 30 years, Pakistan has used this (terrorism) as a means of sub-critical warfare against India," said Doraiswami.

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

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

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

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

In his interview with CNN, Kwatra said that from a large number of Congressmen and Senators to the whole world, they all appreciate that India should respond and bring accountability for these terrorists and justice for the victims.

He said the terrorists killed the civilians in Pahalgam on the basis of religion, identifying and killing "all non-Muslims".

"So what we did the day before yesterday was essentially our re-

sponse to terror," Kwatra said, adding that India's response has been very measured, calibrated and proportionate.

Responding to a question on explosions being heard in Kashmir, Kwatra said Pakistan has appropriated to stand with the terrorists. "Rather than take action against them, they are essentially lending them support," he said.

To a comment that Pakistan has denied involvement in the attacks, Kwatra said that "denial and obfuscation" have always been the first part of Pakistan's strategy.

"They have this unique characteristic where they

Investors' wealth erodes Rs 7 lakh cr in 2 days as markets tumble due to India-Pak conflict

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

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

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

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

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

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded Rs 7,09,783.32 crore to Rs 4,16,40,850.46 crore (USD 4.86 trillion) in two days.



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

From the Sensex firms, ICICI Bank, Power Grid, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, Bajaj Fin-

serv, Adani Ports, ITC, and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the laggards.

Titan Company, Tata Motors, Larsen & Toubro and State Bank of India were the gainers.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.30 per cent, and the mid-cap index dipped 0.10 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, realty tanked 2.08 per cent, utilities (1.50 per cent), financial services (1.40

per cent), power (1.11 per cent), bankex (1.04 per cent), FMCG (0.65 per cent), and services (0.63 per cent).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"All our ATMs, CDMS/ADWMS and digital services are fully operational and available for public use," India's largest bank, State Bank of India, said in a post on X.

India's largest lender also advised its customers not to rely on unverified information. Similar messages



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

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

guidelines issued by the local state level banking committee.

Apart from that, the bank is ensuring that adequate cash is kept at the branches and ATMs so that economic activities are not impacted, the CEO said, adding that it has also upped the cybersecurity defence.

Canara Bank in a post on X said, "all out ATMs are functioning as usual. Please don't fall prey to the rumours. Canara Bank is always at your service and your money is safe with us."

Govt warns wholesalers, traders against hoarding of essential food items

New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) The government on Friday said the country has ample food stocks to meet domestic demand but warned traders and wholesalers against hoarding of essential food items that could create artificial shortage.

The warning came as the conflict between India and Pakistan widened to unprovoked shelling and drone attacks in border towns.

In a social media post, Union Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said, "Don't believe in

propaganda messages regarding food stocks in the country. We have ample food stocks, far exceeding required norms. DONT PAY HEED TO SUCH MESSAGES".

"Traders, wholesalers, retailers or business entities which engage in trading of Essential Commodities are directed to cooperate with Law Enforcement agencies. Any person indulging in hoarding or stockpiling, shall be prosecuted under relevant sections of the Essential Commodities Act," Joshi said.

India on Wednesday struck at nine sites in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and Pakistan, its deepest strike inside Pakistan in decades, in retaliation for a deadly terrorist attack in Pahalgam two weeks before.

On Thursday also, Joshi had urged people not to pay heed to rumours about the need to hoard essential items, saying the country has more than enough stock of all essential goods.

"In certain parts of the country, rumours are spreading, causing people to rush to collect essential food



items and other daily necessities," he said.

The minister had categorically said, "We have

more than enough stock of everything required across the country".

"Our stock is many times larger than what is needed, and there is absolutely no reason for anyone to rush to the markets in any part of the country," the minister asserted.

Joshi said there is no shortage whatsoever and no one should give any value to such rumours.

In the current 2024-25 crop year (July-June), the government has set a target of 341.55 million tonne of foodgrain production.

Foodgrains include paddy, wheat, coarse cereals and pulses.

Already, the country's foodgrain production has reached 330.92 million tonne in the Kharif and rabi seasons of the current 2024-25 crop year. The production estimates for summer (zaid) sowing are yet to be released.

The Food Corporation of India, the nodal agency for foodgrains procurement and distribution, had wheat stock of 13.55 million tonne as on April 1 this year as against the buffer requirement of 7.46 million tonne.

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



New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) Government watchdog CCPA has issued notices to 13 e-commerce players like Amazon and Flipkart for illegal sale of walkie-talkie devices on their platforms amid rising India-Pakistan tensions.

In an official statement on Friday, the government said the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued 13 notices to lead-

ing digital marketplaces against the illegal listing and sale of walkie-talkies on e-commerce platforms. These platforms are Amazon, Flipkart, Meesho, OLX, TradeIndia, Facebook, Indiamart, VardaanMart, Jiomart, Krishnamart, Chimiya, Talk Pro Wallie Talkie and MaskMan toys.

The crackdown focuses on the sale of walkie-talkies without proper

frequency disclosure, licensing information, or Equipment Type Approval (ETA), constituting a violation of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

Earlier, Union Food and Consumer Minister Pralhad Joshi in a social media post said, "The sale of non-compliant wireless devices not only breaches statutory obligations but may also pose significant risks to national security operations".

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

The minister said the CCPA will issue formal guidelines under Section 18(2)(l) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, aimed at strengthening compliance and consumer safeguards in digital marketplaces.

Sellers have been directed to adhere strictly to all applicable regulatory standards to uphold consumer rights and prevent unlawful trade practices, he added.

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

New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) India has ample stocks of petrol, diesel and cooking gas LPG, and there is no need for panic buying, oil companies assured the public on Friday.

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

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

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

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

Panic buying was mostly witnessed in states bordering Pakistan.

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



Army said the attacks were "effectively repulsed".

These had led to a fear of escalation in tension and panic buying.

"Help us serve you better by staying calm and avoiding unnecessary rush. This will keep our supply lines running seamlessly and ensure uninterrupted fuel access for all," IOC said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gold rallies Rs 480, inches close to Rs 1 lakh-mark



New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) Gold prices rallied Rs 480 to Rs 99,730 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday as rising tensions between India and Pakistan triggered demand for safe haven assets, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had ended at Rs 99,250 per 10 grams in the previous market close.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity climbed Rs 480 to Rs 99,280 per 10 grams on Friday. It had closed at Rs 98,800 per 10 grams on Thursday.

"Gold prices are holding steady as easing trade tensions take some pressure off the market," Abans Financial Services' Chief Executive Officer Chintan Mehta said.

However, geopolitical risks stemming from soaring India-Pakistan tensions, Russia-Ukraine war and Israel's plans to take full control of Gaza continue to simmer in the background and may keep underlying support for gold intact, Mehta said.

These developments could continue to drive demand for gold as a hedge against uncertainty, he added.

As per the Sarafa Association, silver prices also increased Rs 200 to Rs 98,400 per kg. The white metal had settled at Rs 98,200 per kg in the previous market session.

In the international markets, spot gold rose USD 22.37 to USD 3,328.09 per ounce.

Spot silver in the overseas markets went up 0.23 per cent to USD 32.54 per ounce.

HDFC Securities' Senior Analyst of Commodities Saumil Gandhi said investors will be awaiting for speeches of Federal Reserve's FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) members later in the day that could impact the future direction of the US dollar and gold prices.

Telcos step up vigil, network preparedness; roll-out measures to ensure uninterrupted connectivity

New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) Amid heightened tensions between India and Pakistan, Indian telecom operators have taken immediate measures to ensure uninterrupted connectivity, including intra-circle roaming arrangements and setting up of control centres for constant vigil, as well as diesel stock-up for telecom towers.

The telecom department held a meeting with operators earlier this week, and asked telcos to establish national-level control centres and ensure network continuity and close coordination at all times.

Sources said the meeting took place on May 7, and all telcos offered their full commitment to the government in immediately activating measures including round-the-clock monitoring of networks, in light of the



prevailing situation.

The telecom department on the same day issued an office memo detailing the measures. Telcos were asked to share details of their nodal officers in charge of control centres, and ensure roaming arrangements work smoothly so customers have 24/7 connectivity.

They were also asked to ensure adequate supplies so that towers can switch to Diesel Generator (DG) gensets in case of any power disruptions.

The operators were also

asked to set up 'war rooms' for vigil, and work in close coordination.

The government also instructed telecom operators to inform in real-time in case any network or site is affected.

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

After the Pakistani attempts were foiled last night, the defence ministry said India remains "fully prepared to defend its sovereignty and ensure the safety of its people."

Indian military officials said the Pakistani drones and missiles were effectively engaged by Indian armed forces and the attempts by the enemy were thwarted.

Delhi airport sees cancellation of 138 domestic, international flights on Friday

New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) As many as 138 flights to and from the Delhi airport were cancelled by various airlines on Friday, according to a source.

In the wake of rising tensions between India and Pakistan, security measures have also been enhanced at airports.

Around 27 airports in various parts of the country are closed in the wake of Operation Sindoore, under which armed forces carried out strikes on terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on Wednesday in retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack that had killed at least 26 people



last month.

As a result of the closure of the airports, many flights have been cancelled.

A total of 66 domestic departures and 63 arrivals, as well as 5 international departures and 4 arrivals, were cancelled between 5 am and 2 pm on Friday, the source

said.

"Delhi airport operations remain normal. However, due to evolving airspace conditions and heightened security measures, some flight schedules and security processing timings may be impacted," DIAL said in a post on X on Friday.

Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) operates the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), which is the country's largest and busiest airport.

DIAL also advised passengers to be prepared for additional time at security checkpoints and cooperate with airline and security staff for smooth processing.

Defence minister reviews security situation with CDS, 3 service chiefs



New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday carried out a comprehensive review of the national security scenario with the top military leadership, a day after Pakistan's attempts to target Indian military installations were repelled.

Every aspect of the evolving security situation was discussed in the meeting, it is learnt. The meeting was attended by Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan, Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi, Air Chief Marshal A P Singh, Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi and Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh.

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

Defence ministry spokesperson said.

After the Pakistani attempts were foiled last night, the defence ministry said India remains "fully prepared to defend its sovereignty and ensure the safety of its people."

Indian military officials said the Pakistani drones and missiles were effectively engaged by Indian armed forces and the attempts by the enemy were thwarted.

country using missiles and drones.

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

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

S-400 Triumph missile systems, Barak-8 and Akash missiles were used to thwart Pak offensive: Sources



New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) India used S-400 Triumph missile systems, Barak-8 missiles, Akash surface-to-air missiles, and DRDO's anti-drone technologies to thwart Pakistani offensive following the Operation Sinoor, highly-placed sources said on Friday.

After India launched Operation Sinoor on May 7, Pakistan tried to escalate tensions by launching missiles at Indian military installations but every single missile was neutralised,

they said. In retaliation to the Pahalgam terror attack, Indian armed forces carried out missile strikes on terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir including Bahawalpur, a stronghold of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terror outfit. The defence ministry had said that on the night of May 7-8, Pakistan attempted to engage a number of military targets in northern and western India including Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu,

38 Maoists surrender before police in Telangana

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

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

The 38 Maoists of various cadres decided to shun the path of naxalism and lead a peaceful life with their family members, it said. The rebels laid down their arms and surrendered before Bhadradi Kothagudem Superintendent of Police B Rohit Raju, after learning about the development and welfare measures undertaken by the police and CRPF for the tribal people and welfare activities for the surrendered Maoists under the "Operation Cheyutha" programme, it said.

CPI demands govt action on 'inflammatory, misleading content' aired by some channels

New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) CPI general secretary D Raja on Friday urged Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw to take action on "inflammatory and misleading content" being aired by several news channels following a military flare-up between India and Pakistan in the wake of Operation Sinoor.



Access must be restored to platforms which are responsible and act to maintain national unity. We also call for coordinated and periodic, fact-based briefings from your ministry, in consultation with the ministries of defence, home affairs, and external affairs, to counter misinformation and provide the public with credible updates," he added.

Man arrested in UP's Sambhal for posting content supporting Pakistan on Instagram

Sambhal (UP), May 9 (PTI) A man was arrested in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal for allegedly posting content in support of Pakistan on Instagram on Friday, officials said.

The man has been arrested and booked under Section 152 (actions that endanger India's sovereignty, unity, and integrity) of the (BNS) and has been subsequently sent to judicial custody, said the officer.

While the nation stands united against terrorism, we are witnessing a dangerous trend where certain channels are communalising the issue, spreading unverified claims, and promoting war hysteria without any official confirmation from the government or the armed forces," he said.

Warmongering and targeting of communities erode trust, create fear among citizens, and play into the hands of those who seek to destabilise the country. Public anxiety is being inflamed, not addressed," he said.

But we reject attempts to turn the tragedy of Pahalgam into a spectacle of hate and division. Conflict must not become a tool to distract from facts or delegitimise fellow citizens. The cost of such narratives is paid by ordinary people in the form of insecurity, polarisation and long-term damage to the democratic fabric," he said.

INDO-PAK MILITARY CONFLICT: Air-raid sirens being installed in Delhi

New Delhi, May 9 (PTI) From installing air sirens to deploying civil defence personnel, setting up control rooms to conducting mock drills, authorities in Delhi are preparing themselves in the wake of a military conflict between India and Pakistan.

Locations have been identified and air-raid sirens are being installed. The Civil Defence Directorate carried out the testing of an air-raid siren installed atop the multi-storey PWD building at ITO on Friday afternoon. Similar testing exercises will be carried out in other areas also in the coming days," the official said.



control room has also been activated. In Central district, civil defence volunteers are being trained and 50 of them will be deployed in different areas.

Akhilesh urges calm, cautions against fake news amid India-Pakistan tension

Lucknow, May 9 (PTI) Amid rising tensions between India and Pakistan, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav has called for restraint and responsible behaviour from citizens, urging them not to fall for misinformation or unverified news circulating online.

spreading any unconfirmed reports, warning that such content could be part of the enemy's strategy to create unrest.



In his message, Yadav further emphasised the importance of individual responsibility during uncertain times.

Residents of Punjab, Rajasthan calm but anxious after nerve-wracking night

Chandigarh/Jaisalmer, May 9 (PTI) Schools were closed, most people stayed indoors and the occasional siren rang out as people in many border districts woke up to a tense Friday morning, calm but anxious about what the day would bring.

The night that was had been nerve-wracking with blackouts, loud blasts piercing through the quiet and the fear that their homes would be the frontier of war between India and its fractious neighbour Pakistan.



amid a complete blackout. We spent the night in fear, but things were calm today morning." Special prayers for peace were also held at some gurdwaras in the state, including in Mohali and Rupnagar, amid the soaring tensions.

armed forces thwarted." Amid the escalating tensions, the authorities extended the blackout in Jaisalmer till 6 am on Friday though the situation remained largely calm in the morning.

Meanwhile, a bomb-like object was found in the Kishanghat area of Jaisalmer district on Friday morning, prompting swift action by the local police and air force.

US to stay out of war that's none of our business: Vance on India-Pak tensions

New York, May 9 (PTI) Amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, the US has said it is not going to get involved in a war that's "fundamentally none of our business".

While the US cannot control India and Pakistan, it can encourage the two nuclear-armed neighbours to de-escalate, Vice President JD Vance said in an interview with Fox News on Thursday.

"Look, we're concerned about any time nuclear powers collide and have a major conflict," Vance said when asked how concerned the Trump administration is about a potential nuclear war between India and Pakistan.

Vance quoted US President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio who have said that Washington wants the tensions to "de-escalate" as quickly as possible.

"We can't control these countries though. Fundamentally, India has its gripes with Pakistan. Pakistan has responded to India. What we can do is try to encourage these folks to de-escalate a little bit. But we're not going to get involved in the middle of war that's fundamentally none of our business and has nothing to do with America's ability to control it," the vice president said.

"America can't tell the Indians to lay down their arms. We can't tell the Pakistanis to lay down their arms. And so we're going to continue to pursue this thing through diplomatic channels. Our hope and our expectation is that this is not going to spiral into a broader regional war or, God forbid, a nuclear conflict, but sure, we're worried about these things.

"But I think the job of diplomacy, but also the job of cooler heads in India and Pakistan is to make sure this doesn't become a nuclear war. If it happened of course it would be disastrous. Right now we don't think that's going to happen," he said.

Vance, Second Lady Usha Vance and their three children were on their first official visit to India when terrorists killed 26 people, mostly tourists, in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir on April 22.

Two weeks after the at-



tack, India launched Operation Sindoor on Wednesday, targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

On Thursday night, India neutralised Pakistan military's attempt to hit military stations in Jammu, Pathankot, Udhampur and some other locations with missiles and drones as tensions soared between the two countries amid fears of a wider military conflict.

After the Indian military foiled the Pakistani attempts, the defence ministry said India remains "fully prepared to defend its sovereignty and ensure the safety of its people".

Earlier on Thursday, Secretary of State Rubio spoke separately with India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, emphasising the need for immediate de-escalation.

In his call with Jaishankar, Rubio expressed US support for direct dialogue between India and Pakistan and encouraged continued efforts to improve communications.

He reiterated his condolences for the horrific terrorist attack in Pahalgam and reaffirmed the US' commitment to work with India in the fight against terrorism.

In his conversation with Sharif, Rubio reiterated his calls for Pakistan to take con-

crete steps to end any support for terrorist groups.

In a press briefing on Thursday, State Department Spokesperson Tammy Bruce said Rubio underlined the need for de-escalation in his conversations with Jaishankar and Sharif.

"...at this moment in time, there is like one thing that has to stop, which is a back-and-forth and a continuation of this, and that is what we're focused on right now," she said.

The message from the Secretary of State and from the United States "is that the violence should stop, that military action, war, as we've seen in that region, certainly in the Middle East, has clearly for generations proven that it is not a solution because it never ends.

"There has to be a change in that regard. So obviously, when it comes to solving a problem, this administration has made itself clear, that war, the military, more violence is not a solution. Diplomacy is a solution, new ideas to stop generational violence and problems."

Asked if Rubio offered to mediate between the two countries, Bruce said, "We are not going to be speaking about the details. That is certainly our policy."

The US continues to urge India and Pakistan to work towards a responsible solution. Washington remains engaged with both governments at multiple levels, she said.

The US wants the perpetrators to be held accountable and are supportive of any efforts to that end, she added.

Bruce told reporters that Rubio underlined that the conflict should not escalate.

"Clearly this has been an issue for decades and... with what we saw over the last few weeks after the terrorist attack, it was not surprising but very, very disappointing. But... it should not escalate.

"And communication was fundamentally key, that there should be talks, that there should not be silence and that America obviously was in the centre of this in speaking with a variety of leaders of both countries over the last two days," Bruce said.

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

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

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

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

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

Tensions between India and Pakistan soared significantly following India's Operation Sindoor on early

Wednesday and Pakistan's subsequent unsuccessful attempt to attack 15 Indian cities.

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

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

"The secretary reiterated his condolences for the horrific terrorist attack in Pahalgam and reaffirmed the United States' commitment to work with India in the fight against terrorism," Bruce added.

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

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

On India-Pakistan tensions, the European Union said it is "monitoring closely and with great concern the



growing tensions in the region and the ensuing consequences, including the possible loss of more lives."

"The EU calls on both parties to exercise restraint, to de-escalate tensions and desist from further attacks to safeguard civilian lives on both sides," it said.

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

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

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

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

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

Trump floats cutting China tariffs to 80% ahead of meeting as he looks to deescalate trade war

Washington, May 9 (AP) President Donald Trump on Friday floated cutting tariffs on China from 145% to 80% ahead of a weekend meeting among top US and Chinese trade officials as he looks to deescalate the trade war.

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

"80% Tariff on China seems right! Up to Scott B." Trump wrote on his social media account on Friday morning, referring to Scott Bessent, his Treasury chief, who has been a point person on trade. The Republican president also called on China to open its markets to the US, writing: "WOULD BE SO GOOD FOR THEM!!! CLOSED MARKETS DON'T WORK ANYMORE!!!"

Bessent and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer will meet with their counterparts in Geneva in the most-senior known conversations between the two countries in months, the Trump administration announced



this week. It comes amid growing US market worry over the impact of the tariffs on the prices and supply of consumer goods.

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

Trump had previously

said that he wouldn't lower the tariffs against China to hold substantive talks. But he showed signs of softening during an Oval Office appearance on Thursday, when he said he "could" lower the 145% rate charged on Chinese goods if the weekend talks go well.

"We're going to see," Trump said. "Right now, you can't get any higher. It's at 145, so we know it's coming down."

The president's team has acknowledged that the 145% tariff was not sustainable, as taxes at that rate were effectively an embargo on any trade between the two countries.

But it remains unclear how Trump can reconcile the contradictions in his stated goals. He wants large amounts of tariff revenues to offset his income tax cuts, but he also wants deals to increase market access for US goods that would likely require lower tariffs. His aides have said he wants to isolate China, yet his tariffs on other trade partners make it difficult to create a durable alliance on trade.

Pope Leo XIV will be formally installed as pope at Mass on May 18, Vatican says

Vatican City, May 9 (AP) The Vatican says Pope Leo XIV will be formally installed as pope at a Mass on May 18 and will preside over his first general audience May 21.

The Vatican on Friday provided a schedule of Leo's upcoming agenda. It includes meetings with cardinals, Vatican officials, the media, diplomatic corps and the general public.

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

Leaders of 27 nations join Putin to celebrate 80th Victory Day at Moscow's Red Square

Moscow, May 9 (PTI) Leaders of 27 nations joined Russian President Vladimir Putin in celebrating the 80th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in the Second World War.

Addressing the Victory Day parade at the Red Square here, Putin underscored that the defeat of Nazi Germany was accomplished through the collective efforts of Allied Nations, and the opening of the second front by the Normandy landing of the Allied forces contributed to bringing the victory in the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people closer.

"The complete defeat of Nazi Germany, militarist Japan, and their satellites across various regions of the world was achieved through



the joint efforts of the Allied Nations. We will always remember that the opening of the Second Front in Europe, following the decisive battles on Soviet territory, helped bring victory closer," he said.

The Victory Day celebrations in Moscow are being attended by leaders of 27 foreign states, including Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Brazilian counterpart Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

India was represented by Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth, as due to ongoing Operation Sindoor, Prime Minister Narendra Modi or Defence Minister Rajnath Singh were unable to travel abroad.

The other leaders who attended the Victory Day parade include Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, President of Republika Srpska Milorad Dodik, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko, Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam To Lam, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Venezuelan President Nicolas Madu-

ro, Ethiopian President Taye Atske Selassie, and Guinea-Bissau President Umaro Sissoco Embaló.

This year, the military parade on Moscow's Red Square involved over 11,000 troops, including 1,500 combatants of the special military operation and 183 WWII and advanced weapons systems.

Contingents from 13 countries, including China, Egypt, Mongolia, Myanmar, and Vietnam, also marched at the Red Square parade.

Several CIS countries, which were part of the Soviet Union, also sent their military contingents.

Battle-hardened units involved in Moscow's Special Military Operations in Ukraine also marched through Red Square.

North Korea says leader Kim supervised missile tests simulating nuclear strikes against rivals



Seoul, May 9 (AP) North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised tests of short-range ballistic missile systems that simulated nuclear counterstrikes against US and South Korean forces, state media said Friday, as the North continued to blame its rivals for escalating tensions through their joint military exercises.

The report came a day after South Korea's military detected multiple launches from North Korea's eastern coast and assessed that the tests could also be related to the country's weapons exports to Russia during its war in Ukraine.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said Thursday's tests involved a mobile ballistic missile system apparently modelled after Russia's Iskander, as well as 600-kilometre multiple rocket launchers that South Korean officials classify as ballistic due to their self-propulsion and guided flight. Both are

part of a growing lineup of weapons systems that the North says could be armed with "tactical" nuclear weapons for battlefield use.

KCNA said the tests were intended to train military units operating missile and rocket systems to more effectively execute attacks under the North's nuclear weapons control system and ensure a swift response to a nuclear crisis.

The agency criticised the United States and its "vassal states" for expanding joint military exercises on and around the Korean Peninsula, which the North claims are preparations for nuclear war, and said Thursday's launches demonstrated the "rapid counteraction posture" of its forces.

Kim stressed the need to strengthen the role of his nuclear forces in both deterring and fighting war, and called for continued efforts to improve combat readiness and precision strike capabilities,

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said multiple missiles of various types were launched from the area around the eastern port city of Wonsan on Thursday from about 8:10 to 9:20 am, with the farthest travelling about 800 kilometres (497 miles).

Lee Sung Joon, spokesperson for the Joint Chiefs, said in a briefing the North Korean launches were possibly intended to test the performance of weapons it plans to export, as the country continues to send military equipment and troops to fuel Russia's warfighting against Ukraine.

Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani told reporters that none of the North Korean missiles reached Japan's exclusive economic zone and there was no damage to vessels or aircraft in the area.

It was the North's first known ballistic activity since March 10, when it fired several ballistic missiles hours after US and South Korean troops began an annual combined military exercise, and the country's sixth launch event of the year.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula have escalated in recent months as North Korean leader Kim Jong Un continues to accelerate the development of his nuclear and missile program and supply weapons and troops to support Russia's war against Ukraine.

Thursday's launch came a day after North Korean state media said Kim urged munition workers to boost the production of artillery shells amid his deepening alignment with Moscow.

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

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

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

NCP leadership had spearheaded the massive student-led protests that resulted in the ouster of Hasina on August 5 last Yunus had taken over on August 8. Those students came together to form the NCP earlier this year.

"The government considers with seriousness the recent demand raised on behalf of different political parties, organisations and the people to disband Awami League over allegations of autocratic rule and terrorist activities," the interim government statement said. The government has established contacts with different political parties and "will take a quick decision in consultation with them," it said.

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

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

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

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

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

The activists also chanted slogans against the Awami League.

Earlier, NCP leader Abul Hasnat Abdullah on Thursday

night initiated the sit-in protest near Yusuf's residence along with several supporters and other leaders such as Nahid Islam joined him after midnight.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which was Awami League's main rival, has already distanced itself from the demand saying they are opposed to a ban on any political party.

Most of the leaders of the Awami League are in jail or on the run at home and abroad.

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

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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MAY 09

The Indian Premier League (IPL) was on Friday suspended because of the deepening military confrontation between India and Pakistan, with the BCCI saying that national interest trumps other considerations at a time when the country is responding to a terror attack and unwarranted aggression from across the border.

A cloud of uncertainty had loomed over the future of the ongoing edition since the cancellation of Thursday's match between Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals in Dharamsala midway following air raid alerts in neighbouring cities of Jammu and Pathankot.

"The BCCI has decided to suspend the remainder of the ongoing IPL with immediate effect for one week," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia stated in a press release, after early information from the Board suggested that the suspension was indefinite.

"Further updates regarding the new schedule and venues of the tournament will be announced in due course after a comprehensive assessment of the situation in consultation with relevant authorities and stakeholders," it added.

The high-profile league was to wind up on May 25 in Kolkata as per the original schedule. The Board would look to conduct the remaining 16 matches (12 league and four knockouts) at an opportune time and there is speculation that the month of September could be an option if the scheduled Asia Cup is scrapped.

"At this critical juncture, the BCCI stands firmly with the nation. We express our solidarity with the Government of India, the Armed Forces and the people of our country," the Board statement read.

"The Board salutes the bravery, courage, and selfless service of our armed forces, whose heroic efforts under Operation Sindoor continue to protect and inspire the nation, as they lead a resolute response to the recent terrorist attack and the unwarranted aggression by Pakistan's armed forces," it added.

The BCCI said that while cricket remains a national passion, it is not greater than the sovereignty, integrity, and security of the country.



"The BCCI remains firmly committed to support all efforts that safeguard India and will always align its decisions in the best interest of the nation," it stated.

The Board also thanked stakeholders like the official broadcaster, the title sponsor and all associate partners for "putting national interest above all other considerations."

India launched missile attacks on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir a fortnight after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people were killed.

On Thursday, a blackout was enforced in several districts in India including Pathankot, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Mohali in Punjab and Union Territory Chandigarh amid air raid alarms and reports of explosion-like sounds in Jammu.

Earlier in the day, the Pakistan Super League was moved to the UAE after Indian drone attacks in Lahore and Rawalpindi among other cities.

The military confrontation had caused significant anxiety among the foreign players, according to league sources and they will be

flying back over the next few days. Sixty two overseas players were signed up by the 10 franchises at the mega-auction last year.

"The players are doing well but of course there is concern among them after seeing all that has happened," an IPL team official told PTI when asked about the foreign players' state of mind.

The players of Delhi Capitals and Punjab Kings are currently on their way to the national capital from Dharamsala by road.

On Friday, the IPL bandwagon was in Lucknow for the game between Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru, which now stands suspended.

"Nation first," posted LSG on its official social media page after the league's suspension.

In Sydney, Cricket Australia stated that it was closely monitoring the situation in both India and Pakistan, which shifted its flagship Pakistan Super League (PSL) to the UAE early this morning owing to the Indian military action.

New Zealand's players association had also expressed concerns about the security scenario in India and Pakistan due to the ongoing

conflict.

A similar statement was issued by the Cricket West Indies, whose players are also involved in both the IPL and the PSL.

Not the first IPL disruption

It's not the first time that external factors have caused a disruption to the league, which has been taken thrice out of the country in the past due to varied reasons. In 2009, the entire tournament was moved to South Africa because of security issues amid the Lok Sabha elections.

In 2020, the tournament was played in the UAE in September, instead of the usual April-May window, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The next year, the event began in India in a bio-bubble but was halted when players began testing positive for the deadly infection. The league was eventually completed in the UAE in September that year.

It remains to be seen how the BCCI will complete the ongoing edition after this break.

The Indian team is scheduled to be in England next month for a five-match Test series that will end in the first week of August.

Jammu & Kashmir Volleyball Team Lifts Spirits with Hard-Fought KIYG Gold



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA, MAY 09

Amid a backdrop of tension and tragedy in the Kashmir Valley, a group of young athletes from Jammu & Kashmir delivered a different headline — one of hope, resilience, and triumph.

The boys' volleyball team from the region clinched a gold medal at the Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) 2025 in Bihar, defeating Uttar Pradesh 3-1 in a riveting final to open their state's medal tally.

In a match that kept fans on the edge of their seats, the final scoreline — 35-33, 19-25, 25-21 — reflected not only the intensity of the contest but the spirit of a team determined to rise above adversity.

For players Wani Mahir (Srinagar), Sahil Shamim (Anantnag), Abid Gulzar (Ganderbal), and Nasir Ajaz (Baramulla), the victory carried significance beyond sport.

Only weeks ago, the Pahalgam terror attack

had cast a dark shadow over the Valley. But on the court in Patna, these boys played not with fear, but with fire. Their gold was not just a medal — it was a message.

"This win means everything. Back home, people needed something to feel proud of again. We wanted to give them that," said Abid Gulzar, his voice steady with emotion.

Coach Naresh Kumar, who had previously guided the team to a bronze at the school games, called the triumph "a victory of heart." He praised the discipline and dedication shown by his players in the lead-up to the tournament, noting that "this is just the beginning — they have a bright future ahead."

Among the standouts was Wani Mahir, who has already represented India at the U-18 Asian Championships in Bahrain. "We just wanted to bring something positive back home," he said. Mahir and teammate Nasir Ajaz have been training at the Sports

Authority of India (SAI) center at Jammu's Maulana Azad Stadium, where they have sharpened their skills alongside senior national players.

Others have charted their own unique paths. Abid Gulzar, coached by his father Shamim Ahmed — a former India player himself — learned the game in his backyard in Ganderbal. Sahil Shamim rose through the ranks of local circuits in Anantnag, proving that determination can often outmatch access to elite infrastructure.

"From makeshift courts to national podiums — that's our story," said Sahil. "We hope it shows that even in difficult times, something beautiful can rise."

As the team stood atop the podium, gold medals glinting under the stadium lights, it was more than a sporting victory. It was a triumph of youth, of courage, and of dreams that soar above the net — no matter the weight they carry.

South Africa appoint Shukri Conrad as all-format coach

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JOHANNESBURG, MAY 09

South Africa Test coach Shukri Conrad will take charge of the Proteas white ball teams until the 2027 ICC 50-over World Cup, the CSA announced

here on Friday.

Conrad, who has been coaching the SA Test side from 2023, succeeds Rob Walter, who resigned in April after the Champions Trophy.

The 58-year-old's first white ball assignment will

be a T20I series against Zimbabwe and New Zealand in July.

CSA Director of National Teams and High Performance, Enoch Nkwe commented: "Shukri's track record with the red-ball team speaks for itself."

UAE set to decline PCB request to host PSL games



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DUBAI, MAY 09

The PCB's plans to conduct the remaining Pakistan Super League matches in the UAE may not succeed as the Emirates Cricket Board is "unlikely to approve" its request due to the border tensions between India and Pakistan.

A source close to the developments in the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB) has indicated that the Board is set to reject the request from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), which has already announced that the PSL would be held in the UAE.

The source has cited "security concerns potentially emanating from the rising tension between India and Pakistan."

It is learnt that the recent developments have

made the Emirates Cricket Board "vary of being perceived as an ally of PCB", which it believes the act of hosting the PSL may suggest.

"The Emirates Cricket Board has enjoyed a strong relationship with BCCI in recent years having hosted the 'India' edition of the ICC T20 World Cup 2021, editions of the IPL as well as India matches during ICC Champions Trophy 2025," the source further stated.

Dubai is also the headquarter of the International Cricket Council, which is currently headed by former BCCI secretary Jay Shah.

"The UAE has a diverse South Asian population which enjoys cricket. Hosting a tournament like the PSL in the midst of such tense circumstances

could vitiate harmony, pose security risks and stir unnecessary friction between communities," the source said.

The PCB said early this morning that the last eight PSL fixtures, which were previously scheduled in Rawalpindi, Multan and Lahore, will now be staged in the UAE.

Schedule of matches, outlining the dates and venues, will be shared in due course, a statement said.

On Thursday, the PCB called off a scheduled match between Peshawar Zalmi and Karachi Kings at the Rawalpindi stadium.

India launched missile attacks on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir a fortnight after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people were killed.

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

KUSHAN SARKAR
NEW DELHI, MAY 09

(PTI) The currently suspended Indian Premier League's 16 remaining games can be completed during a 10 to 12 days window in September as the Asia Cup is now uncertain due to the rising armed hostilities between India and Pakistan.

It would be a miracle if Asia Cup, which is supposed to be hosted by India (at a supposedly neutral venue), goes ahead given the raging conflict which was triggered by the killing of 26 people in a terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam. The nearly non-existent sporting ties are unlikely to resume at any level till tensions ease.

The Asia Cup was given a 19-day window in September where at least two Indo-Pak matches were to take place apart from the possibility of a final clash between the bitter rivals which would have assured the broadcasters of high advertising revenue.

"It is extremely bad optics if cricket continues when there is a possibility of war with a rogue nation (Pakistan). Sports can continue when everything is normal.

Plus it is very natural for foreign players and coaches to be wary and wanting to return home," a senior BCCI official told PTI on condition of anonymity after the league was suspended indefinitely on Friday.

Incidentally, the Asian Cricket Council is now headed by Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Mohsin Naqvi and the onus will be on him to deal with financial losses that the Asia Cup cancellation would cause.

It is understood that the BCCI top brass' decision to suspend the league was well thought out call as only a handful of matches are left which can be completed in a 10-day window with possible double-headers.

The options for BCCI?

The IPL has a dedicated window from March end to May end during which no international cricket is scheduled allowing the best of world cricket to ply their trade in the league. Now that the schedule has gone haywire, the BCCI will have to explore the available options.

The Indian team will be touring England from first week of June to first week of August and that schedule cannot be changed.

The only period that looks good right now is between the second and fourth week of September where the BCCI can also negotiate with the various cricket boards to allow their players (except for free-lancers who don't need permission) to come back and complete the assignment.

Why not August?

In August, India have a six-match white ball away series against Bangladesh which could have been stalled for IPL. However, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB)'s 'The Hundred' will be played between August 5 to 31 where most of the top T20 players, who also play in IPL, will be taking part.

Most IPL franchise owners like Reliance and RPSG group have bought stakes in 'The Hundred'. Also Australia will be hosting South Africa for a six-match white ball series through the month of August so players from both countries won't be available.

Why September is best option

From August 15 till September

22, the Caribbean Premier League will also be held where some of the top West Indies players are going to take part. But during the second week of September, a fair number of West Indies players can be made available for their respective IPL teams.

England and South Africa have a six-match white-ball series from September 2 to 14. Given the cordial relationship that BCCI shares with both the ECB and Cricket South Africa, it can request them to allow the players important to their IPL teams to be released during the window.

After All SA20 is also a league that runs on investment from IPL franchises.

By end of September, India's WTC (World Test Championship) commitments against the West Indies and South Africa will commence followed by a white-ball tour of Australia in October-November.

The IPL could also have been played in December but top Australian players like Josh Hazlewood, and Mitchell Starc, whose franchises are in play-off contention, will be busy with the Ashes along with some English players.

Top-5 race, Conference League push and Salah stats: What's still at stake in the Premier League?

STEVE DOUGLASAP
LONDON, MAY 09

(AP) The title race is done, three teams have already been relegated, yet the Premier League isn't quite limping to the finishing line.

The race to secure the final four Champions League qualification places, along with champion Liverpool, is maintaining the interest in England's top league with three

rounds to go. In fact, it's hardly been tighter.

Six clubs are involved — Arsenal, Manchester City, Newcastle, Chelsea, Nottingham Forest and Aston Villa — and two will miss out on securing a spot in Europe's lucrative elite competition.

As well as that, Bournemouth, Brentford, Brighton and Fulham are in a four-way fight for eighth and qualification for a potential

Conference League spot, which would be a big deal to the four somewhat unheralded but improving clubs.

Then there's some individual milestones to reach. Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah takes center stage here, as he leads the Golden Boot race for the top scorer and also has his eye on a Premier League assist record.

Arsenal, in second place, is a near-certainty to qualify for the

Champions League so more scrutiny is on the five teams below, with third-place Man City and seventh-place Villa separated by just four points.

The biggest game this weekend sees fourth-place Newcastle host fifth-place Chelsea on Sunday. They are both on 63 points, one below City and two clear of sixth-place Forest, which is at home to already-relegated Leicester on Sunday.