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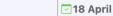












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671 Contributors



1,231Kids



24 States

"Life itself is a privilege, but to live life to the fullestwell, that is a choice."



Church must fight lack of faith', says Leo XIV WORLD » PAGE 14





Screams before sunrise State govt. and temple committee play blar game over responsibility



pause button for IPL

INSIDE



Centre closes 24 airports for civilian flights

NEW DELHI NEW DILLHI

Amid escalation of tensions
between India and Pakistan,
the Civil Aviation Ministry on
Friday extended the closure of
at least 24 airports for civilian
flights until May 15. Most of
these airports are in north,
west and central India and
includes prominent airports includes prominent airports such as Jammu, Leh. » PAGE 4



'India's steadfast unity in itself is a challenge to Pak.

NEW DELIHI Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri condemned Pakistan on Friday for waging a disinformation campaign, asserting that India's "steadfast unity" posed a significant challenge to Pakistan, He accused Pakistani forces of targeting gurdwaras both in India and Pakistan in bid to sow communal discort in India. » PAGE 4



'Pakistani media twisting the facts on operation'

NEW DELHI NEW DELHI
The Information and
Broadcasting Ministry on
Friday accused Pakistani med
of distorting facts to mislead
audiences. The Ministry said
major channels like Geo New
Dunyo News and ARY News
falsely reported that the
Pakistan Air Force shot down

India repels Pakistan strikes for second day

Blackout in several places of Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan as sirens blare along the border Pakistan shelling kills 3 civilians in J&K; Prime Minister Modi chairs high-level security meeting

BSF kills at least seven terrorists while foiling an infiltration attempt along LoC in Jammu

Vijaita Singh

lackout measure lackout measures were put in place in several parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Pun-jab, and Rajasthan on Fri-day as Pakistan continued day as Pakistan continued to violate Indian airspace for the second consecutive day. Sirens blared and areas on the western bor-der went dark as Indian armed forces used air de-fence mechanisms to the properties. thwart armed drone and missile attacks from

Drones, including suspected armed ones, were sighted at 26 locations ranging from Baramulla in J&K to Bhuj in Gujarat, the ndian Army said. An armed drone target

ed a civilian area in Feroz-pur in Punjab resulting in ere injuries to members of a local family, an Army official said. Citizens, espe-cially in border areas, were advised to remain indoors, advised to remain indoors, limit unnecessary move-ment, and strictly follow safety instructions issued there is no need for panic, heightened vigilance and precaution are essential, the official salienter Omar Abdullah on Friday even-ing urged people of Jammu to "stay off the streets and stay at home", as blasts echoed in the city. The were "intermittent sounds

were "intermittent sounds of blasts, probably heavy artillery".

Infiltration attempt On Thursday, hundreds of drones that swarmed In-dian skies were shot down and late in the evening, the Border Security Force (BSF) foiled an infiltration attempt along the border in the Samba sector of I&K.

killing at least seven terro-rists, an official said. One woman and two students were killed in J&K





Lives disrupted: (clockwise from top) An aerial view of the blackout enforced in Amritsar, Punjab on Friday, family members mourn a woman killed in Pakistani shelling in Razerwani area of Uri in Jammu and Kashmir, civilians from the same area being shifted in a police vehicle to a safer location. PTI & INRAN NISSAR

Lalgarh Jatta, Jaisalmer, Barmer, Bhuj, Kuarbet and Lakhi Nala were targeted by aerial objects on Friday. Prime Minister Naren-

dra Modi chaired a high-le-vel meeting at his residence on Friday, attended by Defence Minister Raj-nath Singh, National Securnath Singh, National Secur-ity Adviser Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauban, Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi, Navy Chief Admi-ral D.K. Tripathi, and Ta-pan Kumar Deka, Director, Martin Chief Chief An armed drone target-ed a civilian area in Feroz-pur, ressulting in severe in-

rozpur, Pathankot, Fazilka, juries to members of a I family, a source said adding the injured have been provided medical assistance and the area has referred as the forces antituded by security forces.

A sudden power outage day available to be perfectly a sudden as the force of the force

had plunged Jammu city into darkness following two loud explosions on Fritwo loud explosions on Fri-day night, likely from the interception of intruding drones immediately after, sirens echoed throughout the second of the second of the second of the second of the control of the second of the secon

"A shell fired from Pakis-tan landed just behind the Christ School, run by the

Locations including Ba- rence in New Delhi on Friday. The deceased woman, Nargis Bashir, was a resi-dent of Baramulla's Uri and was hit by a mortar shrap-nel when travelling from Razarwani to Mohra. Lieutenant-Governor

Manoj Sinha, Mr. Abdullah and senior Minister Sakina Ittoo met victims of shell-

and some officials of the second of the seco

Pak, used 400 drones possibly from Turkiye'

Pakistan attempted drone intrusions at 36 locations from Leh to Sir Creek with approximately 300 to 400 drones on Thursday night, Wing Commander Vyomi-ka Singh said at a media briefitz on Briday Bakke. briefing on Friday. Pakis-tan also attempted to tar-get the Bhatinda military station with an armed Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), which was "detected and neutralised", she added.

In response, Indian armed forces launched strikes on four air defence sites in Pakistan. An air de ence radar was destroyed by one of them, Wing Com-

by one of them, wing Com-mander Singh said.

The drones were possi-bly of Turkish origin, likely to test Indian air defences, Wing Commander Singh said while accusing Pakis-

'Cowardly actions'

Terming intrusions "co-wardly actions", Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said these "provocative and escalatory" actions by Pakistan were targeted at Indian cities and civilian infrastructure, in addition to frastructure, in addition to some military targets. "The Indian armed forces responded proportionate-ly, adequately, and respon-sibly," Mr. Misri added.

"What I want to underline is that the official and blatantly farcical denial of these attacks that Pakistan carried out by the Pakistaarried out by the Pakista-ni State machinery is yet another example of their duplicity, and the new depths that they are plumbing in their quest for disinformation," Mr. Misri added.

added.
According to official sources, over 500 drones, mostly quadcopters, were launched in three waves in 36 locations across the western border between 8 p.m. on Thursday and 12 a.m. on Friday. The first

wave was relatively small, but increased over the next two waves, an informed source said. Meanwhile, heavy shelling by Pakistan continues along the Line of Control (LoC) which has resulted in fatalities and injuries among Army per-sonnel, though the num-

Singh chaired a meeting at South Block with Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi, Na Tripathi, Air Chief Marsha A.P. Singh and Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh to review the securiern border and the opera

armed forces.

"On the intervening night of May O8-05, Pakis in the part of May O8-05, Pakis in the paki at a media briefing on Fri-day. "Indian armed forces brought down a number of these drones using kinetic and non-kinetic means."

these large-scale aerial intrusions was to test the AD systems and gather intelligence, she observed, stat-ing that forensic examinaing that forensic examina-tion of the drone debris is being done. Preliminary reports suggest that they are Asisguard Songar Suggest and Wig Cdr Singh said. Wg Cdr Singh said, "Pa-listan is using civil airli-ners as a shield knowing ful-y well that its attack on india would elicit a swift AD response.

The Hindu Huddle begins with focus on national security challenges

The fifth edition of *The Hindu* Huddle, organised by The Hindu Group, kicked off on a strong not on Friday here highlight. on Friday here, highlight-ing critical issues relating to India's ongoing defence of its borders and national security challenges. Touching upon possible responses to the threat posed by Pakistan in the

cussed the options availa-ble to India under the threat posed by Pakistan, drawing upon their years of experience in the higher of the

Telangana Chief Minisjoined the event as a key

Wide range of topics Mr. Reddy discussed major developmental policies in his State, outlining why his party and those across southern States had ex-pressed concerns regard-ing any delimitation formu-la that took only

demographic changes into account and not the economic contributions of orium at the Taj West End, verse range of panel dis-

cricket. liberal education. and how women directors are transforming the landscape of cinema across In-dia. The sports panel was from three generations in-tuding shantha Rangas through the sport of the change was debated by ex-perts in this field including change was debated by ex-perts in this field including from the sport of the sport Founder-CBG, Council on Energy, Environment and ra, Chemical Oceanogra-pher and Professor, IISC, and Suruchi Bhadwal, Die scape of cinema across In-

rector, Climate Change and cussions on contemporary subjects including on cli-mate change, AI, women's Air Quality, TERI. The role of women directors in shaping the norms of cinema was de-bated by film personalities Nandita Das, Shahana Goswami, and Jeo Baby. Dr. Bhavani S., Dean of School of Humanities and

Performing Arts, Christ Un-iversity, Dr. Jonathan Gil Harris, Professor, Ashoka Harris, Professor, Ashoka University, and Sudheesh Venkatesh, Managing Edi-tor, Azim Premji Founda-tion, shed light on the va-lue of liberal education in the modern world.

Courts can't tell media to take down content: SC

The Supreme Court, in a judgment on Friday, held judgment on Friday, held that it is not the duty of

Peerzada Ashiq Vijaita Singh SRINAGAR/JAMMU/DELHI

lackout measures were put in place in several parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, and Rajasthan on Friday as Pakistan continued to violate Indian airspace for the second consecutive day. Sirens blared and areas on the western border went dark as Indian armed forces used air defence mechanisms to thwart armed drone and missile attacks from Pakistan.

Drones, including suspected armed ones, were sighted at 26 locations ranging from Baramulla in I&K to Bhui in Guiarat, the Indian Army said.

An armed drone targeted a civilian area in Ferozpur in Punjab resulting in severe injuries to members of a local family, an Army official said. Citizens, especially in border areas, were advised to remain indoors, limit unnecessary movement, and strictly follow safety instructions issued by local authorities. "While there is no need for panic, heightened vigilance and precaution are essential," the official said.

J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday evening urged people of Jammu to "stay off the streets and stay at home", as blasts echoed in the city. The Chief Minister said there were "intermittent sounds of blasts, probably heavy artillery".

Infiltration attempt

On Thursday, hundreds of drones that swarmed Indian skies were shot down and late in the evening, the Border Security Force (BSF) foiled an infiltration attempt along the border in the Samba sector of J&K, killing at least seven terrorists, an official said.

One woman and two students were killed in J&K as Pakistan resorted to heavy calibre mortar shelling in villages along the Line of Control (LoC)on Thursday night and Friday morning.

Locations including Baramulla, Srinagar, Avantipora, Nagrota, Jammu, Fe-







Lives disrupted: (clockwise from top) An aerial view of the blackout enforced in Amritsar, Punjab on Friday; family members mourn a woman killed in Pakistani shelling in Razerwani area of Uri in Jammu and Kashmir; civilians from the same area being shifted in a police vehicle to a safer location. PTI & IMRAN NISSAR

rozpur, Pathankot, Fazilka, Lalgarh Jatta, Jaisalmer, Barmer, Bhuj, Kuarbet and Lakhi Nala were targeted by aerial objects on Friday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a high-level meeting at his residence on Friday, attended by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, National Security Adviser Aiit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi, Navy chief Admiral D.K. Tripathi, and Tapan Kumar Deka, Director,

Intelligence Bureau. An armed drone targeted a civilian area in Ferozpur, resulting in severe in-

juries to members of a local family, a source said adding the injured have been provided medical assistance and the area has been sanitised by security forces.

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

Aerial objects had attempted to strike the strategic Jammu airport and its surrounding areas, which house Army, Air Force, and paramilitary installations.

ramulla, Srinagar, Avantipora, Nagrota, Jammu, Ferozpur, Pathankot, Fazilka, Lalgarh Jatta, Jaisalmer, Barmer, Bhuj, Kuarbet and Lakhi Nala were targeted by aerial objects on Friday.

"A shell fired from Pakistan landed just behind the Christ School, run by the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, a congregation in Poonch. Tragically, the shell hit the home of two students of the school. Both unfortunately lost their lives and their parents were severely injured," Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said on the ci- arat, Rajasthan, Punjab,

Locations including Ba- rence in New Delhi on Friday. The deceased woman. Nargis Bashir, was a resident of Baramulla's Uri and was hit by a mortar shrapnel when travelling from Razarwani to Mohra.

> Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha, Mr. Abdullah and senior Minister Sakina Ittoo met victims of shelling in both Kashmir and Jammu.

Residents said the intensity of shelling was higher than that witnessed during the 1999 Kargil war.

India shares 3,323 km of its land border with Pakistan along the States of Gujvilian deaths in J&K, while and the Union Territories addressing a press confe- of J&K and Ladakh.

J&K TO GUJ: ANOTHER NIGHT OF DRONES

- ➤ Barely 24 hours after Pak targeted Jammu airport, drones headed towards Srinagar airport late Friday night but were thwarted, officials said. The **drones were** sighted around 9pm, they said
- ➤ Sightings were made in 26 locations, spanning J&K, Punjab, Rajasthan and Guj. Sites included **Srinagar**, **Awantipora**, **Nagrota**, **Jammu**, **Ferozepur**, **Pathankot**, **Fazilka**, **Lalgarh Jatta**, **Jaisalmer**, **Barmer**, **and Bhuj**
- > On Thursday night, Pak used armed UAV to target Bathinda military station, headquarters of Army's 10 'Chetak Corps'. Swiftly detected and neutralised
- ➤ In counter-strike, IAF launched 4 Israeli-origin Harop and Harpy armed drones against Pak air defence sites
- > Fifty Pak drones destroyed using L-70 anti-aircraft guns, ZU-23 twin-barrel guns and other weapons. Another 20 brought down after being jammed, rest flew back
- ➤ Thousands of people living near LoC in J&K border districts of Baramulla, Kupwara, and Bandipora evacuated following heavy shelling by Pak troops. More than 100 houses have been damaged
- ➤ Punjab cabinet approves ₹51.4cr for purchase of nine anti-drone units to combat weapon and drug smuggling on 532km border with Pak



Multiple blasts were heard in Jammu and residents posted photos and videos of India's air defence system intercepting a hail of Pak drones

Metal debris found at Burj Mehma village in Bathinda on Friday

IN PUNJAB, DRONE HITS HOUSE WITH LIGHTS ON

- Remnants of suspected Pakistani drones and missile-like objects were found in border villages of Bathinda, Hoshiarpur & Ferozepur on Friday after a night of intermittent explosions and flares
- ➤ Three of a family sustained burn injuries after an armed drone hit their home in Khai Pheme Ke village in Ferozepur district shortly after blackout was imposed around 9pm. Police said lights were on at the house of Lakhwinder Singh and all Pakistani drones, barring this one, were neutralised

IMF clears loan to Pak, India abstains, citing its poor record

India on Friday abstained from voting on IMF's \$2.3bn loan to Pakistan and raised concerns over efficacy of such programmes, given Pakistan's "poor track record", and also "the possibility of misuse of debt financing funds for statesponsored cross-border terrorism." IMF's executive board on

Friday completed the first review of Pakistan's economic reform program and allowed an immediate disbursement of around \$1 billion. Govt sources said India abstained because IMF rules do not permit a formal "no" vote. They said by abstaining, India conveyed its strong dissent within the con-

straints of IMF's voting system and used the opportunity to formally record its objections. India pointed out that rewarding continued sponsorship of cross-border terrorism sends a dangerous message to the global community, and exposes funding agencies and donors to reputational risks. **P9**

1. India's Abstention:

- India abstained from voting on the IMF's \$2.3 billion loan to Pakistan.
- The loan includes:
 - \$1 billion under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF).
 - \$1.3 billion under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF).
- The abstention was not due to opposition but due to IMF rules, which do not permit a formal "no" vote.

2. India's Concerns:

- Questioned Pakistan's "poor track record" of IMF program implementation.
- Raised concerns over the potential misuse of funds for state-sponsored terrorism.
- Pointed out that continuing financial support to Pakistan sends a damaging message to the global community.
- Highlighted risks of debt financing being used for cross-border terrorism.

4. IMF's View:

- The IMF report on "Evaluation of Prolonged Use of IMF Resources" stated:
 - There was perception of political considerations influencing IMF lending to Pakistan.
 - Pakistan is seen as a prolonged borrower with a high debt burden.
 - Despite past programs, economic slippages and poor policy implementation continue.

5. India's Diplomatic Stand:

- India called on global financial institutions to ensure moral values are considered in funding decisions.
- Called for reassessment of loans to Pakistan from agencies like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).
- Highlighted Pakistan's interference of the military in economic affairs as a major risk.

INBRIEF



Kaziranga bids adieu to anti-poaching sniffer dog

The staff of the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve and the 2nd Battalion of the Assam Forest Protection Force (AFPF) bid a solemn farewell to K9 Karina, a sniffer dog who helped farewell to S9 Karina, a milfer dog who helped prevent widdlier crimes and track down poachers, on Friday. A female German Shepherd, R9 Karina, served the tiger reserve for 10 years with her handlers Jitu Gopol and Manas crimes with the handlers Jitu Gopol and Manas efficient members of the AFP's drug squad. "K9 Karina recovered from a major surgery in December 2024, but she breathed her last on May 8 due to old ago-related health issues," Karinaga's Fleid Director, Sonali Ghoch, said.

Assam CM seeks cancellation of remaining Bihu functions

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday requested organisers to cancel the remaining Rongali Bihu or Bohag Bihu functions from Saturday onwards. Rongali Bihu, a spring festival, marks the start of the Assamese New Year. The Bihu functions are organised from mid-April to mid-May. Mr. Sarma did not cite any reason for his call, but the appeal is believed to reason for his call, but the appeal is believed to be due to the ongoing India-Pakistan conflict. "I humbly appeal that all remaining Bihu functions scheduled from 10th May onwards be kindly cancelled. Let us bring this vibrant celebration to a graceful close, with the same unity and spirit in which it was celebrated," he posted on X.

CPI expresses concern over misleading content on TV

CPI general secretary D. Raja, in a letter to CFI general secretary D. Kaga, in a netter to Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, expressed concern over the "inflammatory and misleading content" being aired by several television news channels aired by several television news channels following Operation Sindoor. "While the nation stands united against terrorism, we are following Operation Sindoor." While the nation stands united against terrorism, we are train channels are communalising the issue, spreading unverified claims, and promoting war hysteria, without any official confirmation from the without any official confirmation from the community of the community o

Congress holds 'Jai Hind Yatra' in solidarity with armed forces

In a show of support for the armed forces, the In a show of support for the armed forces, the Congress on Friday organised the Jal Hind Yatra' in several States, citing the need to boost morale in light of the recent escalation in tensions between India and Pakistan. In the national capital, the march commenced from Jantar Mantar and witnessed the participation of senior Mantar and witnessed the participation of senior party leaders, including general secretaries K.C. Venugopal and Sachin Pilot, treasurer Ajay Maken, head of media and publicity Pawan Khera, and Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav. Carrying the national flag, the leaders led the procession in a symbolic gesture of unity and

India a part of wider trend of eroding press freedom: report

The report says that most governments in South Asia have failed to reverse the increasing levels of impunity for crimes against journalists; it also notes proliferation of disinformation in India in which IT cells of political parties play a big role

ndian media "has been shackled and subjected to a system-ic strategy to cripple it", ac-cording to the 25" Annual South Asia Press Freedom Report 2024-25. The report, titled "Frontline De port, titled "Frontline De-mocracy: Media and Politi-cal Churn", flags several concerning trends, includ-ing a "growing trust deficit in media outlets", "chok-ing of independent web-sites" and the extreme pre-carity of gig workers who are also having to contend with the challenges posed by Artificial Intelligence

state of press freedom in India, Pakistan, Afghanis-tan, Sri Lanka, Bangla-desh, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives. Noting that Pakistan is "for all intents and purposes an authoritarian regime operating under the guise of democracy", the study pointed out that it witnessed the "most vio

Every authoritarian effort is being made to crush those who seek to hold power to account – crackdowns on media houses surveillance, intimidation and harassment of journalists, filing of police cases; or journaists, nung or poice cases; arbitrary detentions; and the unleashing of raids by the income Tax Department, and the Enforcement Directorate that oversees financial crimes

lent year for journalists in the country in two decades with eight journalists killed in the period under re-view." Highlighting that most governments in South Asia have failed to reverse the "ever increas-ing levels of impunity for crimes against journalists", the report reveals details of the "horrific murder of Mukesh Chandrakar in Bastar", who was abduct-ed, murdered and buried in a septic tank.

dia: Propaganda and the Press", the report flagged the proliferation of hate speech and disinformation with the "IT cells" of politi-cal parties playing a big role. Self-censorship issues Noting that "the legal envitile in recent years", the re-

sees financial crimes," the report stated, adding that "withholding government advertisements are routine avenues to harass media houses." Further, the "ongoing mauling of freedom port pointed to the use of "defamation laws, sedition of speech and expression is being done on grounds of charges, the Unlawful Ac-In a section titled "In-tivities (Prevention) Act taining public order, or

preventing misinforma-tion," the report said. It referenced the Global Risks Report 2024, which has found "manipulated and falsified information" to be the "most severe short-tern risk the world faces".

The port also dwells

The report also dwells (UAPA) and Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)" to curb media freedom. "Journalists and media houses have faced legal challenges for pu-blishing reports critical of the government, which has led to self-censorship with-in the industry, following a

in the industry, following a chilling effect," it said. "Every authoritarian ef-fort is being made to crush those who seek to hold power to account – crack-downs on media houses; surveillance, intimidation on other challenges facing the media, in India specifi-cally and South Asia in gencally and South Asia in gen-eral. These include the me-dia workforce reeling under a "shrunken job market", the "growing use of Al for content creation", decline in advertisement revenue, new labour codes encouraging contract-porate media houses be-cause of mergers and ac-quisitions, and the surveillance, intimidation and harassment of journal-ists, filing of police cases; arbitrary detentions; and the unleashing of raids by the Income Tax Depart-ment, and the Enforce-ment Directorate that overquisitions, and the worsening precarity of

On the flip side, the report noted that the media's digital transition has also presented new opportuniries, especially for "grow-ing alternative media as a counterbalance to the stag-nating legacy media".

Vice-President says national interest is paramount

The Hindu Bureau

Against the backdrop of In-dia targeting torrori Against the backtrop of fin-dia targeting terrorist camps in Pakistan, Vice-President jagdeep Dhank-har on Friday said every in-dian had today realised the power, perspective, and vi-sion of the governance and it had elevated the spirit of the country of the

He was speaking at the release of Haryana Gover-nor Bandaru Dattatraya's

nor Bandaru Dattarraya's autobiography here. Saying that no interest -personal, political, or eco-nomic - could be above national interest, Mr. Dhank har emphasised tha "expression" and "debate" pression and if the person believes that whatever he is saying is correct then the expression is meaningless. If we stray away from ex-pression and debate, then

SC is being forced to take on many avatars: judge

The Hindu Bureau

Supreme Court judge Jus-tice B.V. Nagarathna on Pri-day said the top court is forced to take different "avatars", from family court to ball court, as liti-gants appeal to the top court at the drop of a hat, for the slightest of reasons, heading a Bench, observed that cases that vitally need the attention of the highest Supreme Court judge Jus-

the attention of the highest court hardly get it. The court is inundated with petitions challenging every stage or order of the lower

ourts.
"Cases sent back to the "Cases sent back to the High Courts return to the Supreme Court again. Peti-tions are filed against im-pleadments, for allowing pleadments, for allowing amendments in pleadings and even adjournments gi-ven by lower courts," she said. The judge noted that the huge inflow of cases to the Supreme Court had di-luted its actual focus and purpose as a constitutional

Webinar on chronic stress, heart health to be held tomorrow

The Hindu Bureau

Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore, in collaboration with The Hindu, will present a webi-nar on "Stress: The Silent Killer of One's Heart", at

Killer of One's Heart", at 11.30 a.m. on Sunday. This is the 10th webinar in the 15-part series organ-ised as part of the "Healthy India, Happy India" initiative. The session will focus on the often-overlooked

The webinar will offer insights and practical takeaways on the often-overlooked link between chronic stress and heart health, of-fering insights and practi-cal takeaways for individuals of all age groups. Vinayak Shukla, senior

Vinayak Shukla, senior consultant, cardiothoracic surgery, Naruvi Hospitals, Veilore, will speak on "Ma-lier heart", while Ray Ge-orge, consultant, cardio-thoracic and vascular sur-gery, Naruvi Hospitals, Vei-symptoms, and hidden dangers". Mohammed Jaff-er Sherif, consultant, car-diothoracic and vascular diothoracic and vascular tals, Vellore, will share his views on "Stress: The science behind it". Hiba Mariam will moderate the session. E-certificates will be is-

E-certificates will be issued to those who register. To register, visit https://newsth.live/HIHIUIE or scan the QR code.

CHOICES, HAPPIER LIVES.

for individuals of all non-recyclable. The gravity of the envi-

April.
The alliance was initiat-

'Single-use food, beverage packaging forms 84% of Himalayan plastic waste'

Rahul Karmakar GUWAHATI

Single-use food and bever age packaging forms more than 84% of the plastic

According to the Zero Waste Himalaya Alliance, about 70% of the plastics collected from across the Himalayan belt from La-dakh to Arunachal Pradesh

ronmental reality came to light at the Zero Waste Himalaya Network Meet held in Himachal Pradesh's Bir

The alliance was initiated by the Zero Waste Hima-laya, an organisation based in Sikkim's Gangtok, and the Integrated Mountain Initiative based in Uttarak-hand's Dehradun. The two organisations have been spearheading The Himalayan Cleanup (THC), one



gion, since 2018.

the alliance on Thursday said, "Over the past six years, the data has indicat-ed that the Himalayan ed that the Himalayan waste crisis is fundamen-tally a production and sys-tems issue rather than a post-consumer waste man-agement flaw. While the role of individual beha-vioural change was ack-nowledged and empha-sised, the need for

of the biggest movements against plastic pollution in the Indian Himalayan reised, extractive waste sys-tems was seen as critical."

conducted at more than

conducted at more than 250 sites. Among the nine Hima-layan States targeted in 2025, Sikkim generated the most trash items. This was followed by West Bengal's Darjeeling with 36,180 items audited across 37 sites.

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- SM (COM

- Type of oil container carried by Indian transportation company
- 24/26 A part of the launderer's trade's urgent agenda (8,8) 28 Try "Luck" (6) 30 Post repaired material after getting rid of tear (4)
- 31 Golf paraphernalia? They may be found in such places.
 32 Wild party can be gory (4)
- Male voice is included in musical tour (4) Hate a pro wrongly for producing a spring loaded topper (5,3) See 8 Across
- Tiper marks found on NCO's sleeves (7) Wandering desert ox gets sugar of some kind (8)

 Drunk individual died after saint (6)
- King gets beer and some kind of cabbage (4)
- 14 Letter from Nainital pharmacist (5) 16 Apes gambol around northern tree (5)
 18 Funnily, even aces disappear (8)
 20 Will maker use a bit of tungsten in toaster repair? (8)
- 21 Spills stout after operation and chooses not to participate (4.3). 23 Spanish exclamation about river bird (6) 25 Extra from old tax (6)
- 27 Old city with a large mountain range (4) 29 Heads of committees of government schools are just parts of the machinery, perhaps (4)

SUDOKL





ing the twilight hour

FAITH

No tomorrow for Nrisimha

Acharyas and pandits were engaged in a deep debate on the question of God's most eye-catching and beautiful avariat. Trumazibiasi Piran, the fourth among Azhwars, gave the verdict as 'Azhagyuan Thaune Arl Uruvun Thaune', those with awar tendencies may cite the avatar as ferocious, to the true devotee, Nrisimha is his benevolent protector, said Trukkudanthal Dr. Venkatesh. An old adage says, "There is no tomorrow for Nrisimha". This is because He comes making to protect His devoment. The control of the control o

way of outsmarting the asura Hiranyakasipu, who, through severe penance, received a boon from Brahma whereby he could not be killed by man or woman or whereby he could not be killed by man or woman or beast, at morning or night, misde the house or outside, neither on earth nor in the sky, with any weapon. Bloated he had been a supported by the support of the suppor

India a part of wider trend of eroding press freedom: report

The report says that most governments in South Asia have failed to reverse the increasing levels of impunity for crimes against journalists; it also notes proliferation of disinformation in India in which IT cells of political parties play a big role

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

ndian media "has been shackled and subjected to a systemic strategy to cripple it", according to the 23rd Annual South Asia Press Freedom Report 2024-25. The report, titled "Frontline Democracy: Media and Political Churn", flags several concerning trends, including a "growing trust deficit in media outlets", "choking of independent websites" and the extreme precarity of gig workers who are also having to contend with the challenges posed by Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The report reviews the state of press freedom in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives. Noting that Pakistan is "for all intents and purposes an authoritarian regime operating under the guise of democracy", the study pointed out that it witnessed the "most vio-

Every authoritarian effort is being made to crush those who seek to hold power to account – crackdowns on media houses; surveillance, intimidation and harassment of journalists, filing of police cases; arbitrary detentions; and the unleashing of raids by the Income Tax Department, and the Enforcement Directorate that oversees financial crimes

23RD ANNUAL SOUTH ASIA PRESS FREEDOM REPORT 2024-25

lent year for journalists in the country in two decades with eight journalists killed in the period under review." Highlighting that most governments in South Asia have failed to reverse the "ever increasing levels of impunity for crimes against journalists", the report reveals details of the "horrific murder of Mukesh Chandrakar in Bastar", who was abducted, murdered and buried in a septic tank.

In a section titled "In-

dia: Propaganda and the Press", the report flagged the proliferation of hate speech and disinformation with the "IT cells" of political parties playing a big role.

Self-censorship issues

Noting that "the legal environment for the press has become increasingly hostile in recent years", the report pointed to the use of "defamation laws, sedition charges, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act

(UAPA) and Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)" to curb media freedom. "Journalists and media houses have faced legal challenges for publishing reports critical of the government, which has led to self-censorship within the industry, following a chilling effect," it said.

"Every authoritarian effort is being made to crush those who seek to hold power to account – crackdowns on media houses: surveillance, intimidation and harassment of journalists, filing of police cases; arbitrary detentions; and the unleashing of raids by the Income Tax Department, and the Enforcement Directorate that oversees financial crimes," the report stated, adding that "withholding government advertisements are routine avenues to harass media houses." Further, the "ongoing mauling of freedom of speech and expression is being done on grounds of national security, maintaining public order, or

preventing misinformation," the report said.

It referenced the Global Risks Report 2024, which has found "manipulated and falsified information" to be the "most severe short-term risk the world faces".

The report also dwells on other challenges facing the media, in India specifically and South Asia in general. These include the media workforce reeling under a "shrunken job market", the "growing use of AI for content creation", decline in advertisement revenue, new labour codes encouraging contract work, restructuring of corporate media houses because of mergers and acquisitions, and the worsening precarity of freelance journalism.

On the flip side, the report noted that the media's digital transition has also presented new opportunities, especially for "growing alternative media as a counterbalance to the stagnating legacy media".

1. Press Freedom Under Threat:

- The 23rd Annual South Asia Press Freedom Report 2024-25 highlights that Indian media faces a systematic strategy to cripple press freedom.
- The report, titled "Frontline Democracy: Media and Political Churn", points to intimidation,
 harassment, and legal challenges against journalists.
- Trust deficit in media outlets and choking of independent websites are highlighted as key issues.

2. Government Crackdowns:

- Increasing surveillance, intimidation, and police cases against journalists.
- Income Tax Department and Enforcement Directorate raids on media houses.
- Use of laws like UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act) and PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act) to suppress media freedom.
- Efforts to curb criticism of the government are labeled as authoritarian.

3. Self-Censorship and Legal Hurdles:

- Journalists and media houses face legal challenges for publishing critical reports.
- Fear of legal repercussions has led to self-censorship, creating a chilling effect on the media industry.
- Increasing use of defamation laws and sedition charges to silence dissent.

4. Social Media and Disinformation:

- Proliferation of hate speech and disinformation on social media.
- IT cells of political parties are actively engaged in spreading manipulated and falsified information.
- Social media is also used to target journalists, leading to a hostile work environment.

5. Press Freedom in South Asia:

- The report notes that India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Maldives face similar challenges.
- Most governments in South Asia have failed to curb violence against journalists, with increasing impunity for crimes against media workers.

6. Economic and Digital Challenges:

- Media in India and South Asia faces a shrinking job market.
- The growing role of AI in content creation is also reducing employment.
- Decline in advertisement revenue and mergers and acquisitions are weakening independent journalism.
- Media's digital transformation is seen as both a challenge and an opportunity.

'Big four' study-abroad destinations losing ground

Europe, Japan, China, South Korea gain at the expense of US, UK, Australia and Canada

MANU KAUSHIK New Delhi, May 9

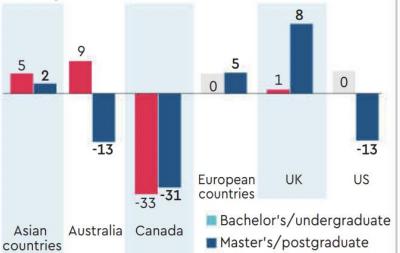
THE RESTRICTIVE VISA policies introduced by the "big four" studyabroad destinations — the US, the UK, Canada and Australia — over the past 18 months have resulted in these countries ceding ground to "non-traditional" destinations, with more and more students from India and other countries looking deeper into Europe and Asia.

The shift in demand for the "big four" to the next tier called "big 14" is fuelled by the flexible immigration policies, affordability, clearer career pathways, and rising job opportunities, sources in the study-abroad industry said.

Students from India, the largest source of foreign students in the "big four" countries, are increasingly opting for "non-traditional" destinations, like those in Asia and Europe, for their

WINDS OF CHANGE

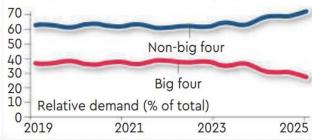
Changes in international enrolments % change in enrolment





Change in relative demand for the big four & non-big four study destinations

On-campus bachelor's & master's programmes



preference to return on investment, accessibility, and opportunity over legacy biases. The lure of marquee universities in the US, the UK, Canada and Australia is waning, partly due to high costs, and less-than-commensurate-

"While the US, UK, Canada, and Australia remain aspirational, restrictive visa policies, rising costs, and uncertainty are making students to look East and deeper

job-market advantage.

Karunn Kandoi, founder and CEO of Vidysea Education.

Outside of the "big four", European countries like Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, France and Sweden attract the most student interests globally, said the latest Global Enrolment Benchmark Survey. It also points out that the relative interest in France, Austria, Ireland and Spain has surged 20-30% over the past year.

"Malaysia, Japan, China, and

Experts said that there are two cohorts of students emerging. Despite policy headwinds, the first cohort of Indian students continues to see the US, the UK, Australia, and Canada as top destinations, underlined by the fact that these destinations make up 60% of the world's top 200 institutes.

"The second cohort of students are predominantly driven by getting a longer-term post-study visa and the aspiration of studying

entry," Piyush Kumar, regional director (South Asia, Canada and LATAM) at IDP Education, said.

Even as the "non-traditional" destinations are gaining ground, the "big four" are dealing with their own set of problems. For instance, in the case of the US, the recent policy uncertainty, and the standoff between the Donald Trump administration and Ivy League universities like Harvard are dampening the sentiments of Indian students planning to pursue higher education in the US.

Study abroad platforms in India have reported a 30% drop in applications in recent weeks, especially since the reports of US government planning to terminate the optional practical training (OPT) programme emerged. The OPT programme allows international students to work in the US for 12 months after graduation.

Similarly, Canada is facing the steepest decline as 73% of institutions reported a drop in undergraduate enrolments in the January-March 2025 period which is far more than any other region, according to the Global Enrolment Benchmark Survey. In European countries and Asian countries, the

1. Decline in Popularity of 'Big Four':

- The 'Big Four' countries (US, UK, Canada, Australia) are witnessing a decline in student enrollment,
 primarily due to restrictive visa policies.
- Students from India and other countries are increasingly opting for non-traditional destinations like
 Europe, Japan, China, and South Korea.

2. Key Factors Driving the Shift:

- Restrictive Visa Policies: Over the past 18 months, strict immigration rules and high costs have made the 'Big Four' less attractive.
- Flexible Immigration Policies in Asia and Europe: These countries offer clearer career pathways and job opportunities post-study.
- Affordability: Asian and European destinations are perceived as more cost-effective.
- Return on Investment: Students are prioritizing career outcomes over the prestige of big-name universities.

3. Impact on Big Four:

- The US has seen a 30% drop in applications from India, linked to policy uncertainties like the
 optional practical training (OPT) programme.
- Canada reported a 73% drop in undergraduate applications in early 2025, the sharpest decline among the four.
- Australia and the UK are also facing reduced interest due to aspirational, restrictive visa policies.

4. Non-Traditional Destinations Gaining Ground:

- Countries like Germany, France, Austria, Spain, and the Netherlands are seeing a surge in interest.
- In Asia, Japan, China, Malaysia, and South Korea are becoming popular due to more accessible post-study visas.
- The United Arab Emirates and South Africa are also emerging as favored study destinations.

5. Emerging Trends:

- Students are focusing on long-term career opportunities and ease of post-study visas rather than
 just the reputation of the university.
- Study-abroad platforms report that students now emphasize where a degree leads rather than where it comes from.

Ontextual Analysis:

A. Thistorical Perspective:

- Traditionally, the US, UK, Australia, and Canada have been favored for higher education, especially among Indian students.
- Stringent immigration policies in recent years have disrupted this trend.

Vanguard slashes Ola's valuation to \$1.25 billion

FE BUREAU Bengaluru, May 9

US-BASED ASSET management company Vanguard has marked down Ola's valuation to \$1.25 billion, according to an SEC filing. This represents more than 80% drop from its peak valuation of \$7.3 billion in 2021.

In February last year, Vanguard had for the first time valued the Bhavish Aggarwal-led company below the \$2-billion mark — at \$1.88 billion. However, it later revalued the company at around \$2 billion in November.

The latest development comes as Ola continues to lose ground in the ride-hailing space. Rapido has emerged as the market leaders, rapidly expanding market leadership in bike taxis to its auto rickshaw and cabs business, followed by Uber, with Ola now relegated to the third spot.

In August last year, CEO Bhavish Aggarwal announced that Ola Cabs would be rebranded as Ola Consumer, consolidating its financial services, cloud kitchens, and electric logistics under one umbrella. Although Ola converted into a public entity in November last year and has been evaluating IPO options since, it has yet to make concrete moves toward a listing.

During FY24, Ola's operating revenue declined by 5.5% to ₹2,012 crore, down from ₹2,128 crore in FY23. However, the company significantly narrowed its losses to ₹10 crore in FY24, compared to ₹623 crore in the previous fiscal. The Bengaluru-based firm also turned Ebitda-profitable in FY24.Last year, the company exited all international markets, including the UK. Australia and New Zealand.

Its rival Rapido reached the uni-

DOWN 80% FROM PEAK



- The latest cut represents more than 80% drop from Ola's peak valuation of \$7.3 billion in 2021
- It comes as Ola continues to lose ground in the ridehailing space
- During FY24, Ola's operating revenue declined by 5.5% to ₹2,012 crore
- The Bengaluru-based firm also turned Ebitda-profitable in FY24
- In revenue terms, Ola's ridehailing business remained more than twice the size of Uber's and 2.5 times that of Rapido

corn status last year after raising \$200 million at a valuation of \$1.1 billion. The Swiggy-backed company also surpassed Ola in terms of combined daily rides across bike taxis, autos and cabs.

Despite losing market share, Ola's ride-hailing business remained more than twice the size of Uber's and 2.5 times that of Rapido in terms of revenue. In FY24, Ola's ride-hailing income stood at ₹1,761 crore compared to Uber's ₹807 crore from its mobility operations. Rapido reported ₹648 crore in revenue for the same period, while managing to cut its losses by 45% to ₹371 crore.

REPORTS LOSS OF ₹1,081 CR AMID AGGRESSIVE Q-COMMERCE EXPANSION

Swiggy losses nearly double

RAGHAV AGGARWAL New Delhi, May 9

platform Swiggy on Friday reported a sharp 94.8% year-on-year increase in its net loss to ₹1,081.18 crore for the January-March quarter, significantly exceeding Bloomberg's estimate of ₹778 crore. The steep rise in losses was driven largely by heavy investments in its quick commerce arm, Instamart, as the company aggressively expanded its dark store network.

This widening of losses came despite a 44.8% increase in revenue from operations, which stood at ₹4,410.01 crore, beating estimates of ₹4,178 crore. However, expenses rose even more sharply, by 52.9% year-on-year to ₹5,609.6 crore, undermining any benefit from the topline performance.

Total income grew 44.1% to ₹4,530.7 crore during the quarter. Ebitda loss came in at ₹962 crore, wider than Bloomberg's estimate of a loss of ₹733 crore.

Meanwhile, Zomato, Swiggy's closest competitor, reported a 78% year-on-year decline in net profit to ₹39 crore for the March quarter, while its revenue surged 64% to ₹5,833 crore.

REPORT CARD

Swiggy consolidated financials

(₹ crore) Q4FY24 Q4FY25

Revenue Ebitda Net profit

180'1

180'1

180'1

■ Expenses rose sharply by 52.9% y-o-y to ₹5,609.6 crore

■ Total income grew 44.1% to ₹4,530.7 crore during the quarter

SRIHARSHA MAJETY,
CO-FOUNDER & CEO, SWIGGY

Future growth in
food delivery
segment will rely
on customer
innovation

Swiggy's biggest operational bet was on Instamart, which opened 316 new dark stores during the quarter, which was more than it had cumulatively launched in the previous eight quarters combined.

\$ 44.8

% change

As of March-end, the platform operated 1,021 such stores. The company also focused on scaling up its larger-format stores, known as Megapods, with 44 opened in the past year. These now account for roughly 10% of Instamart's total dark store area, which has expanded to four million square feet.

Instamart's gross order value

(GOV) doubled year-on-year to ₹4,670 crore, representing a 101% increase. The average order value (AOV) rose 13.3% to ₹527, but it still trailed Blinkit's AOV of ₹665. On an analyst call following the results, chief financial officer Rahul Bothra said that Swiggy expects "high-teen" growth in AOV in the upcoming quarters.

However, the surge in store openings weighed heavily on margins. Instamart's contribution margin dropped to -5.6% during the quarter, down from -4.6% in the preceding quarter. Bothra attributed the

decline to underutilised new stores and continued customer incentives amid growing competitive pressure. He added that the company expects the quick commerce business to reach contribution breakeven in three to five quarters, as most stores mature operationally.

The company now plans to moderate store expansion, shifting focus towards increasing order values, especially in tier-2 cities. In tier-1 cities, the densification strategy will continue, with additional store launches to reduce delivery time and cost.

In the core food delivery business, Swiggy reported a GOV of ₹7,347 crore, marking a 17.6% year-on-year increase. The Ebitda margin rose by 236 basis points to 2.9%, with sequential Ebitda growth of 15.4%. Co-founder and CEO Sriharsha Majety stated that future growth in this segment would rely on customer innovation. He cited Swiggy's recent initiative, Snacc, launched in January to deliver snacks from in-house kitchens, as a key example. Early user traction has been promising.

The company is also scaling Bolt, its 10-minute food delivery service, which operates within a 2-kilometre radius from partner restaurants.

1. Significant Valuation Drop:

- US-based asset management company Vanguard has marked down Ola's valuation to \$1.25 billion.
- This represents an 80% decline from Ola's peak valuation of \$7.3 billion in 2021.

2. Timeline of Valuation Adjustments:

- February 2022: Vanguard valued Ola below \$2 billion at \$1.88 billion.
- November 2022: Revised valuation to \$2 billion.
- May 2024: Marked down to \$1.25 billion.

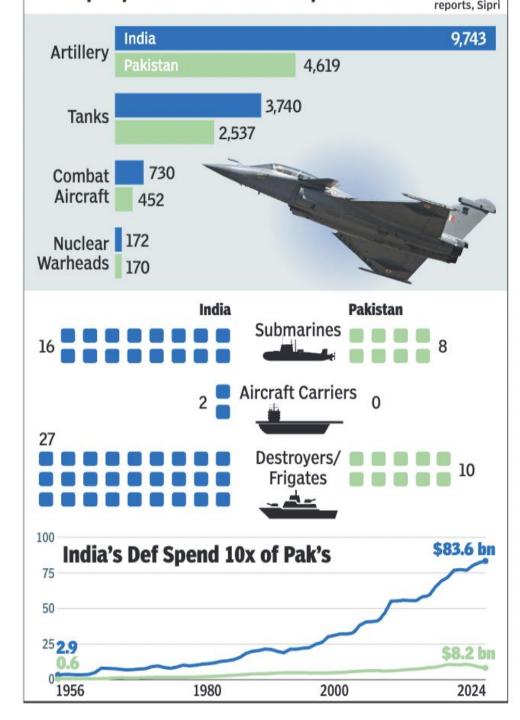
3. Challenges in the Ride-Hailing Space:

- Loss of Market Leadership:
 - Rapido has overtaken Ola in the bike taxi segment.
 - Uber follows, pushing Ola to the third spot.
- Operational Changes:
 - CEO Bhavish Aggarwal announced consolidation under Ola Consumer, integrating services like financial services, kitchens, and electric logistics.

4. Financial Performance in FY24:

- Operating Revenue: Declined by 5.5% to ₹2,012 crore from ₹2,128 crore in FY23.
- Net Loss Reduction: Decreased significantly from ₹623 crore to ₹10 crore.
- **Profitability:** The company became **Ebitda-profitable** in FY24.
- Revenue Comparison:
 - Ola's ride-hailing revenue is more than twice that of Uber and 2.5 times that of Rapido.
- Income from Ride-Hailing: Stood at ₹1,761 crore compared to Uber's ₹807 crore.

MEASURING INDIAN, PAKISTANI India has a larger fighting force and a bigger arsenal of military assets. It also has a defence budget that's substantially higher than what Pakistan spends annually on its military **PAKISTAN** INDIA Army 5,60,000 Be it on land, sea Army or air - each 12,37,000 of the three arms of India's military forces is more than twice the size of Pakistan's Navy Navy 75,500 30,000 Air Force Air Force 1,49,900 70,000 Source: Media reports, Sipri 9,743 India Artillery 4,619 3,740 **Tanks** 2,537 Combat Aircraft 452 Nuclear 172 Warheads 170 **Pakistan** Submarines 8 2 Aircraft Carriers 0 Destroyers/ 10 Frigates



Ownership Shift: ₹13.5K Cr Deal Biggest Foreign Investment In Indian Lender

Japan's SMBC to buy 20% in Yes Bank

To Be Top Shareholder 5 Yrs After RBI Rescue

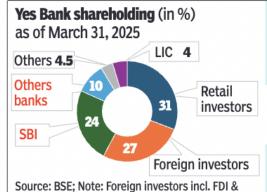
Mayur.Shetty@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Five years after a group of Indian lenders led by SBI stepped in to rescue Yes Bank, Japan's Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) will acquire a 20% stake in the private lender for Rs 13,483 crore, making it the largest shareholder. The deal, India's biggest cross-border banking investment, marks a shift in ownership of the bank once run by veteran banker Rana Kapoor.

Kapoor lost control in 2020 after the bank nearly collapsed due to bad loans, which wiped out its net worth. RBI then mandated a reconstruction scheme under which eight Indian banks took equity stakes.

SBI will now sell a 13.2% stake,

SBI TO SELL 13%, OTHER BANKS 7%



- The deal, India's biggest cross-border banking investment, marks a shift in ownership of the bank once run by veteran banker Rana Kapoor
- ➤ Kapoor lost control in 2020 after the bank nearly collapsed due to bad loans, which wiped out its net worth
- ➤ RBI then mandated a reconstruction scheme under which eight Indian banks took equity stakes

cutting its holding to just over 10%. ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Axis Bank, IDFC First Bank, Federal Bank, and Bandhan Bank will offload a combined 6.8%. The deal is priced at Rs 21.5 per share, above the recent market price and more than double what the rescuing banks invested.

FPI: Retail incl. HNIs. NRIs: Some nos. rounded off

SMBC, a unit of Japan's second-

largest bank by assets, will become Yes Bank's anchor investor after securing regulatory and shareholder approvals. The deal may reshape the bank's strategy and comes amid SMBC's broader push into Asia. Its parent, Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group, has \$2 trillion in assets and recently took full ownership of its Indian NBFC arm, SMFG India Credit

(formerly Fullerton).

SMFG sees India as a counterweight to Japan's ageing population and low growth. The firm is betting on India's demographics and macroeconomic momentum.

On May 6, after reports of SMBC's interest, Yes Bank denied knowledge of any unannounced developments, causing shares to erase a 10% gain. The stock again surged 10% on Friday ahead of the announcement.

Banking industry observers are waiting to see if SMBC takes the wholly-owned subsidiary (WoS) route in Yes Bank. In the past, both DBS and State Bank of Mauritius used the WoS route to acquire a local banking licence. Most large foreign banks operate as branches and need permission to open new ones. SMBC will also have to deal with a bank that has a bloated equity base, following massive capital infusions.

1. Major Investment Move:

- Japan's Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) to acquire a 20% stake in Yes Bank for ₹13,483 crore.
- Marks the biggest foreign investment in an Indian lender.
- Will make SMBC the largest shareholder in Yes Bank.

2. Background and Context:

- Yes Bank faced a near-collapse in 2020 due to bad loans, resulting in negative net worth.
- RBI intervened and mandated a reconstruction scheme with eight Indian banks taking equity stakes.
- SBI (State Bank of India) became the largest stakeholder as part of the rescue plan.

3. Current Shareholding Pattern:

- SBI to reduce its stake from 24% to just over 10%.
- Other banks (ICICI, HDFC, Kotak Mahindra, Axis, IDFC First, Federal, Bandhan) to sell a combined
 6.8%.
- Retail Investors hold 31%, Foreign Investors hold 24%, LIC holds 4%, and Others hold 4.5%.

4. Strategic and Economic Implications:

- SMBC's Move:
 - Part of a strategy to expand in Asia.
 - India seen as a counterweight to Japan's aging population and slow growth.
- Yes Bank's Recovery:
 - The deal may reshape Yes Bank's strategy, integrating global practices.
 - Potential regulatory approvals needed before completion.
- Market Reaction:
 - After reports of SMBC's interest, Yes Bank's stock surged 10%.

SINDOOR VS SONGAR

Pakistan fired 300-400 **Turkish-built SONGAR drones** against India, most of which were brought down. Turkey's first indigenous armed drone system, it's been in service with Turkish armed forces since 2019-20

Armament

5.56mm assault rifle underslung, 200 rounds; or grenade launcher

Material | Carbon-fiber body; light yet strong to maximise flight time

Max Speed | 10m/s to 15m/s (36-54kmph)

Multi-use | Can be used in military, security and surveillance ops, night and day

Op Ability Can detect and destroy while transmitting real-time video & flight data.

Type Quad copter

Max range & 140

5km, 25 min

flight time

Takeoff weight

44 kg

Max payload

9 kg

140 cm, rotor to rotor

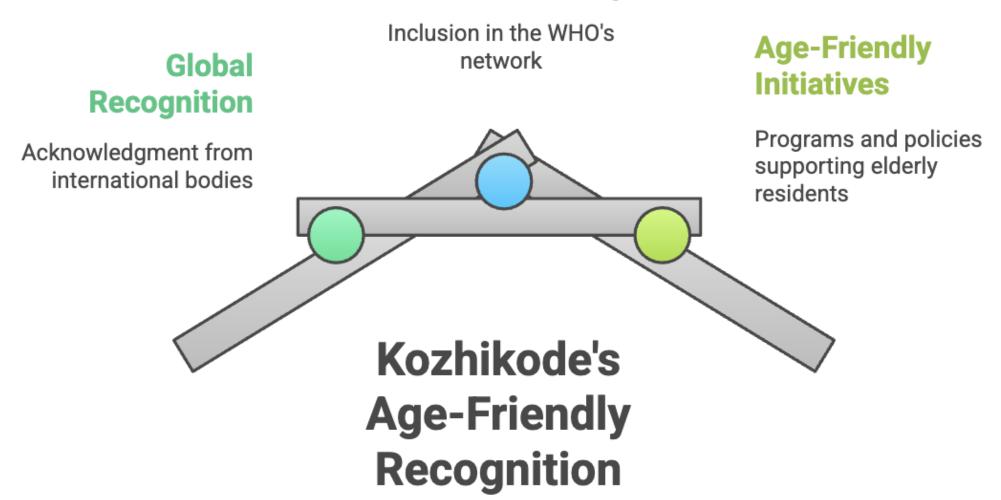
Service Ceiling

3000m from sea level

Operating Temp Range -20°C to 50°C



WHO Membership



Healthcare Access

Affordable
Housing

Offers accessible healthcare services and support

Provides suitable and

Social Support

Facilitates community engagement and social activities

Accessible Public Spaces

affordable housing

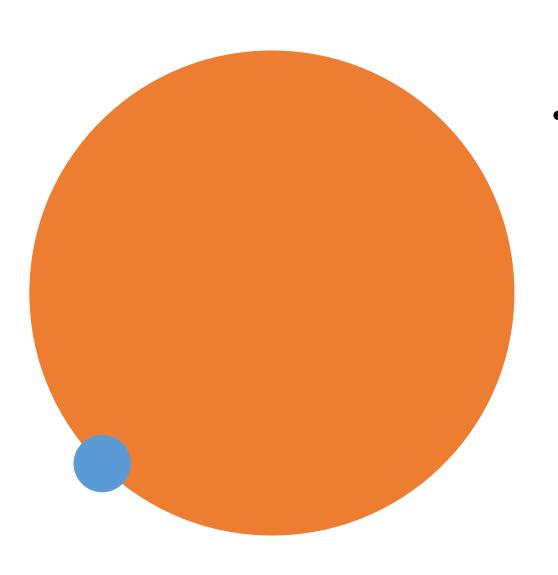
options

Ensures easy access to parks, transportation, and buildings

Components of an Age-Friendly City

Age-Friendly Communication

Utilizes tools that cater to older adults' communication needs



- UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)
 - Kozhikode was inducted into the UNESCO Creative Cities Network under the Literature category in 2022.
 - It became the first Indian
 city under the UNESCO "City of Literature".



BrahMos Missile Production Sequence





Inauguration of Unit

The BrahMos missile manufacturing unit is officially opened in Lucknow.

Start of Production

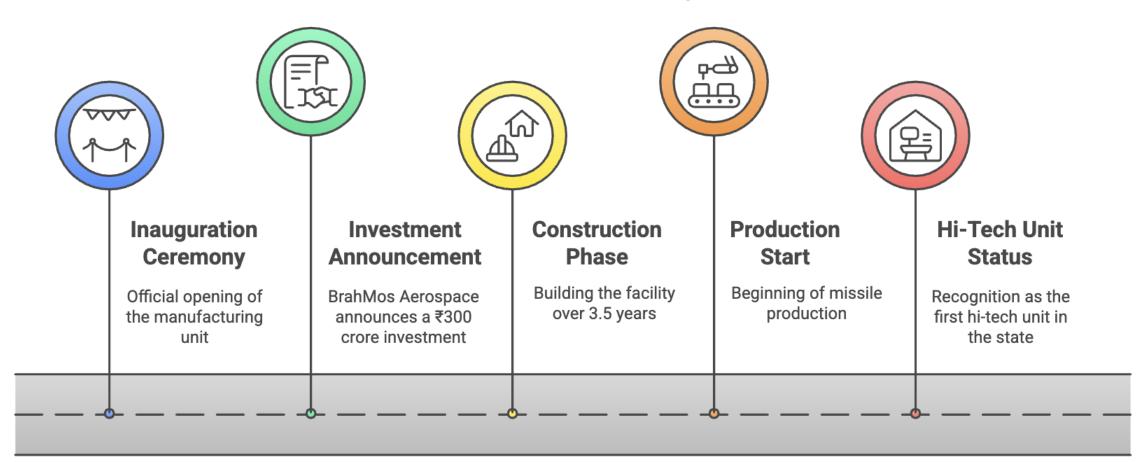
. . . .

The manufacturing of BrahMos missiles begins at the new facility.

Decision to Produce

The decision to start BrahMos missile production in Lucknow is made.

BrahMos Missile Unit Development



Impact of BrahMos Missile Project

Strategic Impact

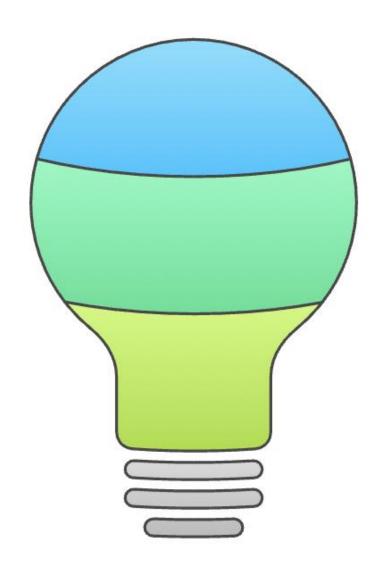


Enhances India's defence capabilities

Employment Generation



Creates direct and indirect job opportunities

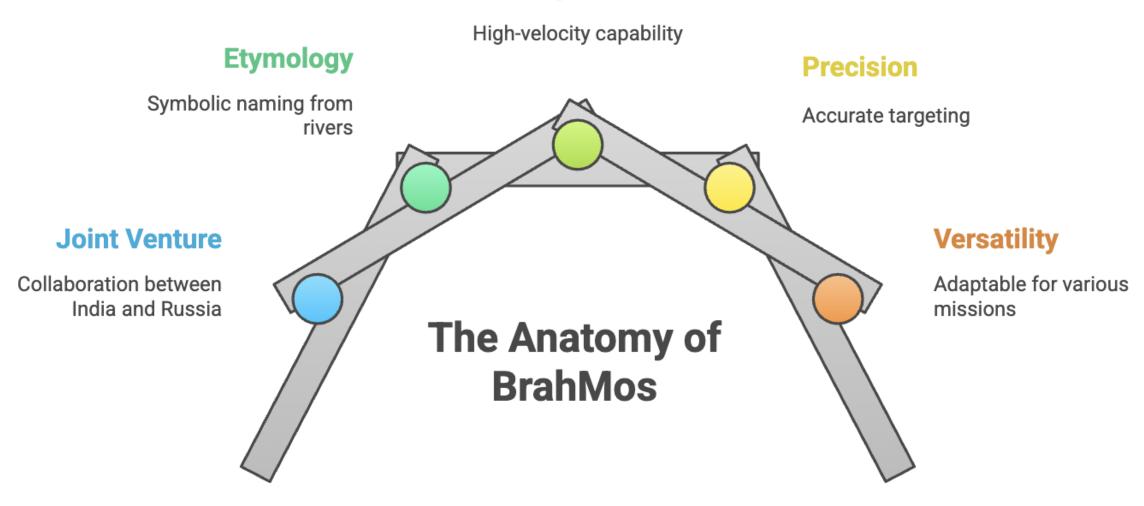




Industrial Impact

Introduces modern manufacturing technologies

Speed



Actor Sonu Sood Honoured for Philanthropic Work During COVID-19

Sonu Sood's Humanitarian Recognition



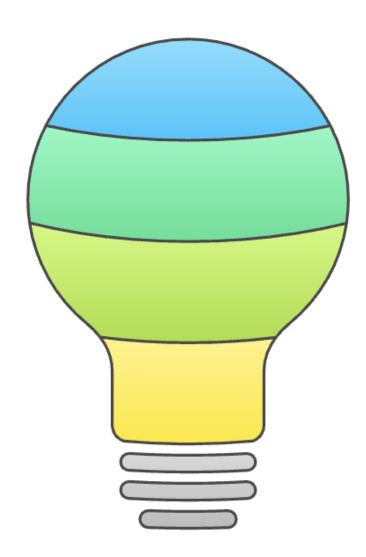


The entity presenting the award

COVID-19 Relief Efforts



The work acknowledged by the award





Humanitarian Award

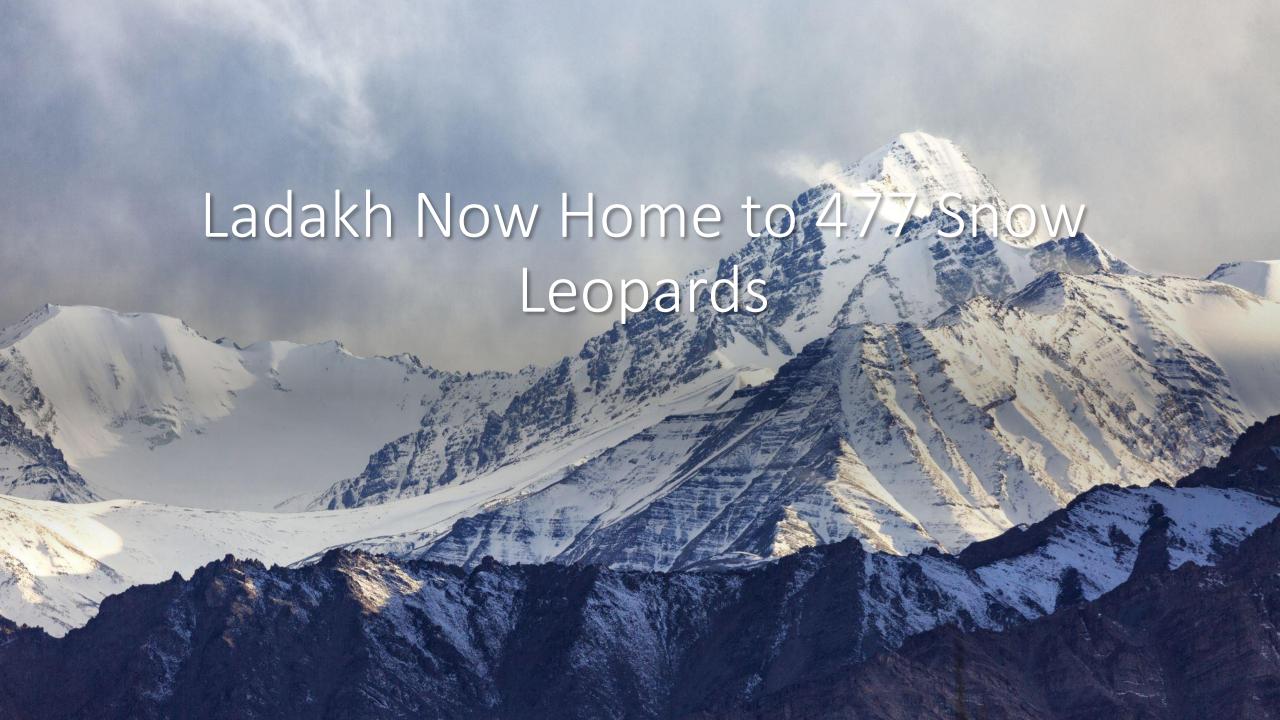
The specific recognition being given



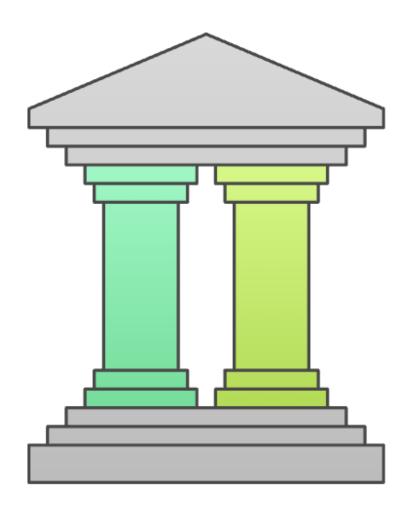
Hyderabad Event

The location and date of the award ceremony





Ladakh's Snow Leopard Conservation





Snow Leopard Population

The census confirms a significant population of 477 snow leopards in Ladakh.



Global Biodiversity Role

Ladakh's unique habitat supports global biodiversity conservation efforts.

Key Highlights of the Study

- Total Snow Leopards in Ladakh: 477
- Percentage of India's Snow Leopards in Ladakh: ~33%
- Total Assessed Area: 93,000 sq. km across India
- Methods Used: Camera traps, field surveys, and spatial modeling

Why Snow Leopards Thrive in Ladakh

- Topography: Rugged terrain, cliffs, and gorges ideal for stealth and hunting
- Elevation: Average height of 3,000 meters suits the snow leopard's needs
- Prey Base: Himalayan ibex, blue sheep (bharal), and urial
- Low Human Interference: Minimal deforestation, mining, or industry
- Protected Zones: High densities in Hemis National Park, Changthang, Zanskar

Region Studied	Ladakh, India
Total Snow Leopards in Ladakh	477
India's Total Snow Leopard Count	718
Lead Organizations	WII, MoEFCC, Nature Conservation Foundation, Forest Dept.
Major Snow Leopard Areas	Hemis NP, Changthang, Zanskar
Tourism Initiatives	Himalayan Homestays, Wildlife Treks
Major Threats	Climate change, roads, unplanned tourism

10 MCQ from the session

Consider the following statements regarding Kozhikode's recent recognitions:

- 1. Kozhikode has been recognized as an Age-Friendly City by WHO.
- 2.It is the first Indian city to be inducted into the UNESCO Creative Cities Network under the Literature category.
- 3. The recognition as a City of Literature was granted in 2022.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
 - A) 1 and 2 only
 - B) 2 and 3 only
 - C) 1 and 3 only
 - D) All of the above

What is the significance of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)?

- A) It recognizes cities based on industrial productivity.
 - B) It promotes sustainable urban development through culture and creativity.
 - C) It focuses exclusively on economic growth indicators.
 - D) It is aimed at rural community enhancement.

Consider the following statements about the BrahMos Missile Manufacturing Unit:

- 1.It will be set up in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- 2. The unit aims to produce next-generation Brah Mos missiles.
- 3.It is a joint venture between India and the USA.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
 - A) 1 and 2 only
 - B) 2 and 3 only
 - C) 1 and 3 only
 - D) All of the above

Which Indian state is now home to 477 snow leopards as per recent data?

- A) Uttarakhand
 - B) Himachal Pradesh
 - C) Sikkim
 - D) Ladakh

Consider the following statements about the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup:

- 1.It will be hosted by Brazil.
- 2. This will be the first time Brazil hosts a Women's World Cup.
- 3. The event will be held across eight cities.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
 - A) 1 and 3 only
 - B) 2 and 3 only
 - C) 1 and 2 only
 - D) All of the above

Consider the following statements regarding Sonu Sood's recognition:

- 1.He was honored for his philanthropic work during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2.He was awarded the Padma Shri for his efforts.
- 3. His work primarily involved migrant worker assistance.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
 - A) 1 and 3 only
 - B) 2 and 3 only
 - C) 1 and 2 only
 - D) All of the above

Which of the following statements is correct about BrahMos missiles?

- A) They are supersonic cruise missiles.
 - B) They are developed under the India-Japan military cooperation.
 - C) They are exclusively deployed on Indian Navy submarines.
 - D) They are non-nuclear ballistic missiles

Consider the following statements about the UNESCO "City of Literature" recognition:

- 1.It is given to cities that promote literature as a pillar of urban development.
- 2. Kozhikode is the first Indian city to receive this title.
- 3.It is awarded annually to one city per continent.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
 - A) 1 and 2 only
 - B) 2 and 3 only
 - C) 1 and 3 only
 - D) All of the above

Why was Kozhikode recently recognized by WHO?

- A) For achieving 100% vaccination against COVID-19.
 - B) For being declared an Age-Friendly City.
 - C) For reducing air pollution levels.
 - D) For promoting organic farming practices.

What is the BrahMos missile known for?

- A) Hypersonic speed
 - B) Supersonic speed
 - C) Intercontinental ballistic range
 - D) Short-range air-to-air combat











671Contributors



1,231Kids



24 States

