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RESEARCH INVESTIGATE EXPOSE

**SYSTEM
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"Observing the System, Informing the World"



If It's wrong to impose liquor ban on Hindus, how did Gujarat and Bihar do it: Iltija to J&K CM

JAMMU

Peoples Democratic Party leader Iltija Mufti on Monday said Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's refusal to ban alcohol in Jammu and Kashmir because Hindus are permitted

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LG SINHA INAUGURATES NATIONAL YOUTH FESTIVAL- AAROHAN 2026 IN SRINAGAR



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
SRINAGAR**

The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today inaugurated National Youth Festival- Aarohan 2026 in Srinagar.

The Lieutenant Governor said this event declares a new vision of 'Rise, Shine, and Conquer' to our youth which encapsulates a complete philosophy that lights the path to the future, a promise, and a bold challenge to build a developed India @2047.

"National Youth Festival is also a proclamation that

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PM Modi Calls for Fuel Conservation, EV Adoption and Economic Restraint Amid Global Crisis

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
DESK
HYDERABAD**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday urged citizens to adopt economic restraint measures, conserve fuel and reduce import dependence as global instability linked to the Iran conflict continues to pressure energy markets and foreign exchange reserves.

Speaking in Hyderabad, the Prime Minister outlined a series of public measures aimed at reducing economic vulnerability and strengthening domestic self-reliance

during a period of geopolitical uncertainty.

PM's Key Appeals

Modi called on citizens to use petrol, diesel and cooking gas "with great restraint" in order to reduce pressure on India's foreign exchange reserves caused by rising energy imports.

He also encouraged offices and institutions to prioritise work from home arrangements, online meetings and virtual conferences to reduce transportation-related fuel consumption.

The Prime Minister urged citizens to

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INDIA TIGHTENS ITS GRIP: NEW CDS, SEALED BORDERS, ONE NATIONAL RESOLVE

**AVINASH BASSAN
NEW DELHI / KOLKATA**

Two announcements on Saturday painted a single, unmistakable picture of a government in firm national security mode, one at the apex of military command, the other at the nation's most sensitive frontier.

A NEW CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF

The Government of India appointed Lieutenant General N S Raja Subramani (Retd.) as the new Chief of Defence Staff, who shall also function as Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Military Affairs, with effect from the date of assumption of charge and until further orders.

The CDS is the single-point military adviser to the Prime Minister and the Defence



Minister, and heads the Department of Military Affairs, the nerve centre of India's tri-service integration. The appointment signals continuity in the government's push to

forge a unified, theatre-command-ready military structure capable of responding to threats across all domains: land, sea,

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ISI-Linked Module Planned Coordinated Attacks Across North India: Delhi Police Crackdown Exposes Multi-Target Conspiracy

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
NEW DELHI**

A major counter-terror breakthrough by the Delhi Police Special Cell under "Gang Bust Operation 2.0" has uncovered an alleged ISI-linked terror module that planned coordinated attacks on civilian, religious, and military targets across northern India.

According to interrogation details emerging from the arrest of nine accused operatives across multiple states, the module was allegedly connected to Pakistan-based handlers associated with the Shahzad Bhatti network. The planned targets reportedly

included a historic temple in Delhi, a crowded dhaba on the Delhi-Sonipat highway, a military camp in Hisar, Haryana, and several police stations in Uttar Pradesh.

Investigators revealed that one operative conducted detailed reconnaissance of the Delhi temple, capturing photographs and videos of the premises before transmitting them to handlers across the border through social media platforms. The broader objective, according to officials, was not merely physical destruction but the creation of

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The War Jammu & Kashmir Ignored for Years: Explosive Rise of Drugs, Massive Crackdowns, and the Questions That Refuse to Die



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
EXCLUSIVE
SRINAGAR**

A massive anti-narcotics offensive is now unfolding across Jammu and Kashmir. Properties worth crores are being attached, drug hotspots are being identified district by district, hundreds of FIRs are being registered, and large-scale awareness campaigns are being carried out under the

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DIGITAL INDIA OR DIGITAL DISTRACTION? Viral Adult-Service Promotions Raise Questions Over Youth Safety, Ethics and Platform Accountability

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

A growing wave of aggressive online advertisements promoting video chat, dating and adult-oriented applications is increasingly appearing across popular digital platforms used daily by Indian youth. Sponsored content, viral reels and algorithm-driven recommendations are now reaching millions of smartphone users, including teenagers and first-time

internet consumers, often without meaningful safeguards or adequate awareness.

The latest concern stems from promotional advertisements displayed during video streaming sessions, where applications with suggestive branding and imagery are marketed directly to users through mass advertising networks. Critics argue that such campaigns normalise

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FROM PAGE-1

IG Sinha.....

the time for youth has arrived. Through Youth Festival's "Young Leaders Dialogue," we are laying the very foundation and the framework on which the next chapter of India's glorious heritage will stand tall," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that history was never made by those who waited for permission to be extraordinary. He urged the youth participating in 'Viksit J&K Young Leaders Dialogue', 'Hackathon' and 'Cultural Event' to rise up and commit to building a developed India that future generations will take pride in. He said governance can't thrive without the voice of its youth and inclusive governance means ensuring young people have a real stake in the work happening across every key sector.

"Every young boy and girl has incredible talent. They just need opportunities and faith in themselves. I want India's youth to create their own paths instead of treading well-worn trails, because innovation and invention spring from uncharted routes. What India needs is youth brave enough to shatter pre-made molds," the Lieutenant Governor said.

PM Modi.....

increasingly use public transport, metro systems, railways and car-pooling instead of private vehicles.

He additionally promoted wider adoption of electric vehicles as part of efforts to reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels.

The Prime Minister also appealed to citizens to postpone non-essential gold purchases, including luxury and wedding-related buying, for nearly a year. India remains among the world's largest gold importers, making gold imports a major source of foreign exchange outflow.

Citizens were further advised to reduce unnecessary foreign travel and instead support domestic tourism.

Reiterating the government's self-reliance agenda, Modi urged people to buy Swadeshi products to strengthen Indian manufacturing and reduce dependence on foreign goods.

On agriculture, he called for wider adoption of natural farming practices, reduced chemical use and greater focus on sustainable and eco-friendly cultivation.

Critics Question Election Expenditure During Crisis

The speech triggered political criticism, with opposition voices and analysts questioning the contradiction between appeals for public austerity and the continuation of large-scale election expenditure during a period of economic uncertainty.

Critics questioned whether the government considers the current geopolitical and economic situation serious enough to demand national sacrifice while simultaneously continuing costly electoral campaigns and political mobilisation.

Some opposition figures also raised questions over timing, asking whether the crisis emerged suddenly "within a single day" or whether policymakers had already been aware of the growing risks since the Iran conflict abroad began escalating.

According to critics, if the economic dangers linked to the external conflict were visible from the beginning, then stronger institutional austerity and economic preparedness measures should have been implemented earlier instead of relying primarily on public restraint campaigns.

Rising Concerns Over External Economic Pressure

Economists warn that prolonged instability in West Asia could significantly affect India through higher crude oil prices, increased shipping costs and inflationary pressure.

As one of the world's largest energy importers, India remains highly exposed to external supply disruptions and global commodity volatility.

The Prime Minister's remarks are therefore being viewed as both a public advisory and a broader attempt to prepare citizens for a prolonged period of economic uncertainty driven by international conflict and market instability.

INDIA.....

air, cyber, and space.

This follows, on the same day, the appointment of Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, PVSM, AVSM, VSM as the next Chief of the Naval Staff, effective May 31. Within hours, the government had placed new hands on two of the most critical levers of India's defence architecture.

A BORDER THAT WILL NOT BEND

Hundreds of kilometres to the east, Union Home Minister Amit Shah delivered a pointed message at the Bengal border.

"We now have a government in Tripura. We have a government in Assam. And we have a government in Bengal too," he declared. "Infiltration will be impossible. Cow smuggling will be impossible."

He went further: "With determination, the Bengal government and the Indian government

will transform this border into an impenetrable fortress of national security."

The statement carries weight beyond rhetoric. With BJP governments now operational across the northeastern corridor and a working relationship with the Bengal administration, the Centre is projecting a contiguous security architecture along one of India's most historically porous frontiers. The Bangladesh border, long a pressure point for illegal immigration, trafficking, and smuggling networks, is now squarely in the government's crosshairs.

ONE MESSAGE

Read together, Saturday's announcements were not coincidental in tone. A new CDS to unify military command. A new Navy Chief to lead maritime modernisation. And a Home Minister vowing fortress-level border security in the east.

The message from New Delhi on May 10, 2026 was clear, consistent, and deliberate. *India is closing every gap.*

ISI-Linked.....

psychological shock, communal tension, and nationwide panic.

The planned temple attack reportedly involved opening fire on police and paramilitary personnel deployed at the site. Security analysts believe such attacks are designed to provoke maximum symbolic and emotional impact, especially at locations carrying religious significance and high civilian footfall.

Another alarming revelation was the alleged plan to carry out a grenade attack on a popular dhaba situated along the Delhi-Sonapat highway - a route frequented daily by commuters, transport workers, and families. The choice of a soft civilian target indicates an attempt to create mass casualties while amplifying fear among the public.

Authorities further disclosed that reconnaissance had also been conducted near a military installation in Hisar, Haryana. Videos and location details were reportedly shared with Pakistan-based handlers. In addition, some police stations in Uttar Pradesh were allegedly shortlisted to target law enforcement infrastructure and stretch security resources across multiple regions simultaneously.

Strategic Analysis

The exposure of this module reflects an evolving hybrid warfare strategy increasingly focused on:

- Soft civilian targets
- Religious locations
- Security infrastructure
- Psychological destabilization through low-cost, high-impact attacks

Rather than conventional infiltration alone, such networks rely heavily on local recruitment, encrypted communication, social media coordination, and decentralized reconnaissance operations. The operational pattern also suggests a shift toward creating urban panic and media shockwaves instead of large-scale sustained assaults.

Viral Adult.....

virtual intimacy services and push vulnerable young people toward addictive digital behaviour patterns under the banner of "modern entertainment."

As India rapidly expands its digital economy, pressing questions are emerging:

- Is unchecked digital commercialisation reshaping cultural values?
- Are search engines and social media algorithms indirectly promoting an online exploitation culture?
- Is Generation Z becoming the primary consumer target of psychologically manipulative engagement systems?
- Can a nation achieve technological advancement while simultaneously neglecting ethical digital discipline?

Experts warn that the issue is no longer limited to isolated applications. The deeper concern lies within a larger ecosystem of viral promotion, influencer culture, monetised loneliness and instant-access virtual companionship. With affordable internet connectivity and smartphone penetration now reaching rural India, many fear that addictive digital ecosystems are expanding far faster than digital literacy itself.

Social commentators have drawn comparisons to entertainment districts in foreign tourism economies, arguing that India risks importing commercialised social behaviours without establishing strong cultural or educational safeguards. Others, however, contend that online platforms merely reflect evolving consumer demand and broader global digital trends.

The debate has intensified around the role of technology platforms and advertising networks. Critics maintain that algorithms are designed to maximise watch time and emotional engagement, frequently prioritising sensational or provocative content because it generates higher clicks and greater advertising revenue. In this environment, young and impressionable users are often the most exposed and the least protected.

Simultaneously, concerns are being raised about the future vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Citizens questioning the direction of digital growth ask whether economic modernisation alone is sufficient, if social responsibility, youth development and ethical internet governance continue to lag behind.

India's digital revolution has connected villages, empowered startups and created transformative new opportunities. Yet many believe the next phase of progress must focus not only on connectivity, but equally on digital responsibility, regulatory accountability and citizen awareness.

The larger question remains:

Will Digital India become a model of empowered innovation, or a marketplace driven entirely by attention, addiction and algorithmic influence?

The answer may well define the character of a generation.

The War.....

ongoing "Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan."

But beneath the numbers, seizures, and official achievements lies a disturbing question many in Jammu and Kashmir have quietly asked for years:

Why did the system react only after the drug crisis had already penetrated deep into society?

The latest developments indicate that the administration has finally acknowledged the scale of the narcotics menace that silently spread across urban towns, villages, educational institutions, and even among minors during the last decade.

Crores Attached, Hundreds Arrested

In one of the biggest recent actions, Police and Revenue authorities attached properties worth nearly ₹6.17 crore in Sangam area of Bijnbehara in south Kashmir's Anantnag district under the NDPS Act. Officials said the action targeted assets allegedly linked to narcotics networks operating in the region.

Simultaneously, the Jammu and Kashmir administration released data showing the scale of the ongoing anti-drug drive:

- 614 FIRs registered
- 646 arrests made
- 435 drug peddlers apprehended
- 160 drug hotspots identified
- ₹25.97 crore worth properties seized or attached
- 37 houses of alleged drug peddlers sealed or demolished
- 3.8 kg heroin, 32.92 kg charas and 222.31 kg ganja seized

Authorities also suspended 104 drug store licences, cancelled two others, and intensified surveillance across schools, hospitals and vulnerable localities.

The figures reveal not just enforcement, but the existence of a deeply entrenched narcotics ecosystem that had expanded across the Union Territory over several years.

The Question Being Whispered Everywhere: Why So Late?

The speed and intensity of the current crackdown have raised another uncomfortable reality.

If such extensive networks, hotspots, trafficking routes, pharmaceutical misuse chains, and local supply systems could now be identified within months, then were the warning signs already available years earlier?

According to sources familiar with anti-drug advocacy efforts in Jammu and Kashmir, detailed written memorandums regarding the rapid spread of narcotics were allegedly submitted to senior police leadership and higher authorities between 2020 and 2021 by social activists involved in grassroots campaigns against drug abuse.

The memorandums reportedly identified: vulnerable districts, specific trafficking hotspots, rising pharmaceutical drug misuse, school-level addiction patterns, and alarming youth involvement.

If It's.....

to drink liquor was illogical.

"J-K CM's expected U-turn on the refusal to prohibit liquor shops lacks logic. He claims it is wrong to impose a ban on Hindus consuming alcohol since their religion does not forbid it. If this is the case, how have Hindu majority states like Gujarat and Bihar banned alcohol successfully without a whimper?" Mufti asked on X.

She was commenting on Abdullah's statement on Sunday that liquor shops were to serve people of those faiths in which the consumption of alcohol was not forbidden.

"We are proud of J-K's secular credentials, but deeply unfortunate and insensitive for its chief minister to dismiss religious sensibilities of the majority with such indifference," she added.

While interacting with reporters in Ganderbal on Sunday, Abdullah was asked about the demand for an alcohol ban in Jammu and Kashmir.

The chief minister replied that his government was not forcing anyone to drink. "Is anyone forcing them to drink? You are going to (a wine) shop on your own will. Why are you going there? We are not dragging you there. We are not advertising it," he had said. (Agencies)

The Stature Standoff: India-Nepal Relations at a 2026 Geopolitical Crossroads

SYSTEM OBSERVER EXCLUSIVE

The relationship between India and Nepal, traditionally described as "as close as nail and flesh," is currently navigating its most significant stress test of the decade. In May 2026, the diplomatic atmosphere chilled following the cancellation of a scheduled visit by Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri to Kathmandu.

At the heart of this disruption is a bold new doctrine from Nepal's Prime Minister, Balendra Shah, who has signaled that on matters of sovereignty and territorial disputes - specifically the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra route - Nepal will only engage with representatives of "equal stature."

1. The 2026 Crisis: Protocol as Policy
The immediate friction stems from India's announcement to resume the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra via the Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand. On May 3, 2026, the Nepal government issued formal "protest notes" to both New Delhi and Beijing, asserting that the pass is sovereign Nepali territory.

The "Equal Stature" Doctrine
The cancellation of Foreign Secretary

Misri's visit (originally set for May 11) was not merely a scheduling conflict. Sources within Kathmandu indicate that PM Balen Shah - the first Prime Minister from a non-traditional political background - aims to reset the "big brother-little brother" dynamic. By demanding to meet only with Prime Minister Narendra Modi for substantive border talks, Shah is signaling: Sovereign Equality: A rejection of "secretary-level" diplomacy for issues Nepal deems existential.

Domestic Mandate: Shah's base, largely Gen Z and nationalist-leaning, expects a more assertive stance against perceived "bureaucratic high-handedness" from New Delhi.

2. The Historical Tapestry: Why Lipulekh Matters
To understand the current standoff, one must look at two centuries of cartographic and political history.

The Treaty of Sugauli (1816)
Following the Anglo-Nepalese War, the Treaty of Sugauli established the Kali River as Nepal's western boundary with India. However, the river has multiple headwaters.



Nepal's Claim: The river originates at Limpiyadhura (further northwest), making the entire Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura triangle Nepali territory.

India's Claim: The river begins at a lower ridge in Kalapani. India has maintained a security presence there since at least the 1950s, viewing it as a vital strategic link to the Tibetan plateau.

The 1950 Treaty & The 2015 "Blockade"
The 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship allowed an open border, but it has become a symbol of "unequal status" for many Nepalese. Tensions peaked in 2015 during a months-long border blockade that followed Nepal's adoption of a

new constitution. This event deeply scarred the relationship and accelerated Nepal's "Look North" policy toward China.

3. The Present Situation: A Triangular Dilemma

The 2026 dispute is unique because it involves China. By protesting to Beijing as well, Nepal is emphasizing that any bilateral agreement between India and China regarding Lipulekh (such as the 2015 trade agreement) that ignores Nepal's claims is unacceptable.

Aspect Current Status (May 2026)
Diplomatic Channel Currently stalled; Foreign Secretary visit postponed.

Infrastructure India continues road-widen-

ing toward Lipulekh; Nepal objects.

Regional Pivot Nepal is pursuing "Strategic Neutrality," engaging China as an infrastructure partner while demanding "equal stature" from India.

Public Sentiment
High nationalist fervor in Nepal; "Neighbourhood First" skepticism in India.

4. The Way Forward: Beyond the Stalemate
The current "stature row" risks hardening into a long-term diplomatic freeze. To thaw the relationship, three steps are critical:

I. Re-activating Technical Mechanisms
Diplomacy cannot be conducted through protest notes alone. The Boundary Working Group (BWG) and the Eminent Persons

Group (EPG) reports must be brought back to the table. Resolving the "origin of the Kali River" requires joint cartographic evidence rather than political rhetoric.

II. Reciprocal High-Level Visits

If "equal stature" is the barrier, India should consider a high-level political envoy (at the Cabinet level) to Kathmandu. A direct "Modi-Shah" summit would validate Nepal's sense of sovereignty while providing the political cover needed for both leaders to make concessions.

III. Decoupling Religion from Politics

The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra is a spiritual journey for millions. Framing it as a territorial tool complicates its sanctity. A "trans-Himalayan cooperation zone" or a joint-management framework for the pilgrimage could turn a flashpoint into a bridge.

> Final Analysis: Nepal is no longer the "buffer state" of the 20th century. Under leaders like Balen Shah, it is a nation seeking a seat at the table as a sovereign equal. India's challenge is to adapt its "Neighbourhood First" policy to accommodate this new Himalayan assertiveness without compromising its own core security interests.

Hitler saw British India as a colonial blueprint - not a nation deserving freedom

SYSTEM OBSERVER EXCLUSIVE

Adolf Hitler did not merely admire the British Empire; he studied British rule over India as a model for Nazi expansion in Eastern Europe and Russia.

?? In Mein Kampf, Hitler praised how a relatively small British administrative and military structure controlled hundreds of millions of Indians. To him, British India proved that an empire could dominate vast populations through racial hierarchy, fear, and centralized power.

By 1941, Hitler openly compared Nazi ambitions in Soviet territory to Britain's control of India. His vision for the East was clear: Germany would seize land, grain, oil, and resources while native populations remained permanently subordinate.

???? On Gandhi and Indian independence, Hitler's position was openly hostile. He dismissed anti-colonial movements and believed Indians were incapable of self-rule without imperial control. His comments about Mahatma Gandhi

reflected the same racial arrogance that shaped Nazi ideology.

When Subhas Chandra Bose met Hitler in Berlin in May 1942 seeking support for India's liberation, the meeting exposed the limits of German backing.

Hitler viewed Bose not as an ally in freedom, but as a strategic tool against Britain. Germany supported anti-British operations only insofar as they weakened London during the war. Hitler himself showed little genuine interest in an independent India.

For the Nazi leadership, British India represented something larger than colonial territory - it was proof that a small ruling elite could dominate millions through force and ideology.

In Hitler's geopolitical imagination:

- * Britain ruled India
- * Germany would rule Eastern Europe
- * Subject populations existed to serve imperial power

India, in Hitler's worldview, was never treated as a future sovereign equal - only as an example of empire.

US Navy Shipbuilding Sinks Deeper Into Systemic Crisis

America's naval shipbuilding sector is facing mounting delays, spiraling costs, and industrial bottlenecks that are steadily eroding the pace of US fleet expansion.

The US Navy's Fiscal Year 2027 budget documents reveal a procurement system struggling under what analysts increasingly describe as structural decay across the country's military shipbuilding ecosystem.

Among the most striking setbacks is the next-generation aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy (CVN-79), whose construction timeline is now approaching nearly 16 years, with full delivery drifting toward the next decade.

The USS Enterprise (CVN-80) continues to face major delays linked to supply chain disruptions and complex systems integration problems, while the USS Doris Miller (CVN-81) has now been pushed back from 2032 to 2034, extending its total construction cycle to roughly 15 years.

America-class amphibious assault ships have also suffered repeated scheduling disruptions, largely tied to shipyard congestion, berth limitations, and sequencing problems inside the already overstretched industrial base.

At the center of the crisis stands Newport News Shipbuilding, one of the few US facilities capable of constructing nuclear-powered aircraft carriers. Industry officials warn that

when one vessel remains in dock longer than expected, the entire production chain behind it begins to stall.

The problems extend beyond infrastructure. Fragile supply chains, shortages of skilled labor, rising material costs, and increasingly sophisticated combat systems have all contributed to slower timelines and ballooning expenses across nearly every major naval program.

Critics argue that the situation has been worsened by budget uncertainty. Last year, the Navy proposed cutting nearly \$16 billion from shipbuilding allocations for 2026, raising further concerns about America's long-term maritime readiness.

The industrial contrast with China has become increasingly stark.

According to figures cited from the US Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), China's shipbuilding capacity is now estimated to be 232 times greater than that of the United States. Beijing reportedly commands roughly 23.25 million tons of shipbuilding output, while America's domestic capacity remains below 100,000 tons.

For many defense observers, the issue is no longer about isolated delays. It is about whether the United States can still sustain the industrial tempo required for prolonged great-power naval competition in the 21st century.

Hezbollah's Post-2024 Transformation: From Hybrid Force to Adaptive Resistance Network

SYSTEM OBSERVER EXCLUSIVE

The 2024 confrontation between Hezbollah and Israel was widely portrayed as a campaign that severely degraded the Lebanese movement's command structure. Yet beneath the surface, the conflict appears to have accelerated a strategic evolution rather than ended it.

What is emerging now is not the same Hezbollah that fought the 2006 war.

The Shift From Heavy Formations to Agile Cells For years, Hezbollah balanced guerrilla warfare with semi-conventional military structures developed during the Syrian conflict. That model gave the organization territorial depth and battlefield endurance, but it also increased exposure to modern surveillance, AI-assisted targeting, and precision strikes.

The post-2024 battlefield seems to have forced a recalibration.

Instead of relying on large formations, Hezbollah increasingly appears to favor smaller, autonomous combat units - specialized teams trained for rapid infiltration, drone deployment, ambush warfare, electronic disruption, and precision harassment operations.

This restructuring creates several advantages: Smaller signatures reduce detectability



Independent units survive leadership disruption

Flexible deployments complicate enemy targeting cycles

Attrition operations become sustainable over longer periods

In practical terms, it means the battlefield no longer depends on maintaining continuous frontlines.

Decentralized Warfare: Surviving Without Central Command

Modern conflicts have demonstrated that centralized command structures are highly vulnerable against states possessing advanced ISR capabilities (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance).

The emerging Hezbollah model appears designed around battlefield continuity even under communication disruption.

Each operational cell can potentially:

Identify targets independently

Operate with local initiative

Continue missions despite isolation

Maintain pressure without waiting for strategic directives

This resembles modern distributed warfare doctrines increasingly studied by military planners worldwide.

The objective is simple: Destroying leadership no longer guarantees battlefield paralysis.

Attrition Over Territory

One of the biggest strategic transformations is psychological.

Traditional warfare measures victory through territorial control. The newer model increasingly treats territory as secondary to operational exhaustion.

Under this doctrine:

Enemy advances are tolerated temporarily

Supply lines become targets

Occupied zones become persistent harassment corridors

Casualties and operational fatigue become the central metric

The message is clear:

Advancing is possible. Stabilizing is not.

This creates what military analysts often describe as a "denial environment" - where tactical gains fail to produce strategic security.

EW-Resistant Drone Operations

One of the most closely watched developments has been the reported use of drones capable of operating despite electronic warfare environments.

Drone warfare has fundamentally changed Middle Eastern battlefields:

Low-cost aerial surveillance

Precision strike capability

Psychological pressure

Continuous intelligence gathering

If resistance groups successfully reduce vulnerability to jamming and interception, it complicates the technological advantage traditionally held by state militaries.

The concern inside Israeli security circles intensified when UAV incursions demonstrated gaps in interception and early-warning systems.

In asymmetric warfare, even limited drone penetration carries strategic symbolism far beyond physical damage. Generational Leadership Renewal

Another overlooked factor is leadership transition.

Conflict often accelerates internal adaptation. A younger cadre of commanders - shaped directly by drone warfare, cyber coordination, EW environments,

and decentralized combat - may be less bound by earlier operational doctrines.

This matters because future conflicts are increasingly defined by:

AI-assisted targeting

Swarm drones

Electronic warfare

Network disruption

Autonomous battlefield decision-making

Organizations capable of adapting rapidly tend to survive longer than those relying solely on legacy structures.

The Regional Implication

The broader implication is not merely about Hezbollah itself.

The conflict reflects a larger evolution in 21st-century asymmetric warfare: Smaller non-state actors increasingly seek to neutralize technological superiority through decentralization, mobility, persistence, and low-cost precision systems.

The battlefield is shifting from: Holding ground ? sustaining pressure

From: Mass formations ? distributed resistance networks

And from: Short wars ? prolonged attrition environments

Whether this transformation ultimately succeeds strategically remains uncertain.

But one reality is increasingly difficult to ignore: Modern warfare is no longer determined solely by who possesses the most advanced weapons - but by who adapts faster under pressure.

Caspian Corridor Emerges as Iran's Strategic Lifeline Against Western Pressure

SYSTEM OBSERVER EXCLUSIVE

As Washington intensifies sanctions and maritime pressure campaigns against Tehran, a quieter but strategically significant trade corridor is gaining momentum far from the Persian Gulf - the landlocked Caspian Sea.

Shielded from direct US naval presence, the Caspian route is increasingly becoming a critical economic and logistical artery for Iran, allowing Tehran to sustain imports of essential commodities while reducing vulnerability to Western maritime interdiction.

?? A Route Beyond US Naval Reach

Unlike the Strait of Hormuz or the Red Sea, the Caspian Sea remains inaccessible to the US Navy due to its enclosed geography and the control exercised by regional littoral states including Russia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan.

This geographic reality has created what analysts describe as a "strategic sanctuary" for Iranian trade.

According to multiple regional shipping assessments, Iran has significantly expanded cargo activity

through its northern Caspian ports, with terminals operating continuously to absorb rising commercial flows.

Food Security Through the North The corridor is now playing a central role in Iran's food security architecture.

Large quantities of Russian wheat, corn, sunflower oil and animal feed are reportedly entering Iran through Caspian maritime networks. Tehran imports nearly two million tons of Russian wheat annually, and a growing share of that volume is now believed to transit through the northern route.

The shift reflects Tehran's broader strategy of insulating critical supply chains from potential disruptions in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea, where US and allied naval forces maintain operational superiority.

Strategic Cargo and Dual-Use Concerns

Western intelligence circles have

also raised concerns that the Caspian corridor may be facilitating the transfer of dual-use technologies and drone-related components into Iran. While definitive public evidence remains limited, growing defense-industrial cooperation between Moscow and Tehran has intensified scrutiny over logistics networks linking the two countries.

The corridor's protected geography complicates any attempt by Washington or Tel Aviv to disrupt these shipments through conventional naval blockade measures.

Why the Route Changes the Equation

For years, Western pressure on Iran relied heavily on control over maritime choke points and sanctions targeting shipping networks.

However, the Caspian Sea presents a fundamentally different operational environment:

No direct US naval deployment capability

Limited interception options

Strong regional influence from Russia and Iran

Expanding North-South trade inte-

gration projects

This effectively reduces the feasibility of a traditional maritime blockade strategy against northern Iranian trade flows.

The Bigger Geopolitical Picture

The rise of the Caspian corridor reflects a broader Eurasian realignment underway across the region.

Under mounting sanctions pressure, Iran and Russia are accelerating efforts to build alternative economic ecosystems outside Western-controlled maritime and financial frameworks.

The corridor also aligns with the broader International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), aimed at linking Russia, Iran, Central Asia and India through integrated rail and maritime logistics.

For Tehran, the Caspian route is no longer merely a commercial channel - it is becoming a geopolitical insurance policy.

And for Washington and Tel Aviv, it represents a reminder that in modern geopolitical competition, geography can still override military dominance.

The Hangor Transfer: China Arms Pakistan's Depths

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
EXCLUSIVE**

The delivery of the first Hangor-class submarine to the Pakistan Navy last month was not merely a procurement milestone. It was a strategic signal sent from Beijing to New Delhi, wrapped in steel, powered by air-independent propulsion, and armed with cruise missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

The PNS Hangor, named deliberately after the submarine that sank the Indian frigate INS Khukri during the 1971 war, was commissioned in April 2026. Three more are due before 2029. When fully deployed, Pakistan will operate eight of these modern Chinese-designed vessels in the northern Arabian Sea, completing what Islamabad has long sought: a credible nuclear triad.

For decades, Pakistan's nuclear deterrent rested on two legs - land-based ballistic missiles and a modest airborne delivery capability. The sea leg was always the missing piece. Diesel submarines are survivable, concealable, and ambiguous. Adversaries cannot know which boats carry nuclear-tipped Babur-3 cruise missiles and which do not. That ambiguity itself contributes to deterrence.

The Hangor class is a Pakistani designation for an export variant of China's Type 039A/B Yuan-class, regarded as one of the most capable conventional submarines in the People's Liberation Army Navy inventory. At roughly 2,800 tonnes submerged, equipped with six torpedo tubes and a Stirling-cycle air-independent propulsion system that allows weeks of near-silent operation without surfacing, these boats represent a generational leap over Pakistan's ageing Agosta-90B fleet.

The \$5 billion deal, signed in 2015, called for four boats to be built at Chinese shipyards in Wuhan and four to be assembled at Karachi Shipyard with Chinese technical assistance. The programme experienced delays as Pakistan's domestic shipbuilding sector struggled with integration challenges, but deliveries are now moving forward steadily. The fourth hull, PNS Ghazi, was launched in December 2025. Each Hangor submarine is configured to fire the Babur-3 submarine-launched cruise missile, reported to have a range of approximately 450 kilometres and the capacity to carry a miniaturised nuclear war-

Beijing delivers nuclear-capable submarines to Islamabad, completing a sea-based deterrent leg that India cannot ignore while New Delhi's own submarine programme drifts in a bureaucratic tide.

head. Pakistan's Strategic Plans Division has confirmed the missile's nuclear certification. Two or three Hangor boats are expected to rotate through nuclear mission duties during peacetime patrols.

The timing is not accidental. China and Pakistan have spent decades building what Beijing describes as an "all-weather strategic partnership." The Hangor transfer represents the naval expression of that relationship, serving as a direct hedge against India's growing blue-water ambitions and its expanding strategic partnerships with the United States, Japan, and Australia under the Quad framework.

From Beijing's perspective, a more capable Pakistan Navy serves multiple purposes. It forces India to divide anti-submarine warfare assets between the western and eastern seaboard, complicates Indian carrier operations during crises, and keeps New Delhi strategically focused on its western flank rather than the South China Sea.

The convergence of Chinese and Pakistani naval strategy is no longer theoretical. It is now operational reality and is reshaping the security geometry of the northern Indian Ocean in ways regional planners may take years to fully absorb.

A Triad in the Making - and What It Actually Means

"Nuclear triad" is a term that carries considerable political weight and operational complexity. Pakistan's claim to possessing one now deserves careful examination, neither dismissal nor alarmism, but a clear strategic assessment. A fully mature nuclear triad requires three elements: survivable platforms, secure command-and-control systems, and reliable communication protocols capable of functioning during and after a nuclear exchange. India's Arihant-class ballistic missile submarines, purpose-built nuclear-powered vessels, come closest to meeting that standard in South Asia, though analysts continue debating the reliability of India's assured second-strike doctrine.

Pakistan's sea-based deterrent capability is better described as transitional. The Hangor submarines are diesel-electric platforms, which impose inherent limitations. Air-independent propulsion systems reduce acoustic signatures and extend underwater

endurance, but submarines that must periodically snorkel remain more detectable than nuclear-powered submarines capable of remaining submerged indefinitely.

Pakistan's boats are optimised primarily for coastal and littoral operations in the northern Arabian Sea, within striking range of India's western coastline, rather than extended blue-water patrols.

However, "not fully mature" does not mean strategically insignificant. Pakistan does not need to sink an Indian warship to achieve deterrence. It only needs India to believe it might. The credible presence of potentially nuclear-armed submarines in the Arabian Sea, even submarines theoretically vulnerable to wartime tracking and destruction, forces India to reconsider escalation calculations in any future conflict.

That is the essence of minimum credible deterrence, and the Hangor fleet appears likely to meet that threshold. The larger uncertainty lies in command-and-control systems. Nuclear submarines require extremely low-frequency communication networks and sophisticated operational procedures.

Maintaining secure communication with submerged vessels during wartime, particularly while adversaries actively attempt to disrupt those links, remains one of the most difficult challenges in nuclear deterrence operations. There is little public evidence that Pakistan has fully solved this problem.

The Hangor programme therefore shifts the strategic debate from whether Pakistan possesses a sea-based deterrent to whether that deterrent is survivable enough to guarantee second-strike capability. That question is likely to shape South Asian strategic discussions throughout the next decade.

The Ledger - India's Numerical Edge, Pakistan's Qualitative Ambition

India continues to hold a substantial quantitative advantage in submarine forces. India operates a significantly larger submarine fleet, including nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines, advanced maritime patrol aircraft, and extensive anti-submarine warfare assets. Pakistan, by contrast, is pursuing a more focused strategy aimed at improving

survivability and deterrence quality rather than matching India numerically.

India's Arihant-class submarines provide genuine second-strike capability, while the P-8I Poseidon fleet gives New Delhi one of the world's strongest maritime surveillance and anti-submarine warfare networks. Pakistan's strengths lie primarily in stealth-oriented conventional submarines equipped with air-independent propulsion systems and nuclear-capable cruise missiles.

At the same time, India's own submarine modernisation programme faces growing delays.

Project 75-I, a programme intended to procure six advanced diesel-electric submarines equipped with air-independent propulsion and land-attack cruise missiles, was first conceived in 2007. Nearly two decades later, the contract remains unsigned.

Competing proposals from French, German, Spanish, and Russian shipbuilders remain unresolved after repeated procurement reviews and bureaucratic delays.

This is more than an administrative problem. India's older Kilo-class submarines are ageing rapidly. The Kalvari-class submarines are modern but still await full air-independent propulsion integration. By the time Project 75-I submarines enter service, potentially during the mid-2030s, Pakistan's Hangor fleet may already have achieved full operational maturity.

The contrast in institutional urgency on both sides is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore.

The Geopolitical Architecture - Beijing's Long Game

To understand why China transferred these submarines to Pakistan, the Hangor programme must be viewed not solely through Islamabad's strategic requirements, but through Beijing's broader regional calculations.

China faces a two-ocean challenge. Its primary maritime focus remains the Western Pacific, including Taiwan, the South China Sea, and the first island chain, where American and allied naval power is concentrated.

The Indian Ocean is a secondary but still critical theatre because it carries most of China's imported energy supplies and a growing share of its international trade.

India, with its dominant geographic position in the Indian Ocean and its increasingly close cooperation with the Quad countries, represents a potential strategic challenge to Chinese maritime interests in any future great-power confrontation.

A stronger Pakistan Navy therefore serves Chinese interests beyond simply balancing India. It forces India to allocate additional anti-submarine warfare resources to the Arabian Sea, divides Indian strategic attention, and creates a more complex two-front maritime challenge.

This broader pattern is not new. China has supported Pakistan's military modernisation for decades through transfers involving missile technology, aircraft, nuclear infrastructure, and defence manufacturing cooperation. The Hangor transfer is simply the latest and perhaps most operationally significant extension of that strategy.

At the same time, Beijing appears unwilling to cross certain international bound-

aries. China is unlikely to transfer nuclear propulsion technology to Pakistan due to international non-proliferation concerns and the diplomatic costs such a move would create.

For now, nuclear-powered submarines remain beyond Pakistan's reach and would likely require major technological and financial breakthroughs before becoming realistic.

Assessment - What India Must Do

India still maintains clear strategic advantages.

Its P-8I Poseidon fleet remains among the world's most capable maritime patrol forces. Its frigate and destroyer fleet includes dedicated anti-submarine warfare platforms. The Arihant-class ballistic missile submarines provide a genuine second-strike capability that Pakistan cannot currently match.

Overall naval balance therefore remains firmly in India's favour.

However, advantages can weaken without sustained investment and institutional urgency.

India's most immediate priorities are clear: accelerating Project 75-I, integrating air-independent propulsion systems into existing Kalvari-class submarines, and expanding underwater surveillance infrastructure across the Arabian Sea.

These goals are technologically achievable. The primary obstacle is bureaucratic delay rather than capability.

There is also an important doctrinal dimension. India's nuclear strategy has traditionally focused on land-based deterrence supported by a secure ballistic missile submarine force.

The Hangor programme does not overturn that strategy, but it complicates the conventional maritime environment.

A Pakistani submarine commander does not necessarily need to deploy a nuclear weapon to constrain Indian naval operations. The possibility alone may influence operational decisions during crises.

India's response to the Hangor challenge will therefore be watched closely, not only for what it changes operationally, but also for what it reveals about the pace and seriousness of India's broader defence modernisation efforts.

An India capable of rapidly modernising its submarine fleet, strengthening anti-submarine warfare coverage, and sustaining credible deterrence against both China and Pakistan simultaneously would reinforce its ambitions for Indo-Pacific leadership.

An India that continues allowing submarine modernisation programmes to stagnate while adversaries narrow capability gaps risks undermining its own long-term strategic position.

The Hangor transfer is therefore more than a defence transaction. It is a warning about the rapidly changing balance beneath the waters of the Indian Ocean.

Whether New Delhi treats it as such remains a question not only of procurement, but of strategic culture itself.

The northern Indian Ocean is becoming more contested, more dangerous, and more strategically significant. The submarines now operating beneath its surface are the physical expression of decisions made in Beijing, Islamabad, and, increasingly, New Delhi itself.

Trump's Iran gamble could hit Americans where it hurts most - fuel, food and farming.

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
EXCLUSIVE**

Retired Lt. Col. Daniel Davis warned that escalating conflict around Iran is already feeding fears of a wider economic shock, with rising pressure on oil markets, fertilizer supplies and future crop production.

Davis argued that current fuel prices are being temporarily softened through strategic reserves, but warned that such measures cannot stabilize markets indefinitely if regional energy flows remain disrupted.

"If something isn't done quickly to get the flows back open again, then that upward pressure is gonna return," he said.

The deeper concern, according to Davis, is agriculture.

Higher energy costs could raise fertilizer

prices worldwide, increasing production costs for farmers and potentially affecting harvests and food prices in the months ahead.

"A 10 percent fertilizer reduction capability on the global market equals about a 30 percent less crop yield," Davis claimed, arguing that the impact on food production could be disproportionate.

Even if tensions ease quickly, Davis warned the economic effects may continue to build, with oil potentially surging sharply later this year under a prolonged supply shock scenario.

"You could be looking at \$200 a barrel in September," he said.

The warning reflects growing concerns that instability in the Middle East may not remain confined to geopolitics alone, but could increasingly affect inflation, consumer costs and global food security.

India Launches Landmark Naval Exercise With Ten African Nations, Marking Decisive Shift in Maritime Strategy

SYSTEM OBSERVER EXCLUSIVE

Key Numbers

10 African nations in AIKEYME exercise
9 countries crewing IOS Sagar jointly
\$80B+ India-Africa annual trade
2025 MAHASAGAR vision launched by PM Modi
DAR-ES-SALAAM -On 13 April 2025, warships from eleven nations manoeuvred off the Tanzanian coast in exercises that few outside the region noticed - and that New Delhi had been quietly building toward for over a decade.
The inaugural Africa-India Key Maritime Engagement, known by its Sanskrit-derived acronym AIKEYME - meaning "unity" - brought together naval forces from Tanzania, Kenya, Mozambique, Djibouti, Comoros, Eritrea, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, and South Africa alongside the Indian Navy's INS Chennai, INS Kesari, and INS Sunayna.
The six-day exercise, co-hosted by India and Tanzania's People's Defence Force, was inaugurated by India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Tanzania's Defence Minister Stergomena Lawrence Tax. It marked the first time India had convened a dedicated multilateral naval exercise with African partner nations - and, analysts say, the clearest operational signal yet that New Delhi's Indian Ocean strategy has moved from aspiration to execution. The timing was deliberate. AIKEYME follows Prime Minister Narendra Modi's March 2025 visit to Mauritius, where he announced the MAHASAGAR framework - Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security Across the Regions - extending India's decade-old SAGAR vision into its second phase. Together, the two announcements constitute the most significant formal articulation of Indian maritime

The inauguration of AIKEYME off the coast of Dar-es-Salaam in April 2025 - India's first multinational naval exercise with Africa - signals that New Delhi's long-stated ambitions in the Indian Ocean are moving from doctrine to deployment.

ambition since independence.

What Happened at Sea

The exercise was structured in two phases. During the harbour phase from 13 to 15 April, participants conducted tabletop command exercises focused on anti-piracy response protocols and information-sharing architecture, alongside practical training in Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure operations. The sea phase from 16 to 18 April involved live search-and-rescue drills, small-arms firing exercises, and helicopter operations coordinated across multiple national platforms - a significant test of interoperability between navies that rarely operate together.

Running parallel to AIKEYME, the Indian Navy deployed INS Sunayna on what it designated the IOS Sagar mission - Indian Ocean Ship Sagar - with an unprecedented multinational crew of 44 personnel drawn from nine partner countries: Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and South Africa. The vessel conducted joint surveillance operations across partner nations' Exclusive Economic Zones between 15 April and 8 May, with port visits to Dar-es-Salaam, Nacala, Port Louis, Port Victoria, and Malé. A senior Indian naval strategist described the twin initiatives as "the moment the strategy stopped being a document and became a force."

Key Facts: AIKEYME 2025

Dates: 13-18 April 2025, off Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania
Co-hosted by Indian Navy and Tanzania People's Defence Force (TPDF)
Participating nations: Tanzania, Kenya, Mozambique, Djibouti,

Comoros, Eritrea, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa
Indian ships: INS Chennai, INS Kesari, INS Sunayna
Exercise name derived from Sanskrit "Aikyam" meaning unity
Declared as a biennial event going forward
IOS Sagar Mission
Vessel: INS Sunayna deployed as Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) Sagar
Dates: 15 April - 8 May 2025
Crew: 44 personnel from 9 partner countries
Port visits: Dar-es-Salaam, Nacala, Port Louis, Port Victoria, Malé
Mission: Joint EEZ surveillance and capacity-building training
India's Strategic Frameworks

SAGAR
Security and Growth for All in the Region - launched in 2015 under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
MAHASAGAR

Announced in Mauritius in March 2025, extending SAGAR into its second decade with a broader Global South focus.

India has increasingly positioned itself as both a "net security provider" and a "preferred security partner" in the Indian Ocean Region. The Geopolitical Context

The significance of AIKEYME is sharpened by what surrounds it geographically. Djibouti - one of the ten participating nations - hosts

China's first and so far only overseas military base, established in 2017. The Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, through which roughly 12 percent of global trade transits, lies at the Horn of Africa's northern tip.

The waters these navies exercised in are the same waters where the People's Liberation Army Navy has steadily expanded its presence.

China's approach has relied

on large-scale infrastructure investment - ports at Gwadar, Hambantota, and across East Africa - combined with growing naval deployments and submarine patrols.

India's counter-approach, as embodied in AIKEYME, relies on something different: human capital, shared operational experience, and institutional ties that outlast any single infrastructure project.

India's pitch to African partners rests on a proposition that, if sustained, carries real strategic weight: security cooperation and development support delivered without the debt dependencies or political conditions that have made both Chinese and Western engagement problematic for governments wary of external overreach.

India's development activities in the region - agricultural programmes, digital infrastructure, and technical assistance in Kenya, Djibouti, and Somalia - are increasingly packaged under the same strategic narrative as the naval exercises, presenting a unified offer of partnership.

Competing Powers in the Horn
China

Military base in Djibouti since 2017

Extensive port investment across East Africa

Growing PLAN submarine patrols

United States

AFRICOM headquarters in Stuttgart

Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti

Counter-terror operations in Somalia

Turkey

Military base in Mogadishu since 2017

Expanding soft-power footprint in Somalia

UAE

Port stakes including DP World operations

Security contracts and his-

torical base access

European Union

Operation Atalanta naval mission

Aid programmes tied to political conditionality

India

No permanent overseas base

Focus on multilateral exercises, IOS Sagar, and MAHASAGAR framework

What Comes Next

AIKEYME has been designated a biennial exercise, with the next edition expected in 2027.

Indian naval strategists say the long-term objective is to develop it into a standing multilateral framework - an Indian Ocean equivalent, in ambition if not yet scale, of NATO-affiliated naval exercise structures.

The IMT-TRILAT exercise with Mozambique and Tanzania, which preceded AIKEYME, will continue alongside it. So will India's bilateral exercises with Kenya, South Africa, and Seychelles.

The broader picture is of a power that has learned, slowly but with apparent conviction, that influence in a contested maritime region is not won through a single dramatic gesture, but through the patient accumulation of presence, trust, and institutional habit.

In the Horn of Africa - where China has a base, the United States maintains counter-terror infrastructure, Turkey operates in Somalia, and Gulf states hold major port stakes - India's web of influence remains less visible than its competitors.

It may, in time, prove more durable.

Additional reporting from Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam.

Sources include Indian Ministry of Defence press releases, Vivekananda International Foundation briefings, and analysis from the Center for International Maritime Security and The Conversation. Some officials were quoted on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak publicly.

Pakistan opens quiet channel with Iran to secure Qatari LNG transit through Hormuz

SYSTEM OBSERVER EXCLUSIVE

Pakistan has reportedly opened a discreet backchannel with Iran to facilitate the movement of Qatari LNG cargoes through the Strait of Hormuz amid ongoing regional instability and worsening domestic energy shortages.

According to Bloomberg, a Qatari LNG tanker, Al Kharaitiyat, owned by Qatar's Nakilat, successfully crossed the Strait of Hormuz after loading cargo at the Ras Laffan export terminal



earlier this month. Ship-tracking data reportedly showed the vessel entering the Gulf of Oman on

Sunday.

The tanker is now believed to be en route to Pakistan's Port Qasim after navigating a route approved by Iranian authorities along Iran's southern coastline.

The development marks the first reported successful LNG passage through Hormuz since the outbreak of the Iran war in late February, signaling a possible temporary easing of maritime transit risks in one of the world's most sensitive energy corridors.

Sources cited in the report claim Islamabad is quietly negotiating with Tehran to ensure additional Qatari

LNG shipments can safely transit the strait as Pakistan struggles with an intensifying energy crisis.

Pakistan has been facing severe gas shortages, rising power disruptions, and nationwide blackouts after LNG supplies from Qatar, its primary energy supplier, were disrupted by the regional conflict.

Reports further indicate that at least three additional Qatari LNG tankers are currently signaling Pakistan as their intended destination, raising expectations of a broader effort to restore critical fuel supplies to the country.

Why the Philippines' South China Sea energy strategy faces major geopolitical obstacles

SYSTEM OBSERVER EXCLUSIVE

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is pushing for energy cooperation in the South China Sea as Manila looks to reduce its dependence on imported oil and gas.

But despite renewed diplomatic engagement with China, the broader geopolitical environment makes large-scale cooperation highly unlikely.

The central obstacle is strategic, not economic

Energy insecurity driving Manila's push

The Philippines remains heavily exposed to global energy disruptions.

The country imports most of its oil and gas requirements

Middle East instability and disruptions around Hormuz increased pressure on energy security

Manila wants access to untapped hydrocarbon reserves in the South China Sea

Joint exploration with China is increasingly viewed as a possible solution

Yet every initiative encounters the same geopolitical constraints.



litical constraints.

Territorial disputes continue blocking progress

The South China Sea remains one of the world's most contested maritime regions.

China's territorial claims overlap with Philippine maritime zones

Coastguard confrontations and patrol incidents continue regularly

Strategic trust between

Manila and Beijing remains extremely weak

Diplomatic talks rarely translate into implementation at sea

Security realities further complicate any potential cooperation.

Military alignments deepen strategic mistrust

Joint energy development would require long-term maritime stability and political confidence.

The South China Sea is increasingly militarized

The Philippines expanded defense cooperation with the United States

Washington secured broader military access agreements across the Philippines

China increasingly views Manila through the lens of US regional containment strategy

That directly undermines

the trust required for sustained joint resource development.

Regional comparisons expose the structural problem

Other Southeast Asian states achieved greater success managing offshore energy disputes.

Malaysia and Vietnam pursued more pragmatic dispute management approaches

Philippine energy projects repeatedly stalled in contested zones such as Reed Bank

Political risk and maritime tensions disrupted earlier exploration efforts

Recent diplomatic reopening efforts focused more on process than enforceable agreements

The deeper issue is that the current geopolitical environment remains structurally incompatible with shared control over disputed maritime resources.

Unless there is a major regional realignment or a formal legal settlement of competing maritime claims, South China Sea energy reserves are likely to remain politically constrained rather than commercially developed.

UAE's evolving position toward OPEC reflects deeper fractures inside the global oil system

SYSTEM OBSERVER EXCLUSIVE

The United Arab Emirates distancing itself from OPEC is about far more than production quotas.

It signals a broader transformation in global energy politics, where national priorities, geopolitical flexibility, and economic diversification are beginning to outweigh traditional cartel discipline.

Here's why it matters ??

OPEC's influence is gradually weakening

For decades, OPEC used coordinated production cuts to shape global oil prices and maintain market control.

At its height, OPEC controlled more than half of global oil supply

Today, its share has fallen to roughly 35%

Internal disagreements between member states are becoming increasingly visible

The UAE has emerged as one of the clearest examples of these growing tensions.

National strategy colliding with production quotas

Over the past decade, the UAE invested heavily to expand its oil production capacity.

But OPEC quotas restricted how much of that capacity could actually be

used.

The UAE raised production capacity to nearly 5 million barrels per day

Quota limits prevented full utilisation of those investments

Some OPEC members depend on high oil prices to stabilise state budgets

Others prioritise market share, export growth, and long-term diversification

For Abu Dhabi, the quota system increasingly looked less like protection and more like limitation.

Economic diversification changing energy calculations

Unlike many oil-dependent economies, the UAE spent years building alternative pillars of growth beyond hydrocarbons.

Expansion into logistics, ports, aviation, finance, and tourism

Large-scale investments in AI, technology, and renewable energy

Growing interest in more flexible trade and financial partnerships outside traditional energy structures

This economic transformation reduced the strategic need for rigid cartel alignment.

Geopolitical flexibility becoming a strategic asset

Modern energy markets are now driven as much by geopolitics and supply chain security as by production itself.

Roughly 20% of global oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz

Regional military tensions can trigger immediate price volatility

The UAE invested heavily in pipelines, storage hubs,

and export infrastructure to respond quickly to disruptions

Rigid production quotas limited the flexibility that increasingly defines strategic power

If one of the Gulf's

strongest energy producers concludes that independent maneuverability offers greater advantages than cartel discipline, other producers may eventually begin reassessing their own positions as well.

Trump's China gamble is really about political survival before the 2026 midterms

SYSTEM OBSERVER EXCLUSIVE

Despite the constant focus on Iran, Taiwan and trade wars, Trump's biggest threat is not overseas.

It is the US economy.

With approval ratings falling and recession fears growing, the White House needs a rapid economic recovery before Republicans risk losing Congress in 2026.

That is why China suddenly moved back to the center of Washington's strategy ??

Economic survival first

Trump needs quick economic victories to stabilise markets and voters:

Chinese soybean purchases could calm angry farmers in key swing states

Large Boeing agreements would create headlines about American jobs

Rare earth exports would reduce pressure on US defense and tech industries

Lower oil prices after Iran tensions could give the Federal Reserve room to cut rates before elections

The problem is that Washington now enters negotiations with far less leverage than it expected.

Trade war produced the opposite result

The campaign meant to weaken China instead accelerated Beijing's long-term independence from the American economy.

China preserved huge trade surpluses despite years of tariffs

It expanded economic ties across Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America

Chinese firms replaced many American suppliers with domestic alternatives

US tech sanctions failed to stop China's industrial and AI expansion

Rather than slowing China, the pressure campaign forced Beijing to adapt faster.

Pressure campaign stretched across the globe

Washington also tried to weaken China indirectly through geopolitical pressure:

Pressure on Venezuela targeted Chinese energy interests

Moves around Panama focused on Chinese-linked infrastructure and ports

Escalation with Iran threatened another major supplier of oil to China

Nvidia restrictions and refinery sanctions aimed to slow China's AI and industrial growth

But the broader result may have backfired.

Instead of isolating China, Washington increasingly encouraged countries and corporations to reduce their own dependence on the United States.

SYSTEM OBSERVER EXCLUSIVE SPECIAL DEFENCE EDITION

From Fault Lines to Fortress India: The Reckoning Begins



A System Observer exclusive investigation reveals eleven structural vulnerabilities threatening India's military sovereignty, and the urgent, homegrown roadmap that defence reformers say can turn every weakness into a weapon of national strength.

India stands at a sovereign crossroads. A confidential assessment, now in the hands of System Observer, details eleven hard structural truths about the Indian military's preparedness. Yet defence strategists inside South Block and beyond insist the document is not an obituary. It is a blueprint for transformation.

The report does not mince words. India's dependence on United States GPS infrastructure for navigation and battlefield communications, the absence of a Space and Cyber Command, the military's lack of sovereign servers, and the outsourcing of critical spectrum assets to private entities represent a web of vulnerabilities that, left unaddressed, could prove catastrophic in a high-intensity, technology-driven conflict.

Operation Sindoor, a recent cross-border counter-terror engagement, laid bare the limits of current doctrine and inter-service coordination. The Indian Air Force's performance, while demonstrating individual gallantry, exposed institutional gaps in real-time electronic coordination, spectrum dominance, and rapid command decision-making. These are gaps that adversaries with integrated Space, Cyber, and Conventional Commands do not share.

Pakistan's Joint Operational Command model and China's deeply integrated PLA Strategic Support Force, both fusing space, cyber, and electromagnetic domains, present a structural contrast that Indian defence planners can no longer afford to ignore.

Yet within each crisis lies the seed of transformation. Defence reformers argue that India possesses every ingredient for a sovereign, self-reliant military ecosystem: the DRDO, ISRO, the IITs, a growing private defence industrial base, and a political mandate under the Atmanirbhar Bharat mission that no previous government had articulated with such clarity or budget commitment.

THE ELEVEN FAULT LINES

The Assessment at a Glance: Vulnerabilities and Reform Potential

01. GPS Dependency

India relies on US GPS for communications and navigation. NavIC must be urgently weaponised and fully integrated as a sovereign alternative across all military platforms.

02. No Space and Cyber Command

Critical domains remain without unified, dedicated military com-



mand. A tri-service Space-Cyber-Electro Command is now an operational imperative.

03. Sovereign Servers Absent

Military data stored on commercial cloud infrastructure is strategically untenable. India must build classified, air-gapped, sovereign defence cloud architecture.

04. No Military 5G Network

Spectrum sold to private players leaves the military without secure 5G capability during wartime. A dedicated Defence Band must be legislated and operationalised.

05. CDS Has No Command Authority

The Chief of Defence Staff currently functions as a coordinator, not a commander. Theatre Command empowerment under next-generation reforms is non-negotiable.

06. IAF Gaps Post-Operation Sindoor

Institutional limitations in electronic warfare and rapid joint tasking surfaced during recent operations. Radical upgrades to electronic warfare suites and multi-domain integration are warranted.

07. Fragmented National Command

India lacks a unified Command Authority integrating all national security components. The country requires its own National Security Command architecture.

08. Defence Secretary Primacy

The Union War Manual still vests defence responsibility in a civil servant. Strategic military command must ultimately rest with military commanders, constitutionally codified.

09. Agniveer Scheme Concerns

Short-tenure soldiering risks institutional memory and long-term battle readiness. Reformers advocate a hybrid model balancing youth infusion with experienced core

strength.

10. Morale and Officer Culture

A cultural drift toward risk-aversion signals deeper motivational gaps. Service conditions, institutional respect, housing, and long-term career pathways require urgent redesign.

11. The Bottom Line

Without systemic reform, India's strategic deterrence weakens year by year. Atmanirbharta is not merely a slogan. It is a survival strategy.

"Every vulnerability listed in this document is a project waiting to be sanctioned. India has never lacked the intellect, only the urgency and political will to act before the crisis, not after it."

- Senior Strategic Affairs Analyst, Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses, New Delhi

THE PATH FORWARD

Immediate Priorities (0 to 24 Months)

- Full NavIC military-grade integration across all three Services

- Establish a tri-service Space and Cyber Command with dedicated funding

- Build a sovereign military cloud that is air-gapped, indigenously developed, and continuously audited

- Reserve a dedicated Defence 5G spectrum band through legislative mandate

- Launch an emergency electronic warfare upgrade package for Indian Air Force frontline platforms

Structural Reforms (2 to 5 Years)

- Implement Theatre Commands with full CDS command authority

- Amend the Union War Manual to vest defence responsibility in unified military command structures

- Establish a National Security Command architecture comparable to China's Strategic Support Force

- Introduce a hybrid Agniveer structure combining short-service rotation with long-term permanent

cadre tracks

- Reform officer service conditions including pay, housing, career progression, and lateral government entry pathways

The Atmanirbhar Bharat defence mission, launched in 2020, has already yielded measurable gains: export orders crossing Rs 21,000 crore, indigenisation lists barring 509 imported items, and platforms such as the Tejas Mk1A, Prachand helicopter, and ATAGS howitzer entering service.

But reformers argue that hardware indigenisation alone addresses only the visible surface of the problem. The deeper challenge remains systemic: command architecture, data sovereignty, spectrum control, and the institutional culture of the officer corps.

"We have brilliant scientists at DRDO, extraordinary engineers at ISRO, and soldiers of unmatched valour," a retired Vice Chief of Army Staff told this newspaper. "What we need is not more talent. We need systems that harness this talent in wartime, at machine speed, without dependence on foreign satellites or foreign servers. That is the meaning of true Atmanirbharta."

The document that sparked this debate ends with a blunt warning: without reform, India risks losing future wars.

System Observer chooses to read that sentence differently - not as a verdict, but as a challenge.

A nation that built a space programme from scratch, developed nuclear deterrence on limited resources, and launched a Mars mission for less than the budget of a Hollywood blockbuster is fully capable of building the defence architecture it deserves.

The question is one of political will, institutional speed, and the courage to act before the next crisis compels it.

Editor's Note: This exclusive analysis is based on assessments from serving and retired defence officers, strategic analysts, and open-source intelligence. System Observer has withheld certain operational details in the interest of national security. Views expressed by sources are their own.

Corrections & Feedback : www.systemobserver18.com

India's Shield Must Be Made in India

Every sovereign server built, every NavIC receiver deployed, and every command structure reformed is not merely a defence decision. It is an act of nation-building.

The generation that secures India's skies will be the generation that secures India's future.

Jai Hind ■ Atmanirbhar Bharat ■

IPL 2026: Hard pill to swallow, says Suryakumar Yadav after RCB end MI's campaign

RAIPUR

Stand-in Mumbai Indians skipper Suryakumar Yadav admitted his side fell short in key moments after their heartbreaking two-wicket defeat to Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium on Sunday ended MI's campaign in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026.

Defending 166 on a challenging surface, Mumbai pushed the contest to the final ball before RCB escaped with a dramatic win. Reflecting on the defeat, Suryakumar felt the batting innings lacked the extra cushion required on such a difficult pitch. "I think we were 10-15 runs short. We can say the wrong timing of wickets (while batting). Naman and Tilak batted beautifully and showed character," he said after the loss.

After early blows from Bhuvneshwar Kumar had reduced Mumbai to 28/3, Tilak Varma and Naman Dhir rebuilt the innings impressively. Naman struck a fluent 47 while Tilak anchored the innings with a composed 57, helping MI recover to 166/7 after a difficult start.

Suryakumar Yadav also reserved special praise for young all-rounder



Raj Bawa, who nearly defended 15 runs in a tense final over before RCB sealed victory off the last ball. "I think he had been practising that (death bowling) really well, and he was a completely different all-rounder this year. Almost pulled it off for us," he said.

The final over swung dramatically between both sides, with Bawa

conceding crucial extras before dismissing Romario Shepherd and then being hit for a decisive six by Bhuvneshwar Kumar. Despite the defeat, Suryakumar backed the youngster's temperament under pressure.

Mumbai also produced several notable moments in the field, including Tilak Varma's outstanding relay

effort near the boundary during Krunal Pandya's innings. Though the catch opportunity eventually resulted in confusion and no dismissal, Suryakumar appreciated Tilak's commitment in the field.

"I think these are the things you practice a lot with the fielding. The way Tilak came back and took the catch again showed that he wanted to do something special. Part of the game," he said.

The stand-in captain also praised Corbin Bosch for his impactful spell that kept Mumbai alive deep into the chase. Bosch picked up four wickets, including the crucial dismissals of Rajat Patidar, Jacob Bethell, Jitesh Sharma, and Tim David. "Very proud of the way he (Bosch) bowled in the Power-play and in all phases," Suryakumar added.

The defeat marked a rare, disappointing season for five-time champions Mumbai Indians, who are traditionally among the strongest play-off contenders in the league. Suryakumar admitted the elimination was difficult to process but expressed confidence about returning stronger next year.

"I think we can just try and play this game because we love it. Though we are not used to being in this position often. Hard pill to swallow. Hopefully, we will come back well next year," he mentioned.

IPL 2026: Krunal's 73, Bhuvneshwar's ice-cool finish help RCB knock MI out in Raipur thriller

RAIPUR

Royal Challengers Bengaluru held their nerve in a pulsating last-ball thriller to knock Mumbai Indians out of the tournament with a dramatic two-wicket victory in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium on Sunday. Chasing 167 on a surface that had troubled batters all evening, RCB rode on Krunal Pandya's fighting 73 and an astonishing late cameo from Bhuvneshwar Kumar to seal the contest on the final delivery.

The chase began chaotically. Deepak Chahar struck a massive early blow by dismissing Virat Kohli for a golden duck in the very first over, while Devdutt Padikkal also fell cheaply as Mumbai reduced RCB to 24/2. Corbin Bosch then joined the party by removing captain Rajat Patidar, leaving RCB wobbling at 47/3 at the end of the powerplay.

At that stage, Mumbai appeared firmly in control. Jasprit Bumrah was probing relentlessly, Bosch was extracting awkward bounce, and the sluggish surface made strokeplay difficult. Jacob Bethell attempted to stabilise the innings with a patient 27, but it was Krunal Pandya who transformed the chase.

Krunal initially absorbed pressure before gradually taking control against the spinners. He used the angles



smartly, swept aggressively against Will Jacks and AM Ghazanfar, and repeatedly targeted the straight boundary. His clean six over wide long-on off Ghazanfar brought up a crucial fifty-run stand with Bethell and shifted the momentum back toward RCB.

Even as wickets continued to tumble around him, Krunal kept the chase alive. He battled visible cramps during the closing stages, repeatedly dropping to the turf between deliveries, yet continued to attack. His calculated assault against Bosch and Ghazanfar ensured RCB remained

within touching distance of the target.

Mumbai, however, kept responding. Bosch produced a sensational spell (4-26), including a wicket maiden that removed Bethell before later dismissing Jitesh Sharma and Tim David off successive deliveries. Bumrah's penultimate over was equally exceptional, conceding just three runs and leaving RCB needing 15 off the final six balls.

What followed was pure chaos.

Raj Bawa began the final over with a wide and then overstepped, handing Romario Shepherd a free hit.

But just when the equation seemed to tilt toward Bengaluru, Bawa dismissed Shepherd at the backward point to leave RCB staring at defeat.

That brought Bhuvneshwar Kumar to the crease.

Earlier in the evening, Bhuvneshwar had delivered a masterclass with the ball on a tricky surface, dismissing Rohit Sharma and Suryakumar Yadav with clever changes in length and pace. Now, with the bat, he produced the decisive moment of the night.

After surviving a wide bouncer, Bhuvneshwar

launched Bawa over deep cover for a stunning six that completely changed the equation. Calm under immense pressure, he then nudged a single to leave two needed off the final ball.

Rasikh Salam Dar drilled the last delivery back past the bowler and sprinted back desperately for the second run, diving home to complete a memorable win as RCB players erupted in celebration.

For Mumbai, the defeat ended their campaign despite strong performances from Bosch, Chahar, and Bumrah. For Bengaluru, it was a victory defined by resilience, Krunal's courage in the middle overs, and Bhuvneshwar's nerveless finish, delivering one of the matches of the season.

In the first innings, MI posted 166/7 after a strong recovery led by Tilak Varma. Bhuvneshwar ripped through MI's top order with a brilliant new-ball spell, dismissing Ryan Rickelton, Rohit Sharma, and Suryakumar Yadav to leave Mumbai struggling at 28/3.

Tilak then anchored the innings with a composed 57 off 42 balls, while Naman Dhir added a valuable 47 in a crucial partnership. RCB fought back in the death overs through Bhuvneshwar, who finished with exceptional figures of 4/23, restricting Mumbai to a competitive but manageable total on a difficult surface.

Village roads gateways to prosperity, says Chouhan; launches PMGSY projects worth Rs 1,763 cr



BHOPAL

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday termed village roads the “gateways to prosperity” while launching projects worth Rs 1,763.08 crore under the fourth phase of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY-IV) to mark the scheme’s silver jubilee in Madhya Pradesh.

Addressing a gathering in Bherunda in Sehore district, Chouhan, the Union minister for agriculture, farmers’ welfare and rural development, spoke about road projects worth crores being undertaken in the state. Bherunda is part of the Vidisha Lok Sabha seat, being represented by Chouhan for the sixth term.

“Village roads are not just roads, but gateways to prosperity, respect, education, treatment, markets, and opportunities,” Chouhan said.

He said that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership, the government remains committed to transforming the lives of farmers, women, and the poor.

India is rapidly progressing towards becoming a glorious,

proud, self-reliant, prosperous, and developed nation under the prime minister’s leadership, Chouhan said.

As many as 973 roads spanning 2,117.52 km have been approved under PMGSY-IV, costing a total of Rs 1,763.08 crore, covering 987 settlements in Madhya Pradesh.

Similarly, the Vidisha region has received approval for 259 roads spanning 600.393 km, benefiting 264 settlements, marking a major achievement in Chouhan’s regional development agenda.

The Union minister said that roads worth more than Rs 500 crore will be constructed in the Vidisha parliamentary constituency, and that his priority is to ensure that no village is left without a road.

All eligible roads in Madhya Pradesh that meet the PMGSY criteria will be approved, he clarified.

The former chief minister also criticised the erstwhile Congress rule, recalling broken roads and electricity shortages, while pointing out that Madhya Pradesh has now emerged as the nation’s leader in rural road construction.

Under PM-JANMAN, road projects, spanning 384.34 km, have been approved at a cost of Rs 261.81 crore, covering 168 settlements in the state.

Additionally, of the total indicative allocation of Rs 18,907 crore for PMGSY for 2026-27, Rs 830 crore has been allocated to Madhya Pradesh, which Chouhan described as a step that will reinvigorate the state’s development.

During the event, Chouhan handed over a sanction of Rs 2,055 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin to Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, asserting that no poor person should remain without a permanent home.

He assured that based on a new survey, eligible families will be physically verified and provided with the housing scheme benefits.

Emphasising the economic empowerment of women, Chouhan said that the Lakhpati Didi Abhiyan will be further accelerated through self-help groups.

The Union minister also slammed the Congress on farmer issues, stating that while the Opposition created noise, the BJP provided solutions.

He assured that no eligible farmer would be treated unfairly in wheat procurement and that efforts would continue to create more beneficial mechanisms for land acquisition.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister praised the coordinated approach between the state and the Centre on various issues.

The event was also attended by Union Ministers of State Kamlesh Paswan and Dr Chandrashekhar Pemmasani, along with several state ministers and legislators.

States and Union Territories with outstanding performances were honoured on the occasion.

NMC asks govt medical colleges to support NBEMS practical exams amid examiner and centres shortage

NEW DELHI

The NMC has issued an advisory to government medical colleges and institutions, asking them to extend full cooperation for the smooth conduct of postgraduate and postdoctoral examinations conducted by the NBEMS, citing shortage of examination centres and examiners.

In a public notice issued by the Postgraduate Medical Education Board (PGMEB) on May 8, the National Medical Commission (NMC) said the increasing number of candidates appearing in NBEMS final practical examinations has led to a corresponding rise in the requirement for “adequate examination centres, clinical material, infrastructure, and experienced examiners”.

The Commission noted that the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) has been facing difficulties due to the “non-availability of examination centres and non-relieving of eligible faculty members for examiner duties in certain instances”.

“In this regard, all Government Medical Colleges/institutions under the ambit of the National Medical Commission are advised to extend necessary cooperation and support to NBEMS for conduct of its practical examinations,” the notice said.

The advisory asked institutions to facilitate the conduct of NBEMS practical examinations “subject to administrative feasibility” and ensure the availability of “requisite infrastructure, wards, laboratories, and suitable clinical material/patients as required for examinations”.

The NMC also directed institutions to relieve “eligible and nominated faculty members for examiner duties in a timely manner” and coordinate with NBEMS to ensure the “smooth and efficient conduct of examinations”.

Highlighting concerns over reluctance among institutions and faculty members, the Commission clarified that NBEMS “suitably compensates the exam centres for the expenses incurred by them in holding the examination”.

“The examiners are also given approved remunerations for the services offered by them for various NBEMS academic activities,” the notice added.

The Commission stressed that cooperation from institutions and faculty would significantly contribute towards maintaining standards of postgraduate medical education while ensuring timely conduct of examinations in the larger public and academic interest.

“All institutions are requested to take necessary action accordingly,” the notice signed by NMC Director CK Ramaswamy stated.

CBI exposes alleged bribe-for-medical report scam in railways; books doctor, two loco pilots

NEW DELHI

The CBI Visakhapatnam has lodged an FIR against a railway doctor and two loco pilots who allegedly bribed the former to obtain favourable medical reports and secure undue benefits at their respective workplaces under the South Central Railway Zone.

Officials claimed this is just the tip of the iceberg of “widespread corruption across railway zones”, where doctors allegedly accept bribes from employees in exchange for fictitious medical reports.

Employees then use these reports to obtain extended leave or get medically decategorised, enabling them to move from demanding field duties to office-based roles, they said.

The FIR stated that Dr Priyadarshini, who served as the senior divisional medical officer at Nandyal in the Guntur division, allegedly connived with a private individual, Shaik Rasool Karimulla, who collected bribe money from both employees in return for sickness certificates. Karimulla allegedly transferred the money to the doctor’s driver’s account to avoid suspicion.

It further stated that one of the employees, Lakkakula Venkata Siva Jyothi, a loco pilot who had her job profile changed to technician on medical grounds, did not join the new department and continued on sick leave.

According to the FIR, Jyothi had applied for sick leave regularisation and medical re-screening, and Dr Priyadarshini allegedly demanded Rs 1 lakh to help her. However, Jyothi reportedly negotiated the amount down to Rs 75,000.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), in the FIR, has mentioned the money trail from Jyothi to Karimulla and subsequently to Dr Priyadarshini’s driver.

Maharashtra onion farmers’ body seeks subsidy citing falling prices, mounting costs

MUMBAI

: Onion growers in Maharashtra are on the verge of “economic destruction” due to crashing prices and mounting cultivation costs, and the government must step in by providing a subsidy of Rs 1,500 per quintal, a farmers’ association said on Friday.

Prices of the kitchen staple fell sharply over the past several months while the cost of seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, labour, irrigation, electricity, transport and storage have risen substantially, said the Maharashtra State Onion Growers Association.

Association founder-president Bharat Dighole alleged that farmers were unable to recover even their production cost.

A farmer from Neknoor in Beed district brought 41 sacks of onion to the Solapur market for sale, but only 20 sacks could be sold. After deducting labour charges, commissions, market fees, transport and other expenses, he was left with Rs 519, the association said.

In another case, an onion farmer at the Satana Agricultural Produce Market



Committee in Nashik district received only Rs 50 per quintal, or 50 paise per kilogram, for his produce, and later attempted suicide on the market premises, the association said.

Farmers staged a sit-in at the Vaijapur Agricultural Produce Market Committee in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district and halted onion auctions after low prices were offered for their produce, it said.

Dighole demanded that the state and central governments

immediately provide a subsidy of Rs 1,500 per quintal to affected onion growers, remove export restrictions on onions, regulate commissions in market committees, provide direct market access to farmers and announce a guaranteed support price for onions. He also urged Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to intervene personally in the matter. The association warned of a state-wide agitation that if immediate relief measures were not announced.

Suspended TMC spokesperson Riju Dutta slams party, says corruption had been institutionalised



KOLKATA

Suspended TMC spokesperson Riju Dutta on Sunday launched a scathing attack on his party, alleging that corruption had been institutionalised.

A day after being suspended for six years for alleged breach of party discipline, Dutta questioned why people in West Bengal now felt “free to express themselves without fear” following the BJP’s electoral victory.

“Why have things come to such a stage? Why are people celebrating? We did not introspect,” he told reporters.

The suspended leader alleged that money was demanded for almost every civic-related work.

“From installing commodores in homes to getting building plans approved, money had to be paid everywhere. There was hardly any work for which people did not have to pay the TMC,” Dutta alleged.

He also referred to the school jobs scam and said the allegations of “job theft” should have been given serious attention.

“If someone says jobs were not stolen, that would be a

grave sin,” he said, adding that whenever he tried to raise such issues within the party forum, he was ignored.

Earlier, in a video message after the BJP’s victory in the state, Dutta had thanked BJP leaders for what he described as their “courtesy” and “protection”.

“The BJP’s central and Bengal leadership openly told me to continue doing politics fearlessly according to my ideology and beliefs and assured me that my family would not be harmed,” he had said.

He also mentioned BJP MLA Ritesh Tiwari for extending support and claimed that many TMC leaders were keen to join the saffron party.

Dutta also apologised for his past personal attacks on BJP leaders during political campaigns.

Reacting to his suspension, Dutta said he had devoted 13 years to the party and risen through “hard work and performance”.

“I am not a nepo kid. Yet my beloved party suspended me because I spoke the truth,” he

said in a social media post.

He further claimed that the party’s disciplinary committee accused him of not appearing before it despite his having submitted a written reply at the party headquarters within the stipulated time.

“Perhaps the suspension notice had been typed even before my reply notice was read,” Dutta said.

The TMC on Saturday suspended three of its spokespersons, including Dutta, for six years over alleged anti-party remarks made following the party’s defeat in the West Bengal Assembly elections.

According to a statement, spokespersons Kohinoor Majumdar, Riju Dutta and Kartik Ghosh were suspended for allegedly violating party discipline.

Dutta drew attention after praising the BJP government’s measures to curb post-poll violence in a social media post. The notices were issued by TMC MP Derek O’Brien, who is a member of the party’s disciplinary committee.

Besides the three suspended leaders, notices had also been served on Krishnendu Chowdhury and Papiya Ghosh.

The party had sought explanations within 24 hours, asking why disciplinary action should not be initiated against them for “breach of party discipline”.

According to party leaders, some spokespersons had publicly questioned the leadership’s functioning and campaign strategy after the electoral defeat.

A senior TMC leader said the party would respond to Dutta’s allegations “at the appropriate time” and questioned why he raised the issues only after the election results.

Haryana Local Body Polls: 47pc Turnout Recorded Amid Allegations of Bogus Voting and Rigging

CHANDIGARH

A voter turnout of 47 per cent was recorded in the elections to seven municipal bodies and 528 Panchayati Raj posts in Haryana on Sunday, amidst reports of bogus voting, allegations of bribery, and opposition protests.

While polling officially concluded at 6 PM, the Election Commission allowed voters already present in queues to exercise their franchise. According to official data, Uklana municipal body recorded the highest turnout at 69 per cent, while Sonipat remained at the bottom with 40.2 per cent.

The polling process was marred by an incident in Rewari where a youth was apprehended for allegedly attempting to cast a fraudulent vote at a Government Senior Secondary School. Following a protest by rival candidates, the police took the individual into custody. During questioning, the youth reportedly claimed he was acting on the instructions of a local individual to vote in favor of the BJP. Police officials stated that an investigation is underway to identify the person mentioned by the suspect.

Further allegations of electoral malpractice surfaced in Dharuhera, where Congress chairperson candidate Kumari Raj accused the ruling BJP of distributing cash. Raj alleged that BJP workers were handing out Rs 1,000 to voters and accused the administration of colluding with the ruling party to rig the election.

Similarly, in Ambala, Congress supporters staged a protest outside a booth in Ward 8, claiming that an unidentified woman with mismatched credentials was caught attempting to vote but fled before authorities could intervene. They also alleged that BJP workers were permitted to carry mobile phones inside polling stations in violation of EC guidelines.

The election also faced criticism over logistical arrangements, particularly for the elderly. In Uklana, a woman accompanying an 80-year-old voter accused security personnel of misconduct and failing to provide a wheelchair. She claimed that the staff told her to carry the elderly man inside themselves, citing a total lack of facilities for senior citizens.

While the results for the Panchayat by-elections are expected to be announced later tonight, the counting for the municipal polls is scheduled for May 13. In Sonipat and other regions, polling officials have completed the sealing of EVMs under heavy security.

Actor Jeet backs BJP govt in Bengal, hopes for ‘new dawn’ under Modi

KOLKATA

Bengali filmstar Jeet on Sunday expressed confidence in Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s “guarantee” and said he hoped the new BJP government in West Bengal would usher in a “new dawn” for the state.

In a social media post, the actor, whose real name is Jitendra Madhani, said BJP’s victory in the state was not merely a political success but a “major commitment” to the people of the state.

“This victory is not just a political success for the BJP, but a major commitment towards the people. West Bengal is a land enriched by resources, talent, culture and the contributions of countless people,” Jeet wrote on social media.

“The people of this soil have given a lot to the country through their intellect, hard work and sacrifice. But it is extremely painful that Bengal’s pride, self-respect, culture and educational heritage have long been projected in a diminished manner before the country and the world,” he added.

The actor said he was hopeful that the BJP government would bring “a new morning” and “new light” for the state.

“Today, I am hopeful that the BJP government will bring a new dawn for Bengal and show a new direction of light. Crores of people continue to place their trust and expectations on the promise made by our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi,” the actor said.

“I want West Bengal, our beloved Bengal, to again become ‘Sonar Bangla’ and regain its lost glory. That is my hope. Jai Hind!” he added.

Jeet had on May 4 congratulated the BJP for its “historic victory” in West Bengal and expressed hope that it would mark the beginning of a new chapter of development and progress in the state.

Drug regulator asks firms to file safety reports from actual launch date of new drugs

NEW DELHI,

India’s drug regulator has directed manufacturers and importers to submit Periodic Safety Update Reports (PSURs) for new drugs from the date of actual marketing of the product rather than from the date of regulatory approval, in a move aimed at strengthening post-marketing safety surveillance.

In an advisory issued by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) on April 21, the regulator said it has observed instances where companies obtained approval for a new drug but launched the product in the market much later while submitting PSUR data from the approval date instead of the launch date.

The CDSCO said such a practice results in the loss of “valuable safety insights” that are critical for monitoring adverse effects and ensuring patient safety after commercial roll out of medicines.

Under the Fifth Schedule of the New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019, manufacturers and importers are required to submit PSURs as part of



post-marketing drug safety monitoring.

“In view of the above, all manufacturers/importers are hereby directed to ensure strict compliance,” the advisory stated.

According to the regulator, PSUR submission timelines will now commence from the date of actual marketing of the new drug “even if approval was granted earlier”.

The advisory by the Drugs

Controller General of India (DCGI) also said that ordinarily all dosage forms, formulations and indications for a new drug should be covered in a single PSUR to avoid duplicate submissions.

However, separate presentation of safety data for different dosage forms, indications or patient populations should be included within the same report, it added.

India's growth to slow to 6.7 pc on waning momentum, oil price shock: BMI



NEW DELHI

India's economic growth is likely to decelerate to 6.7 per cent in the current fiscal, from 7.7 per cent in 2025-26, with the GDP expansion expected to slow significantly due to waning momentum and oil price shock from Iran war, BMI said on Monday.

BMI, a Fitch Group firm, also said that the prospect of the Iran-US conflict escalating in scope presents downside risk to its growth outlook and India must balance spending needs on defence and fuel price stabilisation against fiscal consolidation agenda.

The tax reforms in GST and income tax carried out in 2025 will partly offset effects of cost-push inflation, BMI said, adding looser monetary policy will support capital spending, as increased uncertainty amid the war and higher input prices hurt investment.

BMI estimates that India's economy grew 8 per cent y-o-y in the January-March quarter

of 2026, faster than its original 7.8 per cent projection.

It has revised its growth forecast for 2025-26 upwards by 0.1 percentage points to 7.7 per cent.

"We maintain our forecast of 6.7 per cent GDP growth during FY2026-27 due to our belief that the effects of last year's tax reforms will fade as input costs increase in the new fiscal year," BMI said, adding GDP growth could "slow significantly" due to waning momentum and oil price shock from Iran war.

It said one factor behind the unchanged FY27 forecast is its assessment that the effects of last year's tax reforms will dissipate by April-June quarter of 2026.

Such waning is already apparent in the vehicle registrations data, showing new registrations grew 9 per cent y-o-y in April after rising 23 per cent in January-March.

Likewise, while electricity generation grew 2.7 per cent y-o-y last quarter, the growth was driven by power demand in

January-February. During March, electricity consumption rose by a mere 0.9 per cent y-o-y.

"We also anticipate restricted supply of energy and food in FY2026-27 to slow consumption growth while raising price inflation," BMI said.

It said that conflict in Iran has already curtailed supplies and that has already been factored in the 6.7 per cent growth estimate for FY27.

However, India's weather department is also predicting 'below normal' rainfall during this year's monsoon (June-September) due to El Nino. The International Monetary Fund estimates a typical El Nino weather shock hurting India's GDP by 0.1 per cent.

"We think this impact could further offset economic momentum inherited from FY2025-26," BMI said.

BMI said its models indicate that GDP growth will fall by up to 0.4-0.7 percentage points if the price of Brent Crude rises to around USD 90/bbl.

The size of this impact makes India's economy amongst the most sensitive to changes in energy prices within Asia, BMI said.

Crude prices have jumped to USD 105/barrel on Monday after the United States rejected Iran's peace proposal, rekindling fears that the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz will continue for a longer time.

The prices have jumped from about USD 73/ barrel level prevailing before the war started on February 28. Crude prices touched a 4-year high of USD 126/barrel on April 30.

Indian mangoes become prize in Singapore cultural festival

SINGAPORE

Performers at a cultural festival in Singapore this weekend went home with an unusual reward – boxes of mangoes – as India expanded efforts to promote the exports of the fruit through community events.

Mangoes from different states were presented for songs, dances and musical programmes during the "Threads of Indian Tradition" festival, held in the Nee Soon public housing estate in north-east Singapore.

This was the second such mango promotion festival organised this month by the High Commission of India in Singapore. The first one was held between May 1 and 3 at another public housing estate on the east coast, where over 6,000 visitors sampled 10 varieties of Indian mangoes.

"Our endeavour has been to introduce a diverse range of globally renowned Indian mangoes to our Singaporean friends," High Commissioner of India Shilpak Ambule said on Sunday.

The two rounds of the mango promotion festival organised this year have been "received with enthusiasm," he said. "We plan to do more such events in this mango season. We are not just showcasing Indian mangoes, but giving a glimpse of Incredible India to our Singaporean friends,

with the hope of bringing them even closer to India.

Tanuja Mohindru, a homemaker who has been living in Singapore for more than a decade and is a regular volunteer at such community festivals, told PTI that the presentation of mango boxes to performers at the recent cultural event has "sparked greater buying interest" beyond the Indian diaspora.

"I have performed at dozens of events but it is the first time that I have been felicitated with a carton of mangoes, my favorite fruit," said local musical star Thanesh (goes by a single name), who collaborated with a band of musicians at the weekend festival.

The event, which featured around 60 performers, drew more than 650 Nee Soon residents, its organiser Sithara Doriasamy said.

It was attended by some high-profile guests, including Singapore MP Lee Hui Ying.

India, the world's largest producer of mangoes, has been stepping up efforts to promote exports of the fruit in key overseas markets – the UAE, the US and the UK among others – with campaigns centred on premium varieties including Alphonso and Kesar. Promotion initiatives often include mango festivals and buyer-seller outreach programmes.

Fastener traders want govt to roll back quality control order amid rising cost, supply disruptions

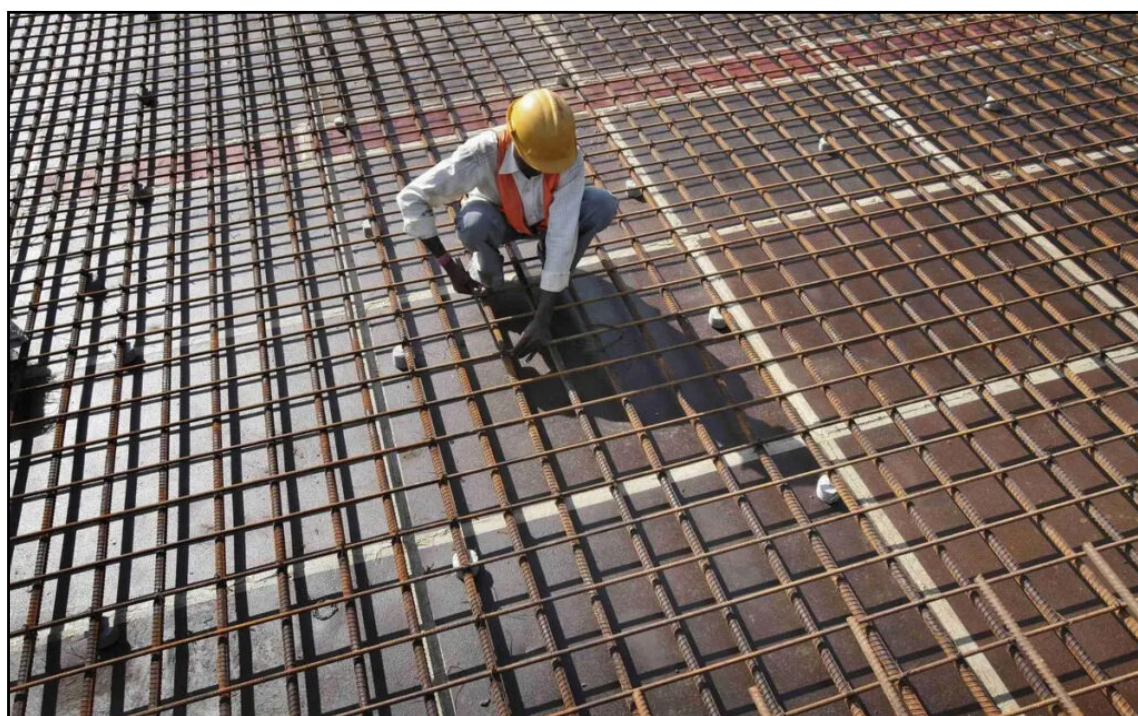
NEW DELHI

Fastener traders on Sunday urged the government to withdraw the quality control order (QCO) on the product as it is raising costs, cutting supply, and disrupting production in the country.

They said that fasteners are produced in small batches but in a huge variety, often on the same machine, yet the QCO imposes a rigid "one-product-one-licence" system that creates duplication, delays, and uncertainty.

Shaunak Rungta, Central Executive Committee Member, Federation of Indian MSMEs (FISME), said that quality cross-recessed screws, particularly drywall and chip-board screws, are not presently available in India, leaving firms without viable domestic sourcing options.

"The QCO has already reduced my firm's turnover by around 50 per cent, and continued delays risk closure. I will urge the government to withdraw this QCO



as it will impact Indian manufacturing also," Rungta said.

He added that the problem is compounded by port delays resulting from Harmonised System (HS) code confusion, which increases uncertainty and transaction costs.

Yusuf Unjahawala, a trader dealing in fasteners, said the imposition of BIS certification on these products would impact the manufacturing sector.

He said that the QCO is benefiting only a handful of manufacturers while marginalising traders who play a

key role in keeping the supply chain moving.

Fasteners include bolts, nuts, screws, washers, rivets, and studs, made in countless variants based on size, strength (grade), coating, and application.

They are used across almost every sector of the

economy — "automobiles, construction, machinery, electronics, railways, aerospace, and infrastructure.

Echoing views, think tank GTRI said India imports USD 1.13 billion worth of fasteners from countries like China (24.6 per cent), Japan (13.3 per cent), South Korea (9.9 per cent), and Germany (9.8 per cent).

"These imports typically consist of high-precision, specialised, or technology-intensive fasteners required for advanced manufacturing segments such as electronics, high-end machinery, and automotive components," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

He said that fasteners account for less than 1 per cent of the final product cost, but their absence can halt entire production lines.

Any delay, "whether due to regulatory barriers, certification bottlenecks, or supply disruptions, "can disproportionately impact industries like automobiles, infrastructure, and electronics, he added.

Operation Sandoor One Year Later Detailed Analysis

Operation Sandoor: One Year Later - The Pahalgam Attack, India's Military Response, Pakistan's Strategy, Global Diplomacy, and Lessons for South Asia

Introduction

Operation Sandoor emerged as one of the most consequential India-Pakistan military confrontations of the 2020s. Triggered by the brutal terrorist attack in Pahalgam in April 2025, the crisis evolved into a multi-domain conflict involving precision strikes, drone warfare, cyber operations, diplomacy, information warfare, naval mobilization, and global intervention.

For India, Operation Sandoor represented a shift from symbolic retaliation toward sustained punitive action against terrorist infrastructure allegedly operating from Pakistani soil. For Pakistan, the confrontation became both a military challenge and a political test of deterrence credibility.

The crisis also drew the attention of major world powers including the United States, China, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Gulf states, and European nations. Each country responded according to its strategic interests, geopolitical calculations, and regional alignments.

One year later, Operation Sandoor is studied not merely as a military operation but as a defining moment in South Asian security doctrine.

Chapter 1: The Background - Why the Region Was Already Tense

India and Pakistan have fought multiple wars since Partition in 1947. The core dispute over Jammu and Kashmir remained unresolved despite ceasefires, diplomatic talks, and confidence-building measures.

Over decades, India repeatedly accused Pakistan-based terror groups of carrying out attacks inside Indian territory. Pakistan denied state involvement but maintained political and strategic support structures in Kashmir.

Several major incidents had already shaped Indian strategic thinking:

- The 2001 Parliament attack
- The 2008 Mumbai attacks
- The 2016 Uri attack
- The 2019 Pulwama attack
- The Balakot airstrike aftermath

After Pulwama and Balakot, India gradually evolved a doctrine of calibrated retaliation. Indian planners increasingly believed that limited but decisive cross-border strikes could impose costs without necessarily triggering full-scale war.

Pakistan, meanwhile, relied heavily on the concept of nuclear deterrence. Islamabad believed the threat of escalation would prevent India from undertaking major military operations.

This strategic contest laid the foundation for Operation Sandoor.

Chapter 2: The Pahalgam Attack - The Spark

On 22 April 2025, terrorists attacked civilians in the Pahalgam region of Jammu and Kashmir. The massacre shocked India.

Twenty-six civilians, including tourists, were killed. Survivors described scenes of panic, targeted killings, and brutal execution-style violence.

The attack carried enormous emotional impact because many victims were ordinary tourists visiting Kashmir during a peaceful season.

Indian intelligence agencies quickly linked the attackers to The Resistance Front (TRF), widely believed by Indian authorities to be connected to Lashkar-e-Taiba.

The attack triggered national outrage across India.



Political pressure on the Indian government mounted immediately.

Questions emerged:

- How did the attackers infiltrate?
- Was there intelligence failure?
- Why were tourist zones insufficiently protected?

Was Pakistan attempting to reignite militancy in Kashmir?

India accused Pakistan-based terror networks of planning and facilitating the operation.

Pakistan denied involvement.

But by then, the political momentum in India had already shifted decisively toward retaliation.

Chapter 3: India's Initial Response - Diplomacy Before Military Action

India did not strike immediately.

The first phase after Pahalgam was diplomatic and strategic.

India's Measures Included:

- Downgrading diplomatic engagement
- Intensifying international outreach
- Sharing intelligence dossiers with major capitals
- Raising the issue in global forums
- Increasing troop alertness along the Line of Control
- Enhancing air defense readiness
- Naval deployments in the Arabian Sea

Indian leadership sought to create an international narrative:

This was not merely an India-Pakistan dispute.

India framed the crisis as a global terrorism issue.

This diplomatic groundwork became critical later when India launched military action.

Chapter 4: How Pakistan Planned Its Strategy

According to Indian security assessments and later military analyses, Pakistan's broader strategic thinking may have included several objectives.

Reviving the Kashmir Narrative

International attention toward Kashmir had declined over time.

A large incident risked forcing global powers to re-engage with the dispute.

Testing India's Political Threshold

Pakistan may have believed India would avoid large-scale escalation due to economic priorities and nuclear risks.

Maintaining Proxy Leverage

India long accused Pakistan's military establishment of preserving terrorist networks as asymmetric tools against India.

Internal Pakistani Pressures

- Pakistan in 2025 faced:
- Economic instability
- Political polarization
- Civil-military tensions
- Inflation and IMF dependency
- Domestic unrest

Historically, crises with India have often altered internal political dynamics in Pakistan.

Strategic Messaging to China and the Islamic World

Pakistan also likely sought to project itself as central to regional security calculations.

India, however, interpreted the Pahalgam attack as an intolerable escalation.

Chapter 5: Planning Operation Sandoor

India's response was not improvised.

Planning reportedly began immediately after the Pahalgam attack.

The Indian military, intelligence agencies, National Security Council structures, and political leadership coordinated closely.

The operation was reportedly designed around several principles:

- Precision strikes
- Limited duration
- Avoidance of Pakistani civilian targets
- Avoidance of major Pakistani military headquarters initially
- Focus on terror infrastructure
- Maintaining escalation dominance
- High-speed execution
- The codename "Sandoor" carried emotional symbolism.

Sandoor in Indian culture symbolizes marital commitment and sacrifice. Analysts interpreted the codename as representing the blood of innocent civilians and national resolve.

Chapter 6: The Night of Operation Sandoor

In the early hours of 7 May 2025, India launched Operation Sandoor.

The operation reportedly lasted around 25 minutes.

Indian forces struck nine major terror-linked targets inside Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

According to Indian briefings, targets included:

- Lashkar-e-Taiba facilities
- Jaish-e-Mohammed infrastructure
- Training camps
- Launch pads
- Command centers
- Logistics facilities

India stated that the strikes avoided Pakistani military installations.

The operation involved:

- Air Force precision strikes
- Long-range missile systems
- Loitering munitions
- Surveillance drones
- Electronic warfare support
- Intelligence fusion systems
- Indian media described the strikes as one of the most sophisticated coordinated military actions since Balakot.
- The strikes reportedly used:
- SCALP cruise missiles
- HAMMER precision-guided bombs
- BrahMos systems

Kamikaze drones

Satellite-supported targeting

India announced that the mission was "focused, measured, and non-escalatory."

But the region had already entered a dangerous phase.

Chapter 7: Pakistan's Immediate Response

Pakistan condemned the strikes as aggression.

Its military leadership vowed retaliation.

Pakistan's official narrative attempted to present the Indian strikes as exaggerated and politically motivated.

At the same time, Pakistani air defenses and military units were placed on maximum alert.

Within hours:

- Cross-border shelling intensified
- Drone incursions increased
- Air activity surged
- Information warfare exploded online

Claims and counterclaims flooded media

Pakistan reportedly launched coordinated drone and missile responses against multiple Indian positions.

Indian air defenses intercepted many incoming threats.

Both sides attempted to shape global opinion.

The information war became almost as intense as the military confrontation.

Chapter 8: Role of the Indian Air Force

The Indian Air Force played the central operational role.

Key Contributions:

- Precision Strike Capability
- Rafale aircraft equipped with advanced stand-off weapons allowed India to hit deep targets without exposing pilots excessively.
- Air Superiority and Deterrence
- Meteor missiles and integrated radar networks reportedly deterred deeper Pakistani air penetration.
- ISR Dominance
- India relied heavily on intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets.

Electronic Warfare

Electronic jamming and network warfare reportedly disrupted enemy coordination.

The Air Force demonstrated India's transition toward modern network-centric warfare.

Chapter 9: Role of the Indian Army

The Army maintained pressure along the Line of Control.

Army Responsibilities Included:

- Artillery dominance
- Counter-infiltration operations
- Border defense
- Rapid mobilization
- Intelligence coordination
- Special operations readiness
- Heavy artillery exchanges occurred across sectors.

Indian artillery reportedly targeted launch pads and infiltration routes.

The Army also strengthened internal security grids inside Jammu and Kashmir to prevent follow-up attacks.

Chapter 10: Role of the Indian Navy

The Indian Navy's role was strategic rather than headline-driven.

Naval Objectives Included:

- Deterrence in the Arabian Sea
- Monitoring Pakistani naval movements
- Protection of maritime trade routes
- Signaling escalation capability
- Sea denial preparedness
- Carrier groups and naval assets

Contd on page 14

Operation Sindoor.....

Contd from page 13

reportedly moved into operational positions.

Pakistan understood that any naval blockade or maritime disruption could severely affect its economy.

The naval dimension thus contributed significantly to strategic pressure.

Chapter 11: Cyber and Information Warfare

Operation Sindoor also demonstrated the growing importance of cyber warfare.

Reports later suggested:

Malware campaigns

Phishing attacks

Psychological operations

Deepfake content

Coordinated propaganda networks

Social media manipulation

Both countries witnessed:

Viral misinformation

False casualty reports

Fake videos

AI-generated battlefield claims

The digital battlefield became central to modern conflict management.

Chapter 12: The United States - Crisis Manager

The United States played one of the most important diplomatic roles.

Washington's priorities were clear:

Prevent nuclear escalation

Maintain regional stability

Protect global markets

Prevent Chinese strategic advantage

Avoid a prolonged South Asian war

American diplomacy reportedly operated continuously behind the scenes.

US officials engaged:

New Delhi

Islamabad

Gulf capitals

NATO partners

The US position broadly supported counter-terrorism while simultaneously urging restraint.

Eventually, Washington became a key facilitator in de-escalation discussions.

Many analysts later described the ceasefire understanding as heavily influenced by American diplomatic intervention.

Chapter 13: China's Role

China's position was complex.

Beijing is Pakistan's closest strategic partner.

China has enormous investments in Pakistan through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

At the same time, China did not want:

Regional instability

Threats to trade corridors

Disruption near Xinjiang

A broader war involving nuclear states

China officially called for restraint.

Unofficially, analysts believed Beijing provided diplomatic backing to Pakistan while simultaneously discouraging uncon-

trolled escalation.

China also carefully observed India's military modernization.

Operation Sindoor gave Beijing valuable insights into Indian operational capabilities.

Chapter 14: Turkey's Position

Turkey openly expressed sympathy toward Pakistan during the crisis.

Ankara's position reflected:

Its growing defense partnership with Pakistan

Islamic solidarity narratives

Strategic competition with India in some diplomatic spaces

Turkish media coverage strongly favored Pakistan.

India took note of Turkey's rhetoric.

This further complicated already strained India-Turkey relations.

Chapter 15: Iran's Quiet Importance

Iran played a quieter but important role.

Iran shares borders with both Pakistan and the broader strategic theater.

Tehran feared:

Refugee flows

Regional destabilization

Sunni extremist spillover

Disruption of regional energy routes

Iran reportedly encouraged de-escalation and backchannel communication.

India also maintained communication with Iran because of strategic connectivity interests involving Chabahar.

Chapter 16: Russia's Calculated Balance

Russia attempted to maintain equilibrium.

Moscow has historically enjoyed close defense ties with India but also cultivated relations with Pakistan in recent years.

Russia's priorities included:

Preventing instability

Maintaining arms relationships

Preserving Eurasian balance

Avoiding Western strategic expansion

Avoided inflammatory rhetoric

Supported de-escalation efforts

This reflected India's rising diplomatic influence in West Asia.

Chapter 18: The "Marka-e-Haq" and Information Narratives

Pakistan later commemorated aspects of the confrontation under the narrative of "Marka-e-Haq" (Battle for Truth/Justice).

Indian commentators criticized Pakistan's narrative-building efforts as attempts to project strategic success despite suffering military and diplomatic pressure.

Both countries constructed competing stories:

India's Narrative

Counter-terror operation

Precision retaliation

Strategic restraint

Deterrence restoration

Pakistan's Narrative

Defensive victory

National resilience

Resistance against aggression

Military preparedness

This battle over perception continued long after the ceasefire.

Chapter 19: The Ceasefire and De-escalation

By 10 May 2025, international concern had reached alarming levels.

Global markets reacted nervously.

Airspace disruptions intensified.

Nuclear rhetoric began appearing in international discussions.

Backchannel diplomacy accelerated.

Eventually, Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) from both countries engaged.

A ceasefire understanding was announced.

However, even after the announcement:

Drone sightings continued

Border tensions remained

Violations were reported

Public rhetoric stayed aggressive

Still, the major phase of the conflict had ended.

The crisis de-escalated gradually rather than instantly.

Chapter 20: One Year Later - What India Learned

Operation Sindoor transformed Indian strategic thinking.

Precision Warfare Works

India demonstrated the ability to execute rapid precision strikes without immediate uncontrolled escalation.

Technology Is Central

Drones, satellites, ISR networks, AI-assisted targeting, and cyber capabilities became essential.

Information Warfare Matters

Narrative control became almost as important as battlefield performance.

Air Defense Is Critical
Drone swarms and missile threats highlighted the importance of layered air defense systems.

Jointness Is Essential

The operation reinforced the need for integration among:

Army

Navy

Air Force

Intelligence agencies

Cyber units

Space assets

Diplomacy and Military

Power Must Work Together

India succeeded partly because military action was backed by strong diplomacy.

Terrorism and Conventional Conflict Are Increasingly Linked

A terrorist attack can rapidly trigger interstate military confrontation.

Chapter 21: Did India Imbibe the Lessons?

One year later, evidence suggested India had begun internalizing many lessons.

Areas of Progress:

Faster procurement of drones and anti-drone systems

Expansion of indigenous defense manufacturing

Improved integrated theater planning

Enhanced border surveillance

Better civilian-military coordination

Stronger cyber defense preparedness

But Challenges

Remained:

Intelligence gaps still exist

Border infiltration remains possible

Information warfare vulnerabilities continue

Escalation management remains delicate

Dependence on imported defense technology still significant

India learned important lessons, but the challenge of sustaining preparedness remains ongoing.

Chapter 22: What Pakistan Learned

Pakistan also drew major conclusions.

Likely Pakistani Lessons:

India is more willing to escalate than before

Precision retaliation is now normalized

International automatic support cannot be assumed

Economic fragility limits strategic options

Drone warfare has become central

Information management is crucial

Pakistan likely accelerated military modernization and strategic coordination with China after the crisis.

Chapter 23: The Future of India-Pakistan Conflict

Operation Sindoor may redefine future confrontations.

The crisis suggested that:

Limited wars below nuclear thresholds are increasingly thinkable

Precision strikes may

become normalized

Cyber warfare will expand dramatically

Drone combat will dominate tactical operations

International diplomacy will remain decisive in crisis termination

However, the danger remains immense.

Both India and Pakistan are nuclear powers.

Any future miscalculation could escalate uncontrollably.

Conclusion

Operation Sindoor was more than a military operation.

It was a strategic message.

India attempted to signal that large terrorist attacks would no longer be answered only with diplomatic protest.

Pakistan attempted to preserve deterrence credibility while managing internal and external pressures.

The United States sought stability. China balanced strategic partnership with risk management. Russia maintained calibrated neutrality. Turkey leaned toward Pakistan. Iran preferred regional calm. Gulf states acted cautiously.

The crisis demonstrated how modern warfare is no longer confined to battlefields.

It unfolds simultaneously across:

Airspace

Borders

Oceans

Cyberspace

Diplomacy

Media ecosystems

Financial systems

Public psychology

One year later, Operation Sindoor remains a defining chapter in South Asian strategic history.

Its biggest lesson may be this:

In the nuclear age, even limited conflict carries enormous risks.

But equally, unresolved terrorism and proxy warfare continue to push nations toward dangerous confrontation.

Whether South Asia learns long-term stability from Operation Sindoor remains uncertain.

But the operation undeniably changed the strategic vocabulary of the region forever.

Notes on Terminology and Sources

The article uses publicly reported timelines, military briefings, media analyses, and strategic assessments available during and after the 2025 India-Pakistan confrontation associated with Operation Sindoor. Some operational details remain disputed between India and Pakistan. Casualty figures, tactical claims, and strategic interpretations vary across official and unofficial sources.

North Tech Symposium 2026: Prayagraj Emerges as India's New Theatre of Defence Innovation



SYSTEM OBSERVER EXCLUSIVE

North Tech Symposium 2026 concluded in Prayagraj after three days of intense military-industrial engagement, emerging not merely as a defence exhibition but as a visible manifestation of India's evolving defence innovation ecosystem. Jointly organised by the Indian Army's Northern and Central Commands in collaboration with the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers, the symposium transformed the historic Sangam city into a national platform where battlefield experience, technological innovation, industrial capability, and strategic vision converged under a single operational framework.

Held under the theme "Raksha Triveni Sangam - Where Technology, Industry & Soldiering Converge," the event carried symbolism beyond rhetoric. Situated at the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers, Prayagraj became the stage for another form of convergence - the coming together of frontline military experience, indigenous technological development, private industrial participation, and academic innovation. Significantly, for the first time, two frontline operational commands of the Indian Army - the Northern Command and Central Command - shared a unified platform to articulate battlefield requirements, operational lessons, and future capability needs before industry and innovators.

Unlike conventional defence expos dominated by broad product showcases, North Tech Symposium 2026 was deliberately structured around 87 clearly defined Army operational requirements, compelling industry to respond directly to battlefield challenges faced by troops deployed across difficult operational theatres including Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh. The result was a far more focused and outcome-oriented ecosystem in which innovation was evaluated not merely by novelty, but by

operational relevance, deployability, survivability, and battlefield utility.

At the institutional centre of this convergence stood the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers, whose role extended far beyond event coordination. Established under the aegis of the Confederation of Indian Industry, SIDM today functions as the apex representative body of India's private defence industry and one of the principal bridges connecting the Armed Forces, private manufacturers, MSMEs, start-ups, academia, and policymakers.

As a joint organiser of the symposium, SIDM played a decisive role in shaping the event into an operationally aligned military-industrial platform rather than a conventional exhibition. By facilitating participation from nearly 284 companies, including major defence manufacturers, emerging start-ups, specialised technology firms, innovators in uniform, and MSMEs, SIDM helped create one of the broadest indigenous defence innovation ecosystems witnessed in recent years.

More importantly, SIDM acted as the interface between operational military requirements and industrial capability. Through direct interaction between Army formations, scientists, defence manufacturers, procurement stakeholders, and technology developers, the organisation helped identify systems suited for immediate field deployment, operational sustainment, rapid prototyping, and indigenous production. Its broader mandate - supporting Aatmanirbhar Bharat through indigenous design, manufacturing, procurement facilitation, capability mapping, and MSME integration - was visibly reflected throughout the symposium floor.

The scale and diversity of technologies displayed in Prayagraj highlighted the expanding depth of India's defence-industrial ecosystem. Drone and counter-drone systems dominated much of the exhibition, reflecting the Army's growing recognition that unmanned systems, autonomous strike

capability, and electronic warfare are becoming central to modern battlefield operations.

Among the showcased systems was the Doot Mk-1 Nano Drone developed by IDR Research and Development, an AI-enabled reconnaissance drone reportedly capable of autonomously identifying up to 80 object classes in real time for tactical mission intelligence. NextLeap Aeronautics displayed advanced UAVs and autonomous defence platforms designed for surveillance, combat support, and independent battlefield operations.

Mobility and high-altitude operational support systems also featured prominently. Dhash Defense Systems showcased the DHASH 4x4 4S, a four-seater all-terrain vehicle designed for rapid troop mobility across extreme terrain, alongside a specialised closed-cabin variant engineered specifically for Super High Altitude Areas (SHAA).

In the Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance domain, EON Space Labs presented an indigenous germanium-free thermal imager, a strategically important development in an area where India has historically depended upon imported electro-optical systems. Meanwhile, ADSL (JCBL Group) displayed armoured combat platforms and aerial delivery systems intended to strengthen battlefield logistics and operational sustainment.

Companies such as SMPP Ltd and IG Defence showcased a range of indigenous mission-ready technologies aimed at enhancing operational preparedness, survivability, and battlefield resilience under the broader vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

Artificial intelligence, robotics, simulation technologies, electronic warfare systems, AI-driven communication decoding, real-time threat detection platforms, and advanced battlefield sensors further reflected the Army's increasing focus on digitally enabled warfare architectures. The exhibition

also highlighted next-generation training ecosystems, including virtual reality-based mission trainers, digital twin systems, and advanced wargaming technologies.

The inauguration of the symposium by Rajnath Singh reinforced the strategic importance of the event. The Defence Minister emphasised the need to identify technologies suited for immediate field deployment while strengthening India's indigenous defence ecosystem. The symposium also unfolded against the backdrop of tributes paid to the Armed Forces for their role in Operation Sindoor, which he described as a golden chapter in India's military history.

General Upendra Dwivedi visited the exhibition and reviewed a wide spectrum of indigenous technologies, commending collaborative efforts between the Army and the domestic defence industry in accelerating self-reliance in defence production.

Lieutenant General Anindya Sengupta underscored the importance of innovation and collaboration in strengthening India's defence preparedness, while Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma highlighted the symposium's role in integrating operational experience with industrial innovation to shape future combat capability.

Adding a broader technological perspective, Jitendra Singh observed that modern warfare is increasingly shaped by advanced technologies, autonomous systems, and real-time data-driven combat architectures rather than physical force alone. He also highlighted a reported 174 percent rise in India's defence production, describing the current period as a decisive phase in India's defence-industrial transformation.

Yet despite the sophistication of technologies displayed in Prayagraj, the broader significance of North Tech Symposium 2026 lies in the institutional shift it represents.

The symposium reflected the Indian Army's growing recognition that future mili-

tary preparedness will depend not merely on imported platforms or procurement budgets, but on the ability to cultivate a responsive indigenous defence-industrial ecosystem capable of rapidly translating battlefield requirements into deployable capability.

That challenge remains substantial.

India's defence innovation ecosystem has long demonstrated engineering talent and technological ambition, but has often struggled to convert prototypes into fielded military systems through timely testing, procurement, and scaled induction. North Tech Symposium 2026 therefore represents more than a technology showcase - it represents a test of whether India's military-industrial architecture can evolve from exhibition-driven engagement toward outcome-driven capability generation.

If the technologies and partnerships emerging from Prayagraj move into accelerated field trials, procurement pipelines, and operational deployment, the symposium may well be remembered as a defining milestone in India's defence-industrial evolution.

If not, it risks becoming another exhibition of unrealised promise.

Nevertheless, the message emerging from Prayagraj is unmistakable. India's defence-industrial base is becoming broader, technologically deeper, and increasingly ambitious. The convergence of soldiers, scientists, manufacturers, start-ups, academia, and policymakers under a unified operational framework reflects the gradual emergence of a more integrated national defence innovation ecosystem.

North Tech Symposium 2026 demonstrated that the architecture for meaningful military-industrial collaboration is steadily taking shape.

The challenge now is to ensure that this convergence delivers not merely innovation on display but battlefield capability in service of the soldier and the nation.

Sadguru Shri Madhu Paramhans Ji Maharaj Emphasises Control Over Mind Through Naam and Satsang



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

Bestowing grace through a shower of nectar-like discourses today Ranjri, Jammu, Sadguru Shri Madhu Paramhans Ji Maharaj of Sahib Bandgi stated that no one is able to see the mind, nor is anyone able to truly comprehend it. This entire world is entangled in the web of the mind. When the saints spoke of that 'Immortal Realm' (Amar Lok), they faced opposition for the world remains deeply enmeshed in transient, non-spiritual matters.

Observe for yourselves: after receiving the Naam (the Divine Name), you experienced a profound transfor-

mation within. Yet, people continue to offer resistance. This is because of the snare laid by Niranjan (the Cosmic Mind/Illusion), which has entrapped everyone. The mind is making everyone dance to its tunes; indeed, all living beings remain under the dominion of the mind. You may feel an inner urge to engage in meditation; however, the moment you sit down for meditation and Sumiran (remembrance of the Divine Name), a massive game of deception begins. The mind instantly whisks you away transporting your thoughts far, far away. The mind simply refuses to come under anyone's control. Just as a street performer makes a

monkey dance, the mind is making everyone dance.

Your only true adversary is none other than your own mind. It manifests itself in myriad forms. One truth is universally accepted: this world is perishable, whereas the Soul (Atma) is immortal. There are no two opinions on this matter. Yet, when one looks around at everyone, one sees that all remain entangled.

Previously, television channels were flooded with spiritual discourses. However, after some spiritual leaders engaged in questionable acts, people became disillusioned with the Gurus and spiritual figures. Now, doctors and astrologers have taken their place on these channels for, ultimately, the channel owners are merely interested in making money.

Humanity is running around like a madman in a frantic search for peace. This precious human life is slipping away a fact of which everyone is well aware. One attains this human form only after traversing through the cycle of 8.4 million different species. All scriptures affirm that the human body has been granted to us for the sole purpose of attaining Moksha (liberation). But to whom can one explain this? No one seems to have any desire to truly understand.

There lies a massive complication within this very body; formidable demons reside within it. From where does such evil arise? A man will rape and murder even a small, innocent girl child. Is the Soul (Atma) truly the one committing such acts? People will kill another human being over a mere pittance. Yet, no one seems to be paying any attention to this grave reality. It is all a game of the mind. The mind compels a human being to do whatever it desires; the soul exerts no influence whatsoever. Hostile forces

are currently ruling over the body.

Therefore, Satsang (spiritual discourse) is essential. Whatever actions you are currently performing are all related to the body; there is no action among them that relates to the soul. If a person attempts to sit in meditation, the mind does not allow it; instead, it drags the mind far astray. Without the Name (the Divine Word), it is impossible to gain control over these forces. And this Name can be received only from a Sant Sadguru (a True Spiritual Master).

Family Escapes Unhurt After BSNL Tower Falls On House JAMMU

A family had a narrow escape after a Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) mobile tower fell on their house following high-speed winds and a severe storm in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district, officials said.

The incident took place in Pangdour village during the intervening night of Sunday and Monday, when strong winds accompanied by heavy lightning and rain lashed the area, causing widespread damage, they said.

Officials said the BSNL tower collapsed onto the house of Banarsi Dass, damaging their residence. Two rooms of the house were damaged, while nearby tin sheds and solar panels were also destroyed, they said.

"A powerful storm accompanied by strong winds hit the area at midnight. The mobile tower collapsed completely onto their house, causing damage to two rooms," an official said.

Recalling the terrifying incident, Banarsi Dass said he was awake around 12:30 in mid night when he heard a massive crashing sound amid intense lightning and rainfall.

CM Omar Abdullah inaugurates, lays foundation of development projects worth Rs.42.38 cr in Ganderbal

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
SRINAGAR**

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today inaugurated and laid foundation stones for multiple development projects worth ₹42.38 crore across Ganderbal district, aimed at strengthening healthcare infrastructure, road connectivity, public amenities, youth facilities, heritage conservation and tourism development.

The Chief Minister began his tour at Beehama, Ganderbal, where he laid the foundation stone for construction of a Library & Reading Room to be established by the Culture Department at an estimated cost of ₹4.83 crore. The project is envisioned as a modern knowledge and learning space for students and youth of the district.

He also e-launched several key infrastructure projects including upgradation of inner links of Ahan Zazna, Waskura and Khojbagh Kondbal; upgradation and construction of link roads from Gutlibagh to Baba Wayil under NABARD-RIDF; construction of Sindh Riverfront Phase-I at Ganderbal; and widening and upgradation of road from Dursuma Market to Misbagh Baba Mohallah, Checkpora Arhama, involving a cumulative estimated cost of ₹15.36 crore.

The Chief Minister further e-inaugurated the new Divisional Office building of



Sindh Forest Division at Beehama, Ganderbal, constructed at a cost of ₹1.11 crore, which is expected to improve administrative functioning and public service delivery in the forest sector.

In the cultural heritage sector, the Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for restoration, conservation and development of the historic Masjid Hamam and allied works at Malshahi Masjid, Malshahi Bagh, at an estimated cost of ₹5.01 crore. The project aims to preserve this architectural and cultural legacy while promoting heritage tourism.

At District Hospital Ganderbal, the Chief Minister inaugurated Bone Densitometry and Fibro Scan machines procured under CSR support from HDFC Bank at a cost of ₹1.16 crore. The advanced diag-

nostic equipment is expected to significantly improve healthcare services and facilitate early diagnosis and treatment for patients in the district.

Later, at Gadoora, Ganderbal, the Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for construction of a Youth Hostel at Government College of Physical Education, Ganderbal, to be executed by the Public Works Department at a cost of ₹15.26 crore.

During his visit to the college premises, the Chief Minister also inspected an exhibition showcasing modern sports science and training equipment, including magnetic gait analysis systems, force plates, body stat analysis tools, basic life support demonstration units, skiing equipment, bowling machines and coaching analysis software. He appre-

ciated the college administration for equipping students with modern training and coaching facilities and promoting scientific approaches in sports education.

The Chief Minister also visited the work site of Guzhama Bridge where he reviewed the status of this long-pending project and directed the concerned departments to ensure timely execution while maintaining quality standards.

He was informed that the technical evaluation process has been completed and the bridge design is presently under progress. Stressing the importance of timely completion, the Chief Minister instructed the officers to ensure that the project is completed within the approved cost and stipulated timeframe so that the bridge is dedicated to the public at

the earliest.

A large gathering of local residents expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister for taking up the bridge project, which had remained stalled for more than a decade. Interacting with the locals, the Chief Minister assured them that the government is fully aware of the hardships faced by the people due to the absence of the bridge and reiterated his commitment to completing the project within the stipulated timeframe.

During the tour and inauguration and foundation laying ceremonies, the Chief Minister was accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Minister for Health & Medical Education Sakina Itoo, Minister for Forests Javed Ahmed Rana, Minister for Youth Services & Sports Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani and MLA Zadibal Tanvir Sadiq.

Commissioner Secretary Housing & Urban Development Department, Commissioner Secretary Youth Services & Sports, Commissioner Secretary Culture, Chief Conservator of Forests J&K, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, SSP Ganderbal, Chief Engineer Public Works (R&B), Medical Superintendent District Hospital Ganderbal and other senior officers also accompanied the Chief Minister during the visit.