

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! My responsibility to...

have "complete operational freedom" to decide on the mode, targets and timing of India's response to the terror strike, according to government sources.

The prime minister also affirmed that it is a national resolve to deal a crushing blow to terrorism, the sources said after the meeting.

India on April 23 announced a raft of punitive measures against Pakistan, including the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, shutting down the only operational land-border crossing between the two countries at Punjab's Attari and downgrading diplomatic ties in view of the cross-border links to the attack.

On Sunday, Singh was addressing a gathering at the "Sanatan Sanskriti Jagran Mahotsav" here.

Hailing the role of seers and spiritual leaders in "protecting the soul of a country", he said a soldier fights in the "ranbhoomi" (battlefield), while a seer fights in the "jeevanbhomi" (field of life).

Singh asserted that India's power lines not only in its armed forces, but also in its culture and spirituality.

This is a land that is known for a warrior like Arjuna, but it also gave a saint like Lord Buddha to the world, he said.

"It is a nation where a sword is purified with meditation ('tapasya')," he said.

Singh emphasised that to achieve the goal of "Viksit Bharat" (developed India) by 2047, the country will have to become strong in every way.

"We will become truly Viksit Bharat if we become strong economically as well as spiritually and culturally," he said.

LG flags off...

by the Consulate General of India, Ministry of External Affairs, GoI, at Jeddah. The Lieutenant Governor also recognised and appreciated the support by all the stakeholders for successful organisation of holy pilgrimage.

Omar Abdullah, Chief Minister; Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary; Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Vidhi Kumar Birdi, IGP Kashmir; Akshay Labroo, Deputy Commissioner Budgam and members of J&K Haj Committee, senior officers of Airport Authority, Civil and Police administration were present on the occasion.

CM bids farewell...

and other concerned. The pilgrims expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister for the elaborate and efficient arrangements made at both the Hajj House and Srinagar International Airport. Elaborate facilities have been put in place for the convenience of the pilgrims, including smooth transportation, boarding & lodging, luggage verification, security screening, refreshment, food, prayer arrangements, distribution of travel documents and prompt issuance of boarding passes.

SC to hear...

and boards. The top court had noted the submissions of Mehta and said that waqf properties, including 'waqf by user', already registered or declared by way of notification, shall not be disturbed and denotified till the next date of hearing.

It had then granted a week's time to the Centre to file a preliminary response to the pleas challenging the validity of the law and posted the matter on May 5.

The three-judge bench of the Supreme Court will hear on Monday the batch of five petitions which are now titled In Re the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 and other related fresh pleas on the issue. The batch of pleas include the one filed by AIMIM chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi.

In its affidavit on April 25, the Centre defended the amended Act and opposed any "blanket stay" by the court on a "law having presumption of constitutionality passed by Parliament". Justifying a provision on "waqf by user" properties, it said any interference would create a "legislative regime by a judicial order".

Waqf by user refers to a practice where a property is recognised as a religious or charitable endowment (waqf) based on its long-term, uninterrupted use for such purposes, even if there isn't a formal and written declaration of waqf by the owner.

In a 1,332-page preliminary counter-affidavit, the Ministry of Minority Affairs referred to the provisions of the old waqf laws and said the registration of waqf properties, including 'waqf by user', has been mandatory since 1923.

The government said the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, respects the essential religious practices of Muslims by leaving matters of faith and worship "untouched".

It had claimed an addition of 20 lakh acre of waqf land post the law's 2013 amendment and flagged "misuse" of waqf provisions to encroach upon private and government properties.

The Centre urged the apex court to dismiss the pleas against the Waqf (Amendment) Act and termed it "really shocking" that there was a 116 per cent rise in the auqaf area after the 2013 amendment.

"Right before even the Mughal era, pre-Independence era and post-Independence era, the total of wakfs created was 18,29,163.896 acres of land in India," it had claimed, adding, "Shockingly, after 2013, the addition of wakf land is 20,92,072.536 acres."

The affidavit claimed the figures were voluntarily uploaded by the respective waqfs and waqf boards on the Waqf Management System of India portal.

It argued, "Despite there being a regime of mandatory registration of all kinds of waqf including 'waqf by user' making registration mandatory almost since a century, i.e. since 1923, individuals or organisations used to claim private lands and government lands as waqf including under 'waqf by user' which not only lead to deprivation of valuable property rights of individual citizens but similarly unauthorised claims over public properties."

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), a prominent Muslim body has accused the Centre of submitting incorrect data in the top court and sought action against the officer concerned for filing a "false affidavit".

The board has expressed serious objections to the statement made by the government that there has been a "shocking increase" in the number of Waqf properties uploaded in the central portal after 2013.

Air Chief Marshal...

grounds of national security and public policy.

New Delhi also suspended all postal services from Pakistan and banned entry of Pakistani-flagged ships at Indian ports.

Pakistani troops violate...

Rajouri, Mendhar, Naushera, Sunderbani, and Akhnoor in J-K. Indian Army responded promptly and proportionately," a defence spokesperson said.

The ceasefire violations along the LoC and International Border (IB) have been very rare since India and Pakistan renewed the ceasefire agreement on February 25, 2021.

Taking precautionary measures, the panicked border villagers have already started cleaning their community and individual bunkers to make them habitable.

Since the night of April 24, just hours after India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty following the Pahalgalam terror attack, Pakistani troops have been resorting to unprovoked firing at various places along the LoC in J-K, starting from the Kashmir Valley.

Initially beginning with unprovoked small arms firing at several posts along the LoC in Kupwara and Baramulla districts of north Kashmir, Pakistan swiftly expanded its ceasefire violations to the Poonch sector and subsequently to the Akhnoor sector of the Jammu region.

This was followed by small arms firing at several posts along the LoC in the Sunderbani and Naushera sectors of Rajouri district. Subsequently, the firing expanded to Mendhar in Poonch district and the international border in Pargwal sector in Jammu district.

The renewed ceasefire violations come despite a recent hotline conversation between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan, during which the Indian side is learnt to have cautioned Pakistan.

On April 24, Pakistan blocked its airspace for Indian airlines, closed the Wagah border crossing, suspended all trade with India, and warned that any attempt to divert water would be considered an "Act of War."

22 injured in...

The injured were shifted to Government Medical College Hospital in Rajouri.

The injured have been identified as Saima Akther (wife of Mohd Khaleel), Sartal Begum (wife of Mohd Din), Ayan (son of Zulfkar Ali), Serish Kousar (daughter of Zulfkar Ali), Zera Hayat Khan (daughter of Mohd Alyas), Tazeem Akther (wife of Munir Hussain), Shabeen Akther (wife of Mohd Arif), Jameelo Akhtar (wife of Mohd Maqsaad), Morad Zubair (son of Mehmood Hussain), Montaz Begum (wife of Mohd Rasheed), Mariyam Akhtar (wife of Mohd Khaliq), Mumtaz Begum (wife of Mohd Kalim), Mumeza Akhtar (wife of Mohd Naseer), Anaya Kouser (daughter of Zaffar Iqbal), Mariya Kousher (wife of Inteyaz Ali), Qadeer Hussain (son of Mehandi Hussain), Araram Amin (daughter of Mohd Imran), Mamtaz Begum (wife of Mohd Din), Yasmeen Akthar (wife of Mohd Shafiq), and Rehan Khan (son of Qadir Hussain).

Later, three people who were critically injured were referred to the Government Medical College Hospital in Jammu for specialised treatment, they said.

Army vehicle plunges...

The accident occurred near Battery Chashma at around 11.30 am, the officials said.

They said a joint rescue operation was launched immediately by Army, police, State Disaster Response Force and local volunteers.

Three soldiers travelling in the vehicle were found dead on the spot.

The deceased were identified as Naib-Subedar Sujeet Kumar, driver Amit Kumar and sepoy Man Bahadur, said officials, who added that their bodies were retrieved from the gorge after several hours of hectic efforts.

The crash has reduced the vehicle into a mangled heap of metal, they said.

Confirming the death of the JCO and two soldiers, Ramban Senior Superintendent of Police Kulbir Singh said preliminary investigation suggested that the accident was caused by a technical glitch in the vehicle and an investigation was underway to ascertain the exact reason.

Army's northern command paid tribute to the deceased personnel and extended its condolences to the bereaved families.

"An Army vehicle moving as part of routine convoy on May 4 slid off the road and fell into a gorge near Ramban. All three Army personnel travelling in the vehicle succumbed to the injuries in this tragic accident," the Northern Command said in a post on microblogging site X, adding that it stands firm with the bereaved families in this hour of grief.

The Congress has expressed sorrow at the deaths of three army personnel and urged the authorities to implement immediate safety measures.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said in a post on X, "Extremely pained to hear about the terrible tragedy in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban, where three Indian Army soldiers have lost their lives due to a vehicle accident."

"We salute their selfless service to the nation. Our heartfelt condolences to the families of our bravehearts," he added.

Kharge said, "Given that a similar fatal incident, involving civilians, occurred in the same gorge in March this year, we strongly urge the authorities to implement appropriate and adequate safety measures immediately to prevent future accidents."

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi paid tribute to the soldiers and expressed his deepest condolences to the bereaved families.

The news of the death of many of our soldiers due to the accident of an army van in Ramban, Jammu and Kashmir, is extremely saddening, he said in a Facebook post.

Navigation alert issued...

as India mulls retaliatory measures against Pakistan in view of the cross-border linkages to the April 22 Pahalgalam terror attack that has killed 26 people, mostly tourists. Tensions between India and Pakistan are escalating following the terror attack.

Sanskrit mother of...

Indian knowledge system, with Sanskrit as its core pillar.

He noted that the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan has been elevated to the status of a Central Sanskrit University.

He also mentioned that under the 'Sahasra Chudamani Yojana', the government has facilitated the appointment of retired eminent Sanskrit scholars as educators.

The home minister emphasised that one of the most significant initiatives of the Modi government is a nationwide campaign with a budget of approximately Rs 500 crore aimed at collecting scattered manuscripts in Sanskrit and Prakrit.

He said Prime Minister Modi has launched the Gyan Bharatam Mission with a foundational corpus of Rs 500 crore dedicated to manuscript preservation, with allocations planned in every budget going forward.

He said over 52 lakh manuscripts have already been documented, around 3.5 lakh digitised and 1,37,000 made available online at .

To support this massive effort, a team comprising scholars from various disciplines and languages has been constituted to translate and preserve these rare manuscripts, he said.

Shah emphasised that the solutions to many of the world's challenges can be found through the revival, propagation and simplification of the profound knowledge contained in Sanskrit.

He highlighted that since its inception, Sanskrit Bharati has introduced over one crore people to spoken Sanskrit, trained more than one lakh Sanskrit teachers, and nurtured 6,000 families who converse exclusively in Sanskrit.

Moreover, there are now 4,000 villages in India where all communication is conducted entirely in Sanskrit.

He noted that Sanskrit Bharati has established 4,500 centres across 26 countries and, in 2011, organised the world's first World Sanskrit Book Fair.

The home minister said Sanskrit represents India's faith, tradition, truth and timeless essence.

The light of knowledge and wisdom is deeply embedded in the Sanskrit language, he said.

He noted that for thousands of years, the churning of ideas across various disciplines has produced a wealth of knowledge preserved in Sanskrit.

Shah stressed that the profound wisdom contained in the Vedas, Upanishads and countless Sanskrit manuscripts must reach a global audience.

The ongoing efforts by Sanskrit Bharati are a significant first step toward achieving this goal, he said, adding Sanskrit was the first language to refine the use of meter and syllables, which has contributed to its continued vitality and relevance even today.

Those who attended the event include Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta.

39 arrested in...

attack. Addressing a campaign rally for the panchayat elections, he appealed to the people to pray and give strength to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Indian Army so that Pakistani terrorists hiding anywhere in the world can be brought to justice.

Terrorists struck Baisaran, a prime tourist location, in Pahalgalam in south Kashmir on April 22, killing at least 26 people, mostly tourists, and injuring several others.

Collaborate with administration to tackle challenges effectively: DC Poonch to locals

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

POONCH: In a significant gathering aimed at fostering community engagement, the Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Vikas Kundal and Senior Superintendent of Police Shafakat Hussain chaired a meeting with civil society members in Sub Division Surankote to discuss pressing developmental issues and promote communal harmony.

In the meeting, SDM Farooq Khan, Tehsildar Akbar Hussain, SDPO, Aijaz Choudhary besides Executive Engineers and other concerned officers were present to address the local issues.

The meeting served as a vital platform for community feedback, where local leaders and residents called for effective implementation of social welfare schemes, measures to augment water supply, improvement of medical facilities, upgrading of roads and blacktopping.

The Deputy Commissioner patiently listened to the issues raised during the meeting and issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned officers to resolve all genuine concerns. He assured attendees that their issues would be prioritized and addressed promptly.

Deputy Commissioner, Vikas Kundal emphasized the importance of unity among community members, urging them to collaborate with the administration to tackle challenges effectively.

SSP Shafakat Hussain highlighted the need for safety and security, calling for collaborative efforts to build a peaceful community. He encouraged residents to report any untoward incidents to the authorities, so that proactive measures can be taken.

This meeting marks a step forward in strengthening the relationship between the administration and the public, fostering a cooperative spirit to enhance local conditions and maintain communal harmony.



DC Poonch, Vikas Kundal chairing a meeting.

DC Rajouri, SSP chair meeting with Civil Society members to promote communal harmony, development

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RAJOURI: In a significant move to reinforce communal harmony and review developmental issues, Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, and Senior Superintendent of Police, Gaurav Sikarwar, convened a meeting with representatives of political parties, religious and social organisations, and other prominent citizens of the district.



The meeting, held in the wake of the recent tragic incident in Pahalgalam, served as a platform for open dialogue and mutual assurance of peace and brotherhood across communities in Rajouri. At the outset, two-minute silence was observed as a mark of respect to the victims of the Pahalgalam terror attack.

Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma commended the collective condemnation of the incident by the people of Rajouri and appreciated their unwavering commitment to unity and peace. He specifically acknowledged the civil society's efforts in offering assistance and shelter to tourists who had halted in Rajouri during their travel before the incident occurred.

"The solidarity shown by the people of Rajouri in this difficult time is commendable. Your support to tourists and your commitment to harmony reflect the true spirit of our district," he said.

Senior Superintendent of Police Gaurav Sikarwar, while addressing the gathering, reaffirmed the district police's commitment to maintaining law and order. He called for continued cooperation from all stakeholders to ensure that peace prevails and any attempts to disturb communal harmony are thwarted.

"Together, we can ensure that Rajouri remains a model of peace and resilience," the SSP said.

Prominent citizens present at the meeting also shared valuable feedback and suggestions concerning law and order, community engagement, and further strengthening the bonds of communal harmony.

The meeting was also attended by Additional District Development Commissioner, Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Chander Prakash; and other senior officers and dignitaries from civil society.

The administration reaffirmed its commitment to safeguarding public welfare, promoting inclusive development, and preserving the peaceful fabric of Rajouri district.

NEET-UG held at over 5,400 centres under strict security

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Medical entrance exam NEET-UG was held at more than 5,400 centres around the country amid strict monitoring and security measures on Sunday, officials said.

More than 22.7 lakh candidates had registered for the test. The official attendance data will be available in a few hours.

Mock drills were held at all National Eligibility cum Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) centres on Saturday to ensure smooth conduct of the nationwide exam. Most of the centres were located in government and government-aided schools, colleges, universities and institutions.

While no untoward incidents have been reported so far, members of the Brahmin community held a protest outside an exam centre in Karnataka's Kalaburagi, demanding accountability after some students from the community were asked to remove their 'janivara' (sacred thread) before entering the exam hall.

Three men were detained by the Special Operations Group of the Rajasthan Police for allegedly trying to dupe a candidate of Rs 40 lakh by promising him the question paper.

In Blubaneshtar, police arrested four members of an interstate gang for allegedly taking money from aspirants for admission in a medical college.

"There were three layers of monitoring today -- at the district, state, and central levels. To ensure smooth and secure conduct of the exam, mock drills were conducted at all centres.

These drills helped in testing readiness in terms of functionality of mobile signal jammers, availability of adequate manpower for frisking, and biometric authentication procedures," an official said.

Transporting question papers under police escort, monitoring coaching centres to identify organised cheating rackets, multi-layered frisking by district police in addition to designated security personnel at the exam centres were among the steps taken by the National Testing Agency (NTA), led by the Union education ministry.

The strict measures came a year after alleged irregularities, including paper leaks, were flagged in NEET-UG that put the exam's integrity under scanner.

In a crackdown on fake claims about NEET-UG, the NTA identified 106 Telegram and 16 Instagram channels involved in spreading false information.

The NTA's dedicated portal for receiving such concerns has flagged more than 1,500 claims of paper leaks for the exam.

In a decisive move to protect the exam process' integrity, the agency had earlier this week initiated action against certain Telegram and Instagram channels that claimed to have access to the question paper.

The NTA requested Telegram and Instagram to immediately take down the channels to prevent the spread of falsehood and unnecessary panic among the aspirants.

The Union education ministry had held a series of meetings with district magistrates and superintendents of police from all states and Union territories to ensure there were no lapses in the conduct of the exam.

Under scrutiny over last year's irregularities in NEET-UG and the PhD entrance exam, the Centre set up a panel to ensure "transparent, smooth and fair" conduct of exams by the NTA.

The University Grants Commission-National Eligibility Test (UGC-NET) was cancelled last year after the ministry received input that its integrity was compromised.

Both matters are being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Two other exams -- CSIR-UGC NET and NEET-PG -- were cancelled at the last moment as a preemptive step.



R.S Bhatti, Director General, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) calling on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, on Sunday.