

# Two soldiers martyred, 2 hurt on day 9 of Kulgam encounter

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**SRINAGAR:** Two Army soldiers made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty while as many sustained injuries in an overnight gunfight with terrorists in Kulgam district, in one of the longest anti-terror operations in the Valley that entered the ninth day on Saturday.

The Army's Srinagar-based Chinar Corps, in a post on X, paid tributes to the soldiers-- Lance Naik Pritpal Singh and Sepoy Harminder Singh--martyred in the encounter and said that the operation was still underway.

Two terrorists have been killed in the encounter that began on August 1 after security forces launched a cordon and search operation in a forest at Akhal in the south Kashmir district, following specific intelligence inputs about the presence of terrorists there.

The identity and the group affiliation of the slain terror-



ists have not been ascertained so far.

In a post on X on Saturday, the Chinar Corps said, "Chinar Corps honours the supreme sacrifice of the Bravehearts, L/Nk Pritpal Singh and Sep Harminder

Singh, in line of duty for the Nation. Their courage and dedication will forever inspire us."

The Army said it stands in solidarity with the bereaved families. "The operation continues," it added.

Officials said two other soldiers were injured in the overnight firing, taking the number of injured security forces personnel to eleven since the beginning of the encounter on August 1. Senior police and Army ► P11

## India endorses Putin-Trump Ukraine talks

**NEW DELHI:** India on Saturday welcomed next week's summit talks between US President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on the Ukraine war, and reaffirmed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's consistent position that it is not an "era of war".

India's reaction came hours after Trump announced that he would hold talks with Putin in Alaska next Friday. Moscow also confirmed the meeting that is aimed at ending the war.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), endorsing the move, said India stands ready to support the efforts.

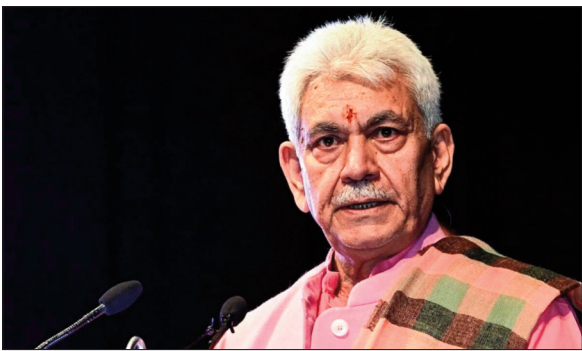
"India welcomes ► P11

# Could not sleep till Pahalgam attackers were eliminated: LG

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**JAMMU:** Reiterating that terror attack on innocent tourists at Baisaran Valley in Pahalgam was an assault on India's soul, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has said that he couldn't get proper sleep till three terrorists involved in the April 22 attack were eliminated by the security forces.

"I could not sleep after April 22. It was an attack on India's soul. It was only after the three killers were eliminated that I got a sound



sleep," the LG said, in an interview to national TV channel. Asked why there was not a single policeman present in

Baisaran Valley, where tourists were enjoying picnic with pizza sellers around, LG Sinha replied, ► P11

## Historic: First freight train arrives in Valley

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**SRINAGAR:** The first freight train arrived in the Kashmir Valley on Saturday as the Northern Railway opened its Anantnag goods shed under its larger Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project for the movement of goods, with Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw termed it a significant milestone in connecting the Kashmir valley to the national freight network.

The train with 21 BCN wagons loaded with cement reached the Anantnag goods shed from Rupnagar, Punjab.

The journey spanning approximately 600 km culmi-

nated at the newly-commissioned goods shed in less than 18 hours, marking a significant milestone in connecting the Kashmir region to the national freight network, the officials said.

The goods shed is equipped to handle both incoming and outgoing freight, offering a new and efficient transport option for businesses across Kashmir, a major step towards enhancing economic activity in the Valley, they said.

The opening of Anantnag for goods traffic also comes at a time when the Valley has achieved full railway connectivity from Katra to Srinagar, including the historic ► P11

## Crackdown on terror ecosystem, 26 houses searched in Kishtwar



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**JAMMU:** The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Saturday conducted searches at 26 houses, including that of Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist

Mohammad Amin Bhat alias "Jehangir Saroori", in a massive clampdown on the terror ecosystem in the Kishtwar district, officials said.

Besides Bhat, the raids mostly targeted homes of ter-

## ‘No restrictions, clear political will, full freedom’ Shot down 5 Pak fighter jets, 1 large aircraft during Op Sindoor: IAF Chief

### ‘Largest surface-to-air kill in history, several F-16s hit’



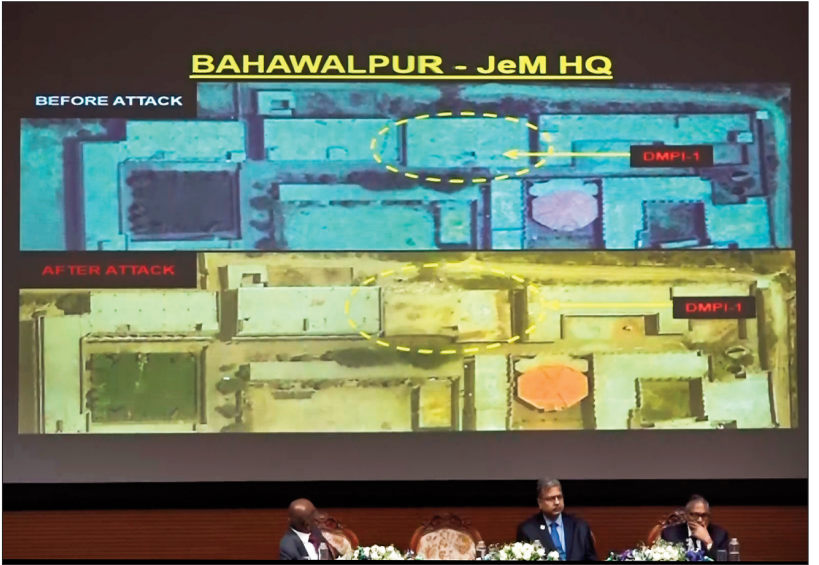
**BENGALURU:** The Indian Air Force (IAF) shot down five Pakistani fighter jets and a large aircraft during Operation Sindoor, in the largest-ever recorded surface-to-air kill by India, Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh said on Saturday.

This is the first official comment on the damage caused to Pakistan during the Indian strikes over three months ago. Many opposition leaders have been attacking the government over the delay in revealing the extent of damage caused to both India and Pakistan during Operation Sindoor, which was in response to the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed.

Singh, who was delivering the 16th Air Chief Marshal L M Katre Memorial Lecture here, also presented a detailed account of the May 7 strikes on terrorist headquarters and other terror assets near the border and inside Pakistan.

"We have at least five fighters confirmed killed and one large aircraft, which could be either an aircraft or an AWC (Airborne early Warning & Control) Aircraft, which was taken at a distance of about 300 kilometres. This is actually the largest ever recorded surface-to-air kill that we can talk about," he said.

He also said that there were indications of at least one AWC in that AWC hangar, and a few F-16s, which are under maintenance there, were also being damaged. The operation also resulted in a large number of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), drones, ► P11



## ‘Happy to tackle 'Balakot ghost' during Op Sindoor’

Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh on Saturday said the non-availability of images of the damage caused by the Balakot air strike became a "big issue", and people could not be convinced about what was achieved, but during Operation Sindoor, that "ghost of Balakot" was taken care of.

Singh, who was delivering the 16th Air Chief Marshal L M Katre Memorial Lecture here, said the Indian Air Force

(IAF) shot down five Pakistani fighter jets and a large aircraft during Operation Sindoor, in the largest-ever recorded surface-to-air kill by India. He provided a detailed account of Operation Sindoor with visuals and slides.

"When we did Balakot, we did something similar (to Operation Sindoor)," he said, and added that there were no images available, and it became a big issue. "Unfortunately, we ► P11

## ‘Achieving goal in a war, ending it very important’

Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh on Saturday said terminating a war is very important and the goal is a key war principle which was achieved in Operation Sindoor.

The objective of Op Sindoor was fulfilled and terrorists were taught a lesson, he said.

Singh, who was delivering the 16th Air Chief Marshal L M Katre Memorial

Lecture here said he participated in a conference in the UK about two weeks back.

The participants discussed Russia, European war, or Israel and Iran war, or Hamas-Israel war. However, not even a word was spoken about India hitting terror targets in Pakistan following the Pahalgam attack.

The Air Force chief said: ► P11

## Rahul Gandhi can sense defeat in Bihar: Union Minister Jadhav

**Inaugurates 'Sindoor Maha Raktdan' camp at AIIMS Vijaypur**

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**SAMBA:** Union Minister Prataprao Jadhav on Saturday said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is sensing defeat in the Bihar election, and that is why he is making allegations against the Election Commission.

He also said the Operation Sindoor was meant to dismantle terror infrastructure across the border and not a declaration of war against Pakistan.

The minister of state for Ayush (independent charge) and health and family welfare was speaking to the media after inaugurating 'Sindoor Maha Raktdan' blood dona-



tion camp at the AIIMS-Vijaypur in Samba district.

More than 1,000 wrestlers from Maharashtra will be donating blood at the special camp for the armed forces, according to the gov-

ernment.

His criticism of Gandhi in response to the Congress leader making explosive claims of a "huge criminal fraud" in polls through a collusion between the ► P11

## India's def prod all-time high: DM

**NEW DELHI:** India's annual defence production has reached an all-time high of Rs 1,50,590 crore in 2024-25, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Saturday.

This marks a growth of around 18 per cent over the previous fiscal's total of Rs 1.27 lakh crore.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India's defence production has hit a record high, Singh said. "The annual defence production has soared to an all-time high figure of Rs 1,50,590 crore in the financial year 2024-25."

"These numbers indicate a robust 18 per cent growth over the previous fiscal's output of Rs 1.27 lakh crore, and

a staggering 90 per cent increase since 2019-20, when the figure was Rs 79,071 crore," he said in a social media post.

The defence minister commended the "collective efforts" of the Department of Defence Production and all stakeholders, including the defence public sector units and the private industry, in achieving what he called a "landmark".

"This upward trajectory is a clear indicator of India's strengthening defence industrial base," he said.

Meanwhile, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) chairman Samir Kamat said on Saturday that ► P11

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