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### Trump to withdraw nomination of Musk associate Jared Isaacman to lead NASA

Donald Trump announced late Saturday that he withdrawing the nomination of billionaire Jared Isaacman, an associate of Trump adviser Elon Musk, to lead NASA, saying he reached the decision after a "thorough review" of Isaacman's "prior associations." It was unclear what Trump meant, and the White House did not immediately respond to an emailed request for



explanation. "After a thorough review of prior associations, I am hereby withdrawing the nomination of Jared Isaacman to head NASA," Trump wrote on his social media site. "I will soon announce a new Nominee who will be Mission aligned and put America First in Space." Trump announced in December during the presidential transition that he had chosen Isaacman to be the space agency's next (Contd. to Page No. 9)

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### ਕੰਨਿਆ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ (BRIDE WANTED)

ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਜੱਟ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੜਕਾ 1980/5'-7", ਸੇਫਵੇਅ ਸਟੋਰ ਵਿਚ ਕੈਸ਼ੀਅਰ ਲੱਗਾ, 3 ਵਾਰ ਤਲਾਕਸ਼ੁਦਾ ਲਈ ਪੜ੍ਹੀ ਲਿਖੀ, ਚੰਗੀ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਬੋਲਣਾ ਜਾਣਦੀ, ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਜਨਮੀ, 5'-4" ਕੱਦ ਵਾਲੀ ਤਲਾਕਸ਼ੁਦਾ ਲੜਕੀ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : (916) 751-9487, (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੂੰ 135, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ.ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੁਡੇ'

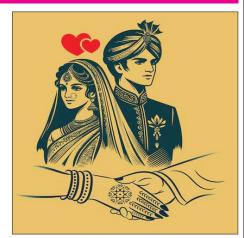
Jatt Sikh boy, 1980/5'-7", living in USA, work as a cashier in Safeway store, 3 times divorce, looking for an educated, fluent English speaking, American born, 5'-4" tall divorcee girl. Contact: (916) 751-9487, (510) 943-8037, Box No. 135, 'USA Punjab Today'

ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ ਉੱਚਾ ਲੰਮਾ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਲੜਕਾ 1997/6', ਨੂੰ 23 ਤੋਂ 28 ਸਾਲ ਉਮਰ ਦੀ ਸੋਹਣੀ, ਸੁਨੱਖੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਸ਼ੀਲ, ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਜਨਮੀ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : 9255488587, (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ 136, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ.ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੁਡੇ'

American Citizen, tall Hindu boy, 1997/6', looking for a beautiful, charming and polite, 23 to 28 years old, American born Hindu girl. Contact: 9255488587, (510) 943-8037, Box No. 136, 'USA Punjab Today'

ਕੈਲੀਫੋਰਨੀਆ ਵਿਖੇ ਜਨਮਿਆ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਕਸ਼ਤ੍ਰਿਯਾ ਲੜਕਾ 1987/6'-0", ਤਲਾਕਸ਼ੁਦਾ (ਪਰਿਵਾਰਕ ਪਿਛੋਕੜ ਫੀਜ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ), ਐਮ.ਬੀ.ਏ. ਕੀਤੀ, ਚੰਗੀ ਆਮਦਨ, ਲਈ ਚੰਗੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੀ ਪੜ੍ਹੀ-ਲਿਖੀ ਲੜਕੀ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ (650) 630-1390, (510) 943-8037 ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ. 131, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ'

Hindu Kshatriya boy born in California 1987/6'-0", divorced, MBA, Good Income, (Family from Fiji Island) looking for educated girl from good family. Contact (650) 630-1390, (510) 943-8037 Box No. 131, 'USA Punjab Today'



ਵਰਕ ਪਰਮਿਟ 'ਤੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਰਹਿ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਲੜਕਾ 1993/5'-5" ਇਲੈਕਟ੍ਰਿਕਲ ਇੰਜੀਨੀਅਰਿੰਗ 'ਚ ਗ੍ਰੈਜੂਏਟ, ਲਾਸ ਏਂਜਲਸ 'ਚ ਆਪਣਾ ਲੀਕਰ ਸਟੋਰ, ਆਪਣਾ ਘਰ ਲਈ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਜਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੀ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ: (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ: 126, ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ

Hindu boy living in America on work permit 1993/5-5" Graduate in Electrical Engineering, Now owner of Liquor store market in Los Angeles and own house. Looking for girl from Hindu or Sikh Family. Contact: (510) 943-8037, Box No. 126, USA Punjab Today

ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ ਮੈਢ ਰਾਜਪੂਤ (ਹਿੰਦੂ) ਲੜਕਾ 1997/6'-2", ਪੇਸ਼ੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਡਾਕਟਰ, ਸਿੱਖਿਆ : ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਆਫ਼ ਸਾਊਥਰਨ ਕੈਲੀਫੋਰਨੀਆ ਤੋਂ ਬੀ.ਐਸ.ਅਤੇ ਐਮ.ਡੀ.ਕੀਤੀ, ਕੰਮ : ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਸੀ. ਵਿਖੇ ਡਰਮਾਟੋਲੋਜੀ ਰੈਜ਼ੀਡੈਂਸੀ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਸਾਲ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤਾ ਲਈ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਜਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੀ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਜਾਂ ਨਰਸ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ। ਸੰਪਰਕ: (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ. 128, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ'

American citizen, Mair Rajput (Hindu) boy, 1997/6'-2", Doctor by profession, Education: B.S. and M.D. from University of Southern California, Job: Started 1st year of dermatology residency at USC, looking for doctor or nurse girl from a Hindu or Sikh family. Contact: (510) 943-8037, Box No. 128, 'USA Punjab Today'

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### ਵਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ (GROOM WANTED)

ਵਰਕ ਪਰਮਿਟ 'ਤੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਰਹਿ ਰਹੀ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਲੜਕੀ 1992/5'-3", ਆਪਣਾ ਬਿਜ਼ਨੈੱਸ, ਲਈ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ ਜਾਂ ਗਰੀਨ ਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਲਡਰ ਵਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : (510) 943-8037, (510) 378-8316, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰਬਰ 141, 'ਯੂਐਸਏ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ'

Hindu girl living in America on work permit, 1992/5'-3", own business, looking for US citizen or green card holder boy. Contact: (510) 943-8037, (510) 378-8316, Box No. 141, 'USA Punjab Today'

ਵਰਕ ਪਰਮਿਟ 'ਤੇ ਯੂ.ਕੇ. ਰਹਿ ਰਹੀ ਮਜ਼੍ਹਬੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੜਕੀ 1994/5'-4", ਬੀ.ਐਸ.ਸੀ ਨਰਸਿੰਗ ਕੀਤੀ, ਲੰਡਨ ਦੇ ਹਸਪਤਾਲ 'ਚ ਸਹਾਇਕ ਨਰਸ ਵਜੋਂ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ, ਲਈ ਯੋਗ ਵਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : (510) 943– 8037, (408) 666–9645, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰਬਰ 140, 'ਯਐਸਏ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟਡੇ'

Mazhabi Sikh girl living in UK on work permit, 1994/5'-4", B.Sc. Nursing, working as a nurse assistant in London hospital, looking for suitable match. Contact: (510) 943-8037, (408) 666-9645, Box No. 140, 'USA Punjab Today'

ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੜਕੀ 1994/5'-2", Working as provider in Neurosurgery department, Study : Family nurse practitioner ਲਈ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ, ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸੈਟਲ, ਤਰਜੀਹੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਡਾਕਟਰੀ ਜਾਂ ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਤੋਂ ਵੈਸ਼ਨੂੰ ਵਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : (510) 943-8037, (661) 808-5226, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰਬਰ 139, 'ਯੂਐਸਏ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੁਡੇ'

US citizen Sikh girl 1994/5-2", Working as provider in Neurosurgery department, Study: Family nurse practitioner, looking for Financial Independent, Vaishnu, well settled preferably from medical field or businessman. Contact: (510) 943-8037, (661) 808-5226, Box No. 139, 'USA Punjab Today'

ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ ਲੜਕੀ 1982/5'-10" ਤਲਾਕਸ਼ੁਦਾ, ਕਾਨਵੈਂਟ ਸਕੂਲ ਤੋਂ ਪੜ੍ਹੀ, ਅਰਥ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਾਸਟਰ, ਫਾਰਚੂਨ 500 ਕੰਪਨੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰੋਜੈਕਟ ਮੈਨੇਜਰ ਲਈ ਵਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ: (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ: 125, ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ

US Citizen Girl 1982/5'-10" Divorced, Educated from Convent School, Masters in Economics, Project Manager with a Fortune 500 company. Looking for a boy. Contact: (510) 943-8037, Box No. 125, USA Punjab Today

ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਰਹਿ ਰਹੀ ਸੈਣੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੜਕੀ 1991/5'-1", ਐਮ.ਬੀ.ਏ. ਗ੍ਰੈਜੂਏਟ, ਵਿੱਤੀ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਡਾਇਰੈਕਟਰ ਆਫ਼ ਆਪ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਨ, ਲਈ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਜਾਂ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਲਿਖੇ, 30-38 ਉਮਰ ਦੇ ਦਰਮਿਆਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ। ਸੰਪਰਕ: (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ: 129, ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ

Saini Sikh girl living in USA, 1991/5'-1", MBA graduate, Director of Operations in a financial company, looking for boy from Punjabi or Hindu family, between the ages of 30-38. Contact: (510) 943-8037, Box No. 129, USA Punjab Today

ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਜਨਮੀ ਜੱਟ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੜਕੀ 1994/5'-9", WORK : Currently doing fellowship in Endocrinology. STUDY: US educated, Completed medical school in US, Graduated from internal medicine residency ਲਈ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਜਨਮੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਲੰਬੇ, ਕਲੀਨਸ਼ੇਵ, ਚੰਗੇ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਵਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : (510) 943-8037 ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ. 134, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ'

American born Jatt Sikh girl 1994/5'-9", Work: Currently doing fellowship in Endocrinology. STUDY: US educated, Completed medical school in US, Graduated from internal medicine residency. Looking for American born, tall, clean shaven, educated and well settled groom from well settled Sikh family. Contact: (510) 943-8037 Box No. 134, 'USA Punjab Today'

ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੜਕੀ 1993/5'-2", Registered Dental Assistant ਵਜੋਂ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ, Bachelor's In Health Science (Looking to pursue degree in Dental Hygenist) ਲਈ ਰਾਮਗੜ੍ਹੀਆ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਚੰਗੇ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਲਿਖੇ, ਪੀ.ਆਰ. ਜਾਂ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ ਲੜਕੇ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : 661-218-0777,(510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰਬਰ 138, 'ਯੂਐਸਏ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੁਡੇ'

US Citizen Sikh girl 1993/5'-2", working as a Registered Dental Assistant, Bachelor's In Health Science (Looking to pursue degree in Dental Hygenist), looking for a well-educated, PR or US Citizen boy from a Ramgarhia Sikh family. Contact: 661-218-0777, (510) 943-8037, Box No. 138, 'USA Punjab Today'

ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੜਕੀ 1991/5'-4", Working as an Nurse Practitioner in a Hospital in cardiac surgery depertment., ਆਪਣਾ ਘਰ, ਲਈ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਨਮੇ ਸਿੱਖ, ਹਿੰਦੂ, ਸੈਣੀ, ਕੰਬੋਜ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਲੜਕੇ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। Doctor, Pharmacist, Lawyer, NP or Physician Assistant ਨੂੰ ਤਰਜੀਹ। ਸੰਪਰਕ: (510) 943–8037 ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ. 133, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ'

US Citizen Sikh Girl 1991/5'-4", Working as an Nurse Practitioner in a Hospital in cardiac surgery depertment., Own house. Looking for an American born from Sikh, Hindu, Saini, Kamboj family. Priority for Doctor, Pharmacist, Lawyer, NP or Physician Assistant. Contact: (510) 943-8037, Box No. 133, 'USA Punjab Today'

ਕੈਲੀਫੋਰਨੀਆ ਵਿਖੇ ਜਨਮੀ ਕੌਸ਼ਲ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਲੜਕੀ 1997/5'-8", ਬੀ.ਐਸ.ਸੀ. ਡਿਗਰੀ ਹੋਲਡਰ, ਪੇਸ਼ਾ : Clinic Eye Liver more CA, ਲਈ ਚੰਗੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੇ 6 ਫੁੱਟ ਜਾਂ ਵੱਧ ਵਾਲੇ ਲੜਕੇ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। Caste No Bar. ਸੰਪਰਕ (925) 497–2888, (510) 943– 8037 ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ. 132, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ'

Kaushal Hindu girl born in California 1997/5-8", B.Sc. degree holder, Work: Clinic Eye Liver more CA, Looking for a boy of 6 feet or more height from a good family. Caste No Bar. Contact (925) 497-2888, (510) 943-8037 Box No. 132, 'USA Punjab Today'





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### Will treasure my moments in India: Miss World Opal Suchata Chuangsri

#### Says Thailand had been waiting for a Miss World crown for more than 72 years

Hyderabad : With her Miss World crown and sash, Opal Suchata Chuangsri believes she can make dreams impactful. Speaking after she was crowned, Chuangsri said, "Now that I got the Miss World title with the crown and the sash, I have a chance to make the purposes of other people come true and be impactful. So, that's what I'll be doing the Miss World organisation for one year."

Chuangsri also said she would treasure her moments in India. "I was just talking to my friends that I don't want to leave this place, because with where we're staying,

with the people, with the food and everything, we are so happy to be here. It was a wonderful journey. I have made a lot of memories with everyone here," said Chuangsri.

Chuangsri also said Thailand had been waiting for more than 72 years for a Miss World crown. "My people in these are the reasons why I'm here,"

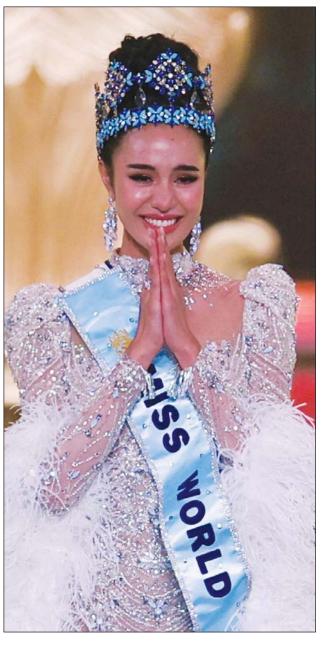


Thailand, we've been waiting for the first Miss World crown for more than 72 years, and I couldn't believe that it would be my honour to bring back home our first crown. And I feel very proud, not only of myself, but also with my people and my team, because

said Chuangsri.

The 72nd Miss World said although she would be working on her own "Beauty With A Purpose" project, she will also try to support the projects of other contestants during her tenure. "My project focuses on breast cancer awareness and women's health, but like I said, as I am Miss World, I have more opportunity to be supporting other projects as well. I wouldn't want to choose: if I get the chance to support all, I want to support all," added Chuangsri. Ethiopia's Hasset Dereje was crowned first runner-up, Poland's Maja Klajda second runner-up and

the third runner-up title went to Aurelie Joachim of Martinique. India is hosting Miss World for the third time. The firstever Miss World pageant in India was held in Bengaluru in 1996, two years after Aishwarya Rai won the crown in 1994 and last year, Delhi and Mumbai hosted the 71st Miss World.



### Rinku Singh to get engaged to Samajwadi Party MP Priya Saroj



Jaunpur (UP) : India cricketer Rinku Singh will get engaged to Samajwadi Party MP Priya Saroj on June 8 in Lucknow, politician's father Toofani Saroj confirmed on

November 18 this year. It will by close family members, be a traditional affair at the friends, and relatives' Hotel Taj in Varanasi. Invitations are expected to be extended to prominent personalities from the world cricket, Bollywood, business, and politics.

Rinku, 27, has played 2 ODIs and 33 T20Is for India in last couple of years and is an important member of IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders. The 26-year-old Priya



Samajwadi Party informed that "engagement ceremony will The wedding is slated for be an intimate affair, attended

> with mutual consent after both families met in Aligarh.

> "Rinku and Priya have known each other for some time. They met through Priya's friend's father, who is a cricketer himself. With the blessings of both families, told mediapersons.

### 3 Punjab ex-cops jailed in 1993 fake encounter case

Chandigarh: A CBI court on ammunition. Saturday sentenced former Rawalpindi and Phagwara City SHO Gurmej Singh to three to eight years' imprisonment information about their death was not

over the killing of two Phagwara youths in a 1993 fake encounter.

Manjit Singh (72) and Gurmej Singh (84) were sentenced to eight years' RI, while ASI Karamjit Singh (70) got three years' RI. The court imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 each on the three. Constables Harjit Singh and Kashmir Singh were acquitted.

According to the chargesheet Toofani, a two-time former filed by the CBI, a police party of the Rawalpindi police station in Kapurthala, headed by ASI Karamjit Singh, had picked up Palwinder Singh, alias Pappu, from his house at Rawalpindi village on March 27, 1993. On the same day,

The marriage was fixed Balbir Singh of Dhade village, Phagwara, was picked up by Manjit Singh. After being illegally detained for a few days, the Phagwara police station recorded their arrest on April 3. The police alleged they were arrested in a theft case and a scooter and gold ring were seized from them.

After a few hours, the police claimed they decided to get married," Palwinder Singh and Balbir Singh had the would be bride's father absconded from police custody while on the way to recover arms and

Two days later, the police claimed SHO Manjit Singh, ASI Karamjit Singh both were killed in an encounter with the

given to their families and their bodies were cremated as "unclaimed".

In 1995, Darshan Singh, father of Palwinder Singh, filed a habeas corpus petition in the Punjab and Haryana High Court. After hearing the parties, an inquiry was entrusted to the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Kapurthala, who filed a report on May 28, 2003. Questioning the encounter, the report recommended an independent probe into the incident. On the basis of the

report, the high court ordered a CBI inquiry on September 12, 2005.

On October 11, 2005, the CBI Sultanpur Lodhi police. However, the registered a case under Sections 120-B, 342, 365, 364 and 302, IPC, against

> unknown persons in Chandigarh. After completing the investigation, it filed a chargesheet against Karamjit Singh, Manjit Singh, Gurmej Singh, Kashmir Singh and Harjit Singh on January 3, 2012, said CBI public prosecutor Anmol Narang. Mohan Singh, the then SHO, Sultanpur Lodhi police station, and Iqbal Singh, ASI, died during the investigation.

Police officials Hardyal Singh, Nirmal Singh and Daljit Singh, who were shown involved in the encounter, deposed before the court that no such incident had taken place.

Similarly, accused Kashmir Singh and Harjit Singh said they had not signed any documents, including the alleged confessional statement of the deceased that they had hidden arms and ammunition.

Sarabjit Singh Verka, counsel for the victims' family, said, "The statements of the co-accused and associate police officials played a vital role in proving that the theory of arrest, escape and then killing of Palwinder Singh and Balbir Singh in the encounter was fake."

# Bangladesh tribunal indicts former PM NIA chargesheets Sheikh Hasina on mass murder charges 3 Naxals

Dhaka: Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal on Sunday indicted former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and two others on several charges, including mass murder, for their alleged role in the violent crackdown on student-led protests last year.

Sunday's proceedings marked the start of Hasina's trial in absentia nearly 10 months after the ouster of her government following the protests.

"We do hereby take into cognizance the charges," the three-judge ICT bench said after a prosecution team formally accused them of attempting to tame the protests using brutal force.

The tribunal simultaneously issued a fresh arrest warrant against Hasina and then home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal.

The third accused, the then inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, is in custody to stand trial in person.

The prosecution charged Hasina with exercising absolute authority to ruthlessly suppress the uprising. The two others were accused of provocation, complicity, abatement, instigation and facilitation.



All three were accused of superior command responsibility for the

Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam urged the court to treat the Awami League as a criminal organisation since the crimes were committed on a partisan basis.

Under the ICT-BD law, if convicted, Hasina and the co-accused could face the death penalty.

The proceedings of the tribunal were broadcast live on television for the first time in Bangladesh's history.

The proceedings were scheduled

to begin at 9.30 am but were slightly delayed as unidentified people hurled three crude bombs at the gate of the tribunal hours before the beginning of the trial.

Police said two of the bombs exploded while the third was defused while they were trying to identify and arrest the miscreants, examining CCTV footage.

Ousted on August 5 last year after the agitation, Hasina faces multiple cases in Bangladesh.

The ICT-BD earlier issued an arrest warrant against Hasina while the interim government sought her repatriation from India in a diplomatic note. New Delhi has only acknowledged receipt with no further comment.

Most senior leaders and officials of Hasina's party and government were arrested to face charges like mass murder during the July-August protests last year that left hundreds of people, including students and policemen, dead.

According to a UN rights office report, some 1,400 people were killed between July 15 and August 15 last year as violence continued even after the fall of Hasina's Awami League regime.

New Delhi: The
National Investigation
Agency (NIA) has filed a
chargesheet against three
Naxals for their alleged
involvement in extortion
and forced recruitment for
the banned CPI (Maoist)
outfit in Jharkhand, the
agency said on Saturday.

In a supplementary chargesheet submitted on Friday to a special court in Ranchi, the NIA named Krishna Hansda, alias Saurav Da alias Avinash Da, Abhijit Korah, alias Matla Korah alias Sunil Korah, and Ramdayal Mahto alias Nilesh Da alias Bachchan Da, as accused in the 2023 CPI (Maoist) terror conspiracy case.

According to the NIA, Hansda was a regional committee member of CPI (Maoist), Mahto served on the special area committee, and Korah was one of the group's armed cadres. While Korah hails from Bihar, Hansda and Mahto are residents of Jharkhand. "All three were active members of the proscribed terrorist organisation and part of a broader conspiracy involving extortion, armed intimidation, and forced recruitment in the Parasnath area of Giridih district," the agency said in a statement.

Their involvement came to light following the arrest of Krishna Hansda in January 2023 from the Lucio forest area under Dumri Police Station limits in Giridih.

The cops recovered extortion money, a 7.65 mm pistol, and various incriminating documents from his possession.

An FIR was subsequently registered against Hansda, Korah, Mahto, and several unidentified individuals. Hansda was earlier chargesheeted in the case before the NIA took over the investigation and reregistered it in June 2023.

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### 1,500 tourists stranded in north Sikkim, search for 8 missing called off amid heavy rain

Gangtok: Nearly 1,500 tourists were stranded in various parts of north Sikkim as the main road was blocked due to landslides triggered by incessant rains, officials said.

On the other side, the search for the missing eight tourists was disrupted by heavy rain, and it was finally suspended on Saturday after the water level in the Teesta river increased, they said.

One person was killed, two injured and eight others went missing when a vehicle in which 11 tourists were travelling plunged into the Teesta river in Mangan district on Thursday night. The vehicle plunged more than 1,000 feet into the river near Munsithang along the Lachen-Lachung highway.

Mangan's SP Sonam Detchu Bhutia said 115 tourists are stranded in Lachen and 1.350 tourists in Lachung.

"Since exit from both directions is closed due to landslides at multiple locations, the tourists have been advised to remain in their hotels, and once the roads are completely opened, they shall be shifted," he said.

throughout the day, especially the Chungthang sub-division, officials said Power supply, which was snapped on Friday afternoon, was restored this evening, while efforts are underway to restore the drinking water supply by Sunday, they said.



The mobile connectivity was restored Incessant rainfall lashed the district after nearly 24 hours, around 3 pm, they

> Due to heavy rainfall induced by cloud burst in the area, the water level in the river Teesta has increased, they added.

The Lachung road was restored this evening, but the road from Pegong said he is stationed at the site where the Denu Sherpa of Singhik in North Sikkim.

(Chungthang) to Phidang via Shipgyer, Sangkalang is closed due to multiple landslides, an official said.

"No tourist permits have been issued today, and will also not be issued tomorrow for visiting north Sikkim," he said.

Mangan's District Collector Anant Jain

tourist vehicle plunged into the Teesta and is overseeing the rescue efforts.

The SP said, "A continuous heavy rainfall and a swollen Teesta river have hampered the search to locate the eight missing persons. The search will resume as soon as weather conditions improve."

He said four identity cards and six mobile phones have been recovered by the search team from the river banks near the accident

Of the 11 persons on the ill-fated vehicle. two were identified as Swayam Supratim Nayak and Sairaj Jena, both from Odisha. They were rescued on the night of the accident and are undergoing treatment at the STNM Hospital in Gangtok.

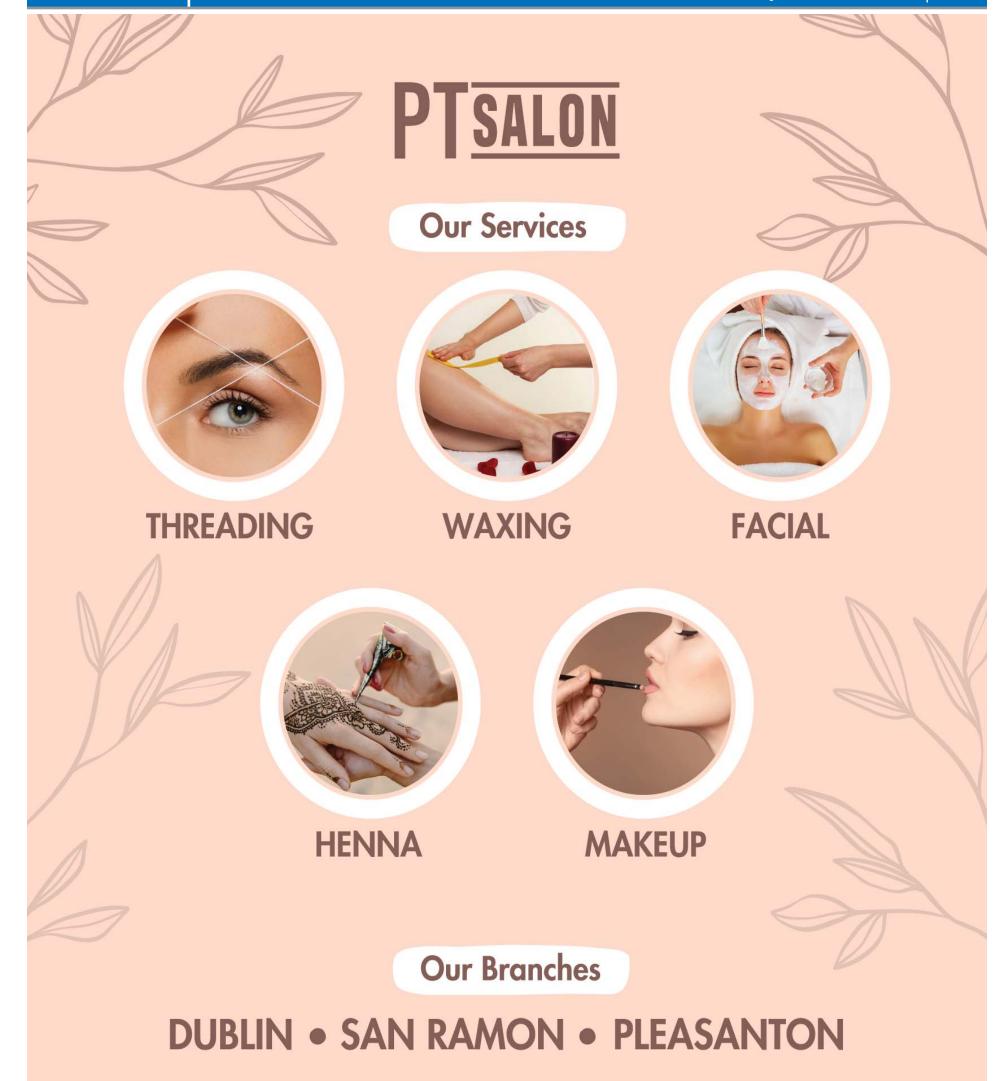
"Search is still on for the remaining eight persons, which includes the driver of the vehicle, while one person was found dead," the SP said.

Of the eight missing tourists, four are from Odisha and two each from Tripura and Uttar Pradesh, he said.

They were Ajit Kumar Nayak, Sunita Nayak, Sahil Jena and Itshiri Jena from Odisha, Debjyoti Joy Dev and Swapnanil Deb from Tripura, and Kaushalendra Pratap Singh and Ankita Singh from Uttar Pradesh,

The driver was identified as Passang







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### Consumer panel asks Flynas Airlines pay Rs 1.25 lakh to passenger for baggage loss

Mumbai: A consumer commission here has directed Flynas Airlines, a Saudi Arabian low-cost carrier, to pay a compensation of more than Rs 1.25 lakh to a passenger for the loss of her baggage.

There was a "mala fide negligence" and the airlines "purposely avoided all the logical actions to find the lost bag," the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Mumbai (Suburban) said in a recent order.

The complainant, along with her family, had gone on a trip to Turkiye from Mumbai between December 23, 2023, and January

Their return flight to the city was booked from Istanbul with a connecting flight from

The complainant stated that at the Istanbul airport, she handed over five bags for check-in.

The airline staff mistakenly tagged only four bags, and the fifth bag went on to the conveyor belt without a tag, she claimed.

The mistake was brought to the notice of the staff present at the ticket and baggage

The complainant was given a physical tag by the staff with an assurance that they would receive all bags at the arrival destination. However, she received only four bags at Mumbai airport.



communications through personal meetings, emails, WhatsApp chats and written complaints to locate the lost bag, but got an "unsatisfactory response" from the airlines.

Left with no alternative, she approached the commission for the resolution against deficient service and unfair trade practice by the airlines.

The opposite party remained absent during the hearing, hence the complaint proceeded ex-parte.

The commission, after perusal of all the facts related to the incident, held "there was a mala fide negligence by the Flynas Airlines supporting staff as well as officials who were in communication with the complainant".

"The opposite party didn't give any The complainant made multiple conclusive reply to the complaint raised by

the complainant and its actions were not satisfactory in the said incident," it stated.

The commission pointed out that the airline could have checked the CCTV footage to confirm the incident and could have brought more factual reports on record.

"However, we do not find any genuine efforts taken by the opposite party to confirm the incidence to trace the lost bag," it said.

The airline "purposely avoided all the logical actions to find the lost bag," the commission said.

There are set rules for baggage loss compensation as per the Montreal Convention (1999), which is an international treaty which governs airline liability for passengers and their baggage on international flights.

The commission stated the aggrieved passenger has followed the directions related to filing a complaint.

"However, we have not seen any record which indicates that the airlines has observed the conditions laid down in the Montreal Convention," it added.

The commission underlined that the airline had an opportunity to submit its defence in the present complaint which it did not avail.

"The opposite party remained absent in the whole proceedings of the case even though they have full knowledge of filing of the present complaint by the complainant," it

"Hence, we have no doubt in our mind about the negligent act of the opposite party/Flynas Airlines. The allegations of the complainant about loss of luggage by Flynas Airlines are genuine," the commission said.

The complainant is entitled to claim the cost of goods due to the loss of luggage along with compensation, it said.

The commission directed the Flynas Airlines to pay Rs 1.25 lakh to the complainant for the baggage loss with six per cent interest rate from January 15, 2025, till its realisation.

The carrier was also asked to pay Rs 10,000 towards compensation for mental

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## 



### US warns Asia of 'imminent' China threat; French Prez suggests alliance aid hub, hospital says



Singapore : US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth reassured allies in the Indo-Pacific on Saturday that they will not be left alone to face increasing military and economic pressure from China, while insisting that they also contribute more to their own defence.

He said Washington will bolster its defences overseas to counter what the Pentagon sees as rapidly developing threats by Beijing, particularly in its aggressive stance toward Taiwan.

China has conducted numerous exercises to test what a blockade would look like of the self-governing island, which Beijing claims as its own and the US has pledged to defend.

China's army "is rehearsing for the real deal", Hegseth said in a keynote speech at a security conference in Singapore. "We are not going to sugarcoat it — the threat China poses is real. And it could be imminent." The head of China's delegation accused Hegseth making "groundless accusations".

Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue, a global security conference hosted by the International Institute for Security Studies, Hegseth said China is no longer just building up its military forces to take Taiwan, it's "actively training for it, every day".

He urged Indo-Pacific countries to increase defence spending to levels similar to the 5 per cent of their gross domestic product European nations are now pressed to contribute.

He also repeated a pledge made by previous administrations to bolster the US military in the Indo-Pacific to provide a more robust deterrent.

Instead, US military resources from the Indo-Pacific have been regularly pulled to support military needs in the West Asia and Europe, especially since the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. In the first few months of President Donald Trump's second term, that's also been the case.

Hegseth was asked why the US pulled those resources if the Indo-Pacific is the priority theatre. He did not directly answer but said the shift of resources was necessary to defend against Houthi missile attacks launched from Yemen, and to bolster protections against illegal immigration into

French President Emmanuel Macron has called on European and Asian nations to work together to build a "positive new alliance" to avoid being dragged into the growing rivalry between the US and China.

"Let's build a positive new alliance between Europe and Asia, based on our common norms, on our common principles. Our shared responsibility is to ensure with others that our countries are not collateral victims of the imbalances linked to the choices made by the superpowers," the leader of Europe's second-largest economy

"We have a challenge of revisionist countries that want to impose under the name of spheres of influence — in reality, spheres of coercion; countries that want to control areas from the fringe of Europe to the archipelagos in the South China Sea," he

### Trump to withdraw nomination...

ollaborator with Musk ever since buying his first chartered flight on Musk's SpaceX someone so competent and good-hearted." company in 2021.

bought a series of spaceflights from SpaceX and conducted the first private spacewalk. SpaceX has extensive contracts with NASA.

The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee approved Isaacman's nomination in late April, and a vote by the full Senate was expected soon.

Musk appeared to lament Trump's nomination.

administrator. Isaacman, 42, has been a close decision after the news broke earlier Saturday,

SpaceX is owned by Musk, a Trump He is the CEO and founder of Shift4, a campaign contributor and adviser who credit card processing company. He also announced this week that he is leaving the government after several months at the helm of the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE. Trump created the agency to slash the size of government and put Musk in

> Semafor was the first to report that the White House had decided to pull Isaacman's

### 21 Palestinians killed while heading to Gaza



Rafah (Gaza Strip) : At least 21 people were killed on Sunday as they went to receive aid from an Israeli-backed foundation in the Gaza Strip, according to a hospital run by the Red Cross that received

Officials at the field hospital said another 175 people were wounded, without saying who opened fire on them. An Associated Press reporter saw dozens of people being treated at the hospital.

Witnesses said Israeli forces opened fire on people as they headed toward an aid distribution site. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

#### New aid system marred by chaos

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation's distribution of aid has been marred by chaos, and multiple witnesses have said Israeli troops fired on crowds near the delivery sites. Before Sunday, at least six people had been killed and more than 50 wounded according to local health officials.

The foundation says the private security contractors guarding its sites did not fire on the crowds, while the Israeli military has acknowledged firing warning shots on previous occasions.

The foundation did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In an earlier statement, it said it distributed 16 truckloads of aid early Sunday "without incident." It dismissed what it referred to as "false reporting about deaths, mass injuries and chaos."

#### Shooting broke out near distribution hub

The gunfire on Sunday erupted at a roundabout around a kilometer (1,000 yards) from the distribution site, in an area that is holding 58 hostages, around a third of them controlled by Israeli forces, witnesses said.

Ibrahim Abu Saoud, an eyewitness, said Israeli forces opened fire at people moving toward the aid distribution center.

"There were many martyrs, including women," the 40-year-old resident said. "We were about 300 meters (yards) away from the military."Abu Saoud said he saw many people with gunshot wounds, including a young man who he said had died at the scene. "We weren't able to help him," he said.

Mohammed Abu Teaima, 33, said he

saw Israeli forces open fire and kill his cousin and another woman as they were heading to the hub. He said his cousin was shot in his chest and died at the scene. Many others were wounded, including his brother-in-law, he said.

"They opened heavy fire directly toward us," he said as he was waiting outside the Red Cross field hospital for word on his wounded relative.

#### The hub is part of a controversial new aid system

Israel and the United States say the new system is aimed at preventing Hamas from siphoning off assistance. Israel has not provided any evidence of systematic diversion, and the UN denies it has

UN agencies and major aid groups have refused to work with the new system, saying it violates humanitarian principles because it allows Israel to control who receives aid and forces people to relocate to distribution sites, risking yet more mass displacement in the

The UN system has struggled to bring in aid after Israel slightly eased its total blockade of the territory last month. Those groups say Israeli restrictions, the breakdown of law and order, and widespread looting make it extremely difficult to deliver aid to Gaza's roughly 2 million Palestinians.

Experts have warned that the territory is at risk of famine if more aid is not brought in.

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting 251. They are still believed to be alive, after most of the rest were released in ceasefire agreements or other deals.

Israel's military campaign has killed over 54,000 people, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many of the dead were civilians or combatants. The offensive has destroyed vast areas of the territory, displaced around 90% of its population and left people almost completely reliant on international aid.



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### All-party delegation arrives in 'Cold war mentality': China UK to convey India's policy of denounces US Defence Secretary zero tolerance towards terrorism Hegseth for calling it a 'threat'



London: An all-party delegation led by BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad has reached London to reiterate India's zero-tolerance stance on terrorism.

The multi-party delegation, comprising MPs Daggubati Purandeswari, Priyanka Chaturvedi, Ghulam Ali Khatana, Amar Singh, Samik Bhattacharya, M Thambidurai and former Union minister of state MJ Akbar and Ambassador Pankaj Saran, is scheduled to meet with community groups, think tanks, parliamentarians and diaspora leaders.

"The All Party Delegation of MPs led by Ravi Shankar Prasad arrived in London (Saturday) evening and was received by High Commissioner Vikram Doraiswami," the Indian High Commission in the UK said in a post on X.

During their three-day visit to the UK, the delegation will be engaging with House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle, UK Foreign Office Minister for Indo-Pacific Catherine West, parliamentarians, think tanks

and Indian diaspora representatives, the High Commission said.

The Prasad-led delegation is on a tour of six European countries as part of India's diplomatic outreach following the terrorist attack in Pahalgam that claimed 26 lives. The delegation arrived here after concluding its visits to France, Italy and Denmark over the past week.

In Denmark's capital, Copenhagen, the delegation interacted with Danish parliamentarians, foreign affairs officials and Indian diaspora groups.

"The delegation emphasised on India's zerotolerance towards terrorism and stance that any act of violence would be responded to befittingly. India's appreciation of Denmark's public stance condemning the Pahalgam terrorist attack and the expression of solidarity with India was conveyed to the Danish side during the meetings," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement earlier.

From the UK, the

delegation will head for discussions and meetings with a cross-section of parliamentarians, political leaders and diaspora groups in the European Union (EU) and Germany.

The delegation is one of the seven multi-party delegations India has tasked to visit 33 global capitals to reach out to the international community to emphasise Pakistan's links to terrorism.

Tensions between India and Pakistan escalated after the Pahalgam terror attack, with India carrying out precision strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in the early hours of May 7.

Pakistan attempted to attack Indian military bases on May 8, 9, and 10. The Indian side responded strongly to the Pakistani actions.

The on-ground hostilities ended with an understanding of stopping the military actions following talks between the directors general of military operations of both sides on May 10.

Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth for calling the Asian country a threat, accusing him of touting a Cold War mentality as tensions between Washington and Beijing further

The foreign ministry said Hegseth had vilified Beijing with defamatory allegations the

previous day at the Shangri-La Dialogue, a global security conference. The statement also accused the United States of inciting conflict and confrontation in the region.

"Hegseth deliberately ignored the call for peace and development by countries in the region, and instead touted the Cold War mentality for bloc confrontation," it said,

referring to the post-World War II rivalry between the US and the former Soviet Union.

"No country in the world deserves to be called a hegemonic power other than the US itself," it said, alleging that Washington was also undermining peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific.

Hegseth said in Singapore on Saturday that Washington would bolster its defences overseas to counter what the Pentagon sees as rapidly developing threats by Beijing, particularly in its aggressive stance toward

China's army "is rehearsing for the real deal," Hegseth said. "We are not going to sugarcoat it — the threat China poses is real. And it could be imminent." The Chinese statement stressed that the Taiwan question is entirely China's internal affair, saying the US must "never play with fire" with it. It also

Beijing: China on Sunday denounced US weaponry in the South China Sea, was "stoking flames and creating tensions in the Asia-Pacific" and "turning the region into a powder kea".

> In a Facebook post on Saturday, China's Embassy in Singapore said Hegseth's speech was "steeped in provocations and instigation." The US and China had reached a

> > deal last month to cut US President Donald Trump's tariffs from 145 per cent to 30 per cent for 90 days, creating time for negotiators from both sides to reach a more substantive agreement. China also reduced its taxes on US goods from 125 per cent to 10

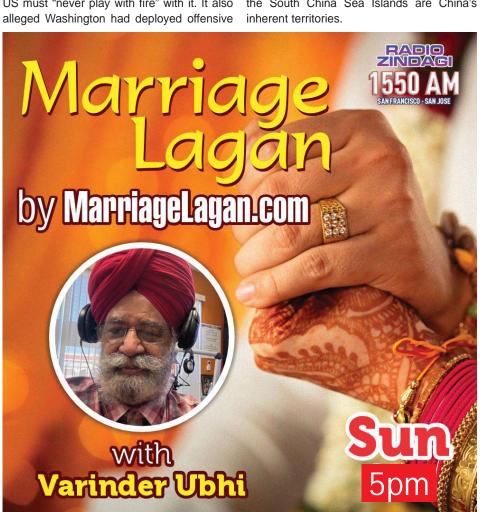
But it's uncertain if a trade war truce will last. Trump in a

social media post on Friday said he would no longer be "nice" with China when it comes to trade and accused Beijing of breaking an unspecified agreement with the US.

Tensions escalated anew after the US said on Wednesday it would start revoking visas for Chinese students studying there.

At the Singapore forum on Sunday, Philippines Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro scoffed at the idea that the US was the problem. His country has been involved in increasingly violent clashes with China over competing claims in the South China Sea. Teodoro said what the Chinese government saw as fair might be contrary to the norms accepted by the rest of the world.

The Chinese Embassy in Singapore later posted three Facebook posts to address Teodoro's "groundless accusations," arguing the South China Sea Islands are China's



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# 'There's only one Susie', says Trump as US govt probes messages impersonating his chief of staff

Washington: The US government is investigating after elected officials, business executives and other prominent figures in recent weeks received messages from someone impersonating Susie Wiles, President Donald Trump's chief of staff.

Trump said Wiles is "an amazing woman" and "she can handle it".

"They breached the phone; they tried to impersonate her," Trump told reporters on Friday. "Nobody can impersonate her. There's only one Susie."

A White House official confirmed the investigation on Friday and said the White House takes cybersecurity of its staff seriously. The official was not authorised to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Wall Street Journal reported Thursday that senators, governors, business leaders and others began receiving text messages and phone calls from someone who seemed to have gained access to the contacts in Wiles' personal cellphone.

The messages and calls were not coming from Wiles' number, the newspaper reported.

Some of those who received calls heard a

voice that sounded like Wiles, which may have been generated by Artificial Intelligence, according to the report.



Some received text messages that they initially thought were official White House requests but some people reported the messages did not sound like Wiles.

The FBI warned in a public service announcement this month of a "malicious text and voice messaging campaign" in which unidentified "malicious actors" have been impersonating senior US government officials.

The scheme, according to the FBI, has relied on text messages and AI-generated voice messages that purport to come from a senior US official and that aim to dupe other government officials as well as the victim's associates and contacts.

"Safeguarding our

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administration officials' ability to securely communicate to accomplish the president's mission is a top priority," FBI Director

Kash Patel said in a statement on Friday.

It is unclear how someone gained access to Wiles' phone, but the intrusion is the latest security breach for Trump staffers.

Last year, Iran hacked into Trump's campaign and sensitive internal documents were stolen and distributed, including a dossier on Vice President J D Vance, created before

Vance, created before he was selected as Trump's running mate.

Wiles, who served as a comanager of Trump's campaign before taking on the linchpin role in his new administration, has amassed a powerful network of contacts.

# Ukraine attacks Russian military airbases with drones; at least 40 aircraft hit

Kyiv: Ukraine conducted a large drone attack on Russian military aircraft on Sunday, a security official told Reuters, saying 40 Russian warplanes were struck.

If confirmed, the strikes would be the most damaging Ukrainian drone attack of the war, and would be a significant setback for Moscow.

The official said that the strikes were conducted by the SBU domestic intelligence agency, and that they had simultaneously hit four Russian military airbases on Sunday.

The source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said more than 40 aircraft were hit, including Tu-95 and Tu-22 strategic bombers, which Russia uses to fire long-range missiles at Ukraine.

Reuters could not immediately verify the



assertions.

The source shared video footage, saying it showed the strikes. The images showed several large aircraft, some of which appeared to be Tu-95 strategic bombers, on fire.

Ukraine, which lacks Russia's vast arsenal of missiles, has instead built up a large fleet of attack drones which it has used to attack Russian military and oil facilities.

Russia had proposed a fresh round of talks in Istanbul on Monday, but Kyiv has thus far neither confirmed nor denied that it will be attending.





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### Evolutionary or revolutionary Visualising the digital battlefield

that Operation Sindoor has been paused, there will be debates on the lessons learned from the short yet sharp encounter and how a future conflict involving the two neighbours could play out. In this context, I came across a paper by Pavithran Raian titled 'Visualising the Al Battlefield — A Realist Perspective'. Rajan is a former intelligence officer of the Indian Army who writes and lectures extensively on information warfare and technology.

Rajan outlines a futuristic scenario in which the Pakistan Army responds to an Indian airstrike on terrorist camps with a ground offensive towards Amritsar. The physical assault is accompanied by a coordinated cyberattack that targets India's digital infrastructure. With full backing from China, the operation leverages pre-planted vulnerabilities in Chinese-manufactured devices across India.

Thousands of smartphones explode in the hands of civilians and military personnel. Electric vehicles, remotely controlled through previously installed backdoors, crash into

#### **Articles Written By:** LT GEN DS HOODA (RETD)

military targets. Accompanying the Pakistani soldiers are swarms of drones with facial recognition software to hunt down high-value individuals.

Simultaneously, India's Information and Communication Technology backbone, seeded with Chinese hardware and software, begins to destabilise. Backdoors embedded in routers, switches and servers allow Chinese cyber warriors to selectively shut down communication networks, power stations, water treatment plants and transportation systems.

Not all Chinese devices in India are weaponised; only 5 per cent are carefully selected to maximise the impact, with some Western devices also becoming victims of supply chain poisoning. This is a two-front war for India involving Pakistan and China but visualise.

Is such a war realistic or in the realm of science fiction? To answer that, we must examine two critical questions: Do such technologies already exist, and can they be weaponised at the scale envisioned in the scenario?

Looking first at the current state of technology. Can smartphones be made to explode? There are known examples of malware, such as BadPower, that work by tricking the adapter into sending more electricity to the phone than it can handle, which, over time, will melt the internal components and start a fire.

Modern lithium-ion batteries of phones have built-in protection circuits that monitor temperature, voltage and current. If dangerous conditions are detected, these circuits disconnect the battery to prevent catastrophic failure. However, the equipment manufacturer can modify the battery



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safety features if pressured by the country of

E-vehicles are essentially "computers on unfolding in ways that Indian planners did not wheels" and vulnerable to hacking. Of late, cybersecurity researchers have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to remotely compromise e-cars, including critical functions like steering and braking, through software vulnerabilities.

> A famous example is the 2015 Jeep Cherokee hack, where researchers Charlie Miller and Chris Valasek remotely disabled the Jeep's transmission and brakes while a Wired reporter was driving on the highway. In another case, a Tencent Keen Security Lab team took remote control of a Tesla Model S from 12 miles away, manipulating its door locks, dashboard and brakes. Cyberattacks are also increasingly targeting e-vehicle charging stations, and there is credible concern that these stations could be used as a vector to spread malware to hundreds of cars.

> Drones with facial recognition software are already a reality. In 2023, the US Department of Defense awarded a contract to develop drones that use machine learning

management system to deactivate some of its and facial recognition to identify human targets for special operations forces. China is the leader in facial recognition technology and a dominant force in drone technology. There is no doubt that the two technologies have been combined for military purposes.

Experts have long warned that when a foreign adversary's equipment is embedded within national infrastructure, it may carry hidden "kill switches" capable of disabling critical systems. Like other countries, India has heavily relied on cost-effective Chinesemade routers, switches and industrial control systems to build its cellular networks and power grid, thereby creating a potential vulnerability.

In April 2022, US cybersecurity firm Recorded Future revealed that Chinese statesponsored hackers had targeted India's power grids in Ladakh. In October 2020, malware deployed by Chinese group RedEcho caused a power outage in Mumbai, which halted trains, shut down stock markets and hit hospitals for 10 to 12 hours.

So, can these technologies be weaponised at scale to unleash mass destruction and disruption? Orchestrating a multi-pronged cyberassault synchronised with a conventional military offensive would demand an extraordinary level of operational sophistication. It implies that well before the conflict turned kinetic, the adversary would have infiltrated supply chains, weaponised key systems, mapped targets and deployed AI to minimise the need for human control.

This degree of sophistication is far beyond the reach of private hacking groups but well within the grasp of state actors like China, whose cyber capabilities are both advanced and expansive. It is not a question of if such planning is underway but how far along it already is.

In February 2024, then FBI Director Christopher Wray confirmed that China has "offensive weapons within our critical infrastructure poised to attack whenever Beijing decides the time is right." Then, US federal agencies warned that Chinese hackers have, at times, "secretly" hidden in US infrastructure for up to five years, ready to conduct a disruptive or destructive cyberattack. It would be naïve to assume that India's critical infrastructure is not already the target of silent infiltration and strategic compromise.

The conflict scenario described in 'The AI Battlefield' could appear exaggerated, but it lies uncomfortably close to reality. It also challenges Clausewitz's classical ontology of war -- where combat once played out on defined battlefields, it now unfolds through invisible networks of code and compromised infrastructure. Preparing for such a war will require not only military readiness but also a national response, which includes rigorous supply chain vetting, the phased removal of foreign hardware from critical systems and investment in indigenous technologies.

## Newton's Third Law in Punjab

TWENTY days before the Ludhiana West Assembly

constituency goes to the polls on June 19, the Punjab BJP is asking two questions. The first is, Ludhiana West where? And the second, Ludhiana West who?

The crisis in the party in the state is totally at odds with a juggernaut that has been caterwauling across the country over the last several months and mopping up all the governments it sets its eyes on. Haryana. Maharashtra. Delhi. Even in Manipur, the BJP folks are claiming the support of a majority of the MLAs (44) in an attempt at upsetting the local applecart.

The BJP blitzkrieg didn't need Operation Sindoor to underline the 24x7 presence of the world's largest political party — with a 90-crore membership, the BJP claims to be even larger than the Communist Party of China.

Certainly, Operation Sindoor has magnified PM Narendra Modi's importance not just in the party, but also across the country and in the international arena. He took the decision, first, to target terror

### Articles Written By: JYOTI MALHOTRA

infrastructure inside Pakistan. Then, when the Pakistanis struck back by raining drones and missiles on Indian military infrastructure from Baramulla to Bhuj, it was the PM who decided to escalate the air war by bombing Pakistan's 11 bases and runways.

The BrahMos missile certainly did its job well, but the credit for the decision to play eyeball-to-eyeball with Rawalpindi until Rawalpindi blinked, must certainly be given to Modi.

Close by his side, the powerful Home Minister and Modi's closest confidante, Amit Shah, has demonstrated how there's no sunlight between the PM and he. It's as if they complete each other's sentences. Between them, there's full control over the party and the country.

The thing about Amit Shah, as has been made clear again and again, is that he doesn't leave anything to chance. It is said he fights every election, from panchayat to Lok Sabha, as if he's astride the Mahabharata chessboard, thinking through every move three moves before.

Within days of the end of the India-Pakistan conflict, as the PM travelled across the country talking to people about the conflict just ended, Shah was back in the Jammu region to assess the damage on the ground.

Perhaps, none of this is new. Modi-Shah have had the BJP and the country in their grip since the party came to power in 2014 — dividing the Opposition, influencing both society and media, invoking the gods and conflating it with nationalism, although, as we know, one of the most endearing things about Hindu gods is that they have feet of clay. All the party presidents, both past and present, know that.

Current incumbent JP Nadda, the mildmannered gentleman from Himachal Pradesh, must be wondering till when and



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how long his extended presidency is going to last.

The RSS is said to be fully on board the Modi train, its message of Hindutva being seeded across the length and breadth of the country; what more could it want in its centenary year.

So, back to the first question. Why does no one in the BJP, not even Modi-Shah, care about a bypoll in a corner of Punjab, in Ludhiana West, considering Punjab is a sensitive, border state; has just been through a near-conflict with Pakistan, even if it was mostly an air war; and none other than the PM came to Adampur within a day of the end of the conflict because the S-400 had warded off

Pakistan's Hatf missiles?

Consider the total disinterest. The BJP state president, Sunil Jakhar, resigned several months ago and there is no move to replace him. The larger-than-life Amarinder Singh, who left the Congress to teach it a lesson and joined the BJP, is far removed from the heat and dust of politics and is planning a summer of travel. Vijay Rupani, the man from Gujarat who is in charge of Punjab, hides when he rolls his eyes in boredom, but everyone can see.

Ludhiana West is a predominantly Hindu constituency, as much as 85 per cent, perfect territory for the BJP to showcase its determination to do much better than the only two MLAs it has today. In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP didn't do too badly, winning 18 per cent of the vote. The PM, who spent a large time in Punjab during the Emergency, is said to have a fond corner for Punjab. But a certain je ne sais quoi is clearly missing.

Local Ludhiana boy Bikram Singh Sidhu is said to be a likely candidate from Ludhiana West — he had contested the election the last time too — except, the local 'sanghathan' or RSS man, Manthri Sreenivasulu, doesn't approve.

Sreenivasulu, instead, likes Jeevan Gupta, another local who pays full obeisance to the 'sanghathan', but as a wag offered, "won't get even 10 votes."

Sreenivasulu, meanwhile, is most unpopular in the Punjab BJP. A godfearing, Telugu-speaking gent, he earnestly clocks the miles, going from 'pind' to 'pind', village to village, but to little avail. It's not really his fault. The Punjabi is mystified by him, and he is mystified by the Punjabi. Newton's Third Law prevails here; every action has an equal and opposite reaction.

For sure, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, via Punjab and Andhra Pradesh, India is one, but the BJP must know that some local flavour is always welcome in the Maggi.

Back, then, to the original question. Why is the BJP not interested in fighting Ludhiana West? Perhaps, Punjab with only 13 Lok Sabha seats doesn't matter that much; and without the Akali Dal, it's difficult for the BJP to enter the state's Sikh-dominated villages.

Perhaps, none of the above is true and the real reason is that Punjabis, so used to resisting the idea of the Delhi Durbar for centuries, find it easy to escape the charms of the saffron party. So, why doesn't the BJP want to change that state of being?









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