

Houthi ballistic missile hits near Israel's biggest airport

TEL AVIV, May 4 (IANS)

A BALLISTIC missile launched by Houthi rebels in Yemen struck near Israel's Ben Gurion Airport on Sunday after multiple interception attempts by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) failed, prompting a temporary halt in all takeoffs and landings at the country's main international airport.

However, the Israel Airport Authority confirmed the reopening of airspace following the temporary suspension of flight operations. The missile impacted a

**Israel
vows
'sevenfold
retaliation'**

Air India's flight diverted to Abu Dhabi

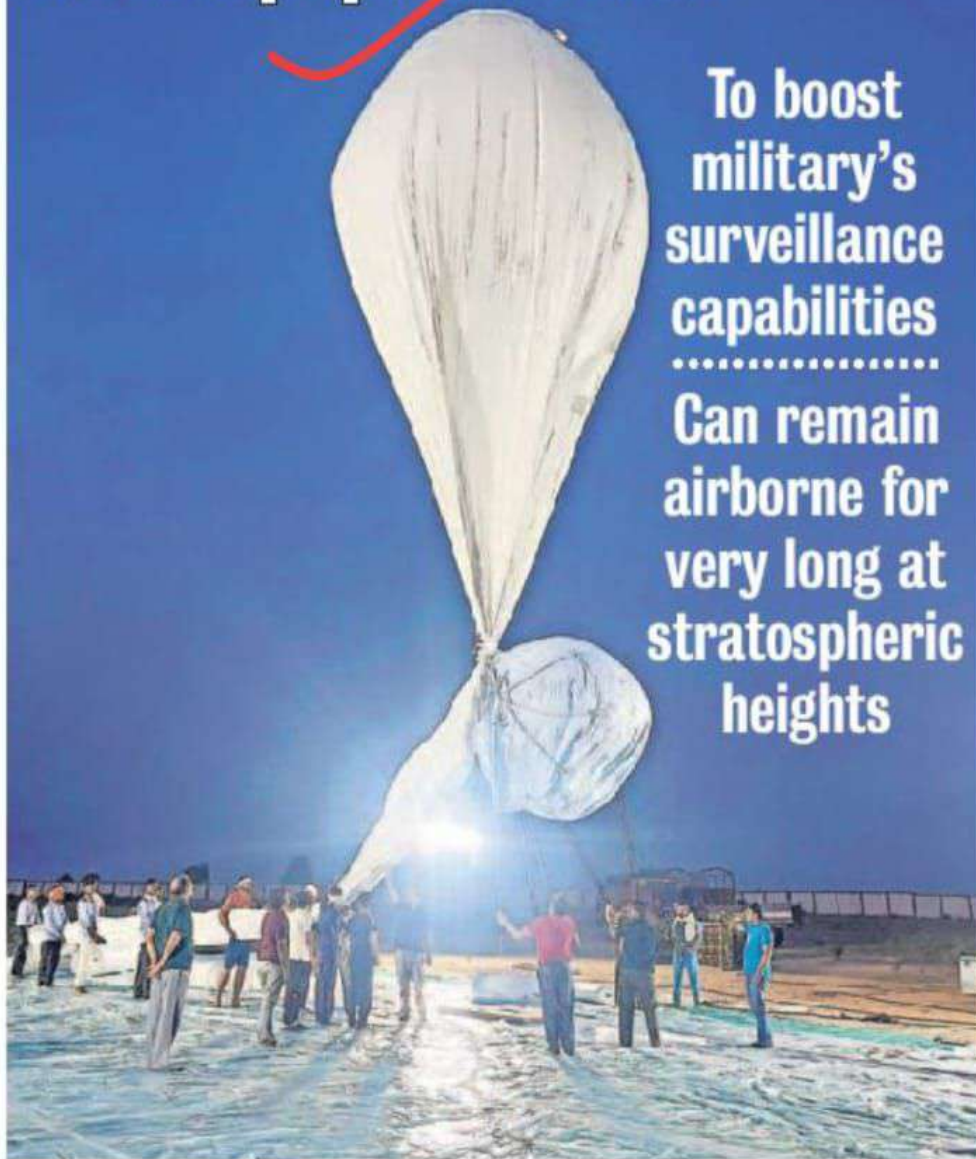
NEW DELHI, May 4 (PTI)

AN AIR India flight from the national capital to Tel Aviv was diverted to Abu Dhabi on Sunday as there was a missile attack near the airport in the Israeli city, according to sources. The attack happened less than an hour before the Air India flight AI139, operated with a Boeing 787 aircraft, was to land at Tel Aviv. They said the flight will be coming back to Delhi.

grove adjacent to an access road within the airport's perimeter. However, a direct hit on terminal infrastructure was averted.

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DRDO conducts maiden trials of stratospheric airship platform



To boost military's surveillance capabilities
.....
Can remain airborne for very long at stratospheric heights

NEW DELHI, May 4 (PTI)

INDIA successfully carried out maiden flight-trials of a stratospheric airship platform which is being developed to boost the military's surveillance capabilities.

Very few countries in the world have developed such a complex platform, officials said.

The flight trial was carried out by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at Sheopur in Madhya Pradesh. DRDO Chairman Samir VKamat said the prototype flight

is a "milestone" towards realisation of lighter-than-air high-altitude platform systems that can remain airborne for very long endurance at stratospheric heights.

The airship platform was launched with an instrumental payload to an altitude of around 17 kms, according to the Defence Ministry. The successful flight trials of the platform came amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan over the Pahalgam terror attack.

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PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK

Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov calls for easing tensions between India, Pak

NEW DELHI, May 4 (PTI)

WITH tensions between India and Pakistan rising over the Pahalgam terror attack, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov spoke to his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar and called for "settlement" of the "disagreements" between the two neighbours

under the framework of the Simla agreement and the Lahore declaration.

The Russian embassy said Lavrov held the phone conversation with Jaishankar on Friday. "They discussed topical issues of the Russian-Indian cooperation, as well as the aggravation of Indian-Pakistan relations fol-

lowing the terrorist attack near Pahalgam," the embassy said in a statement.

It said Lavrov "called for the settlement of disagreements between New Delhi and Islamabad by political and diplomatic means on a bilateral basis in accordance with the provisions of the Simla agreement of



1972 and the Lahore Declaration of 1999". The ministers also discussed the schedule of upcoming contacts at the highest and high levels," the mission said.

There is no comment from the Indian side on the phone conversation.

The talks between the two foreign ministers came against the backdrop of escalating tensions between India and Pakistan over the April 22 terror attack that killed 26 civilians.

Citing "cross-border linkages" to the horrific attack, India has promised severe punishment to those involved in the strike. Many global powers including the US and European Union have called on both sides to de-escalate tensions while unequivocally condemning the terror strike.

India has already asserted that the "perpetrators, backers and planners" of the terror attack

must be brought to justice.

In a high-level meeting with the top defence brass, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the armed forces have "complete operational freedom" to decide on the mode, targets and timing of India's response to the terror attack.

The PM affirmed that it is a

national resolve to deal a crushing blow to terrorism. India on April 23 announced a raft of punitive measures against Pakistan including suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, shutting down of the only operational land border crossing at Attari and downgrading of diplomatic ties in view of the attack.

Police carry out searches at multiple locations in Srinagar

SRINAGAR, May 4 (PTI)

POLICE on Saturday carried out searches at multiple locations in the city here as part of a clampdown on the terror ecosystem in the wake of the Pahalgam attack.

A spokesperson of the Jammu and Kashmir Police said they have intensified searches across multiple locations in the city, with the aim to dismantle the terror-supporting infrastructure in the district. He said the searches were part of the continuing action against terrorist associates and in furtherance of the investigation into cases registered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The spokesperson said the searches were conducted at five places in the city.

The searches were carried out in accordance with proper legal procedures.

Pakistani Ranger apprehended by BSF from international border in Rajasthan

NEW DELHI, May 4 (PTI)

APAKISTANI Ranger has been apprehended by the BSF from along the India-Pakistan border in Rajasthan, official sources said on Saturday.

The development comes nearly a fortnight after a Border Security Force jawan was apprehended by the Rangers amid rising tension between the two countries.

The Pakistani Ranger has been taken into custody by the Rajasthan frontier of the force, they said.

Whatever PM decides will be in national interest: Jitendra Singh

RAMBAN (J&K), May 4 (PTI)

UNION Minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday said whatever Prime Minister Narendra Modi decides on Pakistan post the Pahalgam terror attack will be in the national interest.

Singh was talking to reporters after chairing a meeting here to review the situation following the recent cloudbursts that left three people dead and caused massive damage in this district. He assured proper rehabilitation of the victims of the natural calamity. "I think whatever the Prime Minister decides is for the welfare of the people and in the national interest. He and the home minister (Amit Shah) have inputs which are not available with us," the Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office said.



Farooq urges people of J&K to take stand against perpetrators

ANANTNAG, May 4 (PTI)

NATIONAL Conference supremo Farooq Abdullah on Saturday urged the people of Jammu and Kashmir to stand against the perpetrators of Pahalgam-like attacks for progress and prosperity, asserting that the doors of hell were open for those behind the massacre.

The former Chief Minister of the erstwhile State visited the residence of Adil Hussain Shah, a pony ride operator who was among the 26 victims of the April 22 attack, at Hapatnaar in this south Kashmir district.

"He (Shah) is a martyr. He sacrificed his life, he was not afraid of the guns of the beasts. This is 'insaniyat (humanity)', this is Kashmiriyat. One who is afraid is dead," Abdullah said.



Govt to procure next-Gen Very Short Range Air Defence System

NEW DELHI, May 4 (PTI)

THE Government has started the process to procure a next-generation Very Short Range Air Defence System or VSHORADS (NG), which should be able to engage aerial targets "both by day and night" and under all weather conditions, including in snow-bound locations.

The Defence Ministry has issued a request for proposal (RFP) for the procurement, which was uploaded on the Indian Army's website on Saturday.

In the RFP, the ministry said it intends to procure "48 launchers, 48 night-vision sights, 85 missiles and one missile test station of Very Short Range Air Defence System (New Generation) or VSHORADS (NG) under Buy (Indian) category" and seeks participation from prospective bidders in the procurement process, subject to requirements.



Under the "operational characteristics and feature" head, the RFP document says, "To meet the evolving dynamic air threat, Army Air Defence requires Very Short Range Air Defence (VSHORADS) manportable missile system for effective terminal and point defence."

"These VSHORADS, based on

infra-red homing (IR) technology, are effective fire-and-forget type of missile systems and are being referred to as VSHORADS (NG)," it says.

Manportable refers to an object capable of being carried by one person over a long distance.

The RFP defines the General Staff Qualitative Requirements (GSQRs) for the planned VSHORADS (NG).

"The system should comprise of a IR homing missile coupled to a manportable launching mechanism and suitable sighting system to engage targets both by day and night," it says.

It should have the capability to engage fighter, transport aircraft, helicopters and UAS (unmanned aerial system), the document says.

The procurement seeks to booster the Army's air-defence capabilities to deal with any adversarial aerial threat.

'US likely to seek tariff cuts, regulatory reforms in trade deal with India'

NEW DELHI, May 4 (PTI)

THE US is expected to push for sweeping changes in India's policies, ranging from tariff reductions to regulatory overhauls, that could benefit American firms and exporters, under the proposed bilateral trade agreement with India, think tank GTRI said on Sunday.

In the agri sector, the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said the US demands include scaling back India's minimum support price (MSP) programmes for crops like rice and wheat, removing restrictions on genetically modified (GM) imports, and lowering farm tariffs.

Similarly, on dairy, the US argues that India's GM-free feed certification and facility registration protocols effectively bar American dairy imports.



Indian rules prohibit imports from animals fed with animal-derived feed, for example, butter from a cow fed meat due to religious sensitivities.

"India considers this policy non-negotiable," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

He added that America may also seek easing of restrictions

on US retail giants like Amazon and Walmart that face roadblocks due to India's restrictions on foreign-owned inventory-based e-commerce trading.

India resists the easing as it has to protect its small domestic retailers from unfair competition from deep-pocketed foreign firms.

"It also views these restrictions as part of preserving regulatory autonomy in a fast-evolving sector," Srivastava said.

The US criticises India's cumbersome licensing requirements for remanufactured and secondhand capital goods, calling the process costly and slow.

It said India mandates technical certificates, enforces quantity restrictions, and demands a residual life guarantee of at least five years for imports.

"India maintains that differentiating between new and remanufactured products is crucial to prevent dumping of obsolete technologies and to protect local manufacturing," he said, adding, "as negotiations proceed, Washington will continue pressing for wide-ranging reforms in tariffs, standards, digital rules, and services access".

BSF to get 16 new battalions, 2 field HQs for Pak, B'desh borders

■ By Neelabh Srivastava

NEW DELHI, May 4 (PTI)

THE Border Security Force is all set to get the Government's final nod to raise 16 more battalions, comprising around 17,000 troopers, and set up two forward headquarters for its western and eastern commands guarding the Pakistan and Bangladesh frontiers, respectively, official sources have said.

The plan has already received an in-principle approval.

Once sanctioned, it will be a shot in the arm for the force that has heightened vigil in the east following last year's fall of the Sheikh Hasina Government in Bangladesh and in the wake of a renewed challenge on the Pakistan front after the April 22 Pahalagam massacre.

The BSF is soon expected to get the final sanction for raising 16 new battalions which will be

raised over the next few years, sources in the security establishment told PTI.

The sanction from the Union Finance Ministry are pending and are expected to be granted soon, they said.

The paramilitary force has 193 battalions as of now to guard the two fronts. A battalion of the border force consists of over 1,000 troopers. Hence, the overall strength of the 16 new battalions will be around 17,000 personnel.

These new battalions will help the BSF in its primary task of guarding the Pakistan and Bangladesh borders as per a blueprint being prepared by the border force, they said.

One sector will come up in Jammu to strengthen security along the India-Pakistan International Border in Jammu and Punjab and the second will be based in Mizoram for better surveillance of the Bangladesh

border, they said.

The current sectors, headed by Deputy Inspector General (DIG) rank officers, in its Jammu frontier are located at Rajouri, Sunderbani, Jammu and Indreshwar Nagar. Under its Mizoram and Cachar frontier headquartered in Assam, the sectors are located at Silchar, Aizawl and one in Manipur.

Sources said the BSF will initiate recruitment drives to hire men and women for these new battalions, followed by their training. According to officials, the 2.70 lakh personnel strong force had sent a proposal to the Home Ministry a few years ago to raise 20-21 new battalions owing to "the fast-changing security dynamics, profile of the terrain and related issues" in its primary task area of guarding the two borders apart from combat duties in the anti-Naxal operations theatre.

**Rs 3.07 tn
till 2027**

'Media and Entertainment sector in India to grow 7%'

■ **By Kaushik Bhattacharya**
MUMBAI, May 4

THE Media and Entertainment (M&E) sector of India is expected to grow at 7% with a whopping increase by Rs 3.07 trillion till 2027, revealed a latest report issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India on Saturday on the platform of World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit 2025 (WAVES 2025) held at Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai.

The report named "A Study Called India - Content and Media Services for the World 2025" also mentioned that the M&E sector of India continued to grow in 2024, increasing by Rs 81 billion to reach Rs 2.5 trillion. In the study, the Ministry categorised growth of M&E sector in 2024 and also predicted the year wise growth till 2027. In 2024, the sector is divided into 10 different sub sectors including Digital Media, Television, Print, Online Gaming, Filmed Entertainment, Animation and VFX, Live Events, Out-of-home media, Music, and Radio.

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Growth Chart of M&E sector till 2027

	2024	2025	2026	2027
Digital media	802	903	1,004	1,104
Television	679	676	671	667
Print	260	262	264	267
Online gaming	232	260	288	316
Filmed entertainment	187	196	204	213
Animation and VFX	103	113	130	147
Live events	101	119	142	167
Out-of-home media	59	66	73	79
Music	53	60	68	78
Radio	25	27	28	30
Total	2,502	2,682	2,873	3,067

INR billion (gross of taxes) | US\$ 1 = INR 85

REPORT RELEASED AT WAVES 2025

'Govt committed to create creator-first ecosystem'

■ **By Kaushik Bhattacharya**
MUMBAI, May 4

"GOVERNMENT of India is committed to create a creator-first ecosystem backed by policies, production

incentives and strong intellectual property protections," said Dr L Murugan, Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, Government of India on Sunday from

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