

After Operation Sindoor, India shuts Kartarpur Corridor

CHANDIGARH, May 7 (IANS)

THE Union Ministry of Home Affairs on Wednesday announced the closure of the Kartarpur Corridor "till further orders" after India struck nine terrorist infrastructure sites in retaliation for the Pahalgam attack, under code name 'Operation Sindoor'.

Punjab's Gurdaspur Deputy Commissioner Dalwinderjit Singh told the media that the corridor will be shut for the day.

He said the district administration had not received any orders from the Government for the coming days. Nearly 150 Indian pilgrims arrived at the Integrated Check Post (ICP) for the pilgrimage to the historic

Sri Darbar Sahib gurdwara in Narowal district of Pakistan, but were later asked to return home.

The ICP at Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur district facilitates access to the Kartarpur Corridor.

"Immigration and defence officials told us that the situation is not conducive and advised us to return around 11 a.m.," one of the pilgrims told the media.

Inaugurated on November 9, 2019, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Kartarpur Corridor is a visa-free border crossing that allows Indian citizens and Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) cardholders to visit the gurdwara, located 4.7 km from the India-Pakistan border, without requiring a visa.

India opens Govt procurement sector for UK firms under FTA

NEW DELHI, May 7 (PTI)

AFTER the UAE, India has opened its Central Government procurement for British companies under the free trade agreement (FTA) announced on Tuesday, an official said on Wednesday.

The official said British firms would be allowed to participate in the procurement of goods and services of the non-sensitive central-level entities only. However, access to state and local government-level entities will be excluded. "Eligible UK suppliers would be allowed to bid for domestic tenders as deemed Class II local suppliers only," the official said, adding carve out is also provided for 'Make in India' policy as well as medium and small enterprises. Earlier, India opened the government procurement segment in the comprehensive trade pact with the UAE. Under that pact, UAE firms are allowed to participate in procurement tenders worth over Rs 200 crore. In 2020, the Government modified public procurement norms to give maximum preference to companies whose goods and services have 50 per cent or more local content to promote 'Make in India'.

The revised Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India), Order

No duty cuts by India on diamond, silver, smartphones, optical fibres to UK

NEW DELHI, May 7 (PTI)

INDIA will not give any duty concessions to British businesses on a number of sensitive industrial goods like diamond, silver, smartphones, and optical fibres under the free trade agreement (FTA) with the UK, an official said.

The official also said the duty concession on imports of petrol and diesel engine vehicles from the UK is limited to pre-defined quota. Similarly, the quota for imports of British electric vehicles (EVs) at concessional rate of customs duty is limited only to "few" thousands.

Sensitive industrial goods like plastics, diamond, silver, base stations, smartphones, television camera tubes, optical fibres, optical fibres bundles and cables have been kept under exclusion list of the FTA.

2017, has introduced a concept of Class-I, II and non-local suppliers, based on which they will get preference in government purchases of goods and services.

Class-I local suppliers will get the most preference in all government purchases because their domestic value addition is 50 per cent or more. They will be followed by Class-II suppliers, whose value addition range is more than 20 per cent but less than 50 per cent.

GTRI said that allowing UK firms to compete on near-equal terms could crowd out Indian MSMEs, which depend heavily on protected access to government contracts.

"It also dilutes one of India's last remaining industrial policy tools - government procurement preferences - used to promote domestic manufacturing, innovation, and jobs," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

India's government procurement (GP) market is one of the largest in the world and it is estimated at nearly USD 600 billion annually, or approximately 15 per cent of the country's GDP.

This expenditure fuels development across infrastructure, healthcare, power, education, transport, and defence.

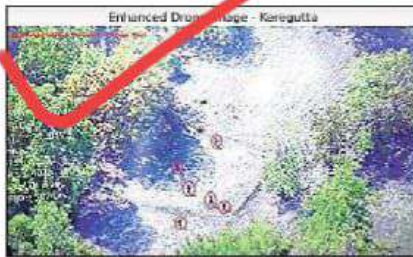
OPERATION SANKALP

■ By Mukesh S Singh
RAIPUR (KEREGUTTA)/RAIPUR,
May 7

IN A high-impact escalation of counter-insurgency operations in southern Chhattisgarh, security forces on Wednesday neutralised 22 Maoists in a sustained encounter near Keregutta Hills, situated along the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border. The area has been under tight siege as part of Operation Sankalp—the region's longest-running anti-Maoist initiative, now in its 15th consecutive day. Drone footage captured during the ongoing assault has surfaced, showing a sizeable group of Maoists taking cover beneath trees as they attempt to repel the coordinated offensive by spe-

cialised units. The confrontation, which erupted early on Wednesday morning, remains active with gunfire exchanges continuing across forested ridges and rocky enclaves.

"Confirmed," said Additional Director General of Police (Naxal Operations), Vivekananda Sinha. In an exclusive confirmation to 'The Hitavada', he noted, "The engagement is still active. Security forces have inflicted heavy losses on the Maoists. DRG, CoBRA, CRPF and STF units are leading the operation with sustained precision." Keregutta, once considered a virtual sanctuary for senior PLGA cadres of the banned CPI (Maoist), was surrounded following credible intelligence indicating the presence of high-



ranking insurgent operatives stockpiled with food and arms for a prolonged standoff. Multiple tactical units launched a layered containment strike under 'Operation Sankalp', methodically tightening their

hold across the topography. Security officials familiar with the terrain confirmed that elite units intercepted internal Maoist communication and propaganda in recent days, which included appeals for

ceasefire and dialogue. However, authorities held firm on their strategy, refusing to dilute operational momentum.

Despite Telangana forces initially refraining from full-scale engagement, Chhattisgarh units maintained an uncompromising cordon, culminating in Wednesday's massive breakthrough. According to security sources, several slain Maoists could be part of Indravati Area Committee, PLGA Company No. 06, and Platoon 16, all crucial nodes in the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC) chain of command.

A senior ground-level commander remarked, "We've breached a deeply embedded stronghold that had once served as a sanctuary. The volume and

calibre of weapons recovered—AK-series rifles, LMGs, SLRs, and .303 rifles—validate the scale of the enemy's embedded infrastructure."

Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Gyanendra Pratap Singh, has been personally monitoring updates from New Delhi, while CRPF IG Rakesh Aggarwal, Bastar Range IG Sundarraj P, and ADGP Vivekananda Sinha are overseeing on-ground coordination and high-frequency tactical assessments.

Notably, the Keregutta campaign also underlines a strategic shift in force posture—from defensive disruption to full-spectrum dominance. The mission's continuity amid rough terrain and operational fatigue

showcases a deliberate intent to dismantle long-held Maoist bastions without negotiating from a position of compromise.

As per field intelligence, more Maoist casualties could be confirmed by nightfall, as combing operations continue amid the unforgiving contours of the hills. "This is not just a tactical win; it is symbolic. We are reclaiming geography long considered irretrievable," a senior CRPF officer told this newspaper reporter on condition of anonymity.

A field officer of intelligence agency remarked, "The Red Corridor's twilight appears closer than ever along this stretch of southern Chhattisgarh, where the fight now hinges not merely on firepower, but on psychological encirclement."

22 Naxalites killed in C'garh encounter

India has agreed already to drop its tariffs to nothing: Trump

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, May 7 (PTI)

UNITED States President Donald Trump on Tuesday said India has "agreed" to drop its high tariffs "to nothing".

"I mean, India as an exam-

ple, has one of the highest tariffs in the world. We're not going to put up with that, and they've agreed already to drop

it. They'll drop it to nothing. They've already agreed. They would have never done that for anybody else but me," Trump

told reporters in the Oval Office.

Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney spoke to reporters as they met in the Oval Office to discuss the US-Canada trade. "So we're going to put down some numbers and we're going to say our country is open

for business and they're going to come in and they're going to pay for the privilege of being able to shop in the United States of America. It's very simple. It's very simple," he added. In the past, Trump has called India "tariff king" and a "big abuser".

Trump, Carney faceoff in Oval Office

WASHINGTON, May 7 (AP)

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney faced off in the Oval Office on Tuesday and showed no signs of retreating from their gaping differences in an ongoing trade war that has shattered decades of trust between the two countries.

The two kept it civil, but as for Trump's calls to make Canada the 51st state, Carney insisted his nation was "not for sale" and Trump shot back, "time will tell."

Asked by a reporter if there was anything Carney could tell



US President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney meet in White House, Washington on Tuesday.

Leaves gaping differences on tariffs, 51st state

him to lift his tariffs of as much as 25 per cent on Canada, Trump bluntly said: "No."

The US President added for emphasis, "Just the way it is." Carney acknowledged that no bit of rhetoric on tariffs would be enough to sway Trump, saying that "this is a bigger discussion." "There are much bigger forces involved," the Canadian leader continued. "And this will

take some time and some discussions. And that's why we're here, to have those discussions."

The meeting between the two leaders showcased the full spectrum of Trump's unique mix of aggression, hospitality and stubbornness. Shortly before Carney's arrival, Trump insulted Canada by posting on social media that the US didn't need "ANYTHING" from its northern neighbour, only to then turn on the charm and praise Carney's election win in person before showing his obstinance on matters of policy substance.

US will stop bombing Yemen's Houthis after rebels stop targeting ships, says Trump

WASHINGTON, May 7 (AP)

PRESIDENT Donald Trump said Tuesday that he's ordering a halt to nearly two months of US airstrikes on Yemen's Houthis, saying the Iran-backed rebels have indicated that "they don't want to fight anymore" and have pledged to stop attacking ships along a vital global trade route.

"We're going to stop the bombing of the Houthis, effective immediately," Trump said at the start of his Oval Office meeting with Canadian PM Mark Carney.

That likely means an abrupt end to a campaign of airstrikes that began in March, when Trump promised to use "overwhelming lethal force" after the Houthis said they would resume attacks on Israeli vessels sailing

off Yemen in response to Israel's mounting another blockade on the Gaza Strip.

At the time, they described the warnings as affecting the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and the Arabian Sea. Trump said the Houthis had indicated to US officials that "they don't want to fight anymore. They just don't want to fight. And we will honor that, and we will stop the bombings."

His announcement came the same day that Israel launched airstrikes against the Houthis that it said fully disabled the international airport in the Yemeni capital, Sanaa. Israel's attacks were its second round of airstrikes on targets in Yemen in retaliation for a Houthi missile strike on Sunday on Israel's international airport.

OPERATION SINDOOR

Indian missiles destroy 9 terror camps in Pak, PoK

JAISH HQ, LET, HIZBUL STRONG-HOLDS RAZED TO GROUND IN PRECISION STRIKES

Modi picked one of the op

Prime Minister Narendra Modi who coined the evocative name "Operation Sindoor" to codename Indian Armed Forces' strikes on nine terror sites. With terror camps in Pahalgam gunned down 26 civilians, women, and the devastated wives of several of the victims becoming the face of the tragedy, the name "Operation Sindoor" was considered appropriate. A spokesman for retaliatory strikes, they noted.



celebrates. (PTI)

Doval briefs counterparts

NATIONAL Security Advisor Ajit Doval told counterparts in the UK, Saudi Arabia and Japan that India has no intent to escalate tensions but is prepared

ALLEN

the Year, One Goal, Victory in NEET

ADMISSIONS OPEN

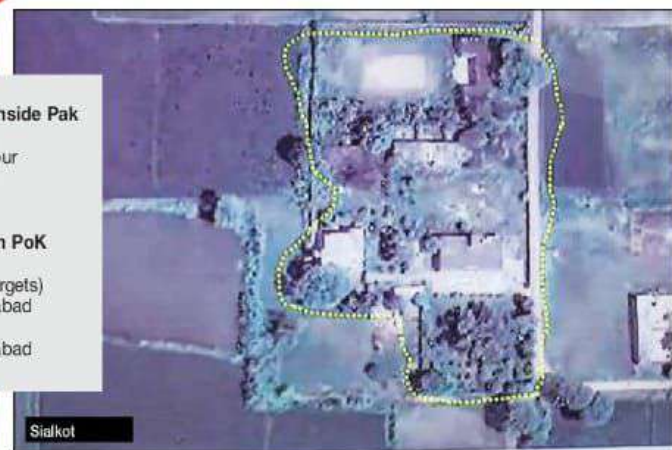
SEE PAGE NO. 2

retaliate resolutely" if Pakistan does so, officials said. He also conferred with Russia and France, officials said.

Bharat's response



Muridke



Sialkot

Targets inside Pak

Bahawalpur
Muridke
Sarjal

Targets in PoK

Kotli (2 targets)
Muzaffarabad
Barnala
Muzaffarabad
Sialkot

NEW DELHI, May 7 (PTI)

STRIKING at the core of Pakistan's terror infrastructure in a series of precision attacks, Indian jets early on Wednesday hit training camps, launch pads and headquarters of the Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Hizbul Mujahideen without breaching Pakistan's airspace, in a 25-minute-long "measured and non-escalatory" strike, officials said.

A large number of terrorists were present at the nine high value sites in Pakistan and

Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir when India attacked in the darkness of the night, they said.

Codenamed 'Operation Sindoor', the sites included the

JeM's sprawling headquarters in Bahawalpur and the LeT's in Muridke, both in Pakistan Punjab.

Read Editorial
OPERATION SINDOOR
on page 8

The retaliatory action follows the "savagely killing" of 25 male tourists, gunned down in front of their wives and families, and one local guide in the higher reaches of Kashmir's

Pahalgam town on April 22.

The Armed Forces chose four targets in Pakistan and five in PoK based on "credible intelligence" about terror camps operating at these sites, camouflaged as health centres to evade detection and circumvent sanctions from international organisations, including the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), officials said.

(Contd on page 5)



Muzaffarabad



Muridke

10 members of my family, 4 others killed in attack on JeM HQ; 'kash mai mar jaata', moans sood Azhar

JAMMU, May 7 (IANS)

JAISH-E-MOHAMMAD (JeM) terror outfit chief, Azhar Masood admitted that ten of his family members and four others were killed in the missile strikes launched by the Indian Armed Forces during 'Operation Sindoor' in the wee

hours of Wednesday.

In an Urdu statement released to the media, Masood said, "Ten members of my family, including five children, my elder sister and her husband, my Islamic scholar nephew, his wife and my niece in addition to this, my old friend Hazifa, his mother and two



other colleagues were killed."

He alleged that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had targeted the innocent.

"I am grieved beyond words, but I am neither sorry, nor afraid. I have been praying to Allah that I should have been included in these

14 guests of Allah who become martyrs today." "The killings have not dampened our resolve. They (Indians) should not expect any mercy from us now." "The fallen minaret of Subhanallah mosque will finally fall on the Indian people in such a manner that their future generations won't be able to forget," he threatened. In the same statement, the JeM chief said that the funeral prayers of these 14 killed in Indian strikes would be held at 4 pm.

Bahawalpur became the hub of the JeM after the release of Azhar in exchange for the hijacked passengers of IC-814 in 1999.