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**IMPORTANT**

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## GS 3: INTERNAL SECURITY

### THE HINDU PAGE : 6

# A watershed moment in India's defence posture

Operation Sindoor commenced at 1:05 a.m. on May 7, 2025, with a surgical, high-intensity destruction of selected terrorist infrastructure. This strike was a direct and decisive response to the cowardly Pahalgam carnage orchestrated by cross-border terrorists on April 22, 2025. This operation represents a paradigm shift in India's politico-military mindset and doctrine, marking a watershed moment in its approach to national security.

#### New era Indian doctrine

India's historical posture of "reactive restraint" provided a strong rationale for a "dossier approach", in which military inaction was often portrayed as extraordinary restraint and was frequently encouraged and lauded by the West. "What if" loops about attacking terror targets in a nuclear-armed adversary provided the final blow to India's decision-makers. Post-Operation Sindoor, the "zero tolerance" policy declared by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was pivoted further and reinforced, whereby any act of cross-border terrorism would be considered an "act of war".

This reflects a leadership that possesses both the strategic resolve to act and the absolute confidence in the armed forces to deliver retribution. Despite the political risks, this extraordinary resolve to tackle terror head on – and the refusal to submit to nuclear blackmail and external pressure drew new red lines.

Operation Sindoor defined a new chapter in India's defence evolution too. While on transition to integration and restructuring, this Operation tested the ground realities of the three services – the Indian Air Force (IAF), the Indian Navy and the Indian Army. Post Pahalgam, the forces were tuned to expect a clear-cut political directive for action, which came in an unambiguous form and was perhaps stronger than what the services had anticipated. The services were given a free hand.

The resultant Indian strikes on nine terrorist targets were exceptionally well-integrated across the three services, achieving total success despite a fully alert Pakistan. The choice of Bahawalpur, and Muridke in Pakistan as targets was unthinkable. Pakistan and the world woke up to realities of the "new normal". Pictures and videos of the massive destruction at these terror hubs, and the sheer scale and success of the strikes, were stunning.

The highly calibrated and intelligent Indian response over the next two days was executed well, calmly but firmly. Pakistan clearly misread



**R.K.S. Bhadauria**

Former Air Chief Marshal and served as Chief of the Air Staff of the Indian Air Force

India's resolve. On May 9 and 10, when the Pakistan Air Force attempted to strike some of India's critical high-value assets, the Indian Air Force countered it in near real time with waves of airstrikes hitting 11 bases across Pakistan, including Nur Khan, Sargodha, Murid and Bholari. The level of precise targeting and extent of damage achieved could not have been imagined by Pakistan. The global defence analytical community acknowledges this as one of the most defining and concise actions against a nuclear-armed nation.

#### Military audaciousness at its best

This total, integrated and calibrated response characterised by masterful control of the escalation ladder, reflects the seamless synergy between India's civil and military institutions. In my opinion, India's achievements could not have been better. After 88 hours of Operation Sindoor, by noon on May 10, Pakistan was reeling from massive destruction at 11 bases by the IAF. Karachi was nervously monitoring Indian naval deployments poised for action, while aggressive Indian Army operations along the Line of Control and the International Border had rendered drone attacks unviable. A robust, networked air-defence system, including the S-400 missile system had completely denied airspace not only over Indian territory but also deep inside Pakistan. Pakistan had no choice but to rush and request a ceasefire.

Given the dynamics and complications of escalation control under a nuclear overhang, India's Chief of Defence Staff and the Service Chiefs deserve high praise for the ferocious targeting on May 10 and the brilliant seizing of the escalation opportunity to coerce a termination. This was military audaciousness at its very best.

The Indian armed forces responded in full measure to the political mandate, leaving no doubt regarding the nation's capacity for rapid, high-impact operation. The sheer scale and speed of India's action on May 10 was watched with awe across the country.

The announcement of the ceasefire was too sudden for the public at large. You cannot blame the people asking for more. One cannot view these developments with emotion. Having achieved all objectives and the scope of action on May 10, the termination decision was perfectly timed.

Operation Sindoor's ongoing status carries a powerful strategic signal. Undoubtedly, the

primary signal is for terrorists to remain in hiding and for their backers to desist. The message also extends to the Pakistani citizenry – a stark and constant reminder of the reckless involvement of part of their military leadership. In the age of global digital transparency and expert strategic analysis, the truth of these events cannot be shielded from their people for long. They must now confront the realities of a military regime camouflaged by a political facade and "regime change should be on their minds."

#### Accelerate indigenous defence growth

Ongoing operations have implications for India as well. The defence forces would need to maintain a high state of readiness to act. After the opening round of Operation Sindoor, the expectations are high. I am sure the services are working proactively to deliver. An equally important implication is for the defence industry to ramp up in real terms to achieve Atmanirbharta. The focus must be to "Innovate, Design, and Manufacture" at scale.



The government has focused hugely on reforms to energise the public and private industry in defence, aerospace, space, cyber and Artificial Intelligence domains. The stellar performance of indigenous systems during Operation Sindoor has invigorated India's innovation and startup ecosystem. I

have always maintained that the real responsibility for being the "agent of change" rests with the Defence Research and Development Organisation laboratories, Defence Public Sector Undertakings, and, to some extent, even on large industry players already in the system. They no longer have the option to delay and must immediately focus on truly integrating the entire private sector, including micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and startups, into an indigenous ecosystem through a "whole-of-nation" approach. There is an urgent need to capitalise on this golden period of governance and reforms, and the unpredictable geopolitical environment only reinforces the need to double down on true Atmanirbharta.

Ultimately, the "Modi redlines" regarding cross-border terrorism are permanent. This new normal is irreversible and will define India's strategic mindset for the foreseeable future. The nation demands nothing less, and the populace would stand firmly behind the architects and executors of India's national security. My salute to everyone involved in the success of Operation Sindoor.

India's strategic doctrine has evolved sharply after Operation Sindoor

## GS 3: ECONOMY ( ENERGY)

THE HINDU PAGE : 11

# OMCs losing ₹30,000 crore a month on petrol, diesel, LPG

Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary, Union Petroleum Ministry, added that Oil Marketing Companies were making these losses despite the government reducing the export duty on petrol and diesel

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

India's oil-marketing companies (OMCs) are losing about ₹30,000 crore a month on the sale of petrol, diesel and LPG as they hold steady retail fuel prices amid rising prices of crude oil, said Sujata Sharma, Joint-Secretary at the Union Petroleum Ministry.

Ms. Sharma told reporters the OMCs were incurring the losses despite the government having reduced excise duties on petrol and diesel earlier.

"Our OMCs are buying crude oil at higher rates but are not selling at corresponding rates to protect our consumers, this impacts their finances," she stated, "To alleviate this pressure [on OMCs], the government reduced the excise duties on retail fuel and forewent revenue of



Sujata Sharma

₹14,000 crore in a month. Notwithstanding the same, OMCs are incurring under-recoveries on petrol, diesel and LPG."

**West Asia tensions**

Escalating tensions in West Asia, which have now extended for more than 60 days, have marred shipping across the Strait of Hormuz, which accounts for a fifth of the global

energy trade. This has resulted in prices of crude oil prices spiralling upwards.

At the time of writing, benchmark Brent Crude futures (for July 2026) were trading 0.7% higher over their previous close at \$100.75 for every barrel.

As per provisional data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC), consumption of petrol rose about 6.36% in April year-on-year whilst that of diesel rose 0.25%.

Since the onset of the tensions, LPG use slid 15.7% in March from February and 7% in April.

This was due to the government seeking to regulate allocation of commercial LPG to commercial establishments.

On March 27, the government increased the allocation of the bottled LPG to commercial and industrial establishment to up to

70% of pre-crisis levels.

Indicative of rising price pressures, the price of commercial LPG cylinder was hiked by ₹993 per cylinder and that of 5-kg free trade LPG by ₹261 per cylinder on May 2, the latter being imperative for migrant populations in urban and semi-urban areas. This was the second such hike. The first of these hikes was effected on April 1.

**13 vessels in Hormuz**

Speaking to reporters at the same briefing, Opesh Kumar Sharma, Director at the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, informed there were 13 India-flagged vessels in the Strait of Hormuz.

This included one LPG tanker, five crude oil tankers, one chemical products tanker, three container ships, two bulk carriers and one dredger.



## GS 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### THE HINDU PAGE : 12

# The 'bridge of defiance' that was struck

The B1 Bridge in Karaj, the tallest bridge in the Persian Gulf region, was hit during the American and Israeli military strikes on the night of April 2 in Iran, however, the bridge has quickly become something larger than a construction project; it is now being presented as a symbol of resistance

#### DISPATCH FROM IRAN

Saurabh Shukla  
Saurabh Shahi  
KARAJ

Standing over the dry bed of the Karaj River, all that remains are twisted steel beams, shattered concrete slabs, dust, and silence. What lies here is not the aftermath of an accident; Iranian officials and witnesses describe it as a deliberate and calculated strike – one they say was designed not just to destroy infrastructure, but to break Iran's industrial and social backbone.

On the night of April 2, 2026, the B1 Bridge in Karaj – the tallest bridge in the Persian Gulf region – was hit during American and Israeli military strikes, according to Iranian authorities. The attack destroyed a key section of the bridge and turned what was once considered a symbol of Iranian engineering into a field of rubble.

In Iran, however, the bridge has quickly become something larger than a construction project. It is now being presented as a symbol of national resistance and self-reliance.

The B1 Bridge, also known as Bilqan 1, connected the Bilqan region of Karaj with Tehran and formed part of one of Iran's most important transport corridors. Karaj, located west of Tehran, functions as Iran's largest industrial suburb. Nearly

200,000 vehicles travel daily between Karaj and Tehran, and the bridge had been designed to divert almost one-third of the traffic from heavily congested older routes.

Its strategic importance extended far beyond urban traffic management.

The corridor links Tehran to Qazvin, Tabriz, the Caspian region, and onward trade routes connecting Iran with Russia and Central Asia.

Project Engineer of this bridge has also emphasised another aspect of the bridge – that it was built almost entirely with domestic technology and materials. The bridge had not yet been formally inaugurated, though traffic had already started moving across it.

#### Broader strategy

According to local accounts, civilians had gathered near the Karaj riverbed on the evening of April 2 when the strikes began. The first missile hit the central span of the bridge, causing a section to collapse and vehicles to fall into the dry riverbed below.

Emergency responders rushed to the scene soon afterward.

Witnesses and Iranian officials state that additional strikes followed after rescue teams arrived. The sequence of attacks has been described by Iranian commentators as a "triple-tap strike", a military tactic in which an initial strike is followed by subsequent at-



**Symbol of resistance:** The B1 bridge, after it was destroyed by a strike in Karaj, nearly 35 km southwest of Tehran, on April 3. Donald Trump had previously threatened to bomb Iran 'back to the Stone Ages'. AFP

tacks targeting rescuers and emergency personnel arriving at the scene.

Iranian authorities have described the attack as a violation of international humanitarian law, arguing that the bridge was civilian infrastructure rather than a military target.

Beyond the destruction itself, Iranian analysts believe the strikes reflected a broader geopolitical strategy aimed at destabilising Iran internally. The B1 corridor connects Tehran with northern and north-western regions that have large Azeri populations. Karaj itself has a substantial Azeri community, while cities further north-west such as Tabriz are overwhelmingly Azeri.

Iranian political commentators argue that the destruction of the bridge was intended to isolate Tehran from those regions

and create internal pressure or instability along ethnic lines – a strategy they claim resembles approaches previously seen in Syria and Lebanon.

However, Iranian officials insist that such assumptions misread the structure of Iranian society. Azeris are deeply integrated into Iran's political, military, and economic institutions and constitute one of the country's most influential communities.

The attacks also intensified debate within Iran over technological independence and industrial self-sufficiency.

In recent years, Tehran has invested heavily in domestic engineering and manufacturing capabilities as sanctions limited access to foreign suppliers and international cooperation. Iranian officials point to projects such as the B1

eriation near the King Fahd Causeway connecting Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Iranian state-linked media framed the move as a warning that critical infrastructure throughout the Gulf region remains vulnerable.

#### Political moment

Inside Iran, the public response to the attack became a major political and symbolic moment.

After statements attributed to U.S. President Donald Trump warning of further destruction of Iranian infrastructure, crowds gathered near bridges and public structures across several cities. In Karaj, thousands reportedly assembled near the damaged B1 Bridge.

The gatherings were widely portrayed in Iranian media as demonstrations of civilian resolve and national unity.

Reconstruction efforts began almost immediately after the strikes. Engineering crews and heavy machinery reportedly arrived at the site within hours, and officials now say the bridge could be rebuilt within six weeks.

At the site today, cranes move continuously above shattered concrete while workers weld new steel structures into place. Iranian authorities say the rebuilt bridge will rely once again on domestic materials, local industry, and Iranian engineers.

(Saurabh Shukla and Saurabh Shahi are senior editors with *The Red Mike*)

# GS 3: SCIENCE ( HEALTH AND DISEASE)

## THE HINDU PAGE : 12

### Bangladesh battles its worst measles outbreak in decades as child deaths rise

Agence France-Presse  
DHAKA

Bangladesh's deadliest measles outbreak in decades is stretching its health system, with children filling hospital wards and doctors struggling to contain a surge in infections that have killed more than 300 youngsters.

The South Asian nation had made advancements in vaccinations to help stem the deadly virus but coverage gaps during and after the chaos of a 2024 uprising that overthrew the autocratic government left the youngest generation badly exposed.

"I was almost sure I was going to lose her today — her condition was terrible in the morning," said Rina Begum, 45, cradling her

three-year-old granddaughter Afa.

Ms. Begum, her eyes red from exhaustion and tears, said Afa had missed her second dose of the measles vaccine at age 18 months, and had spent the last two weeks in the measles ward in Dhaka.

Measles is highly contagious, spreading through coughs and sneezes, and has no specific treatment once caught.

It hits children the hardest.

Their breathing can become strained, their strength fades, and in the most severe cases, the infection reaches the brain, causing swelling that can lead to lasting damage — or death.

Hospitals are treating thousands of young pa-

tients while authorities race to expand vaccination coverage and prevent more deaths.

Ms. Begum offered a smile as Afa reached up — having just turned a corner and regained some strength. "After putting her on oxygen, now she is doing much better," she said.

#### 'Doctor's help'

Bangladesh has recorded 336 child deaths since March 15, with more than 50,000 confirmed and suspected cases, according to the latest government data.

Most cases recorded have been among children aged between six months and five years.

On May 4 the country recorded the grim milestone of the highest number



Preventive measure: Mothers with their children wait in queues to receive measles vaccinations amid a rising outbreak in Dhaka. AP

of children dying in a single day — 17 in 24 hours.

Bangladesh has made significant advancements in vaccinations to tackle infectious diseases, but a measles drive due in 2024

was delayed by the revolution that toppled the government of Sheikh Hasina.

Health officials, aided by the UN children's agency, WHO, and the security

forces, are working to vaccinate children, launching an emergency measles-rubella campaign on April 5.

Nearly 17 million children have received the vaccine since the drive started, according to government data.

Last year the vaccine coverage was only 59%, but 95% coverage of children is needed to ensure herd immunity.

Without herd immunity, children can still get infected after vaccination, said senior health ministry official Abu Hussain Md Moimul Ahsan.

It would take around a month before results can be seen, Mr. Ahsan added.

Siam, a 14-month-old boy, spent 10 days in intensive care at Dhaka's Shishu Hospital, a children's

centre, before improving enough to return to the dedicated measles ward.

He was vaccinated at 10 months, but with wider herd immunity compromised, that was not enough.

"I did not expect to get my son back," said his mother Brishti Akhtar, aged 20, watching her son sleep with an oxygen tube attached to his nose, one of 97 children with measles in the hospital.

"With the doctor's help, now he is out of danger."

Army field hospital Health Ministry official Ahsan insisted that medics could cope. "The hospitals are not yet overburdened," he said.

But, just in case, the army has erected a 20-bed

tent field hospital in the grounds of the government's Dhaka Medical College Hospital, ready for further cases.

"With the current measles outbreak, the health ministry told us to set up a field hospital," said the hospital director, Brigadier General Md Asaduzzaman. But there are other challenges ahead.

Bangladesh has experienced heavy rainfall in the last few weeks — bringing with it a rise in mosquitoes that carry the deadly dengue virus.

"We hope the measles infection rate will decrease soon," said Mr. Asaduzzaman.

"With the dengue season in mind, the field hospital is expected to be effective in that crisis too."



**GS 3: SCIENCE ( HEALTH AND DISEASE)**  
**INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE : 1**

**Spain readies for evacuations as Hantavirus-hit ship nears coast**

**Associated Press**  
 Madrid, May 8

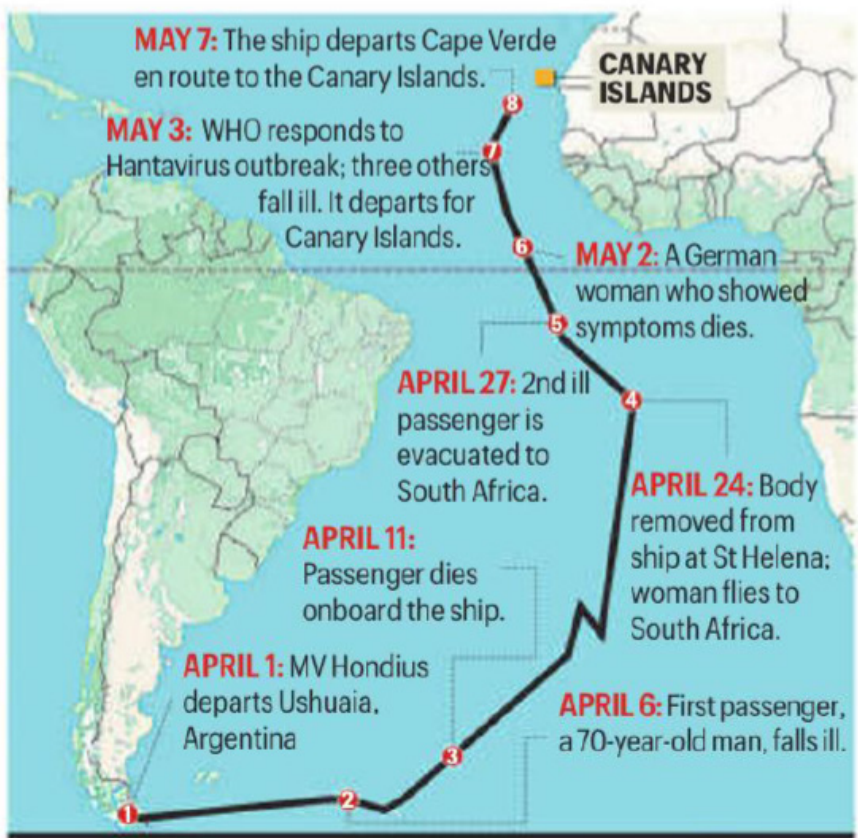
SPANISH AUTHORITIES on Friday were preparing to receive more than 140 passengers and crew members on board a hantavirus-stricken cruise ship headed for the Canary Islands, where health officials have said they will perform evacuations.

The vessel is expected to arrive Sunday at the Spanish island of Tenerife, off the coast of West Africa, and passengers will be taken to a “completely isolated, cordoned-off area,” said the head of Spain’s emergency services, Virginia Barcones.

While three people have died since the outbreak, and five passengers who left the ship are known to be infected with hantavirus, cruise operator Oceanwide Expeditions said Thursday there were no people with symptoms of a possible infection on board the Dutch-flagged ship, the *MV Hondius*.

On Friday, the WHO said a

**•MV Hondius Route**



flight attendant on a plane briefly boarded by an infected cruise passenger tested negative.

Her possible infection had raised concerns about the virus’s potential transmissibility.

## GS 3: INTERNAL SECURITY

### INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE : 2

#### TWO MEETINGS IN LAST 3 MONTHS

# Ex-Army generals, retired diplomats break India-Pak ice

## Meetings in Qatar, another Asian capital amid growing consensus on the need for a back-channel

**Shubhajt Roy**  
*New Delhi, May 8*

A YEAR after Operation Sindoor, while there has been no official contact with Pakistan, former Army generals and retired diplomats from both India and Pakistan have met at least twice in the last three months, including once in Qatar and another Asian capital, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

While these are not formal “back-channels of communication,” this is the first such engagement since Operation Sindoor amid a growing consensus in official circles in favour of opening such a track with Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

It's learnt that the need for this has been “escalated” to National Security Advisor Ajit Do-

**NATION** PAGE 13

## CHINA ADMITS IT SUPPORTED PAK IN CONFLICT WITH INDIA LAST YEAR

val's office and the National Security Council Secretariat has been made aware of the “willingness” from Pakistan as well.

A political call is yet to be taken in favour of a back-channel but one of the key reasons behind this rethink has been the imperative to “manage” escalation in case of another attack.

Sources said, as of now, there is an absence of established crisis-management mechanisms between the two

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



## GS 3: INTERNAL SECURITY

### INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE : 2

# India-Pak

countries. After the Pahalgam terror attack and during Op Sindoor, the only channel of communication in operation was the hotline at the level of each country's Director General of Military Operations (DGMO.) Today, the DGMOs speak once a week, usually on Tuesdays.

Sources said Delhi's thinking is that any back-channel communication doesn't contradict its stated position that "terror and talks can't go together." This is also being seen as a crisis management mechanism led by the civilian government on the Indian side and with counterparts — who could be the military — on the other side.

In theory, Op Sindoor is at a "pause" but Delhi's redlines are still around the "new normal" where any future terror attack will be seen as "an act of war" and military operations can resume. This necessitates a "civilian-level and political-guided mechanism," which can be enabled by the military leaders, sources said.

The other factor is Pakistan's increasing leverage as a diplomatic player in the current

US-Israel-Iran standoff and its Army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir's consolidation of power.

"Right now, Pakistan has an active role in the Iran talks with US Vice President and President Trump's interlocutors travelling there. Trump has given his whole-hearted support to Pakistan's leadership including Munir. In this context, if there's another attack inspired or abetted from across the border, it will be a challenge for New Delhi to navigate the global discourse to put pressure on Islamabad," said a source.

"So we need to have our own points of engagement."

There's an acknowledgment in South Block that India may have won the war last May but Pakistan made significant gains in the battle of perception, not least because of the manner in which it had wormed its way into Trump's inner circle.

That's why a back-channel is vital, said the source. "Trump is here for three years, we are both nuclear powers, any communication between Delhi and Islamabad also helps us firewall ourselves against any direct Trump intervention in the eventuality of any bilateral flashpoint."