

DIA, DEOGHAR IAS ACADEMY

Daily News Feed

D.N.F

18.05.2025

**Sabaijor Complex, Near Jamunajor Pul, Castair Town
Deoghar, Mob:-9162500508**



Eye in the sky

The Indian Space Research Organisation is launching an Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-09) on board PSLV-C61 in its 101st mission

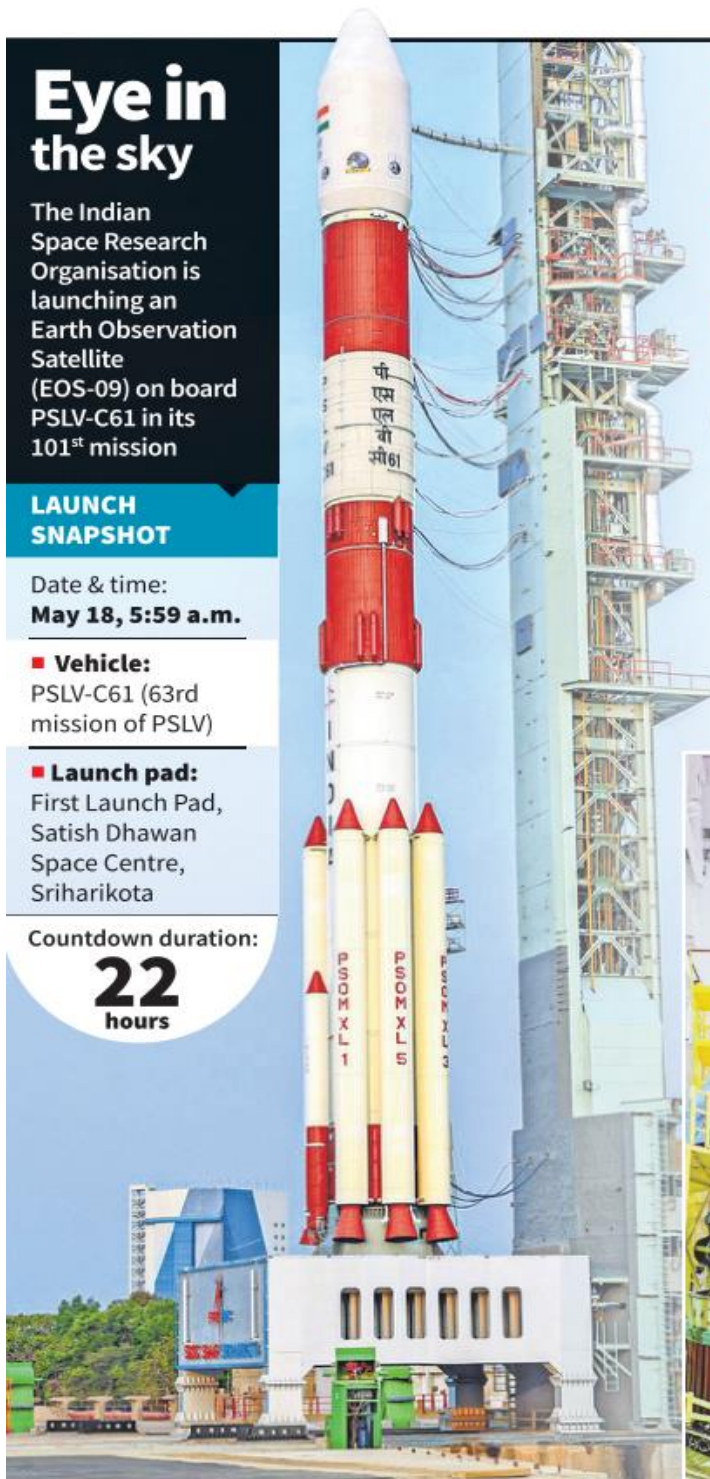
LAUNCH SNAPSHOT

Date & time:
May 18, 5:59 a.m.

■ **Vehicle:**
PSLV-C61 (63rd mission of PSLV)

■ **Launch pad:**
First Launch Pad, Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota

Countdown duration:
22 hours



1 EOS-09 complements and supplements data from the Resourcesat, Cartosat and RISAT-2B series satellites

2 The new satellite carries fuel for post-mission de-orbiting, ensuring it decays in two years and leaves no debris

KEY APPLICATIONS



Agriculture & forestry monitoring



Urban & infrastructure planning



National security surveillance



Disaster management



EOS-09 satellite (RISAT-1B)

Weight:
1,696.24 kg

Orbit: Sun Synchronous Polar Orbit (SSPO)

Mission life:
5 years

Function: All-weather, high-resolution imaging of the Earth's surface across the country's vast territory

Tipped to glory: The countdown for the launch began at 7.59 a.m. on Saturday. SOURCE: ISRO

'Higher defence spending won't stretch India's finances'

Higher-than-expected dividends from the Reserve Bank of India, lower oil prices, will provide fiscal flexibility; the past also shows that the deficit has been contained during heightened tensions

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

The Central Government has enough fiscal space to absorb a jump in defence expenditure without deviating from fiscal deficit target of 4.4% for this financial year, say economists.

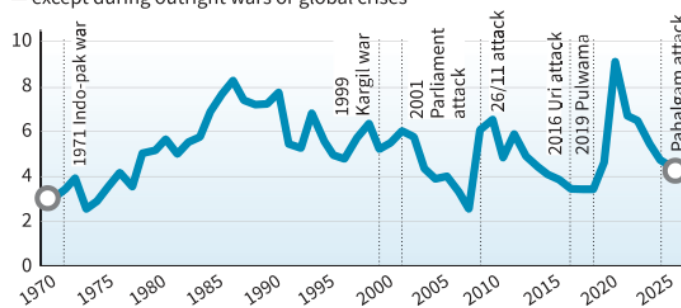
This is largely in keeping with India's past performance where the fiscal deficit has been under control during periods of heightened tensions with Pakistan unless it escalated into a full-blown war, or if global crises had taken place.

The Ministry of Defence will be reportedly seeking an increase in its Budget to the tune of ₹50,000 crore this year in the Supplementary Demand for Grants in December. This extra spending, however, is manageable for the government as it is expecting higher revenue and has the flexibility to cut some other expenditure.

"While additional defence outlays may initially appear to pressure the deficit target, the actual impact of -0.14% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) may be offset by multiple factors throughout the year," Rishi Shah, partner, Grant Thornton Bharat, told *The Hindu*. "The current macroeconomic tailwinds – notably softening global oil prices and stable tax revenue growth – provide a favourable buffer for this reprioritisation."

No cause for concern

The Centre's fiscal deficit remained reasonably in control during heightened tensions with Pakistan – except during outright wars or global crises



Source: Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation • Note: Data for 2025-26 is a target, not the actual



Dr. Radhika Pandey, Associate Professor at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, agrees with this assessment.

"Even if the government does expedite defence deals to ramp up defence infrastructure and logistics, 4.4% fiscal deficit target will likely not be deviated from," she explained.

"If there are to be cuts in expenditure on higher defence spending, then those would more likely be from the revenue expenditure side," Dr. Pandey added. "Even here, it won't be concentrated in any one item or sector, but would be spread across various schemes and outlays."

Higher RBI dividend

A major factor that could work in the government's favour is a higher-than-expected dividend transfer from the Reserve Bank of India. *The Hindu* had reported on Saturday that

the Ministry of Finance was – in parallel to the RBI – examining how it could increase dividend transfers from the Central bank.

The RBI transferred a record ₹2.1 lakh crore dividend last year for financial year 2023-24, a whopping 141% higher than the previous year's transfer.

'Enough fiscal space'

"The government has enough fiscal space to do it and is expecting higher transfers of RBI dividends," said Madan Sabnavis, chief economist, Bank of Baroda. "There is likely additional revenue coming for the government. If nothing else changes and only defence spending goes up, that can be absorbed."

An analysis by *The Hindu* shows the Centre's fiscal deficit remained reasonably in control during heightened tensions with Pakistan – except in outright war or global crises.

The fiscal deficit rose from 3% in 1970-71 to 3.45% in 1971-72 – coinciding with the 1971 war with Pakistan – and further to 3.9% in 1972-73 before dropping again. Similarly, it rose from 5.3% in 2000-01 to 6.1% in 2001-02 following the Kargil War. However, the fiscal deficit fell following the 2001 Parliament attack and the subsequent heightened tensions with Pakistan, as it did following the 2016 Uri attack.

The 26/11 Mumbai terror attack in 2008 was during the Global Financial Crisis, when India, along with several other countries, had significantly loosened its purse strings to stabilise economy – thereby raising deficit levels significantly.

Similarly, fiscal deficit ballooned in 2019-20 and 2020-21 – after 2019 Pulwama attack – due to the government's COVID-19 pandemic response rather than border tensions.



Lab-made ink helps coral reefs rebuild

Scientists have created an ink called SNAP-X to help corals settle and grow on damaged reefs. Healthy reefs issue chemical signals that tell corals floating in the water where to go, but many reefs are now too damaged to do this. SNAP-X is a mix of compounds from healthy algae, nanoparticles, and a soft gel. When spread on reef surfaces, it solidifies when exposed to light. They found corals settled on SNAP-X surfaces up to 20-times more than on untreated ones.



Cause of pesky failure mode in solid state Li-ion batteries found

While these batteries are safer to operate, they have a tendency to short-circuit even with small currents; new research has found the answer in the dendrite growth

Unnati Ashar

Scientists have reported in *Science* that the key to fixing solid-state battery (SSB) failures may lie in well-documented mechanical laws, paving the way for longer operational lifetimes.

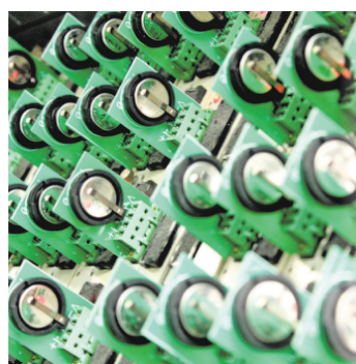
A battery consists of an electrolyte sandwiched between the positive cathode and the negative anode. "In most batteries, including lithium-ion batteries in your cell phone, this electrolyte is a liquid solution, very similar to salt in water, that allows ions to move back and forth from the electrodes," said Naga Phani B. Aetukuri, an associate professor at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, not involved in the new study. His team is among the top groups in India developing SSBs.

In a battery, ions move freely through the electrolyte while electrons flow from the cathode to the anode via an external circuit, charging the battery. In the reverse process, the electrons given up by the lithium (Li) anode travel to the cathode via the external circuit, powering it. Inside the battery, the corresponding lithium ions scurry to the cathode through the electrolyte during discharge.

In an SSB Li-ion battery, a ceramic block is the electrolyte. Solid electrolytes last longer, can store more energy, and are neither volatile nor flammable. Their

Small cause, big effect

Examining a battery under a scanning electron microscope while it operated was key



A batch of Li-ion coin cells being tested.
UCL Faculty of Mathematical and Physical Sciences

- 1 Solid-state batteries (SSBs) use solid electrolytes, offering longer life, higher energy density, and better safety than liquid ones
- 2 In SSBs, lithium dendrites form on the anode and pierce the electrolyte, short-circuiting the battery over time
- 3 Researchers found this failure mode may stem from metal fatigue, similar to mechanical stress in engineering materials
- 4 Operando electron microscopy showed voids and cracks at the anode-electrolyte interface during repeated charge-discharge cycles
- 5 Even low charge-discharge rates were found to cause structural fatigue, eventually breaking the electrolyte
- 6 The new findings could improve predictive models for SSB reliability, enhancing future battery design and performance

solid structure separates the two electrodes well, reducing the need for bulky safety equipment and their weight. Currently, pacemakers and smartwatches use SSBs. On the flip side, solids can crack, so solid electrolytes are inhospitable to volume changes or higher stress. This causes a persistent problem called dendrite growth. Li ions shuttle to the anode while charging and are deposited there, forming lithium filaments at the anode.

"Have you ever seen hairy roots growing from a central root? This occurs in plants to maximise their ability to receive nutrients," Aetukuri said. Like a plant root, the anode tries to absorb as many ions as it can. "The dendritic growth of Li in SSBs maximises the anode's ability to receive

the most Li ions coming its way." But like roots penetrate rocks, the dendrites pierce the electrolyte layer and reach the cathode, creating a short circuit.

Scientists don't know the actual physical mechanism that causes such a failure. Now, researchers from Tongji University in Shanghai and other institutions have said the answer may lie in a known mechanical problem. Metallic materials undergo fatigue due to cyclic loading and unloading. Cracks and fractures from fatigue account for over 80% of engineering failures. The researchers surmised that, as a metal, the Li anode in a battery could suffer similar damage.

Dendrites "are microscopic features, meaning you need a microscope to visualise them. And you

need to see while they are growing – that is when the cell is under operation," Aetukuri said. For this, scientists use a technique called operando scanning electron microscopy: "a special microscopy technique where electrons are the light that lets you see what is happening at small dimensions."

The researchers observed the anode-electrolyte interface under this microscope, monitoring its evolution as they charged and discharged the coin cell. The cell was initially stable, but after 30 minutes, microscopic voids broke out, swelled, and snowballed into each other. The electrolyte finally snapped and the cell was short-circuited at the 145th cycle even though the amount of current was just a tenth of the maximum

the cell could tolerate.

"Applying a small current in one direction may not lead to failure, but repeated cycles of charging and discharging can form structural defects," a commentary published alongside the paper noted. As the battery underwent charge-discharge cycles, Li was stripped away from the anode before being plated back onto it, altering the amount of force exerted on the anode.

"We determined that failure of SSBs is closely linked to the fatigue of the [Li anode], which markedly contributes to interface degradation and dendrite growth," the researchers wrote in their paper.

"You can cut a wire by using a cutter in a single go. ... If you don't have a cutter, you could bend the wire back and forth multiple times and the wire just breaks after a few times due to fatigue," Aetukuri said. "This work shows that cycling the cell at low rates, equivalent to applying a low stress multiple times, can also lead to cell failure."

"While not a lot might change in manufacturing, battery models that predict SSB failures will be a lot more sophisticated and likely more accurate due to this work," Aetukuri said. The researchers wrote that future studies should investigate how Li's stress-strain relationship varies with cycling rate and temperature.

Unnati Ashar is a freelance science journalist

Face of counter-attack

Vikram Misri

The Foreign Secretary's adept handling of Operation Sindoor won the praise of colleagues and friends but also exposed him to online trolls

Kallol Bhattacharjee

As the Indian Air Force's "most potent" weapon made its way over Rajasthan to Bahawalpur in Pakistan's Punjab on May 7, it represented the life's work of Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, who had tracked the Jaish-e-Mohammed headquarters since his posting in Islamabad as a mid-level diplomat from 2000 to 2003.

He arrived in Islamabad as hardline groups in Pakistan were celebrating the setback inflicted upon India following the hijacking of the IC814 flight and the release of Jaish-e-Mohammed Chief 'Maulana' Masood Azhar, Ahmed Omar Sheikh and Mushtaq Zargar.

Speaking at a recent meeting, Misri recounted the "decades-long" history of Pakistan's state policy on terrorism and said the base in Bahawalpur was indeed the strongest link between the Pakistani deep state and terror groups. As the targets for Operation Sindoor were chosen, it was the research done by Misri during his posting in the Indian High Commission office in Islamabad that came in handy.

Misri's field of interest spans beyond cross-border terrorism. Born in 1964, he grew up in a Kashmiri Pandit family in Srinagar and



graduated from Hindu College of the University of Delhi's North Campus before joining the Indian Foreign Service in 1989 – the year India witnessed a change of government.

The period was marked by cross-border terrorism, the dominance of the U.S. as a superpower and the emergence of China as a challenger in the Indo-Pacific. This meant Misri had his plate full. His first posting abroad was in Brussels, where he was part of a team led by diplomat Jayant Prasad who subsequently served as the Indian Ambassador in Kabul in 2008. Prasad remembers Misri as an "extremely hardworking officer" who worked with the rest of the team to calibrate India's response as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was being replaced by the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Over the next three-and-a-half decades, Misri served in Madrid, Tunis, Islamabad, and other loca-

tions, and in the Prime Minister's Office under three different leaders from across the political spectrum – I.K. Gujral, Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi.

Interesting turn

But Misri's career began to take an interesting turn with his posting to Myanmar in 2016, where he served till 2019. His next career high came in 2020 when Indian and Chinese troops clashed in eastern Ladakh, leading to the death of at least 20 Indian soldiers and several Chinese soldiers. Misri was the Indian Ambassador to China during this period and handled several tough negotiations with Chinese officials helping to de-escalate the situation.

But the most challenging part of his career coincided with his lifelong research into terror groups. As the name The Resistance Front (TRF) flickered in news tickers on TV channels after the group took

responsibility for the attack on tourists in Pahalgam on April 22, Misri had no doubt that it was the same group he had tracked earlier in Islamabad. During the subsequent Operation Sindoor, Misri, flanked by Col. Sophia Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, became the face of the counter-attack as he briefed the media both on and off the record.

The toughest point of this episode came when Misri announced the "understanding" arrived at by both parties to stop all firing and military action on May 10, which was soon challenged by Pakistani forces' alleged violations. While Misri's handling of the tense moments of Operation Sindoor gained him admiration from colleagues and friends, it also exposed him to online "trolls" who accused him of not going the full distance with a full-scale war with Pakistan.

Misri's popularity was proved beyond doubt when several current and former diplomats and bureaucrats came to his support. Jayant Prasad, his senior colleague, summed up his career: "From the beginning, there was no doubt that Vikram would go places. He started his career with solid economic diplomacy and now has excelled in political diplomacy."

How is cyberbullying tackled under the law?

In the absence of a dedicated law to take on cyber crimes, what are the provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, and the Information Technology Act, 2000? Where is the existing regulatory framework lacking? Where do the courts stand?

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:

In the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack, Himanshi Narwal, the wife of slain Navy Lt. Vinay Narwal, issued an appeal for peace, rejecting the vilification of Muslims and Kashmiris. However, her message triggered a wave of vicious trolling on X. Similarly, after Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri announced on May 10 that India and Pakistan had reached an understanding to halt military hostilities, his account was flooded with abusive messages, with many targeting even his daughter.

What are the limitations of the existing laws?

A range of terms have emerged to describe forms of cybercrime, including cyberbullying, stalking, and doxxing. Doxxing, short for “dropping dox” (documents), involves the unauthorised release of private information, exposing victims to harassment and real-world threats. Studies show such abuse disproportionately affects women and minorities. India lacks a dedicated law to address online hate speech and trolling. Instead, a few provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, and the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, cover certain aspects of cyberbullying. The BNS includes provisions

‘No provision squarely criminalises sustained online abuse that does not qualify as obscene, threatening, or fraudulent’

such as Section 74 (assault or criminal force against a woman with intent to outrage her modesty), Section 75 (sexual harassment), Section 351 (criminal intimidation), Section 356 (defamation), and Section 196 (promoting enmity between groups). The IT Act supplements these offences with provisions like Section 66C (identity theft), Section 66D (impersonation fraud), and Section 67 (publishing or transmitting obscene material electronically). “The existing regulatory framework is functional but far from complete. No provision squarely criminalises sustained online abuse that does not qualify as ‘obscene,’ ‘threatening,’ or ‘fraudulent.’ While cyberbullying may sometimes be shoehorned into offences like criminal intimidation or defamation, these require proof of threat or reputational harm and are ill-suited to counter the rapid, anonymous abuse unleashed by online mobs,” Apar Gupta, advocate and founder-director of the Internet Freedom Foundation, told *The Hindu*.

What are the concerns over censorship?

In India, Section 69A of the IT Act empowers the government to issue blocking orders on grounds aligned with constitutionally permissible speech restrictions, such as sovereignty, friendly relations with foreign States, and public order. Platforms that fail to comply risk losing safe harbour protection under Section 79, which ordinarily shields intermediaries from liability for user-generated content. However, experts have warned that these provisions are increasingly being used for censorship. The government has often removed content without notifying affected users, violating the Supreme Court’s 2015 ruling in *Shreya Singhal versus Union of India*. While the court upheld the constitutionality of Section 69A, it underscored that blocking orders must be accompanied by cogent reasons to enable judicial scrutiny. After the Pahalgam attack, X disclosed that it had been directed to block 8,000 accounts in India but said that the government had not specified which posts violated the law in most cases.

In March, X filed a lawsuit in the Karnataka High Court against the Centre’s use of Section

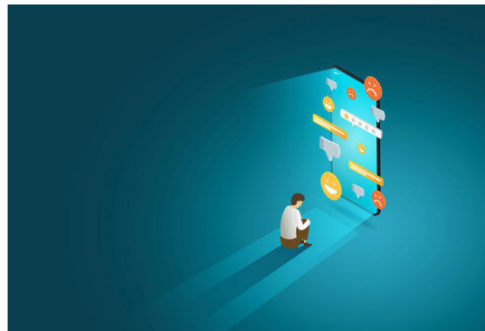
79(3)(b) of the IT Act for takedown orders, arguing it circumvents safeguards under Section 69A. Unlike Section 69A, Section 79(3)(b) lacks clear definitions of “unlawful acts” and any review mechanism. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has recently informed a parliamentary committee that it is reviewing safe harbour protections to better tackle “fake news.”

What about judicial interventions?

In February last year, the Delhi High Court ordered X to remove tweets revealing the personal and professional details of a woman who reportedly posted a critical comment about Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The post triggered a wave of online harassment, with details of her workplace, residence, and photographs being widely circulated. Although these disclosures raised privacy concerns, Justice Prathiba Singh ruled that the incident did not constitute doxxing, as the information was already publicly available. However, the judge acknowledged that doxxing, though not yet a statutory offence in India, poses a serious threat. Accordingly, X was directed to disclose subscriber information associated with the offending posts. This case highlights the contested nature of what qualifies as public information. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, exempts from regulation personal data that is made “publicly available”, either by the individual concerned or by an entity under a legal obligation. However, it does not define what qualifies as “publicly available data.” This lack of clarity may inadvertently enable cybercrimes such as doxxing, given the ease with which fragmented data from multiple platforms can be easily aggregated and used for harassment or intimidation.

What are the challenges ahead?

Experts underscored that enforcement, or rather the lack of it, often determines whether victims can access remedies. “All laws are only as effective as their enforcement. While posts and accounts are promptly removed when government directives are issued, the same urgency is rarely extended to ordinary users reporting harassment or abusive content”, Mishi Choudhary, technology lawyer and digital rights advocate, told *The Hindu*. Mr. Gupta agreed, highlighting challenges such as perpetrator anonymity, cross-jurisdictional hurdles, and limited cybercrime training.



ISTOCKPHOTO



Did Trump cross the line on Kashmir issue?

What are the contours of Indian foreign policy with regard to Jammu and Kashmir? What has the U.S. President said? What has been the experience in the past? What is the stand adopted by India and Pakistan? Is a dialogue with Pakistan possible?

Suhasini Haidar

The story so far:

U.S. President Donald Trump's repeated claims that the U.S. mediated the May 10 India-Pakistan ceasefire has been sternly denied by the Ministry of External Affairs, including by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, and has raised questions about the impact of the comments on India-U.S. bilateral ties. However, far more than Mr. Trump's incredible assertions that he threatened Delhi and Islamabad with cutting trade in order to talk them back from a "nuclear conflict", his references to the Kashmir dispute have been a cause for worry.

Why have the comments caused uproar?

The U.S. President was among the first leaders to call Prime Minister Narendra Modi to condemn the Pahalgaon terror attack. Yet, once Indian airstrikes on terrorist infrastructure in Operation Sindoor intensified into an India-Pakistan conflict, Washington joined countries like Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Iran to push for a halt in hostilities. Half an hour before the ceasefire was announced by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, Mr. Trump took to his account, claiming credit for a "U.S.-brokered" ceasefire. Later, in media meets, he lavished praise on "both great nations", promised to increase trade with them, and offered to mediate to resolve the Kashmir issue, erroneously saying it was "a thousand years old" dispute (it dates back to 1947). With his statement, elements of which he repeated in remarks at the White House; at an investors conference in Riyadh; speaking to U.S. troops in Doha; and in an interview, Mr. Trump crossed all the red lines of Indian foreign policy when it comes to Pakistan and Jammu & Kashmir. These

India's focus is to globalise its fight against terrorism, without internationalising Kashmir

can be summed up as no third-party mediation, no hyphenation with Pakistan, no internationalisation of the Kashmir issue and focussing on terrorism as the core concern.

What does internationalisation mean?

India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru is accused of the original internationalisation of the Kashmir dispute after India went to the United Nations Security Council against Pakistan's illegal acquisition of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) in December 1947. An offer by Nehru to hold a plebiscite for the Kashmir Valley was contingent on Pakistan vacating PoK, and was shelved thereafter. However, as diplomat Rajiv Dogra points out in his book *India's World: How Prime Ministers Shaped Foreign Policy*, Nehru made it clear in Parliament that he had only asked to end Pakistan's aggression, not to seek arbitration or "adjudge the validity of Kashmir's accession or to determine where the sovereignty lay," but the UN broadened its scope of enquiry.

Since then, India and Pakistan have fought wars, and held talks over the issue, with no resolution. In 1972, after Pakistan suffered a humiliating defeat with the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, Pakistan PM Zulfikar Bhutto is understood to have assured Prime Minister Indira Gandhi that the Simla accord they signed would lead to a bilateral resolution of Kashmir along the Line of Control, but then never kept the promise. In 1994, in the wake of the insurgency in J&K backed by Pakistan, Parliament passed a resolution taking a firm line: it called the State an "integral part of India", and said Pakistan must vacate the areas of the Indian State of J&K.

After the 2019 re-organisation of J&K following the amendment of Article 370, Pakistan tried to internationalise the issue again. While it was largely unsuccessful, Pakistan, with China's support managed to hold a UNSC closed-door meeting on "the volatile situation surrounding Kashmir", for the first time in 50 years.

However, post 2019, the Narendra Modi government, which did negotiate with the Imran Khan government for the Kartarpur corridor and the 2021 LoC ceasefire, drew another line: that the only India-Pakistan talks on Kashmir henceforth would be for the return of PoK. While the position seemed maximalist, it was the outcome of decades of frustration at Pakistan's refusal to keep its commitments on the LoC and cross-border terrorism.

Has any third-party ever mediated before?

The Simla accord made the UN process that Nehru invoked irrelevant. Global powers have

been more difficult to keep out of trying to intervene, however. Whenever tensions between India and Pakistan run high, countries like the U.S., the U.K., the UAE and Saudi Arabia establish parallel lines to both capitals, carrying messages between them until there is a pause in the military action, as was the case after Operation Sindoor. The more notable attempts at mediation were by the Soviet Union which hosted ceasefire talks to end the 1965 war, resulting in India and Pakistan signing the Tashkent Declaration.

During the Kargil war in 1999, U.S. President Bill Clinton tried to call PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee to Washington to meet PM Nawaz Sharif, but Mr. Vajpayee told Parliament that he refused the offer. On a day-trip to Islamabad, after his visit to Delhi in 2000, Mr. Clinton then gave a radio address saying the U.S. would not mediate on the Kashmir conflict, but would encourage the two sides for bilateral dialogue, which remained the U.S.'s position until 2019. The U.S. did help in confidence-building measures on Kashmir, as India and Pakistan held direct talks through envoys from 2003-2008 on the idea of "making borders irrelevant" by turning the LoC into a more permanent boundary, but Washington didn't publicise them. After the Balakot strikes of 2019 however, President Trump, who was in his first term, announced that he had negotiated the release of Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, who had been captured in Pakistan. He subsequently offered mediation on Kashmir during a press conference with Imran Khan, but was snubbed by Delhi.

Is direct dialogue with Pakistan a possibility?

Most avenues of direct dialogue with Pakistan have been closed since 2015 when External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj visited Islamabad. India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty and closure of the Kartarpur corridor to Pakistan during the recent crisis closes more channels of communication other than those between security forces at the border. Meanwhile, the back-channel between NSA Ajit Doval and his Pakistani counterparts has been used more for conflict management, like after the Pathankot terror attacks (2016), or the accidental firing of an Indian missile into Pakistan (2022). Pakistan PM Sharif's latest call for talks has been met with cold rebuff from Delhi. Mr. Modi's "new normal" outlined in an address to the nation says any talks with Pakistan will be about terrorism, and the return of PoK, which at present seem impossible conditions for Islamabad. However, as India and Pakistan have learned over the decades, not talking has also not resolved the perennial issues between them, and the absence of direct talks often causes a vacuum that other countries seek to fill by offering to mediate. For now, India's focus will remain on globalising its fight against terrorism, without internationalising the Kashmir issue in any way.



Hands off: Congress supporters hold a protest against Mr. Trump's mediation in the ceasefire between India and Pakistan, in Kolkata on May 14. ANI

Don't read politics into my decision, says Tharoor

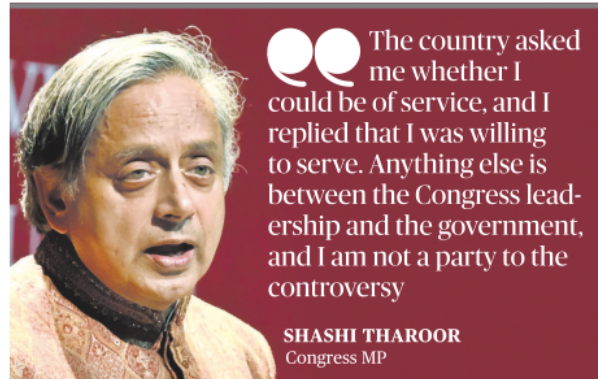
MP downplays Cong. view that BJP showed a 'mischievous mindset' by picking him as head of a diplomatic delegation without its consent; says he agreed to proposal as a 'responsible citizen'

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said that it was inappropriate to read politics into his decision to accept the Central government's invitation to head an Indian diplomatic delegation to five nations to explain the country's standpoint against the backdrop of Operation Sindoor.

Mr. Tharoor told presspersons that no BJP leader had broached the subject with him. Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju had sought his service to present India's stance as the chief of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs.

Asked whether he agreed with the Congress's view that the BJP had displayed a "mischievous mindset" by picking him as the head of a diplomatic delegation without the party's consent, he said: "I ac-



cepted the invitation as a responsible citizen. The country asked me whether I could be of service, and I replied that I was willing to serve. Anything else is between the Congress leadership and the government, and I am not a party to the controversy."

Mr. Tharoor said there could be no politics without a democratic polity. "We are all stakeholders in India's prosperity. India fought an 88-hour war with Pakistan. Mr. Rijiju told me that the country wanted my experience and service

as an Indian citizen. And I concurred," he said.

'Nothing new'

Mr. Tharoor said there was nothing novel in the Central government dispatching international delegations comprising MPs from either side of the political aisle during a national crisis.

He noted that the Manmohan Singh government had sent several delegations comprising leaders of the ruling front and the Opposition as part of the country's international

Centre is sending multi-party teams to various nations in the wake of the Pahalgam attack

outreach in the wake of the profoundly traumatic 2008 Mumbai attacks.

Asked whether he had sought the party's permission to accept Mr. Rijiju's invitation to head an international delegation, Mr. Tharoor said he had informed the All India Congress Committee of the Central government's bidding and his decision to heed the nation's call.

To a question on whether he felt recurrently sidelined and humiliated by the party high command in national politics, Mr. Tharoor, a Congress Working Committee member, said: "I am not easily humiliated. I have my credentials, irrespective of whether someone acknowledges it or not."

India restricts Bangladeshi exports via land

Ready-made garments will be allowed only through the ports of Kolkata and Mumbai

This action comes after Bangladesh imposed port restrictions on export of Indian yarn via land ports

At least 93% of Bangladesh's ready-made garment exports to India pass through land ports

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Bangladesh will no longer be allowed to use Indian land ports to export ready-made garments to India. A notification from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade issued in this regard on Saturday will come into immediate effect, officials here said.

The same notification has also ordered that specified commodities from Bangladesh will be prevented from entering India through the land ports of Tripura, Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram.

"Bangladesh has recently imposed port restrictions on export of Indian yarn via land ports allowing our yarn exports only

via seaports. It has been decided to reciprocate this measure by imposing port restrictions on imports from Bangladesh of ready-made garments of all categories across all land ports - LCS (Land Customs Stations) and ICP (Integrated Check Posts)," said a senior official, who said that in recent months India has noticed aggressive inspection of Indian trucks on the Bangladeshi side.

From now, ready-made garments from Bangladesh will be allowed to enter India only through the ports of Kolkata and Nhava Sheva (Mumbai) where the cargo shipments will be subjected to "mandated inspections".

On April 13, Bangladesh stopped Indian yarn exports through land ports.



Reciprocal measure: On April 13, Bangladesh stopped Indian yarn exports through land ports. AP

Bangladesh has also stopped from April 15 Indian rice exports via Hili

and Benapole ICPs of West Bengal.

"India has decided to

impose port restrictions across all LCSs and ICPs in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram on specified Bangladesh exports to India, targeting those commodities that can be locally manufactured," said the official, explaining the second part of the notification.

The specified items under this order will include ready-made garments, plastic, wooden furniture, juices, carbonated drinks, fruit-flavoured drinks, bakery, confectionery, cotton yarn, and dyes.

The Hindu has learnt that the list of specified items will be reviewed from time to time. This order on specified items will also be implemented through the LCSs of Fulbari and Changrabandha lo-

cated on northern part of West Bengal.

The official said that Bangladesh, which is a major global producer of textile items, has been "cherry-picking" on trade issues and that India did not want it to continue doing so.

According to Indian estimates, at least 93% of Bangladesh's ready-made garment exports to India pass through the land ports.

Officials said that considerable thinking had taken place about these economic and commercial measures and that the Chief Ministers of the northeastern States concerned and West Bengal officials have already been informed about the decision. It is understood that the restrictions imposed on specified items on all

LCS and ICP in the northeast will help the local manufacturing sector in the region.

The Hindu was told that the steps are being taken to "send a message" to Bangladesh's interim government led by Muhammad Yunus, who in his recent visit to China had described the northeastern states of India as "land-locked".

"The eastern part of India, known as the Seven Sisters, is landlocked. They have no access to the ocean. We are the only guardians of the ocean in this region. This opens up huge possibilities," Mr. Yunus had said, calling upon the Chinese manufacturing sector to access northeastern India through Bangladesh.

