



'Tourists taken to meadow without police permission'

INTERNAL SECURITY

An all-party meeting was held following the Pahalgam terrorist attack that claimed 26 lives, where all parties unanimously pledged support to the Centre's fight against terrorism. Chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the meeting included briefings by Intelligence Bureau and Home Ministry officials on the attack and related security lapses. Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju stated that the attack occurred at Baisaran meadow, which lacked police permission for tourist visits and was difficult to access. Union Home Minister Amit Shah revealed that over 1,000 tourists had visited the area in two days without proper security, and that there was no communication signal within 50 km of the site for five days prior. The terrorists reportedly avoided using any communication devices.

'Security failure'

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, criticized the government for a "glaring security failure" in the Pahalgam terrorist attack, expressing surprise that thousands of tourists were in the area without police awareness. He accused the government of deflecting from the issue by highlighting its past achievements and future plans, instead of acknowledging the lapse. Gandhi also questioned the security forces' preparedness if the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba was employing new tactics.

Israeli air strikes on Gaza Strip kill at least 55, including a family of six

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Israeli air strikes in Gaza on Thursday killed at least 55 people, including a family of six—two parents and their four children—while they were sleeping in their home in Gaza City. The strikes resumed after a two-month ceasefire ended on March 18. Ten people were also killed in a strike on a former police station in Jabalia, which the Israeli military claimed was a Hamas command center. Additional casualties included five people killed in tent shelters and three others, including a child, in the town of Zuwaida. Rescue teams described widespread destruction across the region.

Strike in Khan Younis

An Israeli air strike on a home in Khan Younis killed two people, with a witness describing the suddenness of the attack. Since Israel resumed military operations, 1,978 people have died in Gaza, bringing the total death toll to at least 51,355, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. The conflict began after a Hamas-led attack on Israel in 2023, which killed 1,218 people, mostly civilians.

At least 12 killed in Russia's deadliest missile attack on Ukraine capital city

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Russia's 11-hour missile and drone attack on Kyiv killed at least 12 people, marking the deadliest strike on the city since July. The assault caused widespread fear among residents and drew rare criticism of Moscow from former U.S. President Donald Trump, amid ongoing peace efforts.

Trump 'not happy'

Russia's early morning strikes on Kyiv damaged multiple neighbourhoods and injured about 90 people, forcing families into air-raid shelters. President Zelenskyy returned from South Africa, calling it one of Russia's most outrageous attacks in nine months. Former U.S. President Trump, in a rare rebuke of Moscow, urged Putin to stop the strikes, calling them unnecessary and poorly timed.

Senior U.S. officials warned that the Trump administration might end its peace efforts if negotiations fail. This came

after Donald Trump blamed Ukrainian President Zelenskyy for extending the conflict by refusing to cede Crimea. Zelenskyy reaffirmed that surrendering occupied territory is unacceptable for Ukraine and noted that, despite agreeing to a U.S.-backed ceasefire 44 days ago, Russian attacks have continued.

Pak. shuts airspace, snaps trade relations with India

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Pakistan closed its airspace to Indian airliners and suspended trade in response to India's actions following the Pahalgam terror attack. The country warned against any "misadventure," signalling the expectation of a potential military response from India after 26 people were killed in Jammu and Kashmir by terrorists linked to the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba.

'Act of war'

In response to India's actions following the Pahalgam terror attack, Pakistan mirrored decisions made by India's Cabinet Committee on Security, including closing the Wagah border, declaring Indian defence and diplomatic personnel persona non grata, and reducing India's High Commission staff. Pakistan also warned that any attempt to divert the Indus River's water flow would be considered an act of war. Additionally, Pakistan cancelled Indian SAARC visas, with an exception for Sikh pilgrims, and kept the Kartarpur corridor open. Pakistani Defence Minister Khwaja Asif accused India of planning an "all-out war" and threatened retaliation, warning that Indian citizens would not be safe in the event of an attack on Pakistan.

Islamabad ups the ante

Pakistan's countermeasures after India's five-pronged response to Pahalgam attack



Back to home: Indian citizens return from Pakistan through Wagah border on Thursday. AFP

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pakistani airspace shut to Indian-operated airlines ■ Wagah border, cross-border transit and trade closed ■ SAARC visas suspended, except for Sikh pilgrims | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Indian Defence, Naval, Air Advisors told to exit ■ High Commission staff cut from 55 to 30 ■ Blocking Indus flow deemed 'act of war'; Simla Accord may be held in abeyance |
|---|--|

After a meeting of Pakistan's National Security Council (NSC) chaired by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Pakistan announced several decisions in response to India's actions following the Pahalgam attack. The NSC expressed concern over the loss of tourist lives and condemned terrorism, but criticized India's measures as "unilateral, unjust, politically motivated, and legally baseless." Pakistan warned that any attempt to divert its water under the Indus Waters Treaty would be considered an act of war and threatened to cancel other bilateral agreements, including the 1972 Shimla Accord.

After terror attack, militaries of India, Pak. on high alert

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Tensions between India and Pakistan escalated sharply on Thursday, with India expected to carry out punitive strikes in response to the Pahalgam terror attack. Both countries have taken diplomatic measures, with their militaries on high alert. Amid rising tensions, India's Navy tested a medium-range surface-to-air missile (MRSAM) in the western Indian Ocean, while Pakistan issued a live firing warning in the Arabian Sea. Speculation mounts that India may target terrorist infrastructure across the Line of Control (LoC), following Prime Minister Modi's vow to punish terrorists and their supporters, reminiscent of past military responses like the 2016 Uri surgical strikes and the 2019 Balakot air strike.

The Indian Navy's indigenous guided missile destroyer INS Surat successfully engaged a sea-skimming target in a precision cooperative operation, marking a significant enhancement of the Navy's defense capabilities. The operation involved real-time coordination between multiple platforms for detecting, classifying, and launching the missile to intercept the threat.

Aircraft carrier at sea

The Indian Navy's indigenous aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant, is currently deployed in the Arabian Sea, as seen in satellite images. The Indian Air Force is also conducting its routine Akraman exercise in the central sector. Defence sources emphasized that any military action by India must consider the escalation risks and carefully select targets, as it is expected to provoke a response from Pakistan.

WE AIM TO INSPIRE YOU

India to explore options it has 'never considered' under Indus Waters Treaty

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Indian Navy's indigenous aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant, is currently deployed in the Arabian Sea, as seen in satellite images. The Indian Air Force is also conducting its routine Akraman exercise in the central sector. Defence sources emphasized that any military action by India must consider the escalation risks and carefully select targets, as it is expected to provoke a response from Pakistan.

India may halt its periodic communication with Pakistan regarding hydrological data on the Indus rivers and infrastructure work on hydroelectric projects in the Chenab, Jhelum, and Indus rivers. The Permanent Indus Commission, which addresses water-sharing disputes, has not met since 2022. Under the Indus Waters Treaty, India is restricted from creating significant hydro-power storage on the western rivers and must maintain prescribed water levels to prevent flooding or disruption of agriculture in Pakistan.



A scientist from the Central Water Commission stated that India cannot weaponize the Indus waters without completely disregarding the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). Any significant changes to water management would require "techno-economic" feasibility studies, as the locations and terrain of various projects may demand substantial investment. These changes would be long-term and require consistent funding.

A scientist from the Central Water Commission stated that India cannot weaponize the Indus waters without completely disregarding the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). Any significant changes to water management would require "techno-economic" feasibility studies, as the locations and terrain of various projects may demand substantial investment. These changes would be long-term and require consistent funding.

DCGI urged to lay down stringent guidelines on use of new antibiotics

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Infectious diseases experts have raised concerns about the overuse of the potent antibiotic ceftazidime-avibactam, which is losing effectiveness due to misuse and drug resistance. Abdul Ghafur, an infectious diseases specialist, has urged the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) to establish stricter regulations for newer antibiotics to prevent their misuse by practitioners.

Ceftazidime-avibactam, a last-line antibiotic approved in India in 2018, is intended for targeted therapy against carbapenem-resistant infections, not as a broad-spectrum drug. However, Dr. Abdul Ghafur warns that it is being misused in the community. The combination of ceftazidime-avibactam with aztreonam is also developing resistance due to irrational use. He notes that while the DCGI has licensed the drug, it has not established clear usage guidelines, leading to mis-prescriptions. This trend could undermine progress made in reducing antibiotic misuse, such as the ban on colistin in poultry.

Rational use

Dr. Ghafur emphasizes the need for strict antibiotic stewardship as two powerful new antibiotics, Cefierocol and Cefepime-zidebactam, are set to enter the Indian market. He urges the DCGI to ensure their use is restricted to infections with no other effective alternatives and to establish clear regulatory guidelines for their rational use. Dr. Ghafur warns that without urgent action, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) could escalate into an unmanageable crisis, and urges immediate measures to preserve remaining therapeutic options.



**START YOUR JOURNEY WITH THE
BEST**

INDIA'S TOP MOST CIVIL SERVANTS FOR COACHING

SC gives approval for UGC rules to fight caste-based bias

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

The Supreme Court on Thursday rejected a plea to halt the finalization and notification of the University Grants Commission's (UGC) 2025 Regulations aimed at countering discrimination in higher education. The plea was filed by the mothers of Rohith Vemula and Payal Tadvi, seeking a delay until a National Task Force, formed by the Court to address mental health concerns and discrimination, submits its report. Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta objected, stating that the process of finalizing the regulations was already underway and should not be stopped.

Ms. Jaising argued that the 2025 Regulations still had "grey areas," particularly regarding caste discrimination, and requested a stay until the Task Force's recommendations were considered. The Supreme Court, however, decided to notify the 2025 Regulations but ensured that the Task Force's work would continue unaffected. The Task Force would also review the new regulations to identify any gaps. After the Task Force submits its recommendations, they could be incorporated into the regulations if necessary. The court allowed petitioners to approach it later to suggest changes based on the Task Force's findings.

The March 2025 Supreme Court judgment followed an appeal by the parents of two deceased IIT Delhi students, Ayush Ashna and Anil Kumar, who were found dead in their hostel rooms in 2023. The parents alleged caste-based discrimination and murder, and had previously sought to have an FIR filed, but the Delhi High Court had refused. Ms. Jaising, representing the parents, planned to present their case to the Task Force. In February, the Union government assured the court that the new 2025 Regulations would eliminate discrimination, particularly based on caste or religion, and would empower the UGC to de-recognize institutions that fail to comply.

Supreme Court to examine concerns on POCSO clause

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

The Supreme Court agreed to hear concerns raised by senior advocate Indira Jaising regarding Section 19 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, which mandates the reporting of voluntary sexual activity, even between minors. Jaising argued that this provision criminalizes young people and threatens the fundamental right to health of adolescent girls. She pointed out that the 2012 amendment to the POCSO Act raised the age of consent from 16 to 18, leading to situations where voluntary sexual activity between juveniles must be reported to the police.

Counselling is required

Senior advocate Indira Jaising argued that counselling, not criminalization, should be the focus for cases involving voluntary sexual activity among juveniles, as mandating reporting under Section 19 of the POCSO Act criminalizes young people and penalizes parents, guardians, and doctors who fail to report. She highlighted the risk of juveniles turning to unsafe medical options if doctors are forced to report voluntary sexual activity. The Supreme Court recognized the issue as serious and scheduled a hearing for May 8, suggesting the involvement of Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati and possibly the Attorney-General of India. The law's intention is to prioritize the protection of children through timely intervention.

Amidst regional ferment, Kurds' quest for statehood

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Supreme Court agreed to hear concerns raised by senior advocate Indira Jaising regarding Section 19 of the ProtecThe geopolitical landscape of West Asia is undergoing significant changes, with the Palestinian issue at a crossroads due to Israel's hard-right government and Arab states' push for a two-state solution. Amid regional shifts, Iran is negotiating its nuclear program following its weakening and isolation, while the Syrian regime's collapse has altered regional dynamics. Turkey seeks influence in Syria, but President Erdogan faces domestic challenges. The decline in oil prices in 2025 may disrupt regional economic stability. Against this backdrop, U.S. President Donald Trump is scheduled to visit the Gulf. The passage questions how these developments impact the Kurds' century-long pursuit of statehood, pondering whether Kurdistan could emerge as a new state or be sidelined by larger geopolitical concerns.

An unrealised dream

Kurds, the largest ethnic minority in West Asia without a state, number between 35 million and 45 million, primarily residing in Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. They also have a significant diaspora in Europe. Despite their diverse sub-groups, the Kurds share a common identity shaped by history and geography. Most Kurds are Sunni Muslims, but they also have ties

to other regional minorities like Yezidis and Alevis. Historically, Kurds have been exploited or oppressed, though they once led the charge under General Salahuddin during the Crusades. The Kurds' quest for statehood dates back to the 1920 Treaty of Sevres, which promised them autonomy in eastern Turkey, but this was thwarted by Turkish nationalism under Kemal Ataturk. Since then, Kurds in Turkey have faced severe repression, including the criminalization of their language and identity.

Counterproductive repression

Turkish repression of Kurds led to the formation of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) in 1978, which has fought for Kurdish independence. PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, imprisoned in 1999, called for a ceasefire in 2023 after decades of conflict that caused around 37,000 deaths. While Turkey has announced a \$20 billion reconstruction plan for its Kurdish-majority southeast, a political solution is still pending. Meanwhile, Syria's Kurds have gained influence during the civil war, with the Kurdish Self-Defence Force (SDF) controlling 40% of Syria and receiving U.S. support. This has raised tensions with Turkey, which accuses the SDF of aiding PKK. In March 2023, the SDF and Syrian government signed an agreement to integrate the SDF into Syria's political framework, though the future of the SDF may be uncertain with a potential reduction in U.S. military presence in Syria.

Under Saddam Hussein, Kurds in Iraq faced severe repression, including pogroms and chemical weapon attacks. However, after the 1991 U.S. Operation Desert Storm, Kurds gained autonomy with the formation of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in 1992. The Iraqi constitution grants the KRG significant autonomy, though a 2017 independence referendum with 92% support was invalidated by the Iraqi Supreme Court. The KRG, rich in oil, has sought greater autonomy, leading to tensions with Baghdad. Oil exports through the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline have been suspended due to an international arbitration ruling, and Turkey and Iran have carried out military actions in the region against alleged PKK and hostile forces. Despite its three decades of existence, the KRG's future remains uncertain and precarious.

The situation of Iranian Kurds

The Iranian regime has been relatively less harsh on its Kurdish population compared to other regional powers like Turkey and Iraq. Kurdish areas in northwest Iran are strategically located, and while there are ethnic and cultural ties between Kurds and Persians, Tehran has opposed Kurdish separatism. Economic deprivation and attempts to Persianize the Kurds have fueled separatist sentiments. However, with the weakening of the Iranian state and the potential threat of U.S.-Israel military action, Iranian Kurds may feel more inclined to pursue secession.

The weakening of central authorities in Iraq, Syria, and Iran has improved the prospects for Kurdish statehood, with proto-states already forming in Iraq and Syria. However, without a unifying ideology like Zionism or a transnational political body, the creation of a Kurdish state is uncertain. Even if a Kurdish state aligned with Western interests emerges, it may face rejection from regional powers. Ultimately, the Kurds' future remains uncertain, encapsulated by their proverbs: "It is easy to catch a serpent with someone else's hand" and "Kurds have no friends, except the mountains."

Where tariffs trump economics

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement of reciprocal tariffs has led to a decline in key commodity prices, including crude oil, which has dropped by nearly 14%. This drop is fuelled by concerns that a global economic slowdown, particularly in major economies, may reduce demand for oil. The tariff announcement has raised fears of a global trade war, which could result in higher inflation, slower economic growth, and escalating disputes. The uncertainty introduced by this move presents new challenges for economic policy making. While higher-income countries can retaliate, lower-income countries face the added burden of adapting to a shifting global order while managing domestic economic issues.

The role of reciprocal tariffs

Reciprocal tariffs are taxes imposed by one country in response to similar actions by another, aimed at protecting local businesses, preserving jobs, and addressing trade imbalances. While they can temporarily help local industries, reciprocal tariffs often lead to escalating trade barriers, negatively impacting both economies. Initially used to shield industries and boost economic growth, tariffs now primarily serve as protective measures or negotiation tools, rather than significant sources of government income. They can raise consumer prices, disrupt supply chains, and slow economic growth.

Targeting Asia

The tariff dispute has severely impacted South and Southeast Asia, where economic growth has heavily relied on exports to the U.S., with countries like Vietnam and Cambodia facing tariffs as high as 46% and 49%. Southeast Asian economies, especially Cambodia, are vulnerable, as the garment industry, which employs hundreds of thousands, faces job losses. Unlike China, these smaller economies cannot retaliate but can only negotiate with the U.S., whose interests drive the process.

The formula used to calculate reciprocal tariffs is based on a country's trade deficit with the U.S., divided by exports, and then by two. However, this formula is criticized for assuming a low elasticity of 0.25, whereas economists suggest it should be closer to 1. The formula treats all countries the same, regardless of their trade barriers or market openness, and ignores the fact that trade deficits include only goods, not services, benefiting countries that export fewer goods but more services like finance and technology.

Prospects for India

The proposed U.S. tariffs could lead to a \$7.76 billion (6.4%) drop in India's exports to the U.S. in 2024, highlighting the need for India to diversify its trade base. To mitigate this, India should secure a balanced trade deal with the U.S., expedite agreements with the EU, U.K., and Canada, strengthen ties with Russia, Japan, South Korea, ASEAN, and the UAE, and manage its relationship with China strategically. While India has seen some success, such as a 54% rise in iPhone exports, overall merchandise exports remain flat at \$437 billion. To capitalize on this, India needs comprehensive reforms in tariffs, GST, trade processes, and quality standards to avoid missed opportunities and enhance its global position.

Sent messages

INTERNAL SECURITY

The terror attack in Pahalgam targeted tourists based on religion and aimed to undermine India's pluralism, as well as harm the Kashmiri economy reliant on tourism. The killing of a local Kashmiri who tried to assist the tourists further escalates the impact. The attack, occurring during the U.S. Vice-President's visit, also sought to undermine the perception of normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of its special status. The incident has fuelled fears of recurring attacks on tourists and economic distress for ordinary Kashmiris. The responses from New Delhi and Srinagar must address these concerns, mitigate fear, and send a message of unity against terrorism.

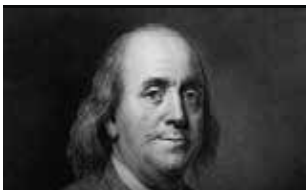
In response to the attacks, New Delhi is taking strong diplomatic measures against Pakistan, as such terror acts are often linked to radicalized elements trained by Islamabad's covert agencies. The absence of large-scale violence does not equate to "normalcy," which is better experienced than declared. While violence from the 1990s has not resurfaced, sporadic attacks targeting Kashmiri Pandits, migrants, and security forces continue. With significant curbs on political activity, citizens have had limited outlets to voice governance concerns. The Union government, in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir government, must restore Statehood, empower the region, and work to isolate radical elements threatening the livelihoods of Kashmiris and the safety of tourists.

Jolted by U.S. tariffs, stainless steel players turn to local market

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

The Indian stainless steel industry is facing challenges due to the U.S. tariff actions, with exports to the U.S. affected by uncertainty and lack of clarity. Although the U.S. has paused the reciprocal tariff for 90 days, the 25% tariff on steel and aluminum imports still remains in place, creating instability. Yash Mehta, CEO of Rajputana Stainless Ltd., highlighted the fear of changing tariffs and the resulting global shift in steel trade. The situation has led to a pause in business discussions between India and the U.S. Additionally, Indian manufacturers are concerned about the potential for steel dumping by China, the largest steel producer, into the Indian market.

Mr. Mehta noted that 10-15% of his company's production was previously exported to the U.S., but now that volume will be redirected to the domestic and Middle Eastern markets. While China's potential steel dumping is a concern, the industry expects more clarity in the next few months. The GSSE Summit in June 2025 will address these challenges. Some industry members believe the U.S. will continue importing steel at high duties due to limited manufacturing capacity. Domestically, the demand for stainless steel is rising, driven by its use in railways, infrastructure, and processing industries, with both private and government projects increasing its usage.



"If you invest more in your education, then you are likely to get more interest in it."

—Benjamin Franklin

T.N. weaving clusters expect cheaper Chinese rayon yarn amid U.S. tariffs

POIITY & GOVERNANCE

Weavers in Palladam and Erode district, Tamil Nadu, are hopeful about the arrival of Chinese viscose yarn, which is expected to be ₹8-₹10 per kg cheaper than domestic yarn due to the U.S. tariff on Chinese goods. Traders have already booked Chinese yarn, which will be sold at a ₹4 per kg price difference after factoring in conditions like bulk purchases and no credit periods. However, the imported yarn will not be available until about a month from now. While large weaving units will benefit from this price difference, small weavers may struggle to import directly. The landed cost of Chinese viscose yarn has dropped, while domestic yarn costs ₹197 per kg. Textile mills producing viscose yarn are calling for restrictions on Chinese imports and the imposition of quality control norms on yarn.

India may be first to sign trade deal: U.S. Treasury Secretary

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has indicated that India may be the first country to finalize a bilateral trade agreement (BTA) with the U.S., as negotiations are nearing completion. Bessent highlighted India's relatively open trade practices, lower tariffs, and minimal non-tariff barriers, which make it a frontrunner for an expedited deal. He also mentioned that trade talks with China have been set aside for the time being.

At a Washington DC event during the World Bank and IMF meetings, U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent discussed the 26% reciprocal tariff on India, which is currently under a 90-day suspension set to expire on July 8. India still faces a 10% tariff under U.S. trade policy. This higher tariff is part of President Trump's strategy to reduce the U.S. trade deficit by pressuring trading partners to lower trade barriers. U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance, during his visit to India, urged the country to open its market further and increase imports of American energy and defence hardware.

China exporters reluctant to heed call to sell locally

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Eno Qian, a clothing factory owner in eastern China, struggles with low profits from domestic sales, making the shift to the local market unviable for her tariff-hit business. Despite Beijing's push for exporters to seek local buyers, many factories face challenges like weak domestic demand, price wars, low profits, payment delays, and high product return rates. Analysts warn that without fiscal stimulus to boost domestic demand, shifting to the local market could squeeze businesses and worsen deflationary pressures. The Chinese government is organizing matchmaking events to connect manufacturers with local retailers and forming task forces to address exporters' issues, including lack of experience and brand awareness.

Calls for stimulus

JD.com plans to launch a 200 billion yuan (\$27.35 billion) fund to help exporters sell domestically, with nearly 3,000 firms already showing interest. However, factory owners like Eno Qian and David Lian emphasize the need for tax support and subsidies due to challenges such as high promotion costs, frequent returns, and price sensitivity in the domestic market. The Chinese Politburo is expected to meet to discuss measures to support this shift. While China's retail sales far exceed its U.S. exports, analysts suggest that any loss in U.S. sales could only be offset by a 4% rise in domestic consumption, which depends on consumer confidence and wage growth.

**The
More
You Learn,
The
More
You Earn**



www.vedhikiasacademy.org

VEDHIK
IAS ACADEMY
The New Learning Mantra



No ongoing talks with U.S. over tariffs, clarifies Beijing

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

China denied U.S. President Donald Trump's claim that active tariff negotiations were taking place between the two countries, calling the suggestion "groundless" and likening it to "trying to catch the wind." The Ministry of Commerce stated that while China remains open to discussions, any negotiations must be based on mutual respect and equality. This came after Trump mentioned that the final tariff rate on China's exports would be significantly reduced, despite earlier comments from his Treasury Secretary indicating no formal negotiations were happening.

U.S. President Trump imposed a 145% tariff on Chinese imports, and China retaliated with 125% tariffs on U.S. goods. While other countries received a 90-day tariff pause, China raised its tariffs and took additional economic actions, such as restricting rare earth exports and filing complaints at the WTO. China insisted that any talks should include the cancellation of all tariffs. Despite these tensions, Trump stated he would be "very nice" and not apply pressure on Chinese President Xi Jinping.



Sri Lanka Opposition, media seek details of defence MoU with India

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Sri Lanka's government has responded to opposition criticism about its recent defence sector MoU with India by suggesting the use of the Right to Information (RTI) Act for more details. The opposition, particularly the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), accused the government of secrecy and demanded the MoUs be tabled in Parliament. The defence MoU was one of seven signed during Indian Prime Minister Modi's visit to Sri Lanka in April 2025, which also covered energy, digital initiatives, and health. The MoU is described as an "umbrella agreement" to structure ongoing defence cooperation. Modi expressed gratitude for Sri Lanka's sensitivity to India's interests, emphasizing shared security concerns. Critics, including retired civil servant Austin Fernando, questioned whether Sri Lanka was aligning too closely with India's security interests, potentially signalling a shift from its traditional non-aligned foreign policy.

'Not a pact'

Scrutiny of the defence MoU between Sri Lanka and India began even before Indian Prime Minister Modi's visit, with Indian media speculating about a major defence deal. This raised skepticism in Colombo. Following the visit, President Dissanayake explained that the MoU simply formalizes ongoing joint operations and training with India, and Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath clarified that it was a non-binding agreement, not a formal pact. A Sri Lankan official emphasized that the MoU addresses current strategic realities, moving beyond past issues like India's interventions in the 1980s, including the Indian Peace Keeping Force and Operation Poomalai.

**The
More
You Learn,
The
More
You Earn**



VEDHIK
IAS ACADEMY
The New Learning Mantra





VEDHIK

IAS ACADEMY

The New Learning Mantra

START YOUR JOURNEY WITH THE BEST

**INDIA'S
TOP MOST
CIVIL SERVANTS
FOR COACHING**

www.vedhikiasacademy.org

Head Office:

Vedhik IAS Academy
Mercy Estate,
MG Road, Ravipuram,
Ernakulam-682 015,

Corporate office:

Vedhik IAS Academy
Samkalp Bhawan, Plot No.15,
Sector 4, Rama Krishna Puram,
New Delhi, Delhi-110022

Regional office

Vedhik IAS Academy
202, Raheja Chambers, 12,
Museum Road. Bangalore -
560001. Karnataka, India.

GCC Office:

Bobscoedu,

Bobsco Educational Solutions WLL
Office No: 201, Floor: 2
AL RAYA SHOPPING CENTRE WLL
Bldg. 517, Road 2408, Area 324,
Al Fateh, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain
www.bobscoedu.com