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21 killed as bus veers off hilly road, falls on another road 100 mt below

Udhampur is heartbreaking. My deepest condolences to the bereaved families. May god grant them strength. Praying for speedy recovery of the injured. I have directed the district administration, police, SDRF and health department to provide every possible assistance to those affected," he said in a post on X.

Abdullah also expressed deep sorrow over the incident. In his condolence message, he extended his heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved families and prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured.

"The government stands firmly with the victims and their families in this hour of grief. All necessary assistance is being extended to ensure proper medical care and support to the affected," the chief minister said.

"The CM's office is in constant touch with the government medical college & hospital, Udhampur, where the injured were receiving treatment and necessary medical care. The district administration has been directed to expedite rescue operations. Instructions have also been issued to the health & medical education minister to ensure all required assistance," officials said.

Meanwhile, Omar announced immediate relief from the chief minister's relief fund for the victims.

An ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh would be provided to the next of kin of each deceased, Rs 1 lakh to those seriously injured, and Rs 25,000 to the persons who had sustained minor injuries.

"No amount of financial assistance can compensate for the irreparable loss of lives in the tragic incident, but the relief is being extended as an immediate measure to support the affected families," Omar said.

"The government stands firmly with the victims," he said, assuring all possible assistance to the victims.

Protest outside G Ngr college over student's death

semester student, was said to have lost her life after reportedly falling from a moving bus during a college trip a few days ago.

The protesting students called for accountability and urged authorities to take strict action against those found responsible. Police personnel were deployed in the area to maintain law and order as the protest intensified.

The situation remained tense for some time, with students continuing their demonstration while police monitored the gathering. Women cops were seen stopping the students from moving further.

VP concludes Sri Lanka visit

on Sunday and held talks with President Anura Kumara Dissanayake on the same day.

The two leaders discussed ongoing Indian project implementation in Sri Lanka, emphasising the USD 450 million Cyclone Ditwah aid offered by India.

"Radhakrishnan stressed India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy and developmental bilateral cooperation", officials said.

"Both leaders held productive discussions on further deepening the multifaceted India-Sri Lanka ties, rooted in shared history, strong civilizational and people-to-people linkages," his office said in a post on X.

"They held wide-ranging discussions on various initiatives, including the Indian Housing Project and projects being implemented under the USD 450 million package for areas affected by Cyclone Ditwah in Sri Lanka, including reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in the most affected regions of the Indian-origin Tamil community", it added.

The two sides also discussed the fishermen's issue in a humanitarian manner, considering the livelihoods of fishing communities on both sides.

Following the talks, the two sides inked six MoUs, including the construction of a medical ward in Mullaitivu, the establishment of a premature baby unit in Dehiattakandiya, construction of EYE, ENT and mental health units in Muthur, among others.

India also announced the extension of OCI eligibility up to the sixth generation of the Indian diaspora and the simplification of the process for the benefit of the Indian-origin Tamil community.

The two sides also announced the resumption of train services on the restored Northern Railway Line as a part of the post-Ditwah cyclone rehabilitation package.

They also announced the installation of a set of three Bailey bridges, one in Central Province (Kandy) and two in Uva Province as a part of the post-Ditwah rehabilitation.

It was also announced that Sri Lanka will join the India-led International Big Cat Alliance.

The vice president also met Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya, who is also the education minister, and discussed cooperation in that area.

An announcement regarding the enhancement of the Ceylon Estate Workers Education Trust scholarship scheme was also made.

The number of scholarships under this scheme is being doubled from 350 to 700, and the monthly stipend is being increased from LKR 2,500 for A-level students to LKR 7,500 for those pursuing higher education.

The vice president also announced the completion and handing over of the final tranche of houses under Phase 3 of the Indian Housing Project.

This Phase 3 includes 4,000 houses for estate workers in the plantation regions of the Central Province, Uva and the Southern Province of Sri Lanka.

As many as 3,855 units under Phase 3 had already been handed over, and during this visit, the remaining 145 units have been completed and handed over, marking a significant milestone in the progress of the Indian Housing Project.

The project, which was announced almost 15 years ago, has an overall commitment of nearly 1,835 crore Indian rupees.

It is a flagship grant assistance project in Sri Lanka and is considered the largest such Indian grant assistance project outside of India.

At least 50,000 houses have already been completed under this project, and work on a fourth phase comprising 10,000 houses is now underway.

On Monday, the vice president visited the Liddlesdale Estate, Ragala, in Nuwara Eliya, in the Central Province and met the Indian-origin Tamil community beneficiaries of the Indian Housing Project.

He said that the government and people of India have a deep commitment to the welfare of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka.

Interacting with Indian-origin Tamils in Nuwara Eliya, Radhakrishnan also expressed his "deep sorrow" over the devastation caused by Cyclone Ditwah and discussed India's prompt relief and rescue operations launched under 'Operation Sagar Bandhu'.

Radhakrishnan also visited the Seetha Amman Temple in Seetha Eliya.

"The sacred temple associated with the holy Ramayana stands as a profound reminder of the deep cultural and civ-

izational linkages between India and Sri Lanka," the vice president said in a post on X.

Recalling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement during his visit to Sri Lanka last year that the temple would be renovated with assistance from the Indian government, Radhakrishnan said that the initiative would further strengthen the historical ties between the two countries.

After concluding a "successful visit" to Sri Lanka, the vice president left for New Delhi, his office said.

Pilots killed as pvt plane crashes in Chhattisgarh

Visuals from the spot show what appears to be a small single-engine propeller aircraft flying unusually low, just above treetop level, moments before the reported crash. A rescue team has been rushed to the spot, and efforts are underway to assess the situation.

However, officials said the crash is yet to be officially confirmed, and more details are awaited.

Govt demolishing drug cartels, securing convictions against offenders: Shah

tions for 73 drug offenders in 35 cases in the first three months of this year. Of the convicts, four were awarded the maximum sentence of 20 years, while 54 received sentences of 10 years or more.

The statement said a total fine of Rs 1.22 crore was also imposed on the convicts.

The statement also mentioned a conviction secured in the 2023 pseudoephedrine-diversion case (a controlled substance under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act) involving a company named Alps Life Sciences Private Limited located in Sonapat, Haryana.

In this case, three accused, including the firm's director, were sentenced to seven years of rigorous imprisonment and slapped a fine of Rs 1.5 lakh each.

The company was also convicted and fined Rs 1.5 lakh. The permission granted to the company for manufacturing pseudoephedrine has also been withdrawn by the NCB, the statement said.

The federal anti-narcotics agency has also appealed to other central and state enforcement agencies to identify key undertrial cases involving drug kingpins and ensure effective prosecution, according to the statement.

Tehran shuns peace talks after US seizes Iranian ship

After initial talks ended without a deal in Islamabad earlier this month, both sides have traded accusations of ceasefire violations.

Iran on Saturday said it had received new proposals from the United States but suggested a wide gap remained between the sides. It was unclear whether either side had shifted stances on issues that derailed the last round of negotiations, including Iran's nuclear enrichment program, its regional proxies and the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump has said American negotiators would head to the Pakistani capital on Monday, but it was not immediately clear whether those plans would now change.

"We're offering a very fair and reasonable deal, and I hope they take it," Trump said in a social media post.

After the US seized the Iranian-flagged cargo vessel, Iran's joint military command vowed to respond, and its Foreign Minister Abbas Aragchi told his Pakistani counterpart that American threats to Iranian ships and ports were "clear signs" of Washington's disingenuousness ahead of the planned talks, Iran state media reported.

"We have no plans for the next round of negotiation, and no decision has been made in this regard," said foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei.

"While claiming diplomacy and readiness for negotiations, the US is carrying out behaviours that do not in any way indicate seriousness in pursuing a diplomatic process," he added, calling the US blockade and cargo ship seizure "clear violations of the ceasefire".

Chinese President Xi Jinping told Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in a phone call on Monday that "normal traffic" through the vital Strait of Hormuz "should be maintained", state media said.

Xi also stressed in the call that China "advocates for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire".

Iran throttled traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, which connects the Persian Gulf to the open seas, shortly after the US and Israel attacked Iran on February 28 to start the war. The US has also instituted a blockade of Iranian ports.

Roughly one-fifth of the world's oil trade normally passes through the strait, along with critical supplies of fertilizer for the world's farmers, natural gas and humanitarian supplies for places in dire need like Afghanistan and Sudan.

Since the war started, at least 3,375 people have been killed in Iran, according to a new toll released Monday in official Iranian media by Abbas Masjedi, the head of Iran's Legal Medicine Organization. He did not break down casualties among civilians and security forces, instead just saying that 2,875 were male and 496 were female. Masjedi said 383 of the dead were children 18 years old and under.

More than 2,290 people have also been killed in Lebanon, 23 in Israel and more than a dozen in Gulf Arab states. Fifteen Israeli soldiers in Lebanon and 13 US service members throughout the region have been killed.

Iran's grip on the Strait of Hormuz has also sent oil prices skyrocketing and given rise to one of the worst global energy crises in decades.

Oil prices recovered slightly following Iran's announcement that the strait was being reopened a 10-day truce between Israel and the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon took hold on Friday.

But then Trump said the US blockade "will remain in full force" until Tehran reaches a deal with the US.

China calls Strait of Hormuz int'l waterway

by the Chinese leader on the closure of the Strait of Hormuz by Iran, followed by the US blockade of Iranian ports in their current conflict.

The closure of the Strait has resulted in acute energy shortages across the world, especially in Asia, and China, which is a major importer of Iranian oil, is increasingly concerned about the prolongation of the US-Israel-Iran war.

China supports regional countries in building a common home of good-neighbourliness, development, security and cooperation, holding their future in their own hands, and promoting lasting peace and security in the region, Xi said.

His comments were significant as China achieved a "major diplomatic success" in West Asia, bringing arch-rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia together in March 2023.

As a result, the two countries restored diplomatic relations.

But the US-Iran conflict has changed all that with Iran attacking Saudi Arabia and other regional countries, besides closing the Strait of Hormuz to counter the US war against it.

Separately, the Chinese Foreign Ministry has expressed concern over the US Navy firing on a cargo ship travelling from China heading to an Iranian port, defying the American naval blockade.

The ship was subsequently seized by the US Navy.

"We are concerned over the US' forcible interception of the vessel and hope that relevant parties will honour the ceasefire agreement in a responsible manner, avoid aggravating disputes and escalating tensions, and provide necessary conditions for the restoration of normal passage through the Strait," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jikun told a media briefing here.

He also called the Strait of Hormuz an international waterway in response to an Iranian official's assertion that Iran will not cede control over it, saying that Tehran has an "inalienable right" over it.

"The Strait of Hormuz is a strait for international passage. Keeping the area safe and stable and ensuring unimpeded passage serves the common interest of regional countries and the international community," Guo said.

For its part, Iran vowed retaliation and called it a piracy act. Tehran also said it will not participate in a second round of talks with the US in Islamabad.

Asked about Iranian security forces firing on Indian-flagged vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, Guo said, "I have already stated China's position on the Strait of Hormuz issue. We would like to reiterate that the Strait of Hormuz is an international waterway, and keeping it open to navigation serves the common interests of countries in the region and the international community."

He was responding to a question about how Iranian forces opening fire on the Indian-flagged vessels raises concerns over navigational safety and China's views on the escalation and what measures it is considering to safeguard its shipping and energy interests in the Strait.

Guo said China hopes all parties will work together to prevent the situation in the Strait from deteriorating further, and stands ready to continue making efforts alongside the international community to help de-escalate tensions.

India, S Korea share common outlook on Indo-Pacific region: Modi

both countries are ready to expand cooperation across a wide spectrum of sectors. "From chips to ships, from talent to technology, and from entertainment to energy, we will realise new opportunities for cooperation across all sectors," he said, adding, "Today, we are laying the foundation for success stories of the next decade."

A major outcome of the talks was the launch of the India-Korea Digital Bridge, aimed at boosting collaboration in artificial intelligence, semiconductors and information technology. Both sides also expressed confidence in enhancing trade and investment ties, with efforts underway to upgrade the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and nearly double bilateral trade to \$50 billion by 2030 from \$25.7 billion at present.

The meeting marked the third in-person interaction between the two leaders since President Lee assumed office last year, underscoring growing momentum in bilateral engagement. Several memoranda of understanding were signed to strengthen cooperation in areas including shipbuilding, emerging technologies and people-to-people exchanges.

Emphasising the deep-rooted cultural ties between the two nations, Modi referred to the shared heritage linking India and Korea. "The story of Princess Suriratna of Ayodhya and King Kim Suro of Korea from 2,000 years ago is part of our shared heritage," he said, while also noting the rising popularity of Korean pop culture in India and increasing recognition of Indian culture in South Korea.

Against the backdrop of global uncertainties, Modi underscored the broader significance of the partnership. "In this time of global tensions, India and Korea together send a message of peace and stability," he said, welcoming South Korea's participation in initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative.

President Lee, who is on a three-day state visit to India from April 19 to 21, was accorded a ceremonial welcome at Rashtrapati Bhavan, where he was received by President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Modi. He also paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat, accompanied by First Lady Kim Hea Kyung.

During his visit, President Lee held discussions with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and engaged with a high-level delegation comprising ministers, senior officials and business leaders. The leaders also exchanged views on key regional and global issues, reaffirming their commitment to strengthening the 'Special Strategic Partnership'.

In a symbolic gesture reflecting the growing partnership, the two leaders planted a tree together, signalling a shared long-term vision for cooperation. The visit, President Lee's first to India since assuming office, is seen as a key step in expanding a multifaceted relationship grounded in shared democratic values, economic synergy and increasing strategic convergence in the Indo-Pacific.

CJI flags rise in 'digital arrest' scams

bers of the judiciary to extract money through video calls.

Sharing a recent instance, he said a woman known to him in an official capacity had lost her entire post-retirement savings to such a scheme.

According to him, she was left distraught after being deceived into transferring her funds.

The remarks came after Attorney General R Venkataramani sought a deferment in the suo motu proceedings dealing with the issue, citing ongoing inter-departmental consultations. He told a bench of the CJI and Justice Joy-malya Bagchi that "they are moving very fast" to tackle the issue of digital arrests and sought more time to file the status report.

The Supreme Court had earlier taken up the matter on its own motion, subsequently directing that cases across states be handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Following the court's intervention, the Ministry of Home Affairs set up a high-level committee, which has since submitted a report outlining a standard operating procedure to tackle such frauds.

In the previous hearings, the bench had also indicated that banks should put in place systems to flag unusually large or suspicious transactions to customers in real time.

Appearing as amicus curiae, Senior Advocate N S Nappinai suggested that intermediaries incorporate a "kill switch" mechanism to halt suspicious transactions. She explained that victims often panic when confronted with coercive calls from impostors, impairing their ability to respond rationally, and argued that technological interventions could help limit financial damage in such situations.

The matter is scheduled for further hearing on May 12. The court has previously been informed that losses from

such scams have run into nearly Rs 3,000 crore.

SC asks states, UTs to provide details of terror, drugs cases

The bench also issued notices to the remaining states and asked them to furnish the requisite information.

The suo motu petition was initiated following concerns that NIA trials were languishing for years.

The court noted that in many of the 17 high pendency states, including Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Bihar and Jammu and Kashmir, special courts were overburdened because presiding officers were also assigned non-NIA cases.

"NIA Courts should exclusively deal with UAPA or other related trials and such Presiding Officers should not be entrusted with any other cases," the bench said.

A Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Office Memorandum of January 7, 2026 outlined a robust financial framework for these courts. It said the Central government will provide an annual grant of up to Rs 1 crore per court for staff salaries and office expenses.

It also provided for one-time non-recurring limit of Rs 1 crore for infrastructure renovation, IT equipment (computers, broadband, etc.), and furniture.

The MHA had said each court will follow a specific "model staff pattern", including a special judge, stenographers and a dedicated driver with a vehicle for the presiding officer.

The bench had identified 17 states where more than 10 NIA trials are currently pending. The 17 states are Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Telangana. They agreed to set up at least one exclusive court as a pilot project.

The bench further directed the chief justices of the respective high courts to fast-track the appointment of judges with "fair and reasonable experience in conducting criminal trials".

India strengthens Gulf strategy as NSA engages Saudi leadership

situation and other issues of mutual interests, the Indian Embassy in Saudi Arabia said in a post on X.

The Saudi press agency said Faisal bin Farhan and Doval "reviewed areas of cooperation and discussed the latest regional developments".

Doval's visit comes amid heightened diplomatic activity linked to the West Asia conflict and concerns over energy supplies following disruptions caused by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

The trip also follows recent visits by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to the United Arab Emirates and Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri to Qatar, reflecting New Delhi's engagement with major energy suppliers in the region.

Saudi Arabia remains among India's top three energy suppliers, alongside Russia and Iraq, and is home to around four million Indians.

India has consistently called for the safe and unimpeded passage of merchant shipping in the region and has backed dialogue and diplomacy to end hostilities.

The NSA's visit also comes amid a possible second round of talks between the US and Iran this week in Pakistan to end the West Asia conflict. The first round of talks between the US and Iran in Pakistan on April 11 and 12 concluded without any agreement.

Rising temperatures linked to health risks: Jitendra

ranging from dengue to cardiovascular diseases, making climate response a public health priority as well.

"India today is dealing with both tropical diseases and lifestyle-related non-communicable diseases at the same time," Singh said.

The minister made the comments while speaking at the Global Heat and Cooling Forum, organised by the Natural Resources Defence Council (NRDC) in collaboration with the Department of Science & Technology (DST), National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

He highlighted that climate change-induced heat is a global phenomenon affecting every region. However, India faces a unique situation due to its diverse climatic conditions, simultaneously experiencing extreme heat and extreme cold across different geographies.

The minister pointed out that this diversity demands customised strategies rather than adopting uniform global models.

Issue was not women's reservation but Modi preservation: Cong

not implemented despite Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge demanding that it be implemented from the 2024 general elections.

"Suddenly, the bill (Act) was notified on the night of 16th April. This reflects the seriousness of the BJP about women's reservation in legislatures. They kept sleeping for 30 months," he added.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah was giving the assurance that no state would lose out and seats would be increased in a manner that the proportionality is maintained, but why was this not part of the Bill, Ramesh asked.

"He (Shah) was asking the opposition to trust him. How can we trust someone who says something, but the Bill doesn't mention it in black and white?" the Congress leader asked.

"The issue was not women's reservation but Modi preservation," Ramesh said.

He alleged that the government wants to put the caste census in cold storage.

The Congress reiterates its demand that an all-party meeting be called after April 29, when polling for the second phase of West Bengal polls is over, and the government place before the parties its proposals in writing, he said.

"We demand immediate implementation of women's reservation in the legislatures on the current strength of the Lok Sabha. The government must bring an amendment bill during the Monsoon session or in May-end if it wants to do it before that," Ramesh said.

On Modi's assertion that women will give a befitting reply to the Congress and other opposition parties, Ramesh said women will not be fooled by the "BJP propaganda" as they know that it was the Congress that provided reservation to women in panchayats and nagar palikas, and has been fighting for their cause consistently.

"We demand that the government implement reservation for women in legislatures from 2029 and include OBC women too," he said.

While 298 members voted in support of the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 230 MPs voted against it. Out of the 528 members who voted, the Bill required 352 votes for a two-thirds majority.

The Bill proposed to increase the number of Lok Sabha seats to 816 from the current 543 to "operationalise" the women's reservation law before the 2029 parliamentary polls, following a delimitation exercise based on the 2011 Census.

Seats were also to be increased in assemblies of states and Union territories to accommodate 33 per cent reservation for women.