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 US, UK strike trade deal; final details being written up



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 Robert Prevost elected first American pope in history
 Prevost, a missionary who spent his career in Peru will take the name Leo XIV



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 India-Pak tension casts a cloud on IPL match

INDIA BLUNTS PAK ATTACKS

AIR DEFENCE UNITS INTERCEPT AT LEAST 8 PAK MISSILES TARGETING BORDERING AREAS OF JAMMU, AIRPORT

PTI
JAMMU

Indian air defence units successfully intercepted at least eight missiles fired by Pakistan towards the border areas of Jammu, including the strategically important Jammu Airport at Satwari on Thursday evening, defence sources said here. Drawing a parallel to the tactics of the Palestinian Hamas terror group, the sources said all “cheap” rockets directed at the Jammu region were successfully intercepted and neutralised by Air Defence Units.

The missiles were aimed at key locations, including Satwari (Jammu Airport), Samba, RS Pura, and Arnai. The sources said that the Pakistani Army has been operating in a manner akin to a terror organisation like Hamas and referred to a meeting between Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Hamas operatives in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir last month. There were also potential sightings of hostile drones along India’s western border, which were successfully thwarted. A sudden power outage plunged Jammu city into darkness following two loud explosions, likely resulting from the interception of intruding drones.

Immediately after, sirens echoed throughout the city, alerting residents to seek shelter. The aerial objects had attempted to strike the strategic Jammu airport and its surrounding areas, which house Army, IAF, and paramilitary installations. The sources confirmed the activation of air defence protocols, resulting in the downing of several Pakistani drones by the Indian Air Defence System. Earlier, India said it foiled Pakistan military’s attempts to target military installations in 15 cities in the northern and western parts of the country using missiles and drones as tensions between the two neighbours mounted amid fears of a wider conflict.

Sources in the defence and security establishment said the S-400 missile defence systems, surface-to-air missiles and the integrated counter unmanned aircraft system were used in thwarting the Pakistani attempts. In its response on Thursday morning, India launched kamikaze drones and destroyed a Pakistani air defence system in Lahore. The Defence Ministry said the Pakistani military attempted last night to target Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Pathankot, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Adampur, Bhatinda, Chandigarh, Nal, Phalodi, Uttarlai, and Bhuj. The Indian armed forces targeted air defence radars and systems at a number of locations in Pakistan and “neutralised” an air defence system in Lahore, it said. The Pakistani attempt came after Indian armed forces carried out missile strikes on nine terror targets in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Pakistan under Operation Sindoor.

“On the night of May 7-8, Pakistan attempted to engage a number of military targets in northern and western India including Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Pathankot, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Adampur, Bhatinda, Chandigarh, Nal, Phalodi, Uttarlai, and Bhuj, using drones and missiles,” the Ministry said. “These were neutralised by the Integrated Counter UAS (Unmanned Aircraft System) grid and air defence systems,” it said in a statement. “The debris of these attacks is now being recovered from a number of locations that prove the Pakistani attacks,” it added.

INDIA DESTROYS AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM IN LAHORE; FOILS PAK ATTEMPTS TO TARGET 15 INDIAN CITIES



Police personnel and others stand near metal debris at an open field at Makhan Windi village, amid tension between India and Pakistan in the wake of Operation Sindoor, in Amritsar district of Punjab on Thursday. Metal debris was found scattered at some places in the village with locals claiming them to be parts of a missile. — Photo: PTI

S-400 MISSILE DEFENCE SYSTEMS, SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES AND KAMIKAZE DRONES USED, SAYS DEFENCE MINISTRY

‘100 terrorists dead, Op Sindoor on’

NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh told an all-party meeting on Thursday that at least 100 hardcore terrorists and their associates were killed in Indian strikes on terror sites in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK) under the ongoing Operation Sindoor, sources said.

The meeting saw opposition parties backing the government in the military action and hailing the armed forces, as leaders across the political spectrum projected a united front amid heightened tensions between the two neighbouring countries. Chairing the meeting, Singh, in his briefing and then responding to points raised by the leaders of different parties, said India does not want escalation but will give a befitting reply to Pakistan if attacked, the sources added.

“In the moment of crisis, we are with the government,” Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge told reporters after the meeting, a view reiterated by his party colleague and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and echoed by several other opposition

leaders. Singh noted that it is an emerging and evolving situation, declining to get into the details of the continuing Indian operation.

Kharge said, “The Defence Minister said this is a sensitive time and in the interest of the country, detailed questions are not to be asked.” He conveyed his disappointment over Prime Minister Narendra Modi not attending the all-party meeting.

A number of opposition leaders, the sources said, referred to the Pakistani claim of downing Indian fighter jets and wondered if the government needed to counter such propaganda.

Gandhi and John Brittas of the CPI(M) suggested that a special session should be convened, saying it would send out a message of united national resolve. Singh said at least 100 including hardcore terrorists and their associates, were killed in the Indian strikes. A source quoted him as saying, “It is difficult to give an exact estimate as the operation is still ongoing. India will give a befitting reply if Pakistan attacks.” The operation has achieved its intended objectives, he added.

OPERATION SINDOOR

LEAVES CANCELLED, SCHOOLS SHUT: PUNJAB, HARYANA, RAJASTHAN AMONG STATES ON HIGH ALERT

Govt advises OTT platforms to stop streaming Pakistan-origin content

Saudi junior Foreign Minister arrives on unannounced visit; holds talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar

- Any military attack on India will be met with very firm response: Jaishankar tells Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi
- Foreign airlines closely monitoring situation amid escalation in India-Pakistan tensions
- US Consulate in Lahore directs all personnel to ‘shelter in place’
- 430 flights cancelled, 27 airports to remain shut till May 10
- Kashmir’s Gulmarg resort shuts for tourists due to proximity to LoC

Pahalgam attack is ‘original escalation’, says India

NEW DELHI

India on Thursday warned Pakistan that any attempt at further escalation of the situation will be responded to in an appropriate manner. “Now if there is an attempt at further escalation by Pakistan, it will be responded to in an appropriate domain and therefore the choice is entirely that of Pakistan to make,” Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said during a media briefing in New Delhi on Operation Sindoor.

He also slammed the disinformation directed at India from across the border since the events that started with the barbaric terror attack in Pahalgam, mentioning that the “original es-



Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri addresses a press briefing on ‘Operation Sindoor’ in New Delhi on Thursday. — Photo: IANS

calation” has been from Pakistan on April 22 and the Indian Armed Forces are only responding to it.

“The allegations to the targeting of the Neelum-Jhelum dam project in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir are absolutely fabri-

cated and a blatant lie. India has only targeted terrorist infrastructure... If this kind of a claim is a pretext for targeting Indian infrastructure of similar nature, then Pakistan will be entirely responsible for the consequences that will undoubtedly follow,” he said.

India also once again highlighted Pakistan’s pressure to remove references to The Resistance Front (TRF) - the Pakistan-based terror group responsible for the heinous Pahalgam terror attack - in the April 25 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) press statement. “This was after the fact that the TRF had claimed responsibility for this attack, not once but twice - within a few

hours of the incident on April 22 and then again on the morning of April 23. It is perhaps only after the full gravity of the incident was realised by its masters and handlers across the border that it was managed to back off from this claim. Obviously, that retraction does not convince anybody,” said Misri.

The Resistance Front, which has claimed responsibility for the Pahalgam attack, is a front for the UN-proscribed terrorist group, Lashkar-e-Taiba. It had given inputs about TRF in the report to the Monitoring Team of the UN’s 1267 Sanctions Committee in May and November 2024, bringing out its role as a cover for Pakistan-based terrorist groups. IANS

Only Allah can save us: Pak MP breaks down

NEW DELHI

The tremors of India’s Operation Sindoor are now echoing inside the halls of Pakistan’s Parliament.

In an emotional moment, retired Major and MP Tahir Iqbal, a ex-officer of Pakistan Army, broke down in Parliament, delivering a passionate plea in Urdu, begging Allah to protect Pakistan. This emotional outburst came a day after Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif appealed to the world for help in shielding his country. (SEE PAGE 2)

Discontent brewing among Congress MLAs over funds

PS DILEEP
Hyderabad

Discontent is brewing among legislators in the State, especially among ruling party MLAs, who are finding themselves increasingly cornered due to the delay in the release of Constituency Development Funds (CDF). They are citing bureaucratic hurdles and “ministerial gatekeeping” that is stalling basic but

crucial local works, leaving a major portion of Rs.1,190 crore remaining unutilised from the last fiscal year.

Nearly a year and a half since taking office, the Congress government has yet to empower the MLAs with access to meaningful funds for development. After the Congress government was formed in December 2023, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy made a grand announcement in January

2024 replacing the CDF with Special Development Fund and allocating Rs.10 crore per constituency annually, i.e., a total Rs.1,190 crore for 2024-25.

However, the ground reality tells a different story. No key works have been executed, as fund proposals still require clearance from district in-charge Ministers, an arrangement MLAs say is causing delays and political discomfort. (SEE PAGE 2)

In a nutshell

Three Greyhound jawns killed

MULUGU/WARANGAL: Three Greyhounds were killed and one RSI was seriously injured in a landmine blast triggered by CPI (Maoist) cadres in Nugur forest area near Peddagutta under Wazedu police station limits in Mulugu. In a statement here on Thursday, DGP Dr Jitender said Mulugu police and Greyhounds units were engaged in search operations on Wednesday and Thursday.

SC raps BJP MP over his remarks

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has rapped BJP MP Nishikant Dubey for his remarks against it and Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, saying they tend to “scandalise” and lower the authority of apex court. The top court, in a way, put an end to recent political debates as to who is supreme whether Parliament or the judiciary. “It is the Constitution that is higher than all of us,” the bench said.

Six killed in chopper crash

UTTARKASHI : A helicopter on its way to the Gangotri temple crashed near Gangnani in Uttarkashi district on Thursday, killing six people, including the pilot, and leaving a man seriously injured, officials said. Barring the pilot, who hailed from Gujarat’s Vadodara, the five other deceased were women. The lone survivor of the crash was Maktur Bhaskar (51), a resident of AP. (REPORT PAGE 8)

ED books case in AP liquor scam

HYDERABAD: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has registered a money laundering case to investigate an alleged liquor scam that took place in Andhra Pradesh during the previous YSRCP regime, official sources said on Thursday. The federal probe agency has filed an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) under sections of PMLA to probe irregularities in the sale of liquor in the State.

Justice Varma may be impeached

NEW DELHI: Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna is learnt to have recommended to the Centre impeachment of Allahabad High Court judge Yashwant Varma following his indiscretion in the cash discovery row by a Supreme Court-appointed committee. The CJ wrote to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi and shared the report of the three-member committee. (REPORT PAGE 8)