

Bibi acknowledges pressure from allies in resuming aid to Gaza

Tel Aviv: The first few aid trucks have entered Gaza following nearly three months of Israel's complete blockade of food, medicine and other supplies, Israel and the UN said on Monday, as Israel acknowledged pressure from allies.

Five trucks carrying baby food and other desperately needed aid entered the territory of over 2 million Palestinians via the Kerem Shalom crossing, according to the Israeli defence body in charge of coordinating aid to Gaza, COGAT.

The UN called it a "welcome development" but said far more aid is needed. Food security experts last week warned of famine in Gaza. During the latest ceasefire that Israel ended in March, some 600 aid trucks entered Gaza each day.

Israeli PM Netanyahu said his decision to resume limited, "basic" aid to Gaza came after allies said they couldn't support Israel's renewed military offensive if there are "images of hunger" coming from the territory. The UN humanitarian chief, Tom Fletcher, said the first few trucks were a "drop in the ocean of what is urgently needed." He said four more UN trucks were cleared to enter Gaza.

Israel over the weekend launched a new wave of air and ground operations across Gaza, and the army ordered the evacuation of its second-largest city, Khan Younis, where



Palestinians fight for donated food at a community kitchen in Jabalia

UK, France and Canada threaten action against Israel if Gaza offensive carries on

The leaders of Britain, France and Canada warned on Monday that their countries would take action if Israel does not stop a renewed military offensive in Gaza and lift aid restrictions. "The Israeli govt's denial of essential humanitarian assistance to the civilian population is unacceptable and risks breaching International humanitarian law," a joint statement released by the British govt said. "We oppose any attempt to expand settlements in the West Bank ... We will not hesitate to take further action, including targeted sanctions." AGENCIES

re Israel carried out a massive operation earlier.

Netanyahu said Monday Israel plans on "taking control of all of Gaza," as well as establishing a new system to distribute aid that circumvents Hamas. He has said Israel also will encourage what he describes as the voluntary emigration of much of Gaza's population to other countries. He said Israel's "greatest friends in

the world" had told him, "We cannot accept images of hunger, mass hunger." Netanyahu said the situation was approaching a "red line" and a "dangerous point," but it was not clear if he was referring to the crisis in Gaza or the potential loss of support from allies. The statement appeared aimed at pacifying anger in his nationalist base at the decision to resume aid. AP—

India, Maldives sign **13** MoUs

MALE, May 19 (PTI)

INDIA has signed 13 MoUs with the Maldives for enhancing ferry services in the island nation with an MVR 100 million grant, expanding maritime connectivity and uplifting community livelihoods.

The MoU signed on Sunday are for projects to be implemented under the Indian grant assistance scheme—High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP) Phase III. The signing ceremony took place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, marking another milestone in the ever-strengthening partnership between the two countries, the Maldives' Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.



High Commissioner of India to Maldives G. Balasubramanian, left, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives Abdulla Khaleel, centre, during signing of 13 MoUs between the two countries for projects under the Indian grant assistance scheme - High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP) Phase III. (PTI)

The 13 projects launched under this phase amount to a total grant of MVR 100 million

(about Rs 55,28,47,552), primarily aimed at enhancing
(Contd on page 5)

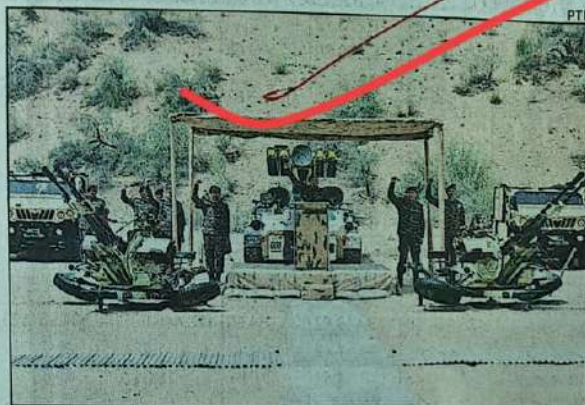
CDS, Army chief review situation along Pak border

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The operational situation along the border with Pakistan in Rajasthan and the Kutch region was reviewed on Monday by Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan and Army chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi, who also took stock of the air defence systems deployed under 'Operation Sindoor' in forward areas.

Gen Chauhan visited the Suratgarh military station and Naliya air force station, while Gen Dwivedi was at Longewala and other forward areas under the Army's 12 Konark Corps in the desert sector.

"In his interaction with troops, the CDS emphasised



Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi at Longewala in the forward areas of the Konark Corps in Jaisalmer on Monday

the importance of maintaining high operational readiness and resilience in the face of evolving security

challenges. He said they must remain ever prepared for responding to any challenge with decisive force,"

an officer said.

Gen Dwivedi, taking stock of the joint actions taken by the Army in close coordination with IAF and BSF in the desert sector, in turn, also praised the troops for their vigilance, including the successful neutralisation of enemy drone incursions, which effectively prevented any misadventure by the adversary in the region.

Another officer said the desert sector, which stretches from Jaisalmer to the Kutch region, witnessed "a swift and coordinated" operational response from the Army, IAF and BSF, which not only "blunted the enemy's intent" but also established "a new normal" in maintaining operational dominance

along the western front.

"The calibrated positioning of weapon systems and other operational enablers, aligned with civil administration support, ensured effective area domination and neutralization of potential threats," he said.

"Gen Dwivedi commended the commanders and units for their professionalism, high morale, and integrated execution of operational plans. He highlighted the Army's unflinching readiness to meet future challenges with decisive force, reaffirming its commitment to safeguarding national sovereignty and ensuring high operational preparedness amidst a dynamic security environment," he added.

India, Pak both key neighbours, will help keep peace: China

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: China is willing to maintain communication with both India and Pakistan and play a constructive role in achieving a full and lasting ceasefire, as well as in maintaining regional peace and stability, the Chinese foreign ministry said on Monday.

Spokesperson Mao Ning's remarks came in response to queries about the Beijing visit of Pakistan foreign minister Ishaq Dar—the first high-level Pakistani official to be in China after the Islamabad's military tensions with New Delhi—and China's position on the conflict.

Asked about reports that China may have provided satellite and air defence support to Pakistan during the conflict, the official said that since tensions started to increase between India and Pakistan, China followed an "objective and just position, urged the two countries to exercise calm and restraint, and avoid escalation".

"Both India and Pakistan are China's important neighbours. China attaches high importance to its ties with both, and is committed to fostering an amicable, secure and prosperous neighborhood, the principle of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness and the vision of a shared future..." Mao said.

Dar, who arrived in Beijing on Monday, is also expected to brief China about Pakistan's position on India's decision to put the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance.

On a question about China's military aid to Pakistan during the conflict, the official said that the query should be directed to competent authorities in the country. Mao gave a similar answer when asked if replenishment of the Chinese weapons system would be discussed during Dar's visit. The Chinese air force has denied reports that it is sending weapon supplies to Pakistan in a cargo plane.



BJP workers join a Tiranga Yatra in Moradabad on Monday to celebrate the Indian armed forces for Operation Sindoor

China speeds up construction of dam in Pak

Beijing: China has announced plans to accelerate work on a "flagship" dam in Pakistan to ease pressure on its all-weather ally, weeks after India placed the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in abeyance following the Pahalgam terror attack, according to a media report.

The state-owned China Energy Engineering Corporation has been working on the Mohmand Hydropower Project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in north-western Pakistan since 2019. The project was scheduled to be completed next year.

On Saturday, state broadcaster CCTV reported that concrete filling of the dam had started, marking "a critical construction milestone and a phase of accelerated development for this national flagship project of Pakistan", the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

The Mohmand dam is designed to serve as a multi-purpose facility for power generation, flood control, irrigation and water supply and is designed to generate an estimated 80MW of hydropower and supply 300 million gallons a day of drinking water to Peshavar, the capital and largest city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Want meeting of Ukraine with Russia, US, EU & UK: Zelensky

Trump Says Vatican Interested In Hosting Peace Negotiations

President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Monday that Kyiv and its partners were considering setting up a meeting of the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, the US, EU countries and Britain as part of a push to end Moscow's war in



Ukraine. Speaking to reporters in Kyiv after holding two phone calls on Monday with

US President Donald Trump, the Ukrainian president said he hoped the meeting could happen as soon as possible and that it could be hosted by Türkiye, the Vatican or Switzerland.

A source familiar with the matter earlier said Zelensky spoke "for a few minutes" with Trump before the US president's call with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Kyiv has said it is ready for a ceasefire now while Moscow has said conditions must be met first.

In his social media post, Trump said the Vatican, "as represented by the Pope, has stated that it would be very inter-



Reuters/File

Putin and Trump spoke on phone after direct talks last week in Türkiye between Moscow and Kyiv, the first since 2022

ested in hosting the negotiations. Let the process begin!"

European leaders welcomed Pope Leo XIV's readiness to host the talks at the Vatican, Italian PM Giorgia Meloni said on Monday. Meloni's office said Zelensky, French President Macron and German Chancellor Merz, spoke to Trump after his call with Putin. "Work is underway to immediately start negotiations between the parties that can lead to a ceasefire as soon as possible and build the conditions for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine," Me-

loni's office said in a statement. "In this regard, the Holy Father's willingness to host the talks at the Vatican was considered positive. Italy is ready to do its part to facilitate contacts and work for peace," the statement added.

Putin and Trump spoke after direct talks last week in Türkiye between Moscow and Kyiv, the first since 2022 in the early months of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Talks last week failed to agree on a truce.

US vice-president JD Vance earlier repeated a warning

that Washington could walk away from the peace process.

Putin said the memorandum would define "a number of positions, such as, for example, the principles of settlement, the timing of a possible peace agreement". He said that if appropriate agreements were reached, there could be a ceasefire, adding that direct talks between Russia and Ukraine gave "reason to believe that we are generally on the right track." "The main thing for us is to eliminate the root causes of this crisis," Putin said. "We just need to determine the most effective ways to move towards peace."

He thanked Trump for supporting the resumption of direct talks between Moscow and Kyiv and said Trump noted Russia's support for peace, though the key question was how to move towards peace. Trump, who has promised to bring a swift end to Europe's deadliest war since WWII, has repeatedly called for a ceasefire after three years when Washington joined other Western countries in arming Ukraine. REUTERS