

US nudges India, Pak to work together, de-escalate tension

EAM: Terrorists, Backers Must Be Brought To Book

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New Delhi: The US stepped in to prevent any military conflict between India and Pakistan over the Pahalgam terror attack as it asked both countries to work for peace. India has been weighing punitive measures against Pakistan for its cross-border adventurism, but in a phone conversation with counterpart S Jaishankar, secretary of state Marco Rubio "encouraged" India to work with Pakistan to de-escalate tensions and maintain peace and security in South Asia.

There was no readout from the Indian side but Jaishankar posted on X that the perpetrators, backers and planners of the attack must be brought to justice.

Rubio spoke to Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif before his talks with Jaishankar and urged officials' cooperation in investigating "this unconscionable attack". The state department's Hindi account on X said in a post Thursday that under President Trump, those who support terrorism would have to face consequences.

SHAH: CHUN CHUN KAR JAWAB MILEGA

> In his first public address after Pahalgam attack, home minister Amit Shah says, 'har vyakti ko chun chun kar jawab milega, jawab bhi liya jayega (every single person will be given answers and everyone will be held accountable)'

> SC rejects PIL seeking probe supervised by retd SC judge into attack. Says 'don't file petitions to demoralise the forces'

> On another petition for stay on deportation of 9 of a family to Pak, SC tells petitioner, 'you read today's Times of India' (referring to report on J&K HC's interim stay on deportation)

> Islamabad appoints DG of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) as national security adviser

> Citing security concerns, Pak to close portions of Karachi and Lahore airspace from 4am to 8am each day in May

> Pak allows 150 stranded Afghan trucks to cross into India via Attari border though it didn't allow citizens to enter on Thursday

> Indian Navy issues warning for ships to stay away till May 3 from specified coordinates in northern Arabian Sea due to drills. Around 160km away, Pak Navy carrying out its own drills

> Trump admin approves proposed sale of Indo-Pacific maritime domain awareness related software & equipment worth \$131m to India

REPORTS: PG OPP, P 8, 9, 11, 12, 15



An Indian woman and her child, a Pak passport holder, break down after not being able to cross over to Pak at Attari-Wagah border as Pak refused to open the gates Thursday

US backs India's right to defend itself: Hegseth

New Delhi: The Trump administration fully supports India's fight against terrorism and its right to defend itself, US secretary of defence Pete Hegseth told defence minister Rajnath Singh Thursday evening.

Singh, on his part, said Pakistan has a history of supporting, training and funding terror organisations during his phone conversation with Hegseth, who had called to express his deepest sympathies for the tragic loss of civilian lives in Pahalgam. "Pakistan has been exposed as a rogue state, fuelling global terrorism, and destabilising the region." TNN



Seek justice, don't spew hate: Slain officer's wife

Karnal: Navy officer Lt Vinay Narwal's wife Himanshi, whose forlorn figure sitting next to her slain husband became the image of the Pahalgam massacre, appealed to people to stop spewing hatred and seeking reprisal against any community.

"We don't want people going after Muslims or Kashmiris. We only want peace right now. Of course, we want justice, but govt must take precise steps against those who did us wrong," Himanshi said at a blood donation camp Thursday, on what would've been Narwal's 27th birthday, reports Bhavya Narang. "I just want the nation to pray for him (Lt Vinay) so that he is at peace," she said.



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US, Ukraine sign deal giving Washington access to country's valuable minerals

Prez Zelensky Hails 'Equal Deal', Says Will Help Modernise Ukraine's Industry

Washington: Kyiv and Washington on Thursday hailed a deal giving the US preferential access to new Ukrainian minerals as a milestone which a top US official said would allow President Trump to negotiate with Russia on a stronger basis. The Kremlin was silent on Wednesday's agreement, but former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev said it meant Trump had "broken the Kyiv regime" because Ukraine would have to pay for US military aid with mineral resources.

The accord, which was signed in Washington and heavily promoted by Trump, establishes a joint investment fund for Ukraine's reconstruction as the US president tries to secure a peace settlement in Russia's war in Ukraine. The agreement also gives the US preferential access to new Ukrainian minerals projects. It is central to Ukraine's efforts to mend ties with the White House, which frayed after Trump took office in Jan, but is yet to be considered by the Ukrainian parliament. The deal will show the "Russian leadership that there is no daylight between the Ukrainian people and the American people, between our goals," US treasury secretary Scott Bessent said. "And again, I think this is a strong signal to the Russian leadership, and it gives President Trump the ability to now negotiate with Russia on even a stronger basis." His remarks appeared to send a signal to Russia that US remains aligned with Kyiv despite question marks over its commitment to its ally since Trump's return to power upended US diplomacy.

Ukraine's economy minister, Yulia Svyrydenko, flew to Washington Wednesday to help finalise the deal. "Together with the US, we are creating the Fund that will attract global investment to our country," she said. US officials said three agreements had been signed — a framework deal and two technical accords — and that they ex-

WITH DEAL, TRUMP TIES HIMSELF TO FUTURE OF UKRAINE

The minerals' deal could bring untold money into a joint investment fund between the two countries that would help rebuild Ukraine. But the untapped resources will take years to extract & yield profits. And could fail to deliver the kind of wealth Trump has promised

What Mineral Resources Does Ukraine Have?

Ukraine has deposits of 22 of the 34 minerals identified by the EU as critical

Lanthanum and cerium | Used in TVs and lighting

Neodymium | Used in wind turbines and EV batteries

Erbium and yttrium | Applications can range from nuclear power to lasers

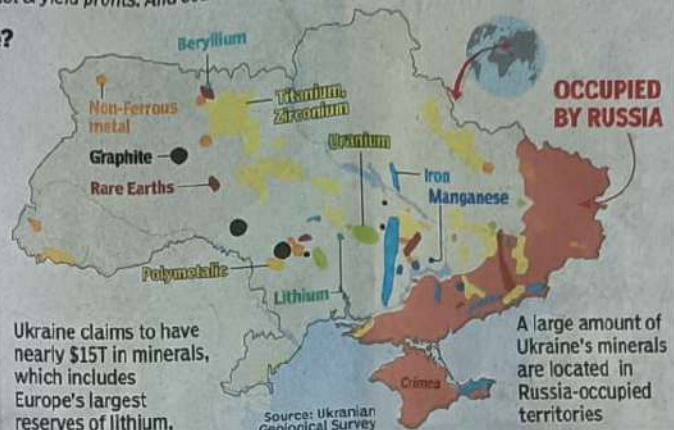
Scandium | Details classified

Lithium | Vital for batteries, ceramics,

glass. Ukraine has one of Europe's largest confirmed reserves, estimated at 500,000 metric tonnes

Graphite | Key component in EV batteries, N-reactors; Ukraine has 20% of global resources

Coal | Most are now under the control of Russia in occupied territory



Ukraine claims to have nearly \$15T in minerals, which includes Europe's largest reserves of lithium, uranium and titanium

Source: Ukrainian Geological Survey

What Is Still Under Kyiv's Control?

About 40% of Ukraine's metal resources are reportedly now under Russian occupation. Russia occupies at least two Ukrainian lithium deposits — one in Donetsk and another in Zaporizhzhia



An open pit titanium mine in Ukraine's Zhytomyr region

What Are Rare Earths?

Rare earths are a group of 17 metals used to make magnets that turn power into motion for electric vehicles, cell phones, missile systems, and other electronics. There are no viable substitutes

| Element | Reserve | Share of global production (%) |
|-----------|------------|--------------------------------|
| Graphite | 18.6Mt | 4.0 |
| Manganese | 140Mt | 1.6 |
| Iron | 6.58t | 1.5 |
| Beryllium | 13.9Kt | 0 |
| Lithium | Classified | 0 |
| Uranium | Classified | 2 |
| Titanium | Classified | 7 |

What's In The Agreement?

> Create an investment fund; Kyiv and Washington will jointly manage it, it will be financed with revenues from new projects in critical minerals, oil and gas

> No mention of a US security guarantee

> Past aid to Kyiv won't be treated as debt, but future military help, including weapons and training, to be US contribution to fund

> Door open for Ukraine to join EU



Scott Bessent & Yulia Svyrydenko sign the deal

What Is In It For US?

The agreement is intended to give Trump a personal stake in Ukraine's fate. It could also clear the way for more consequential talks on US military backing for Ukraine and on the terms of a possible truce with Russia

China Link? The International Energy Agency estimates China accounts for about 61% of rare earth production and 92% of their processing. That means it currently dominates the rare earths supply chain. US would like to cut dependency on China

'Big milestone': North Korea and Russia cement relations with first road bridge

North Korea and Russia have begun building the first road bridge linking them across their river border, both govts said Thursday as they expand bilateral ties following the deployment of North Korean troops and weapons to help Russia's war against Ukraine. The two countries held a simultaneous groundbreaking ceremony for the two-lane bridge on their respective sides

of the border, according to their state media. They currently have a cross-border rail link. "This is a big milestone for Russian-Korean relations," Russian PM Mikhail Mishustin said when he talked with his North Korean counterpart, Pak Thae-song, through a video link, said Russian news agency Tass. Pak said the new bridge would mark "a historic monument" to the efforts by North Korea's

Kim Jong Un and President Vladimir Putin of Russia to deepen bilateral ties, the North's official Korean Central News Agency said. The new bridge will be a little over a half-mile long, and its construction is expected to take 18 months, according to Russian media. Once completed, the bridge will help expand passenger and commercial traffic, as well as tourism, the North's state media said. NYT

pected Ukraine's parliament to approve them within a week.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he hoped there would be no delays in securing parliament's approval.

"The agreement has changed significantly in the preparation process," Zelensky said, hailing what he called a "truly equal agreement" that created opportunities for investment in Uk-

raine and the modernisation of industry and legal practices in his country. He and Bessent both underlined the key role in securing a deal that had been played by talks Zelensky and

Trump held in Rome during Pope Francis' funeral on April 26.

"In fact, now we have the first result of the Vatican meeting, which makes it truly historic," Zelensky said. REUTERS

Waltz his deputy

Navy intensifies muscle-flexing against Pak even as small arms fire continues across LoC

IAF Also Undertaking Sorties, Has Increased Number Of ORPs

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New Delhi: Navy has further intensified its muscle-flexing against Pakistan by issuing another warning for ships to stay away from specified coordinates in the northern Arabian Sea due to its firing drills, as the exchange of small arms fire continues unabated between the rival armies along the Line of Control in J&K.

The "NavArea" warning for the specified zone off Gujarat till May 3, incidentally, is just around 80-85 nautical miles from where the Pakistan Navy is undertaking its own drills in the Arabian Sea. "We have made it clear that if any warship or ship enters that zone, she will do so at its own peril," an officer said.

Navy chief Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi took stock of his force's operational readiness during a

visit to the Western Navy Command in Mumbai Thursday. The review came even as Navy has deployed several warships in the Arabian Sea, which conducted multiple firings of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles and other weapon systems last week.

China, which has the world's largest Navy with over 370 warships and submarines, is assiduously helping Pakistan build a strong maritime force. Pakistan has already inducted four latest Type 054A/P multi-role frigates and other platforms from China. It's slated to soon get eight Yuan-class diesel-electric submarines, with air-independent propulsion, in a major capability jump for India's western adversary.

Amid the heightened tensions with Pakistan, IAF is undertaking long-range day and night fighter sorties, while also keep-



Navy's latest indigenous guided missile destroyer INS Surat arrives at Hazira Port for the first time on Gujarat Foundation Day, in Surat on Thursday. Navy has deployed several warships in the Arabian Sea

ing its air defence network with a variety of surface-to-air missile systems in full alert mode.

While IAF has increased the number of ORPs (operational readiness platforms) at its air bases, especially in the western sector, the force is also slated to practice operations of super-

sonic fighter jets like Rafales, Jaguars and Mirage-2000s, transport aircraft and helicopters on an emergency landing facility (ELF) on the Ganga Expressway in UP on Friday.

This will be the fourth such ELT on expressways in UP, and the first to support day and night

landings. Such ELT airstrips being established in different parts of the country, with reinforced cement concrete construction on national highways or expressways, can provide operational flexibility during conflicts.

If an adversary bombs air bases, for instance, such ELTs can be used for unhindered air operations using mobile air traffic and radar control, refueling and armament-loading facilities, say officers. Pakistan and several other countries like Germany, Sweden, South Korea, Taiwan, Finland, Switzerland, Poland and Singapore also have dedicated stretches on their highways and expressways for aircraft to land and take off in emergencies or war-like events.

The ceasefire along the 778-km LoC and 198-km international boundary in J&K has frayed since the Pahalgam attack, with Army Thursday saying Pakistan army posts had opened unprovoked small arms fire across LoC in Kupwara, Uri and Akhnoor sectors.

Dhruv copters cleared for Army, IAF operations

Bengaluru: Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) said on Thursday that the Army and IAF variants of its Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Dhruv have been cleared for operations, following recommendations by a defect investigation committee.

"A time-bound plan for resumption of operations has been worked out with the users (the armed forces)," the defence PSU said in a statement. The entire Dhruv fleet of around 330 choppers has been grounded since a crash killed two Coast Guard pilots and an aircrew diver in Porbandar on Jan 5.

Last week, Army had confirmed a "partial clearance" to operate some Dhruv helicopters in Kashmir. The armed forces rely heavily on the multi-role 5.5-tonne ALHs for "sustenance flights" to forward areas and posts as well as for observation and reconnaissance, search and rescue missions.

ALH Dhruv is a multi-role helicopter with a crew of two, capacity for 12-14 passengers, powered by two turboshaft engines, and has a maximum speed of 290kmph and range of 630km. Army, which has a fleet of over 180 ALHs, including 60 weaponised versions called 'Rudra', was the most affected by the grounding. IAF, in turn, has 75 ALHs, while Navy 24 and Coast Guard 19.

HAL CMD D K Sunil has defended the helicopter's safety record, saying, "Dhruv has more than 4 lakh flying hours collectively, and there are no issues with its design or production." He said India's aircraft certification body Cemilac and an independent Dutch agency both have validated the helicopter's safety. Regarding the Jan crash, Sunil said a preliminary probe found "a fracture in the swashplate", and that a detailed defect inspection report was commissioned. TNN

US clears \$131m sale of defence software, equipment to India

New Delhi: Trump administration has approved the proposed sale of Indo-Pacific maritime domain awareness related software and equipment worth \$131 million to India.

Given its increasing role in the crucial Indo-Pacific region, India had recently requested the US for purchase of the SeaVision software, technical assistance field team training, remote software and analytic support, and other related elements of logistics and programme support.

"This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the US by helping to strengthen the US-Indian strategic relationship and to improve the security of a major defence partner which continues to be an important force for political stability, peace, and economic progress in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia regions," the US defence security cooperation agency said in a notification to US Congress.

The proposed sale will improve India's capability to meet current and future threats by bolstering its maritime domain awareness, analytical capabilities, and strategic posture, the agency added. TNN