

IAF to hold 2-day wargame along frontier with Pakistan

NEW DELHI, May 6 (PTI)

THE Indian Air Force (IAF) will carry out a two-day mega military exercise along the border with Pakistan from Wednesday that will involve all the frontline fighter jets including Rafale, Su-30 and Jaguar aircraft, sources in the defence establishment said on Tuesday.

The exercise is taking place amid heightened tensions between India and Pakistan over the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people.

India's civil aviation authorities have already issued a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) for the major air exercise that will largely take place along the Southern and Western section of the Indo-Pakistan border. India's frontline fighter jets including the Rafale, Su-30 MKI, MiG-29, Mirage-2000, Tejas and AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) aircraft are set to feature in the exercise, the sources said. In the course of the exercise, the IAF will simulate enemy targets on ground and in the air with deadly precision, they said. The militaries of both India and Pakistan are on a high alert following rising tensions between the two nations.

Soon after the Pahalgam terror attack, India, citing "cross-border linkages" to the strike, promised severe punishment to those involved in it.

In a high-level meeting with the top defence brass on April 29, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the armed forces have "complete operational freedom" to decide on the mode, targets and timing of India's response to the terror attack.

After historic defeat, Friedrich Merz wins to become Germany's Chancellor

BERLIN, May 6 (AP)

FRIEDRICH Merz succeeded Tuesday in his bid to become the next German Chancellor during a second vote in Parliament, hours after he suffered a historic defeat in the first round.

The conservative leader had been expected to smoothly win the vote to become Germany's 10th chancellor since World War II. No candidate for Chancellor



in postwar Germany has failed to win on the first ballot.

Merz received 325 votes in the second ballot.

He needed a majority of 316 out of 630 votes in a secret ballot but only received 310 votes in the first round — well short of the 328 seats held by his coalition.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Tuesday he seeks more European and transatlantic leadership from Germany following Friedrich Merz's win to become the country's 10th Chancellor.

UNSC raps Pakistan, poses tough questions

NEW YORK, May 6 (PTI)

UN SECURITY Council member nations have posed tough questions to Pakistan while discussing the Pahalgam terror attack amid increasing global outrage over the dastardly strike that killed 26 civilians.

The Security Council refused to issue a statement following the meeting which was held in a consultative room rather than the main hall, effectively dismissing Pakistan's attempt to get a favourable position from the Security Council.

There was broad condemnation of the terrorist attack and the need to fix accountability for it, authoritative sources told PTI after an informal session of the top UN body.

"The United Nations Security Council members raised tough questions for Pakistan at its informal session. It was advised to sort out the issues bilaterally with India," a source said.

At the deliberations, the UN Security Council discussed rising tensions between India and Pakistan and several envoys called for de-escalation.

Although the 15-member UNSC did not issue a statement, Pakistan claimed that its



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres delivers a statement regarding the escalating tensions between India and Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack, in USA, on Monday. (PTI)

own objectives were "largely served".

Pakistan is one of the non-permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Greece, President of the UNSC for the month of May, had scheduled the meeting on Monday following a request by Pakistan.

Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations Khaled Mohamed Khari of Tunisia briefed the Council on behalf of both departments (DPPA and DPO).

Coming out of the meeting, Khari said there was a call for "dialogue and peaceful resolution of the conflict." He noted that the "situation is volatile."

Ambassador Evangelos Sekeris, a Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations and the current UNSC President, described it as a "productive meeting, helpful".

A Russian diplomat said, "We hope for de-escalation."

The sources added that there was broad condemnation of the terrorist attack and recognition of the need for accountability. Some members specifically brought up targeting of tourists on the basis of their religious faith, the sources said. UNSC members refused to accept the "false flag" narrative and asked whether Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba was likely to be involved.

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Mock drills in nearly 300 distts



Security personnel stand guard in a park amid high alert, in Srinagar, Tuesday. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, May 7 (PTI)

THE stage is set for a nationwide mock drill on Wednesday with all States and Union Territories preparing to operationalise air-

raid sirens and train people on evacuation protocols and cleaning of bunkers and trenches

among other steps in the event of a "hostile attack".

The emergency preparedness, the first perhaps since 1971, will be conducted by most States from 4 pm.

Home Ministry officials said nearly 300 civil defence districts with sensitive installations like nuclear plants, military bases, refineries, and hydroelectric

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PREPARING FOR WAR
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(PTI) Guild of India filmmaker vivek saikar explained.

'GAGANYAAN MISSION' slated for first quarter of 2027

NEW DELHI, May 6 (PTI)

THE launch of India's maiden human space flight -- Gaganyaan -- has been pushed to the first quarter of 2027, nearly five years later than the original schedule as it races to ace technologies for such complex projects.

The first uncrewed mission of the Gaganyaan project is expected to be launched later this year, which will be followed by two more similar missions in 2026, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman V Narayanan said at a press conference. "The first crewed mission is targeted for the first quarter of 2027," Narayanan said and added ISRO would send a half-humanoid robot -- Vyommित्र -- as part of the uncrewed mission before sending astronauts to low-Earth orbit.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the Gaganyaan project during his Independence Day address in 2018 and set a target of 2022 for achieving India's maiden human space flight.

The project has run into several delays, partly due to the Covid pandemic that affected the training of astronauts, and complexities of mastering the crucial technologies required for the mission. The crewed mission was expected to take place in 2025 and later slotted for 2026. It has now been delayed to the first quarter of 2027.

Besides developing the human-rated launch vehicle for the Gaganyaan mission, ISRO scientists have also built from scratch the Environment Control and Life Support System (ECLSS) for the mission, which will involve taking the astronauts to



ISRO Chief Narayanan

low-Earth orbit of 400 kilometres above the Earth for a few days and getting them back safely.

The ECLSS will help maintain cabin pressure, humidity, temperature, quality of air and personal hygiene management system in the spacecraft during the duration of the mission.

"It is a very complex process. For the first time we undertook this development. I want to say,

90 per cent of the work is completed and we are in the final phase of qualification," Narayanan said.

If successful, India will become only the fourth country after Russia, the US and China to independently launch humans into space.

Narayanan said space docking experiments comprising two satellites launched by a PSLV rocket in December were successful and ISRO was planning SPADEX-2.

A proposal on this will be presented to the government soon, he said.

He said judicious use of fuel during the ongoing SPADEX mission allowed ISRO to conduct more experiments in orbit that included circumnavigating one satellite around the other in March.

Pak troops target LoC posts, Indian Army retaliates

JAMMU, May 6 (PTI)

PAKISTANI troops continued to violate the ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, resorting to unprovoked firing across multiple sectors and prompting a strong and calibrated response from the Indian Army.

This marks the 12th consecutive night of such provocations amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan following the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam that left 26 dead.

"During the night of May 5-6, Pakistan Army initiated unprovoked small-arms fire across the LoC in areas opposite Kupwara, Baramulla, Poonch, Rajouri, Mendhar, Naushera, Sunderbani, and

Akhnoor," said a Defence spokesperson in Jammu.

The firing exchanges are taking place in five districts out of seven border districts of Jammu and Kashmir. So far, there has been no firing reports along International Border in Samba and Kathua districts.

The latest round of cross-border firing further undermines the ceasefire agreement reached in February 2021, which is now largely seen as ineffective due to Pakistan's frequent violations across the 740-km-long LoC.

The latest hostilities began in the northern districts of Kupwara and Baramulla in the Kashmir Valley, before spreading southwards to Rajouri, Poonch, Akhnoor, and the Pargwal sector along the

International Border in Jammu district. The firing affected five border districts -- Baramulla, Kupwara, Poonch, Rajouri, and Jammu. Since the night of April 24, hours after India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty in response to the Pahalgam terror attack—Pakistani troops have repeatedly targeted Indian positions along the LoC, beginning in the Kashmir Valley and quickly expanding to the Jammu region.

In a series of retaliatory measures, Pakistan blocked its airspace for Indian carriers, shut down the Wagah border crossing, suspended bilateral trade, and warned that any diversion of water under the Indus Waters Treaty would be considered an "Act of War."

Pakistani intruder arrested along LoC in J&K's Poonch

JAMMU, May 6 (PTI)

A 26-YEAR-old Pakistani intruder was arrested along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Tuesday, officials said.

The arrest came amid a diplomatic flare-up between India and Pakistan and almost daily ceasefire violations on the borders in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed.

India's water will flow, stop in India's interests, be of use only to India: PM

IAF Combat Exercise Near Border Today

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Days after India put the Indus Waters Treaty on hold, triggering protestations from Pakistan, in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terrorist attack, PM Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the water, which belonged to India, would flow in India's favour and be used by India only.

"Pehle Bharat ke haq ka paani bhi bahar ja raha tha... ab Bharat ka paani Bharat ke haq me bahega, Bharat ke haq mai rukega aur Bharat ke hi kaam aayega (Earlier, even the water belonging to India was flowing out, now India's water will flow for India's benefit, will stay here for

BALUCH OUTFIT KILLS 8 PAK SOLDIERS

► Baluch Liberation Army targets Pak army convoy with IED blast, kills at least eight soldiers in Mach, Kachhi district. Islamabad alleges India's involvement

► India slams Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's statement on India-Pak tensions, says it speaks Pak's language, ignores cross-border links of Pahalgam attack

► Pak backs 18% increase

India's benefit and will be utilised for India only," the PM said at an event organised by ABP Network.

The remarks came as IAF gears up to carry out a major air combat exercise close to the international border in Rajasthan. Frontline fighters such as Rafales, Mirage-2000s and Sukhoi-30MKIs as well as force-multipliers will be part



Villagers clean a bunker near the border in Jammu

in defence spend to over 2.5 trillion Pakistani rupees in next budget, says media report. Budget to be presented in June

of the exercise, coming close on the heels of naval drills in the north Arabian Sea.

Both armies spoke over the DGMO hotline Tuesday, with the Indian side raising the issue of Pakistan army posts opening "unprovoked" small arms fire at several locations across the LoC. Firing continued for the 12th successive night. P19

At UNSC huddle, Pak faces tough questions

Sachin Parashar
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New Delhi: The United Nations Security Council's closed-door meeting on rising India-Pakistan tensions expectedly failed to yield any substantive outcome for Pakistan.

Indian govt sources said Pakistan's efforts to internationalise the issue made little headway as UNSC advised Is-

► **EDIT: Ignore The Noise**

lamabad to resolve issues bilaterally with India and sought accountability for the Pahalgam attack, while expressing concern over Pakistan's nuclear rhetoric and missile tests.

In the 90-minute meeting, the member-states are learnt

Iran Ign minister lands in Delhi today

Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi will arrive in Delhi Wednesday after a visit to Islamabad where he is believed to have discussed the fallout of the Pahalgam attack with the President and PM, among others. He purportedly stressed "fraternal dialogue" between India and Pakistan. new

to have condemned the April 22 attack and posed "tough questions" about the likely involvement of UN-proscribed Pakistan-based terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba.

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Defence agreements with India being amended, says Maldives

Male: The Maldives on Tuesday said existing defence agreements with India are being amended to ensure they do not compromise the Maldives's sovereignty and independence, media reports said in Male. Defence minister Mohamed Ghassan Maumoon also told Parliament members that 74 Indian soldiers stationed in the Maldives, who were repatriated under an agreement last year, were unarmed while in the Maldives.

Maumoon's statements come days after Maldivian

President Mohamed Muizzu, during a marathon 15 hour press conference, said there is nothing to worry about the agreements signed by the previous govt with other countries, including with India.

On Tuesday, while answering questions raised by Parliament members, Maumoon said, the agreements formed with India as part of long-standing close ties between the two countries had been amended or is being amended "to ensure that they protect the sovereignty

and independence of Maldives," according to a report in newsportal.edition.mv.

One of the key agreements under review pertained to the development of a naval dockyard at Uthuru Thilafalhu with Indian assistance, PSM News said.

The Maldives and India witnessed a downturn in bilateral ties since pro-China president Muizzu assumed office in Nov 2023. Within hours of his oath, he had demanded the withdrawal of Indian military personnel from his country. PTI