

UN urges Pakistan, Afghanistan to end hostilities to protect civilians

ISLAMABAD, Oct 16 (AP)

THE United Nations on Thursday urged Pakistan and Afghanistan to bring “a lasting end to hostilities” to protect civilians, after days of fighting killed dozens of people in both countries and injured hundreds more.

It's the deadliest crisis between the neighbours

since 2021, when the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan following the collapse of the Western-backed government. Cross-border violence has escalated since Oct 10, with each country saying they were retaliating to armed provocations from the other. On Wednesday, the two sides agreed to a ceasefire. The truce followed

appeals from major regional powers, as the violence threatened to destabilise a region where groups, including the Islamic State and al-Qaida, are trying to resurface. There were no reports of overnight fighting. Key border crossings remained closed on Thursday. The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan welcomed the

ceasefire and said it was still assessing the number of casualties. It said the heaviest toll was in south on Wednesday.

“Current information indicates that at least 17 civilians were killed and 346 were injured in Spin Boldak on the Afghan side of the border,” the UN mission said.

India pitches for supply of Akash missile system to Brazil

NEW DELHI, Oct 15 (PTI)

INDIA is learnt to have pitched for supply of Akash missile system to Brazil as Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday held wide ranging talks with Brazilian Vice President Geraldo Alckmin here.

During the meeting, the two leaders "identified priority areas" for joint work, including exploring opportunities for co-development and co-production of defence equipment.

Defence Minister of Brazil, José Múcio Monteiro Filho, was also present during the meeting, the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

It is learnt that in the meeting, India has pitched for supply of Akash missile system to Brazil, people familiar with the matter said. India and Brazil share a



strategic partnership.

"The leaders reaffirmed their shared commitment to advance defence cooperation, focusing on military-to-military exchanges, including joint exercises and training visits," the statement said.

They reviewed the progress of ongoing defence-related initiatives and "identified priority areas for joint work, including exploring opportunities for co-development and co-production of defence equipment", the Ministry said.

Tejas Mk1A to take maiden flight from Nashik today

NEW DELHI, Oct 16 (IANS)

HINDUSTAN Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is all set to mark a significant event with the maiden flight of the Tejas Mk1A fighter jet from its Nashik facility on October 17, however, the Indian Air Force (IAF) will not be getting the delivery of the Tejas Mk1A.

According to HAL's official invitation, the event will be marked by the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at HAL's manufacturing Division, Nashik, Maharashtra.

It will also mark the inauguration of HAL's third production line for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA).

Despite this maiden flight of the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas Mk1A, the IAF continues to face delays in the jet delivery.

Notably, scheduled for the induction last year, the Mk1A programme has been facing consistent delays, and the primary reason is due to the disruptions in the supply of GE F404 engines from the United States.

In a press conference earlier this month," Air Chief Marshal AP Singh on the arrival of the Tejas Mk-1A fighter aircraft remarked, "We are eagerly waiting for the LCA Mk1A — it's like we are waiting with hungry mouths for food."



The state-of-the-art Tejas Mk-1A is an upgraded version of the Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) and will replace the recently retired MiG-21 fleet.

The IAF phased out the MiG-21s on September 26 after over six decades of service.

The Tejas Mk-1A features advanced avionics, a modern radar system, improved weapon capabilities, and a cutting-edge electronic warfare suite. With a top speed exceeding 2,200 km/h, it is designed for enhanced combat performance and operational flexibility.

Last month, on September 25, the Ministry of Defence signed a Rs 62,370 crore contract with HAL for the supply of 97 Tejas Mk-1A fighter jets -- 68 single-seater and 29 twin-seater trainer variants. The deal is expected to significantly boost the IAF's operational strength.

French PM Sebastien Lecornu survives no-confidence vote

PARIS, Oct 16 (AP)

FRENCH Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu survived a vote of no-confidence on Thursday that could have toppled his fragile new Government and plunged France deeper into political chaos.

The National Assembly vote clears the way for the embattled Lecornu to pursue what could be an even greater challenge: getting a 2026 budget for the European Union's second-largest economy through Parliament's powerful but bitterly divided Lower House before year end.

Lecornu's survival also spares

any immediate need for President Emmanuel Macron to again dissolve National Assembly and call snap legislative elections, a hazardous option that the French leader had signalled he might take if Lecornu fell.

The close ally of the French President faced two no-confidence motions filed by Macron's fiercest opponents — the hard-left France Unbowed party and Marine Le Pen of the far-right National Rally and her allies in Parliament.

The 577-seat chamber voted on the France Unbowed motion first — and it fell short, with 271 lawmakers supporting it.

With fragile Gaza ceasefire taking hold, Trump says he's now looking to 'get Russia done'

WASHINGTON, Oct 16 (AP)

WITH a fragile Israel-Hamas ceasefire and hostage deal holding, President Donald Trump says he's now turning his attention to bringing Russia's war on Ukraine to an end and is weighing providing Kyiv long-range weaponry as he looks to prod Moscow to the negotiating table.

Ending the wars in Ukraine and Gaza was central to Trump's 2024 reelection pitch, in which he persistently pilloried President Joe Biden for his handling of the conflicts.

Yet, like his predecessor, Trump also has been stymied by President Vladimir

Putin as he's unsuccessfully pressed the Russian leader to hold direct talks with Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy to end the war that is nearing its fourth year.

Trump to host Zelenskyy for talks today, their 4th face-to-face meeting this year

But fresh off the Gaza ceasefire, Trump is showing new confidence that he can finally make headway on ending the Russian invasion. He's also signalling that he's ready to step up pressure on Putin if he doesn't come to the table soon.

"Interestingly we made progress today, because of what's happened in the Middle East," Trump said of the Russia-Ukraine war on Wednesday evening as he welcomed supporters of his White House ballroom project

to a glitzy dinner.

Earlier this week in Jerusalem, in a speech to the Knesset, Trump predicted the truce in Gaza would lay the groundwork for the US to help Israel and many of its Middle East neighbours normalise relations. But Trump also made clear his top foreign policy priority now is ending the largest armed conflict in Europe since World War II. "First we have to get Russia done," Trump said, turning to his special envoy Steve Witkoff, who has also served as his administration's chief interlocutor with Putin. "We gotta get that one done. If you don't mind, Steve, let's focus on Russia first. All right?"

Trump is set to host Zelenskyy for talks Friday, their fourth face-to-face meeting this year.