

# Pak, Afghanistan agree to truce



Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and Afghanistan's acting Defence Minister Mullah Yaqoob shake hands after agreeing to an immediate ceasefire, in Doha. (X)

ISLAMABAD, Oct 19 (PTI)

**PAKISTAN** and Afghanistan have agreed to an immediate ceasefire and setting up of "mechanisms" to ensure lasting peace

after days of violent clashes along the border that left several soldiers, civilians, and terrorists dead on both sides, officials said on Sunday.

The breakthrough came following negotiations between Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and Afghanistan's acting Defence Minister Mullah Yaqoob in Doha, facilitated by Qatar and Turkey, according to a statement issued by Qatar's Foreign Ministry.

"During the negotiation, both sides agreed to an immediate ceasefire and establishment of mechanisms to consolidate lasting peace and stability between the two countries," the statement read.

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# US warns of Hamas attack against Gaza civilians

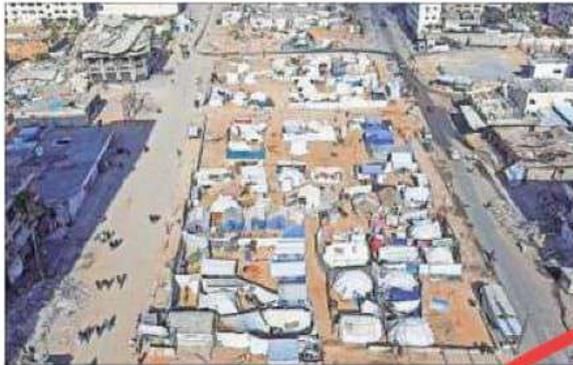
WEST PALM BEACH, Oct 19 (AP)

THE US State Department said on Saturday that it has "credible reports" that Hamas could violate the ceasefire with an attack on Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

If the attack takes place, it "would constitute a direct and grave violation" of the agreement forged by President Donald Trump to end the two-year war between Israel and Hamas, the statement said.

No further details were disclosed about the potential attack.

"Should Hamas proceed with this attack, measures will be taken to protect the people of Gaza and preserve the integrity of the ceasefire," the State Department said. Trump previously warned on social media that "if Hamas continues to kill people in Gaza, which was not the Deal, we will have no choice but to go in and kill them." The US President later clarified he won't send US troops into Gaza after launching



A drone view shows tents of displaced Palestinians following the withdrawal of the Israeli forces in Gaza City.

the threat against Hamas.

"It's not going to be us," he told reporters. "We won't have that. There are people very close, very nearby that we can go in and they'll do the trick very easily, but under our auspices." Trump's hostile rhetoric represented a shift after initially expressing nonchalance

about Hamas killings, saying they had taken out "a couple of gangs that were very bad."

**ISRAEL IDENTIFIES BODY OF HOSTAGE AS MAJOR GAZA CROSSING REMAINS CLOSED:** ISRAEL identified the body of a deceased hostage Sunday morning, after Hamas handed over

two bodies of what the militant group said are deceased hostages to the Red Cross on late Saturday night. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the body was identified as Ronen Engel. The second body is still undergoing identification at Israel's National Institute of Forensic Medicine. Engel, 54, was killed during the Oct 7 attack on Kibbutz Nir Oz on the Gaza border. His wife, Karina, and two of his three children were kidnapped and released in a ceasefire in November 2023.

The move comes as Israel threatened to keep the Rafah bor-

der crossing between Gaza and Egypt closed "until further notice". The statement by Netanyahu's office said reopening Rafah would depend on how Hamas fulfills its ceasefire role of returning the remains of all 28 deceased hostages.

Hamas has handed over the remains of 11 identified hostages. Israel has returned the bodies of 135 Palestinians to Gaza.

The handover of remains is among key points — along with aid deliveries into Gaza and the devastated territory's future — in the ceasefire process meant to end two years of war.

## Iran's IRGC unveils upgraded ballistic missiles, overhauled launchers



# Venezuelan President announces defence drills amid US threats

CARACAS, Oct 19 (IANS)

VENEZUELAN President Nicolas Maduro announced the launch of military drills code-named the "Great Corridor of the Venezuelan Plain" as part of the "Independence 200" operation to strengthen national defence amid perceived US military threats.

The exercises, which started on early Saturday and cover the central States of Barinas, Portuguesa, Cojedes and Guarico, are part of a nationwide mobilisation aimed at enhancing the country's preparedness against potential external attacks, reports Xinhua news agency.

"All the integral defence zones across the country are now active and operational,"



Nicolas Maduro

Maduro said in a message posted on social media on Saturday (local time). "We have completed all the zones with 27 fundamental defence tasks." The President highlighted coordination among civilian, police and military sectors, calling it "a perfect and organised fusion" to safeguard national sovereignty and internal stability.

"We want to keep winning along the path of peace,"

Maduro said, referring to what he called the US military buildup in the Caribbean near Venezuelan waters.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump has announced that Washington had destroyed a "drug-smuggling submarine" in the Caribbean and was sending two surviving suspects back to their home countries, Ecuador and Colombia, following a military strike that killed two others on board.

"It was my great honour to destroy a very large drug-carrying submarine that was navigating towards the United States on a well-known narco-trafficking transit route," Trump said on his Truth Social platform on Saturday (local time), claiming that the vessel was loaded with fentanyl and other narcotics.

# India developing 200 MW nuclear reactors to power ships

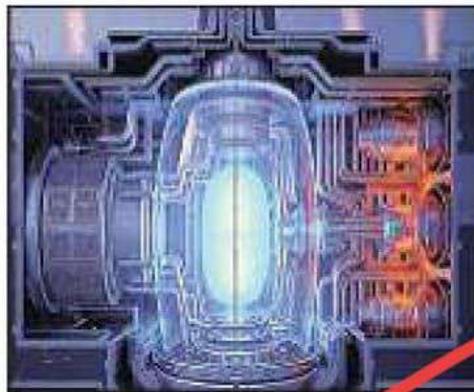
NEW DELHI, Oct 19 (PTI)

INDIA is developing 200 MW nuclear power reactors, compact in size that can be deployed on commercial ships.

“Nuclear power is generated by causing nuclear fission to create heat that leads to electricity production. You can put the reactor wherever you want, even on a ship,” a senior official said here.

He said scientists at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) are developing two nuclear power reactors of 55 MW and 200 MW that could be deployed at captive power plants used by energy-intensive companies such as cement manufacturers.

“These nuclear reactors are very safe and can even be used



to power merchant navy ships,” the official said, side-stepping questions of their use to power nuclear submarines.

He said these Bharat Small Modular Reactors (BSMR) will be the mainstay in the expansion of the share of nuclear power in India’s energy mix.

Currently, India operates two home-built nuclear submarines

-- INS Arihant and INS Arighaat -- which are powered by 83 MW reactors. A third nuclear-powered submarine, INS Aridhaman is undergoing trials.

The Government has also announced that it would amend the Atomic Energy Act (AEA), 1962, to allow the entry of private players in the civil nuclear sector. According to the plans, the Government may allow private players to operate nuclear power plants and also handle the front-end of the nuclear fuel cycle.

As per the discussions on the amendments to the AEA, the Government may also allow private companies to procure fuel from foreign countries for the nuclear power plants.

# Chandrayaan-2 makes **FIRST EVER** observation of Sun's impact on Moon

CHENNAI, Oct 19 (PTI)

**THE** Chandrayaan-2 mission, launched in 2019, has made the first-ever observation of the effects of the Sun's Coronal Mass Ejection (CME) on the Moon using its onboard scientific instruments, ISRO said on Saturday.

This observation would help understand the lunar exosphere, very thin atmosphere of the Moon, and the impact of space weather on its surface, the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency said.



Launched on July 22, 2019, from Sriharikota using the GSLV-MkIII-M1 rocket, Chandrayaan-2 carried eight experiment payloads.

On August 20, 2019, Chandrayaan-2 was successfully inserted into the elliptical orbit around the Moon. Although communication with the Vikram lander was lost during its September 7 landing attempt, the Orbiter

remains fully operational and continues to function in a 100 km x 100 km orbit

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