

Russia declares May 9 truce, threatens attack if Ukraine violates it

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday declared a two-day ceasefire in the conflict with Ukraine on May 8-9 to mark the anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War Two, Russia's defence ministry said. The ministry added that it counted on the Ukrainian side to follow suit and that Russia would launch a massive retaliatory missile strike on the centre of Kyiv if Ukraine attempted to disrupt the celebrations.

Citing that the May 9 World War II Victory Day parade in Moscow could be held without any military equipment, Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelens-**



ky on Monday claimed that Russia is steadily weakening. "If that happens, it will be the first time in many, many years. They cannot afford military equipment — and they fear drones may buzz over Red Square," he posted on social media platform X.

His statements came on a day when it was reported that a drone hit a residential tower in an upscale Moscow district in a rare strike near the city centre ahead of the parade.

A Russian missile attack on the town of Merefa, in Kharkiv region, killed six people and injured more than 30 others, Ukrainian officials said on Monday. IANS, REUTERS

US President's Project Freedom meets Iran's residual firepower

US Initiates Hormuz Escort; Iran Fires Missiles At UAE, 1st Attack Since Truce

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Getty Images



GERMAN MINESWEEPER SETS SAIL: German navy's minesweeper "Fulda" during its departure at Kiel, Germany, for a possible deployment in the Strait of Hormuz, on Monday. The German govt has said it is willing to participate in mine clearing efforts in the Strait, but only once Iran and the US have agreed on the cessation of hostilities

Washington: The United States and Iran are on the verge of resuming their shooting match in the Gulf after Tehran attacked UAE with drones and missiles in response to US efforts to militarily escort scores of ships stranded in the Strait of Hormuz under what it called "Project Freedom".

In a high-stakes gamble that blends humanitarian rhetoric with hard power signaling, US President Donald Trump on Monday initiated a Washington-led move to escort commercial vessels out of the volatile waterway under protective US cover. But the power move was met with residual Iranian firepower as Tehran attacked UAE's Fujairah province, forcing it to take defensive measures against incoming missiles and drones.

The US, for its part, claimed two merchant ships had transited through the strait, but Iran rejected the assertion, claiming it was in full control of the strait. The tit-for-tat announcements come amid a grinding two-month conflict in the Gulf that has choked one of the world's most critical oil arteries.

The contest for control of the Strait of Hormuz has now crystallised into a stark reality: the US clearly commands the superior military power, but Iran appears to be dictating

3 Indians injured in Fujairah attack

Three Indians were injured on Monday after a fire broke out on the Fujairah Petroleum Industries Zone in the UAE following a drone strike, officials and reports said. In a post on X, the Indian Embassy in the UAE confirmed that three Indians sustained injuries in attacks in Fujairah.

"We are in touch with local authorities for ensuring adequate medical care and welfare of the affected Indian nationals," it added. PTI

the terms of engagement.

Earlier, framing the operation as a humanitarian intervention, Trump said neutral countries had appealed to Washington to help free ships "locked up" in the strait, many running low on food and essential supplies. The US, he said, would "guide their ships safely out of these restricted waterways", warning that any interference "will... have to be dealt with forcefully". The operation, which began Monday morning Middle East time, was pitched as a goodwill gesture — including toward Iran — even as it carries unmistakable coercive undertones.

Ships pick Iran lane, for now

On the ground, Project Freedom got off to a hesitant start. Vessel traffic through the strait remained a trickle, with

Iran's Strait map shows UAE areas

Iran's Revolutionary Guards navy issued a new map of the area of the Strait of Hormuz under its control on Monday, state media said. The area starts in the west with a line between the westernmost tip of Iran's Qeshm island to the UAE's Umm al Quwain. In the east, the area stops at a line between Iran's Mount Mobarak and UAE's Emirate of Fujairah. It was not clear to what extent their claimed area of control has changed. REUTERS

most ships opting to use an Iranian-controlled traffic separation scheme (shipping channel closer to Iran's shores) rather than a US-proposed corridor closer to Oman. Shipping executives said the plan lacks operational clarity and it is unclear whether it is sustainable, echoing industry concerns that without Iranian coordination, any large-scale transit risks reigniting hostilities.

Shippers not convinced

In strictly military terms, the US retains overwhelming superiority. The US Navy can project force across the Gulf with carrier strike groups, surveillance systems, and allied bases. But geography — and politics — complicate that advantage. Iran's proximity to the strait, combined with its arsenal of coastal missiles,

Schools go back to online mode

The United Arab Emirates on Monday ordered all schools to return to remote learning for the rest of the week, the education ministry said, following a spate of attacks targeting the country. The UAE slammed the latest Iranian barrage, saying the attacks represent a "dangerous escalation and an unacceptable transgression." It added that the UAE "reserves its full and legitimate right to respond to these attacks". AP, AFP

drones, and fast-attack craft, gives it effective control over escalation dynamics. Even limited harassment can deter commercial shipping, as insurers raise premiums and companies refuse to risk multimillion-dollar vessels. Without a broader agreement — ideally involving Iran — insurers are unlikely to underwrite voyages through the strait.

Choppy waters for Trump

In the US itself, the crisis is colliding with kitchen-table economics. Gas prices across the country have surged to an average \$4.5 a gallon, up from \$2.9 before the conflict — a roughly 50% increase. Analysts warn prices could breach \$5.

The spike is putting intense pressure on Trump, who has made energy affordability a central political message.

Some lawmakers are questioning if Project Freedom risks entangling the US in a broader conflict without congressional authorisation, while others contend the president has little choice but to act to stabilise global energy flows.

Trump, however, has struck a defiant tone, insisting that the operation is both necessary and limited. He has pointed to "very positive discussions" with Iran as evidence that diplomacy is still in play, even as he underscores the willingness to use force if required.

US destroys Iran missiles, boats

The United States shot down multiple Iranian missiles and drones fired at US Navy and commercial vessels and destroyed six of Tehran's small boats, a top US admiral said on Monday. US Apache and Seahawk helicopters hit "six Iranian small boats threatening commercial shipping," Admiral Brad Cooper, the head of US Central Command said. US forces also "effectively engaged" all "missiles and drones". AFP

Left's last bastion slips out of its grip

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, May 4 (PTI)

KERALA on Monday witnessed a sharp political reset as the State electors voted out the last Left Government in the country, bringing back the Congress to

| KERALAM (140) | | |
|-------------------|-----------|----------|
| UDF | LDF | BJP |
| WINS/LEADS | | |
| 102 | 35 | 3 |

the ruling saddle after a gap of 10 years, while the BJP broke through a long-standing electoral drought by winning three seats.

The Congress-led UDF swept aside a decade of Left rule under Pinarayi Vijayan with a decisive Assembly victory, with the national party adding the third southern State to be ruled by it, in its kitty. The party is in power in Karnataka and Telangana.

While Congress' vote share

UDF takes over Keralam after a decade



Congress members celebrate as Congress leads in the Keralam Assembly elections 2026, in New Delhi on Monday. (ANI)

stood at 28.79 per cent, that of CPI (M) was 21.77 per cent. Congress ally IUML had a vote-share of 11.01 per cent.

Apart from strong anti-incumbency against the Government,

the results of the April 9 polls also indicated a consolidation of support across sections of society in favour of the United Democratic Front, which had been in

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Three Lotuses bloom in Keralam



THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, May 4 (PTI)

THREE Lotuses bloomed in Kerala as the BJP on Monday won from the Nemom, Kazhakoottam and Chathannoor constituencies in the April 9 Assembly polls.

BJP Kerala president Rajeev Chandrasekhar confirmed
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Four youths undertake 9-month-long 'dandavat yatra' to Amarnath shrine

RAMBAN/JAMMU, May 4 (PTI)

UNDETERRED by high temperatures and difficult terrain, four youths from Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have been on an extraordinary, over nine-month-long journey to the revered Amarnath Shrine, performing 'dandavat pranam' -- a rigorous religious practice involving full-body prostrations -- to spread "a message of Sanatan Dharma" and "communal harmony".

Traversing the winding stretches of the Jammuâ Srinagar National Highway in Ramban district, the young pilgrims have been advancing entirely through full-body prostrations -- a form of pilgrimage where devotees move forward by repeatedly lying flat on the ground -- as they make their way towards the cave shrine housing the naturally formed ice lingam of Lord Shiva at an alti-



tude of about 3,880 metres in the South Kashmir Himalayas.

The pilgrims, Jatinder Rajput, Rohit Ray and Nayain Jain from Madhya Pradesh, along with Amit Rajput from Uttar Pradesh, began their journey months ago.

While the trio from Madhya Pradesh started on September 3, 2025, Amit Rajput set out earlier on July 23, 2025.

"We are on a dandavat pranam yatra to seek the blessings of Baba Barfani. It was our long-cherished wish, and we have been on this journey for over nine months," Amit Rajput said.

Unlike conventional pilgrim-

age, the group has been moving along step by step through repeated prostrations, while taking intermittent breaks.

"For nearly a year, our daily routine has revolved around lying flat on the ground, rising, and inching forward," said Rohit Ray.

Carrying minimal belongings on a bicycle, including blankets, water and limited food supplies, the youths have braved extreme weather, from scorching plains to the cold and rugged Himalayan terrain.

Despite the physical strain, they remain resolute, chanting "Baba Barfani" for motivation.

The annual Amarnath Yatra is scheduled to commence on July 3 via the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route in Anantnag district, and the shorter but steeper 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal district, concluding on August 28 on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan.

DRDO passed on 2,200 technologies: Rajnath

PRAYAGRAJ, May 4 (IANS)

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said the Government has placed defence research at the centre of its priorities and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has already transferred 2,200 technologies to various industries.

Addressing defence personnel, industry captains, innovators and start-ups at the inaugural session of the three-day 'North Tech Symposium', organised here by the Indian Army's Northern and Central Commands and Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers, the minister underscored the importance of sustained focus on research and cultivating the element of surprise to stay future-ready in the present era of intense technological revolution.

He pointed out that 25 per cent of the defence R&D budget has been allocated to the industry, academia, and start-ups, and to date, these entities



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Northern Command Lt. General Pratik Sharma and others during the North Tech Symposium 2026 in Prayagraj. (PTI)

have already utilised over Rs 4,500 crore of the budget.

He highlighted the explosive

rate of technological change being witnessed in modern-day warfare, in addition to the emer-

gence of the constant "never-imagined-before" element of surprise. "In the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the nature of warfare transformed from tanks and missiles to game-changer drones and sensors within a span of merely three or four years. Furthermore, things which are part of day-to-day life are turning into deadly weapons. The pager attacks in Lebanon and Syria have prompted a reassessment of modern warfare methods. In such a situation, we need to be prepared," Singh said.

He emphasised the need to adopt a proactive approach and build capabilities that enable the country, should the need arise, to launch an unexpected strike against its adversary.

Rajnath Singh highlighted that a new Transfer of Technology policy has been implemented, wherein the 20 per cent fee, levied earlier, has been completely waived off for Development-cum-Production Partners, Development Partners, and Production Agencies.

HISTORIC WIN: It's BJP in WB

KOLKATA, May 4 (PTI)

IN A mandate as sweeping as it is symbolic, the BJP on Monday scripted history by winning 202 seats to secure more than a two-thirds majority in the West Bengal Assembly polls, ending the TMC's

| WEST BENGAL (294) | | |
|-------------------|------|--------|
| BJP | TMC | Others |
| WINS/LEADS | | |
| 202/5 | 73/8 | ---/ |

15-year rule, and decisively shifting the State's ideological and political centre of gravity.

The verdict acquired added political drama and symbolic heft as Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was defeated in the prestigious Bhabanipur seat by



Seats tally/trends till 11.30 pm.

BJP's Suvendu Adhikari, capping a stunning turnaround after initial trends appeared to favour the TMC supremo.

What began as tentative early leads soon hardened into a decisive wave, with the BJP winning 202 seats and leading in five,

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ON PREDICTED LINES
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while the TMC trailed far behind, managing to win 73 and leading in eight seats, according to Election Commission data at 11.10 pm.

The scale, spread and speed of the BJP surge -breaching the halfway mark of 148 in the 294-member House well before counting reached its midpoint-
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**TMC offices
vandalised in WB,
BJP denies hand**

KOLKATA, May 4 (PTI)

FLEX boards, party banners and festoons at Trinamool Congress offices across West Bengal were allegedly defaced and damaged following the BJP's landslide victory in the Assembly polls, even as the party denied any role in the incidents, officials said on Monday.

The TMC claimed that hours after poll trends became clear, "miscreants" gathered outside its offices at Baruipur
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