

Netanyahu, Trump discuss Iran over phone

JERUSALEM, May 18 (IANS)

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Donald Trump discussed the possibility of renewing fighting against Iran over phone, Israel's state-owned Kan TV news reported.

The broadcaster, citing a senior Israeli official, said the United States is expected to carry out attacks jointly with Israel if it resumes the war against Iran, Xinhua news agency reported.

Later in the evening, Netanyahu convened a cabinet meeting, during which the multiple fronts on which Israel is fighting were discussed, a government official told Xinhua.

The developments came after Trump signaled that Washington could escalate its confrontation with Iran, warning in a post on his social media platform that "for Iran, the clock is ticking, and they better get moving, fast, or there won't be anything left of them."

Iran, the United States and Israel reached a ceasefire on April 8 after 40 days of fighting that started with US and Israeli attacks on Iran on February 28.

Following the truce, Iranian and US delegations held one round of peace talks in Pakistan's Islamabad on April 11 and 12, which failed to yield an agreement.

Over the past weeks, the two sides have reportedly exchanged several proposed plans outlining conditions for ending the conflict through Pakistani mediation. Meanwhile, Trump warned that if Tehran failed to reach a peace agreement with the US, it would face "a very bad time".

Government amends Citizenship Rules, 2009

- Applicants will have to give a declaration about the status of their passport from their native country

NEW DELHI, May 18 (PTI)

APPLICANTS from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh seeking Indian citizenship under the Citizenship Rules, 2009, will now have to give a declaration about the status of their passport from their native country, according to a notification issued by the Home Ministry on Monday.

The Ministry has amended the Citizenship Rules, 2009, introducing a paragraph under which the applicant should not be in possession of a valid and/or expired passport issued by the Governments of Pakistan, Afghanistan or Bangladesh.

In case the applicant is carrying an active passport, the person will have to submit the pass-

port number and other details such as date and place of issuance and date of expiry, the gazette notification said.

They will also have to give a declaration to surrender their valid and/or expired passport to the Senior Superintendent of Post or Superintendent of Post concerned within 15 days of approval of the citizenship application, it said.

The new addition will be inserted after Schedule IC of the rules which is for Afghan, Bangladeshi and Pakistani nationals belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities seeking Indian citizenship.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, paved the way for granting Indian nationality to undocumented non-Muslim migrants -- Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Christians -- from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan who came to India before December 31, 2014.

First look of India's Bullet Train unveiled

NEW DELHI, May 18 (ANI)

WITH the bullet train project making rapid progress, a photo of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) has been put up in the Railway Ministry. The picture has been posted near Gate Number 4 of the Ministry.

The (MAHSR) Project (508 km) is under execution with technical and financial assistance from the Government of Japan.

The Project will pass through the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Union Territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli with 12 stations planned at Mumbai, Thane, Virar, Boisar, Vapi, Billimora, Surat, Bharuch, Vadodara, Anand, Ahmedabad and Sabarmati. The



Work underway at Ahmedabad-Mumbai High-Speed Rail Bullet Train project near Bullet Train headquarters in Ahmedabad. (ANI)

Railway Ministry has expressed confidence of running the coun-

try's first bullet train between Surat and Bilimora this year.

Out of the total 12 stations, foundation works have been completed at 8 stations (Vapi, Bilimora, Surat, Bharuch, Anand, Vadodara, Ahmedabad, and Sabarmati). Seventeen river bridges have been completed. Work is in advance stage for 4 major river bridges (Narmada, Mahi, Tapti and Sabarmati) in Gujarat & in progress in 4 river bridges in Maharashtra. Work on Depots (Thane, Surat and Sabarmati) is in full swing.

Civil works at Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) are progressing satisfactorily. Excavation works have achieved about 91% progress, and concreting works are at various stages, with 100% completion of the basement slab at Level-4.

Pakistani forces kill 35 terrorists in Balochistan

KARACHI, May 18 (PTI)

PAKISTANI security forces killed 35 terrorists and captured three high-profile senior commanders during an ongoing intelligence-based operation in Balochistan's Mangla Zarghoon Ghar area. A spokesperson for the Balochistan government, Shahid Rind, told the media in Quetta on Sunday night that the operation, which began on May 13, saw the deaths of 35 terrorists over the past four days.

"The operation was against the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and their proxy groups in Balochistan," Rind said.

Rind mentioned that the three captured commanders are high-profile figures, and the operation was conducted based on intelligence gathered from previously captured militants in the province. "The security forces also destroyed several base

Section 144 imposed in Balochistan

QUETTA, May 18 (IANS)

SECTION 144 has been imposed in Pakistan's Balochistan province, which the authorities have said is a precautionary measure against potential terrorist threats, local media reported on Monday.

The notification issued by the Home Department stated that the restrictions which have come into immediate effect and will remain in force for 30 days, include a ban on the display of weapons, double riding on motorcycles and gatherings of five or more individuals, Pakistan's daily reported.

camps in the Mangla Zarghoon Ghar region," he added. He noted that additional operations are underway in the province, based on credible, actionable intelligence aimed at apprehending the facilitators, handlers, and financial supporters of these terrorist elements.

The Pakistan military is yet to release a statement regarding this latest anti-terror operation.

At a recent press conference, DIG Imran Shoukat said that the city was facing multiple security threats and that strict security measures were being enforced to ensure the safety of citizens.

Last Wednesday, five soldiers, including a major, were killed during a clean-up operation against terrorists in Balochistan's Barkhan district, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), which also stated that at least seven terrorists were killed during that operation.

Deeply concerned: India on drone strike near UAE's nuclear plant

NEW DELHI, May 18 (PTI)

INDIA on Monday voiced deep concern over a drone attack targeting the Barakah nuclear facility in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as it marked a dangerous escalation in the West Asia conflict.

New Delhi's reaction came a day after a drone struck a generator near the Gulf nation's sole nuclear power plant, sparking a fire on the complex's perimeter.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack. The UAE's Ministry of Defence said it is working to determine the source of the drone strike.

The incident triggered fears of a sharp escalation in tensions across West Asia. "India is deeply concerned at the attack targeting the Barakah nuclear facility in the UAE," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

"Such actions are unacceptable and represent a dangerous escalation. We urgently call for restraint and a return to dialogue and diplomacy," it said.

Rajnath embarks on 4-day trip to Vietnam and South Korea

NEW DELHI, May 18 (PTI)

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday embarked on a four-day visit to Vietnam and South Korea to explore ways to shore up strategic defence cooperation, including joint production of military hardware.



Before leaving for Vietnam's capital Hanoi, Singh said the focus of his trip to the two Asian nations will be to strengthen defence industrial partnerships, boost maritime collaboration and promote peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

After concluding his trip to Vietnam, the Defence Minister will travel to South Korea on Tuesday on a 3-day visit. Singh's visit to Vietnam comes days after the two countries elevated their ties to an enhanced comprehensive strategic partnership during Vietnamese President To Lam's trip to New Delhi.

In Hanoi, Singh will hold bilateral talks with National Defence Minister Gen Phan Van Giang.

PM Modi calls for resolution of W Asia, Ukraine conflicts

OSLO, May 18 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Monday called for a resolution of the West Asia crisis and the Ukraine conflict through dialogue and diplomacy, asserting that military action alone cannot achieve lasting peace.

Modi made the remarks after holding wide-ranging talks with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store that focused on boosting the overall trajectory of bilateral relations.

"India and Norway, both, believe in a rules-based order, dialogue, and diplomacy. We agree that no issue can be resolved through military conflict alone," Modi said in his televised statement to the media.

"Be it Ukraine or West Asia, we will continue to support every effort for the early end of the conflict and for peace," he said.

Modi met Store hours after he



Prime Minister Narendra Modi receives the Grand Cross of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit from King Harald V, in Oslo on Monday. Report on last page. (@MEAIndia X/ANI)

landed in Oslo from Sweden as part of his four-nation European tour.

In his remarks, the Prime Minister also underlined the need for reform of the global institutions.

"We also agree on this point that reforming global institutions is essential for addressing the growing global challenges."

"And eradicating terrorism in every form from its roots is our shared commitment," he noted.

Modi also complimented Norway for its support to India following last year's Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people, mostly tourists.

"I was supposed to visit Norway last year, but had to postpone that trip due to the

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India-Sweden unveil tech, trade roadmap



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, from left, Sweden's Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson and Crown Princess Victoria at World of Volvo in Gothenburg, Sweden. (AP/PTI)

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GOTHENBURG, May 18 (PTI)

DRIVEN by a push to deepen strategic and technology ties, India and Sweden have unveiled an ambitious roadmap spanning artificial intelligence, critical minerals, innovation, trade and cultural exchanges during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the country.

During bilateral talks in Gothenburg on Sunday, Modi

and Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson reviewed bilateral ties and discussed ways to strengthen cooperation in strategic, economic and emerging technology sectors. Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden also participated in the meeting.

The two leaders also agreed to work towards doubling bilateral trade and investment in the next five years.

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