

Drones attack Iran's neighbours as Tehran appears to test US pause

Trump Says Ready For Strong Military Action If Diplomacy Fails: Report

Dubai: President Trump said on Monday that the US was having "good talks" with Iran and there was a chance of a deal over their conflict, but warned US strikes would resume if the negotiations failed to deliver. Washington abruptly suspended a two-week campaign of airstrikes against Iran on Saturday in the president's latest strategic U-turn in the five-month-old conflict.

"We're talking right now," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One. "We're having good talks... I think there's a good chance that something could happen, and if it does, good, if it doesn't, we go back to doing what we were doing two days ago."

Iran, however, has said it is not seeking to resume peace talks with the US, although it would pause its own attacks for as long as Trump's self-imposed ceasefire continues.

Tehran also appeared to quickly test the pause in the US military campaign, with Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Iraq reporting drone attacks on Monday. Saudi Arabia said it shot down drones aimed at petroleum targets, including in the capital Riyadh. It said the drones had been launched from Iraq by Iran-backed armed groups, and it reserved the right to respond.

Separately, Iran's Houthi allies in Yemen said they had targeted the 1,200-km East-West Pipeline carrying oil to Saudi Arabia's main Red Sea port of Yanbu, in retaliation for what they said were Saudi drone incursions into Yemeni airspace.



NEW FRONT: The wreckage of a downed Saudi drone in the northwest of Yemen's al-Jawf governorate on Sunday. Saudi Arabia said on Monday it had shot down drones fired by Iran-backed militias in Iraq that had targeted its petroleum facilities. Houthi rebels in Yemen meanwhile claimed to have attacked Saudi oil facilities as part of a separate but related conflict. It was unclear if they referred to the same attack

Iran top agenda in meeting with Trump, says Bibi

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu departed for Washington Monday, where he said he would meet US President Trump for their first face-to-face talks since the start of their conflict with Iran. It will be Netanyahu's eighth meeting with Trump since the US president returned to office. "In these complex times, you need to act with both great determination and great wisdom. We will discuss all the issues on the agenda, primarily Iran. Our goal is to protect our security and also to expand the circle of peace around us," Netanyahu said. **REUTERS**

US not involved in talks with Oman on Hormuz: Tehran

Iran's foreign ministry Monday said the US was not involved in recent talks with Oman over the administration of the strategic Strait of Hormuz. "These talks have no connection with the US. They are a bilateral matter between Iran and Oman, and they are continuing," ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said at a weekly press briefing. Deputy foreign ministers from the two countries held talks on Friday and Saturday on "common principles and operational mechanisms" to ensure the safe passage of shipping through the strait. **AFP**

Earlier, Jordan reported shooting down two drones, and Iraqi security sources reported a series of drone attacks in northern Iraq. Officials did not identify the sources of those drones. Jordan and northern Iraq were the locations where four US service members were killed during the two-week air campaign, which Trump suspended abruptly over the weekend after his top brass advised him that the strategy had run its course.

The US ambassador to the UN, Mike Waltz, said on Sunday Trump had paused the campaign to allow room for negotiations. Trump, secretary of state Marco Rubio and other US officials have described Iran as "begging for a deal".

But the spokesperson for Iran's foreign ministry, Esmail Baghaei, said in a televised press conference on Monday that Iran had not asked to resume peace talks with the US.

Messages were still being passed between the sides through mediators and Iran had not forsaken diplomacy, but "reports about Iran requesting negotiations with the US are fabricated," Baghaei said. "This is not in our DNA."

Iran also said it was still in control of Strait of Hormuz. Several Iranian state media outlets cited an "informed source" as saying that Iran had turned around six "offending ships" Monday that had attempted to cross the Strait of Hormuz without its permission. One of the vessels, the source said, had had "an accident". **REUTERS**

Skyroot Aerospace founders discuss Vikram-1 mission, vision on future of space with PM Modi

NEW DELHI, July 27 (PTI)

FOUNDERS of Skyroot Aerospace, the company which successfully launched India's first privately developed orbital-class rocket Vikram-1, met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday.

After the meeting, Prime Minister Modi said their energy, ambition and positivity reflect the vibrant spirit of the country's private space ecosystem. "A great interaction with Pawan Chandana and Naga Bharath Daka of Skyroot Aerospace," Modi said on X.

He said the success of Vikram-1 naturally featured prominently in the discussion, in addition to many other interesting subjects.

"Happy to hear about their journey so far and their insights on what lies ahead. Their energy, ambition and positivity reflect the vibrant spirit of our private space ecosystem. Best wishes to the entire Skyroot team," he said.

Skyroot Aerospace said its founders Pawan Chandana and Naga Bharath Daka had the privilege of sharing the company's journey, the successful Vikram-1 mission, and the vision for the future of space.

The company said the Prime Minister discussed the technology, long-term vision, and the opportunities ahead for India's private space ecosystem.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi receives a memento from Skyroot Aerospace co-founder Pawan Chandana (L), and co-founder Naga Bharath Daka during a meeting, in New Delhi. (PTI)

Assam flood situation improves

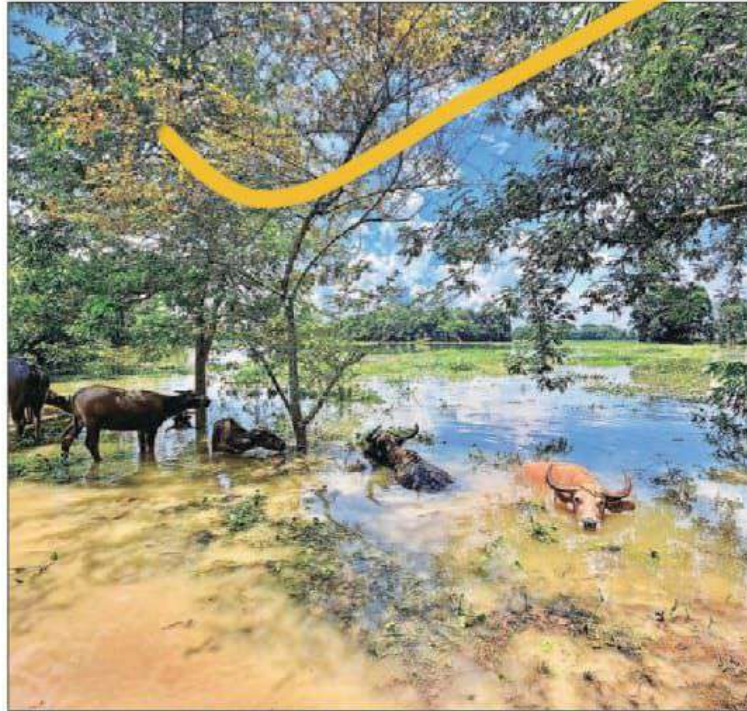
- Death toll rises to 68 with two more fatalities
- Over 4.45 lakh people remained affected across six districts

GUWAHATI, July 27 (PTI)

THE flood situation in Assam improved marginally on Monday, with no fresh fatalities reported in the last 24 hours, though 4.45 lakh people remain affected across six districts, an official bulletin said on Monday.

The death toll in this year's floods in Assam climbed to 68 with two more fatalities. Over 5.24 lakh people remained affected across five districts despite an overall improvement in the situation till Sunday.

The two deaths were reported on Sunday from Charaideo district, which also remained the worst-affected with nearly 1.9 lakh people reeling under water, they said. Among the other affected districts were Golaghat, Jorhat, Nagaon and Sivasagar, officials said. Altogether 354 relief camps and aid distribution centres were operating in four districts, taking care of 37,724 displaced people, they said.



Buffaloes wade through floodwaters in an inundated area of Sivasagar district of Assam on Monday.

(PTI)

Multiple agencies, including the Army, NDRE, SDRF, Fire & Emergency Service and the police, were engaged in the rescue and relief operations, they added.

Embankments, roads, bridges and other infrastructure suffered

damage in various districts of the State. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that power restoration work was on in a phased manner.

"As Assam steadily recovers from the floods, power restoration efforts continue across affected districts," Sarma said in

a social media post on Sunday.

He said following the precautionary suspension of electricity supply during the floods, Power Department teams have been carrying out comprehensive safety inspections while restoring power in a phased manner across Sivasagar, Jorhat, Charaideo, Dhubri, Bongaigaon and other affected areas.

DEEP DEPRESSION OVER

BAY OF BENGAL: The deep depression over the Bay of Bengal is likely to bring heavy rainfall to south Bengal districts till July 28, the IMD said in its forecast on Monday. The IMD advised fishermen not to venture into the sea along and off the West Bengal coast and north-west Bay of Bengal till July 29 as sea conditions are likely to be rough to very rough due to squally winds reaching speeds of 55 to 65 kmph, gusting to 75 kmph at times.

RAJASTHAN SEE LIGHT TO MODERATE RAINFALL:

Parts of Rajasthan received light to moderate rainfall over the past 24 hours, with heavy showers recorded at isolated places in Jalore and Sirohi districts, the Meteorological Centre said on Monday. The department forecast an increase in rainfall across the State later this week.

Record-breaking duel with Nigerian at CWG

GYANESHWARI WINS SILVER



GLASGOW, July 27 (PTI)

WEIGHTLIFTER Gyaneshwari Yadav continued India's medal rush, clinching a silver as records were broken left, right and centre in a riveting women's 53kg competition at the Commonwealth Games.

The 23-year-old from Bhondiya village in Chhattisgarh totalled 199kg (88kg snatch + 111kg clean and jerk) but Nigeria's Onome Omolola Didih stole the show with a stunning 206kg (93kg + 113kg), rewriting both the Commonwealth and Commonwealth Games records to take the gold.

The numbers only told half the story.

What unfolded on the weightlifting platform was an absorbing duel between two young lifters refusing to blink. Almost every successful attempt forced officials to scramble for a new Games record as Gyaneshwari and Didih traded blows in a contest that kept the packed arena on its feet.

Gyaneshwari was elegance personified in the snatch. All three of her lifts were clean, composed and almost effortless, the bar travelling overhead in one smooth motion as she stayed firmly in touch with the Nigerian. The clean and jerk, however, turned into a spectacular game of one-upmanship.

(Contd on page 5)

South Korea's Oppn party at risk of losing 40 bn won

- Seoul court convicted South Korea's former President Yoon Suk Yeol of election law violations
- People Power Party at risk of returning nearly 40 billion won (USD 27.3 million) that was reimbursed in campaign expenses for the 2022 presidential election

SEOUL, July 27 (IANS)

A SEOUL court on Monday convicted South Korea's former President Yoon Suk Yeol of election law violations, putting the main Opposition party at risk of returning nearly 40 billion won (USD 27.3 million) that was reimbursed in campaign expenses for the 2022 presidential election.

The Seoul Central District Court sentenced Yoon to 18 months in prison, suspended for three years, after finding him guilty of making false statements as the People Power Party (PPP)'s presidential candidate ahead of the election in March 2022.

If the verdict is finalised through appeals, the PPP will be forced to return the 39.7 billion won it was reimbursed in campaign expenses by the election watchdog after Yoon's victory in the 2022 election, Yonhap News Agency reported.

Under the election law, political parties are reimbursed for campaign expenses if their presidential candidate receives at least 15 per cent of the vote. They must, however, return the funds if the candidates receive a finalised fine of at least 1 million won or a prison term for election law violations.

Yoon's lawyers said they would appeal, claiming multiple errors in the ruling.

Special counsel Min Joong-ki's



Yoon Suk Yeol

team earlier indicted Yoon on suspicion of falsely claiming during a December 2021 press event that he had never introduced a lawyer to a former tax official.

Yoon was also charged for lying in a January 2022 interview when he said a party official had introduced him to shaman Jeon Seong-bae and denied meeting Jeon together with his wife, Kim Keon Hee. The court found Yoon guilty on both charges, accepting the special counsel's argument that Yoon had in fact introduced the lawyer to the former tax official and had met Jeon through his wife's introduction.

"The nature of the offence is very grave as false information was publicised on a matter that drew great voter interest," the court said.

Min's team had requested a two-year prison term for Yoon.

If the case reaches the top court, a finalised ruling is expected to be made in January next year. Under a special counsel law, cases covered by Min's team must conclude within six months during the first-instance trial, and within three months each at an appellate court and the Supreme Court.

It marked the latest conviction for the jailed former president, who has been standing multiple trials following his failed martial law bid in December 2024.

He was sentenced to life imprisonment in February for leading an insurrection through his failed bid in the case's first-instance trial.

Balochistan armed group launches attacks on Pak forces, torches mineral transport vehicles

QUETTA, July 27 (IANS)

THE Baloch armed fighters launched a series of attacks targeting Pakistani forces and installations across multiple districts of Balochistan, leaving several personnel dead, local media reported citing sources.

The fighters also seized and torched multiple vehicles transporting minerals, after opening fire on a convoy in the Nokchah area of Chagai district.

The incident came against the backdrop of an "economic blockade" declared by the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA). Since the announcement, the group has

established control over major highways across Balochistan, with reports indicating that over 200 vehicles have been set ablaze, 'The Balochistan Post' reported.

In a separate incident, a large Pakistani military convoy heading to Noshki city was attacked on the N-40 highway near the Killi Batto area. The convoy included bulletproof vehicles and was accompanied by police personnel. Reports suggest Pakistani security personnel were killed in the attack, although the number could not immediately be confirmed. A police vehicle assigned to the deputy commissioner was struck, but the official reported-

ly escaped without injury.

The latest attack came days after another military convoy near Noshki city was attacked, which resulted in the death of three personnel and injuries to three others.

Additionally, the armed fighters blocked the highway near the Zinda Pir area in Harnai district, searching passing vehicles before remaining in the area for several hours. They subsequently blew up the nearby Delkona Levies station and a telecommunications tower in Pan Ghar using explosives. Anti-Terrorist Force (ATF) personnel were attacked in the Hasri area of Kohlu dis-

trict, with preliminary reports suggesting casualties and material destruction.

Meanwhile, a remote area in Balochistan province has become ground zero for an operation by the country's security forces against outlawed insurgent outfits and the banned TTP, with three more terrorists being killed on Monday. According to figures released by the Inter-Services Public Relations and confirmed by security sources and announcements by the state-run media, cumulatively around 140 terrorists have been killed in different operations so far since July 6 in the Mastung district.

Raja Muthupandi wins weightlifting silver

GLASGOW, July 27 (ANI)

INDIA'S Raja Muthupandi capped a memorable comeback by clinching the silver medal in the men's 65kg weightlifting event at the 2026 Commonwealth Games continuing a strong showing by the Indian weightlifting contingent.

The 26-year-old finished with a combined total of 286kg, lifting 126kg in the snatch and 160kg in the clean and jerk to secure second place on the podium.

Malaysia's Aznil Bin Bidin Muhamed claimed the gold medal with a Commonwealth Games record total of 299kg, sealing his third successive



India's Raja Muthupandi secured a silver medal during the men's 65kg weightlifting final at the 23rd Commonwealth Games, in Glasgow, on Sunday. (PTI)

Commonwealth Games title after victories at Gold Coast 2018 and Birmingham 2022. Raja opened his campaign strongly

by recording a best lift of 126kg in the snatch on his second attempt. He followed it up with a successful 160kg lift in the clean and jerk, also on his second attempt, to finish with an overall total of 286kg and earn India's latest medal in Glasgow.

The silver capped an impressive comeback for Raja, whose career was nearly derailed by a serious elbow ligament injury in 2019. The rehabilitation process was further disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, while a shift to a higher weight category coincided with Jeremy Lalrinnunga's rise, forcing Raja out of contention for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.