

Pakistan, Turkiye, Qatar, Indonesia sign def pact, experts say 'no worry for India'

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Turkiye, Qatar, Pakistan and Indonesia Wednesday signed 'Badr Memorandum of Understanding' in Doha to boost defence cooperation and strengthen defensive capabilities. The accord seeks to foster cooperation in military production, boost military capabilities and help collaboration in technical military training, research and development.

But will this MoU put India's recent defence agreements with Indonesia on advanced weaponry in jeopardy? New Delhi had in July inked two major agreements worth \$630 million with Jakarta for selling BrahMos

cruise missiles and Astra air-to-air missiles.

Talking to **TOI**, Sudhir Kumar Mishra, DRDO chair (emeritus) and former DG, CEO & MD of BrahMos Aerospace, said, "Defence agreements with Indonesia have been done with enough safeguards and that only user manual, not technology of transfer manual, will be shared with Jakarta." "Secondly, there are strict data protection, intellectual property, and defence sovereignty clauses embedded within the agreements that Indonesia has to honour. There is no question of technologies of BrahMos and Astra getting into the hands of our rivals," he said.

Another defence expert, Group Capt Ajay Ahlawat

(Retd), who is Senior Fellow at Centre for Aerospace Power and Strategic Studies, rubbished any speculation of pacts with Jakarta getting derailed.

"An MoU is not equal to a military alliance. It would be unwise to let go of a confirmed defence export contract for an MoU which may not amount to anything. The wordings suggest that Badr MoU is just a work-share agreement. The MoU is a working arrangement among countries with common Islamic identity, seeking to synergise their defence R&D. India should monitor it but not worry about it. Selling weapons doesn't automatically involve sharing technology that would enable the buyer to do things themselves," he told **TOI**.

Putin agrees to resume 3-way talks with Ukraine, US: Kremlin

'Will Focus On Building A Security System For Both Countries After War Ends'

Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed Wednesday to resume three-way negotiations next month with Washington and Kyiv aimed at ending the war in Ukraine, a Kremlin official said. The Russian leader has agreed "in principle" to resume the talks after Nov 10, Putin's foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov told reporters following a meeting in St. Petersburg between Putin and US President Donald Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff.

The talks will focus on "building a security system for Russia and Ukraine after the conflict ends," Ushakov said. Witkoff's talks with Putin took place as Trump pushed Kyiv to make a deal that stops the fighting.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has insisted that only a summit of leaders can break the impasse.

Representatives of the three countries held three rounds of negotiations early this year, meeting twice in Abu Dhabi in Jan and Feb, followed by further talks in Geneva in Feb. However, little progress was reported beyond exchanges of prisoners of war as Moscow and Kyiv stuck to their basic demands.

The discussion in St. Petersburg lasted about three hours, the Kremlin said, and came a day after Witkoff met with Zelensky and some European leaders in Norway's capital, Oslo. The proposals



Russian President Vladimir Putin with US President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff during their meeting in Russia Wednesday

Order to slow down Ukraine's Starlink came from Musk, claims WSJ report

A recent slowdown of the SpaceX's Starlink satellite system that enables Ukraine to fend off deadly Russian aerial assaults came from an order by Elon Musk, the company's CEO, the Wall Street Journal reported Tuesday. Musk restricted the speed of Ukraine's access to the satellite system, which hampered the ability of the country's drones to carry out defensive and offensive missions, the newspaper reported, citing unnamed American officials and others. Musk discussed the Starlink decision with President Trump after the shortfall became publicly known, according to the Journal. **BLOOMBERG**

from the Oslo meeting "contained little of real value in the context of resolving the Ukrainian crisis," Ushakov said.

However, he later told Russian state TV that while Moscow isn't "fully satisfied" with the Oslo proposals, they are a step in the right direction. Witkoff's meetings suggested leaders are keen to bring new momentum to US-led peace efforts.

Zelensky said freezing the conflict in Ukraine was the "minimum" required from Russia to bring about an end to the war. "Right now, we have to freeze, and I think this is (the) real way to end this war," Zelensky said in an interview broadcast Wednesday.

Witkoff and Putin met at St. Petersburg's Constantine Palace, with Ushakov and Russian presidential envoy

Kirill Dmitriev also at the table. Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, joined the discussion via a video link, Ushakov said.

Putin said he was ready to consider prospects for the restoration of US-Russia economic ties, adding that he was also prepared to discuss the US-led conflict with Iran.

Ushakov said that "large-scale joint economic projects that offer significant prospects for cooperation" between Russia and US were discussed in detail with Witkoff. "Some of these are, in fact, nearing the implementation stage," he said.

In other developments, Russia Wednesday released a retired American teacher who had been imprisoned on charges of fighting as a mercenary in Ukraine. Witkoff said it appeared to be a goodwill gesture by the Kremlin after Trump asked Putin to free Stephen Hubbard.

Putin and Witkoff also discussed a possible meeting next month between the Russian, Chinese and US leaders in China, Ushakov said, adding that Beijing is already preparing for it.

Witkoff planned to return to Oslo for more consultations after his trip to Russia, Norwegian PM Jonas Gahr Store said. "I think we may have entered a phase now where the Russians are also looking for opportunities for diplomacy," Store said Wednesday. **AP**

Maldives and Pak sign 20 MoUs including defence, maritime cooperation

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I believe that through this organisation, we can work together to find solutions to the challenges facing the countries of this region," said Muizzu in Islamabad during what was the first visit by a Maldivian president to Pakistan in over a decade.

"The Maldives stands ready to consult with member countries on resuming Saarc's work. Through sustained dialogue, trust and understanding, we can strengthen cooperation within Saarc," he said.

The visit also saw the two sides signing 20 MoUs, including in areas like defence and maritime cooperation that will be of concern to India.

This is not the first time though that Muizzu has called for revival of Saarc. In his inde-

pendence day speech this year, Muizzu had also offered to act as a mediator between India and Pakistan to advance talks for an early leaders' summit.

The last Saarc summit was held in 2014 in Nepal. Member-states like the Maldives, Bangladesh and Nepal have from time-to-time sought revival of the summit.

In its response, India has always blamed Pakistan for blocking the initiative for a connected and integrated South Asia.

"India favours strong regional cooperation and has been working towards it for several decades. Everyone in South Asia is aware of which country and what activities are responsible for stymieing Saarc," said MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, responding to media queries on Muizzu's remarks in July.



Defence ministry inks ₹770-cr deal for lightweight radars for Army

New Delhi: To beef up the Indian Army's surveillance capabilities against unmanned aerial systems, the defence ministry Wednesday signed a contract with the state-owned Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) to procure improved low-level lightweight radars (LLLR-I) at a cost of around Rs 770 crore. The deal was signed in the presence of defence secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh in New Delhi, reports **Surendra Singh**.

The LLLR(I) system has the capability of detecting and tracking fighter-sized targets and mini or micro drones and has additional capability of prioritising aerial targets.

The LLLR(I) radar is a pulse-Doppler, software-defined radar platform that incorporates an active electronically scanned array antenna and gallium nitride amplifiers with advanced 3D processing capabilities, providing unprecedented clutter handling and multipath mitigation, according to BEL. It is an agile, lightweight radar that is operable in plains, desert and even high-altitude terrain, and it is man-portable and transportable via service vehicles.

India sees dip in global greenhouse gas emissions in 2025: Report

New Delhi: The rise in global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions may continue to pose a serious threat of global warming but India reported a decrease in its emission level in 2025 over the previous year because of the country's "structural shifts towards renewables" and also in part due to weather effects, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has observed in its annual 'Emission Gap Report'.

Highlighting the break in emission trends in India after a long period of rapid growth, the report, released Wednesday, shows the country is currently the third-largest emitter in terms of total GHG emissions but its per capita emission is not only less than half of the global average but also substantially lower than the top two emitters, China and the US, where total emissions increased last year.

The EU (27 nations collectively) and Russia too reported decreases in their levels of emissions in 2025, when total global emissions were similar to the 2024 levels.

Though efforts are being made in most of countries to reduce their carbon footprints, the report underlines that temperature projections are still "far too higher" and the chance to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius with no overshoot is gone.

It notes that if current policies continue, warming could reach 2.8 degrees Celsius within this century over the pre-industrial levels (1850-1900) and increase thereafter.

— Vishwa Mohan

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Social unrest setting Europe streets ablaze

France, Italy, Albania, Spain, Portugal, Greece witness violence, arrests, looting, injuries

MADRID, Oct 21 (AP)

RISING fuel costs, discontent with the state of schools, declining public services and a housing crisis have created perfectly stormy weather for an autumn of protests in Europe.



People watch a burned-out car after protests over cost of living turned into rioting and looting across France, in Paris on Tuesday. (AP/PTI)

Crowds have taken to the streets for weeks in major cities, resulting in arrests, looting, injuries, and violence across France, Italy and Albania. In Spain and Portugal, tent camps have sprung up in protests against unattainable rents and housing costs. In Greek capital of Athens, thousands of students and teachers marched through the streets calling for affordable student housing and more state investment in education, as protests that have swept Europe spread further.

Young people "feel disappointed with the (social) model and experience a strong sense of uncertainty and a lack of control," said Maria Silvestre, professor of sociology at the University of Deusto in Spain.

"And when specific situations come together, a spark suddenly ignites that is capable of channelling that discontent and driving people into the streets."

Cities have turned into battlefields as several top EU economies, includ-

ing France, Italy and Spain, approach pivotal elections, while far-right parties have made electoral gains in Germany and could do so elsewhere. It also comes as Europe faces a critical moment in its support for Ukraine, with President Donald Trump making

overtures to President Vladimir Putin even as Russia is blamed for increasingly frequent hybrid attacks in NATO countries.

Right-wing politicians have seized on the chaos. While protests in France have appeared broad-based, Trump portrayed immigrants as responsible for the destruction, writing on his Truth Social platform: "The migrants have taken over France. They must CLOSE THE BORDERS, FAST!" on Monday.

Many of the protests have been fuelled by frustrated young people. Other elements including black-clad, masked agitators have fomented violence, but French authorities and police have not blamed immigrants.

In France, which has a centuries-old tradition of popular protest, high schoolers have staged blockades and demonstrations for more than three weeks, demanding more resources for schools they call understaffed and dilapidated, especially in lower-income neighbourhoods.

The protests then broadened as France's CGT labour union and other activists joined in while students paused for a fall break. The movement now includes demands over rising living costs and public services.

French President Emmanuel Macron condemned violence, accusing far-left activists of trying to foment chaos by attacking buildings and police.

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'Putin agrees for trilateral talks with Kyiv and US'

MOSCOW, Oct 21 (AP)

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin agreed Wednesday to resume trilateral negotiations with Washington and Kyiv on ending the war in Ukraine, a Kremlin official said.

The Russian leader has agreed "in principle" to resume the talks after November 10, Putin's foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov told reporters following a meeting in St. Petersburg between Putin and US President Donald Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff.

The trilateral talks will focus on "building a security system for Russia and Ukraine after the conflict ends," Ushakov said.

Witkoff's talks with Putin about Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine came as Trump pushes Kyiv to make a deal that stops the fighting.

As the talks began, Putin thanked Trump and Witkoff for their efforts to end the war. The discussion lasted

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