



Russia's President Vladimir Putin (L) shakes hands with the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Tô Lâm in Moscow



CHEGA far-right party's lawmaker, Joao Paulo Graca smiles during a party's electoral campaign action at Quarteira market in Algarve



Prefect Philippe Le Moing-Surzur and Prefect Baptiste Rolland attend a ceremony at the Luxembourg garden in Paris



Cyprus' President Nikos Christodoulides walks with European Parliament Prez Roberta Metsola ahead of their meeting at the Palace in Nicosia

Ukraine, allies push for 30-day ceasefire starting Monday

AP, KYIV: Ukraine and its allies are ready for a "full, unconditional ceasefire" with Russia for at least 30 days starting Monday, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiba said Saturday.

His remarks came as the leaders of four major European countries visited Kyiv to push for Moscow to agree to a truce and launch peace talks on ending the nearly three-year war.

They followed what Sybiba said was a "constructive" phone call between them, US President Donald Trump and his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Saturday also marked the last day of a unilateral three-day ceasefire declared by Russia that Ukraine says the Kremlin's forces have repeatedly violated.

In March, the United States proposed an immediate, limited 30-day truce, which Ukraine accepted, but the Kremlin has held out for terms more to its liking.

The leaders of France, Germany, Poland and the United Kingdom arrived together at the train station in Kyiv, and met Zelenskyy shortly after to join a ceremony at Kyiv's Independence Square marking the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II. They lit candles at a makeshift flag memorial for fallen Ukrainian soldiers and civilians slain since Russia's invasion.

The visit marked the first time the leaders of the four countries had travelled together to Ukraine, with Friedrich Merz making his first visit to Ukraine as Germany's new chancellor.

Sybiba on Thursday called the Russian truce a "farce," accusing Russian forces of violating it over 700 times less than a day after it formally came into effect. Both sides also said attacks on their troops had continued on Thursday.

"We reiterate our backing for President Trump's calls for a peace deal and call on Russia to stop obstructing efforts to secure an enduring peace," the leaders said in a joint statement.

"Alongside the US, we call on Russia to agree to a full and unconditional 30-day ceasefire to create the space for talks on a just and lasting peace."

Trump has pressed both sides to quickly come to an agreement to end the war, but while Zelenskyy agreed to the American plan for an initial 30-day halt to hostilities, Russia has not signed on.

Speaking on the enhanced role of air defence in this backdrop, the expert informed that previously considered a secondary element, AAD has now assumed a central role in battlefield dominance.

"Achieving and maintaining air superiority is contingent upon the effective interception of enemy aerial threats, including UAVs and cruise missiles. Timely neutralisation of these threats not only protects strategic assets but also denies the adversary freedom of action in the air domain," Col Chavan said.

According to Brig John, drones are a better deal when it comes to fighting a low intensity but high impact battle. "Each ADS missile like the S-400 fired at \$1,000 drones, costs millions. A swarm of thousand drones could deplete ammunition, exhaust radar operators and expose vulnerabilities. This is classic asymmetric warfare - bankrupting the defender's resources while studying their response," he added.

Lt Col (ret'd) M K Gupta Ray said that India's ADS has proven resilient, eliminating hundreds of drones with kinetic and non-kinetic means. But this is a wake-up call.

"Countermeasures must evolve, scaling up laser-based defences like DRDO's anti-drone systems to target them cost-effectively. Use AI-driven threat detection to prioritise high-value targets," he said.

US, Swiss agree to speed up tariff talks

AFP, GENEVA: Switzerland and the United States agreed Friday to speed up negotiations towards a deal on averting further tariffs planned by Washington, the Swiss president said after talks with top US officials.

As part of US President Donald Trump's global tariffs offensive unleashed on April 2, his administration

has threatened to impose a 31 percent levy on Swiss exports to the United States. Such a move would be catastrophic for major sectors of Switzerland's economy including manufacturing and watchmaking.

For now, Washington is imposing 10 percent tariffs on goods coming from Switzerland and much of the rest of the world.

FROM PAGE 1

CEASEFIRE, INTERRUPTED

The India-Pakistan decision came following diplomatic overdrive by the Group of Seven (G7) and several countries including the US and Saudi Arabia, urging both sides to de-escalate the conflict.

The sources cited above said India's punitive measures announced against Pakistan including putting the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance following the Pahalgam attack will remain in place.

India announced the measures on April 23, a day after the terror attack.

Terrorism will not go unpunished and India's resolve on terrorism remains firm, the sources added.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said there was no decision to hold talks on any other issue at any other place.

This statement came after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said, "The governments of India and Pakistan have agreed to an immediate ceasefire and to start talks on a broad set of issues at a neutral site."

"Over the past 48 hours, Vice President Vance and I have engaged with senior Indian and Pakistani officials, including Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Shehbaz Sharif, External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir, and National Security Advisors Ajit Doval and Asim Malik," he said.

In his reaction, Jaishankar said India and Pakistan have worked out an understanding on stoppage of firing and military action. "India has consistently maintained a firm and uncompromising stance against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It will continue to do so."

Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar while confirming the ceasefire said Islamabad has always strived for peace and security in the region, without compromising on its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Earlier in the day, India said it had hit eight military installations in Pakistan in response to the neighbouring country's "provocative" action of targeting its defence infrastructure and civilian areas using drones, long-range weapons and fighter jets. The Pakistani installations hit included a weapons depot and control centres, India's military said.

Pakistan is also moving its troops into forward areas, indicating an "offensive intent", to further escalate the situation, an Indian military spokesman said. India, stressed Colonel Sofiya Qureshi, remains in a high state of operational readiness.

As fears of a larger military conflict loomed, Qureshi said Indian armed forces reiterate their commitment to non-escalation, provided it is reciprocated by the Pakistani military. She was addressing a special press briefing along with Wing Commander Vyomika Singh and Foreign Secretary Misri.

Misri said India has responded to the Pakistani military's "provocative" and "escalatory" actions in a measured manner and that Islamabad has resorted to a wanton campaign of targeting innocent people and civilian infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab.

Five persons, including a senior J-K government official and a two-year-old girl, were killed as intense mortar shelling and drone strikes by Pakistan hit Jammu region early Saturday, officials said. With this, the death toll due to shelling in the recent days rose to 24.

Raj Kumar Thapa, Additional District Development Commissioner, Rajouri, and his two staff members were seriously injured when an artillery shell hit his official residence in Rajouri town, the officials said.

They were rushed to the Government Medical College where Thapa succumbed to his injuries, they said.

TOURISM TAKES A HUGE BLOW AS HOLIDAYERS DESERT GOA

Event cancellations have also become commonplace. "Almost all events in Goa have been cancelled due to the shutdown in North Indian airports. Please note, these are events that were booked by tourists/corporates and not government or Goa-run events," clarified an event management professional.

Stakeholders acknowledged that the restaurant sector has been affected too.

"The overall business has been slow this month; those who are coming (locals) are there, but there has been a drop in tourists, and on the weekends, it has also been tough," said a restaurant owner in South Goa. Restaurant owners across the State feel that the traditional weekend rush has not yet diminished so far, but they would have to observe how it goes during this weekend and upcoming weekends.

Observing another trend, a restaurant owner in Panjim said, "There has been a dip amongst locals moving out too, as the whole war psyche has discouraged them from going out at a time like this."

This sentiment appears to extend beyond dining, as several locals have reportedly cancelled their planned holidays or trips outside Goa during this period of heightened alert being implemented by the State and Central authorities.

While the immediate impact of the India-Pakistan situation dominates the current conversation, industry stakeholders also point to longer-term challenges that have been affecting Goa's tourism sector well before the recent escalation. These underlying issues, ranging from infrastructure problems to service quality concerns, have compounded the effects of the current geopolitical tensions.

Industry insiders draw parallels to previous periods of national uncertainty. "We're witnessing an unprecedented wave of postponements and cancellations—especially from corporate groups—citing economic caution, India-Pakistan tensions, and internal cost-cutting measures," an industry expert explained, adding: "The sentiment today eerily mirrors the slowdown post-26/11, where uncertainty led to immediate and widespread travel freezes."

The cautious atmosphere has affected travel plans in both directions. While fewer tourists are coming to Goa, many Goans have also modified their travel behaviour by cancelling planned trips outside the State.

"People are just being more cautious right now," explained a local travel agent, adding: "They're prioritising safety and staying close to home until the situation stabilises, as we have seen how some Goans have been stranded in airports in North India and are finding it difficult to return."

"There's been an overall impact on tourism across India. Unfortunately, being a hugely tourism-dependent economy, we Goans will feel a greater impact," noted an industry observer.

Resort Rio, a five-star property in Arpora, has issued an appeal to industry stakeholders, including the Travel and Tourism Association of Goa (TTAG), Hotel and Restaurant Association (Western India) (HRAWI), Goa Tourism, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Government of Goa, emphasising the resilience of Goa's tourism industry, while acknowledging current challenges.

"As regional tensions between India and Pakistan cast a shadow on international travel sentiment, we're already seeing early signs of impact on Goa's tourism sector," the appeal reads.

Beyond the immediate impact of the current situation, stakeholders have been discussing broader challenges facing Goa's tourism sector this season. Poor infrastructure, competitive pricing from international destinations, and concerns about service consistency have been ongoing issues predating the recent developments.

"Even before the current situation, this has been a lukewarm season overall," admitted a veteran hospitality professional, adding: "We need to look at longer-term strategies to enhance Goa's appeal, which have nothing to do with the current geopolitical tensions but are essential for our industry's sustainability."

These strategies, according to industry experts, include diversifying tourism offerings beyond beaches, improving infrastructure, and recalibrating pricing strategies to remain competitive with neighbouring countries—challenges that have been on the industry's agenda throughout the season.

The TTAG President also commented on these long-term issues affecting Goa's tourism sector. "Spot on. The long-term issues which need to be addressed are technology in transport, cleanliness and reduction of single-use plastic, touting and lawlessness, and over-tourism," Sukhija said.

Stakeholders also noted that sales teams from hotels across the State continue their efforts to salvage bookings. Nonetheless, the industry observers unanimously agree that the current situation calls for patience as national security concerns rightfully take precedence. The tourism industry remains prepared to rebound when circumstances improve, continuing its vital role in the State's economy.

MONSOON LIKELY TO REACH KERALA ON MAY 27: IMD

The IMD had, in April, forecast above-normal cumulative rainfall in the 2025 monsoon season, ruling out the possibility of El Niño conditions, which are associated with below-normal rainfall in the Indian subcontinent.

"India is likely to see above-normal rainfall in the four-month monsoon season (June to September), with cumulative rainfall estimated at 105 per cent (with a model error of 5 per cent) of the long-period average of 87 cm," M Ravichandran, secretary in the Ministry of Earth Sciences, had said.

According to the IMD, rainfall between 96 per cent and 104 per cent of the 50-year average of 87 cm is considered 'normal'.

Rainfall less than 90 per cent of the long-period average is considered 'deficient'; between 90 per cent and 95 per cent is 'below normal'; between 105 per cent and 110 per cent is 'above normal'; and more than 110 per cent is considered 'excess' precipitation.

The monsoon is crucial for India's agriculture sector, which supports the livelihood of about 42.3 per cent of the population and contributes 18.2 per cent to the country's GDP. It is also vital for replenishing reservoirs critical for drinking water and power generation across the country.

POPE LEO XIV IDENTIFIES AI AS MAIN CHALLENGE FOR HUMANITY

In another hint to his priorities, the Vatican revealed that Leo, a member of the Augustinian religious order, would retain the motto and coat of arms that he had as bishop of Chichila, Peru. The motto, "In Illo uno unum," was pronounced by St Augustine in a sermon to explain that "although we Christians are many, in the one Christ we are one."

Leo referred to AI in explaining the choice of his name: His namesake, Pope Leo XIII, was pope from 1878 to 1903 and laid the foundation for modern Catholic social thought.

He did so most famously with his 1891 encyclical Rerum Novarum, which addressed workers' rights and capitalism at the dawn of the industrial age. The late pope criticised both laissez-faire capitalism and State-centric socialism, giving shape to a distinctly Catholic vein of economic teaching.

In his remarks on Saturday, Leo said he identified with his predecessor, who addressed the great social question of the day posed by the industrial revolution in the encyclical.

"In our own day, the church offers everyone the treasury of its social teaching in response to another industrial revolution and to developments in the field of artificial intelligence that pose new challenges for the defence of human dignity, justice and labour," he said.

Toward the end of his pontificate, Francis became in-

creasingly vocal about the threats to humanity posed by AI and called for an international treaty to regulate it.

He warned that such powerful technology risks turning human relations into mere algorithms. Francis brought his message to the Group of Seven industrialised nations when he addressed their summit last year, insisting AI must remain human-centric so that decisions about when to use weapons or even less-lethal tools always remain made by humans and not machines.

The late Argentine pope also used his 2024 annual peace message to call for an international treaty to ensure AI is developed and used ethically, arguing that a technology lacking human values of compassion, mercy, morality and forgiveness is too perilous to develop unchecked.

Francis in many ways saw the Chicago-born Augustinian missionary Robert Prevost as something of an heir apparent: He moved him to take over a small Peruvian diocese in 2014, where Prevost later became bishop and head of the Peruvian bishops conference, and then called him to Rome to take over one of the most important Vatican offices vetting bishop nominations in 2023.

In the speech, delivered in Italian in the Vatican's synod hall - not the Apostolic Palace - Leo made repeated references to Francis and the mourning over his death. He held up Francis' mission statement at the 2013 start of his pontificate, "The Joy of the Gospel," as something of his own marching orders, suggesting he intends very much to continue in Francis' priorities.

He cited Francis' insistence on the missionary nature of the church and the need to make its leadership more collegial. He cited the need to pay attention to what the faithful say "especially in its most authentic and inclusive forms, especially popular piety."

Again, referring to Francis' 2013 mission statement, Leo cited the need for the church to express "loving care for the least and rejected" and engage in courageous dialogue with the contemporary world.

Greeted by a standing ovation as he entered, Leo read from his prepared text, only looking up occasionally. Even when he first appeared to the world on the loggia of St Peter's Basilica on Thursday night, Leo read from a prepared, handwritten text that he must have drafted sometime before his historic election or the hour or so after.

He seemed most comfortable, speaking off-the-cuff in the few words he pronounced in Spanish.

He was elected the 267th pontiff on Thursday on the fourth ballot of the conclave, an exceptionally fast outcome given this was the largest and most geographically diverse conclave in history and not all cardinals knew one another before arriving in Rome.

Cardinals have said Prevost did not make any major speech during the pre-conclave discussions, and he carried into the conclave the traditional taboo precluding a pope from the United States given America's superpower status.

But Prevost was already known to many of them given his decades as a missionary and then bishop in Peru, and had been the head of the Vatican's bishops office since 2023.

They said he made an impression in smaller groups where English was the key language of communication in a conclave that brought together 133 cardinals from 70 countries.

Madagascar Cardinal Desire Tsarahazana told reporters on Saturday that on the final ballot, Prevost had received "more" than 100 votes. That suggests an extraordinary margin, well beyond the two-thirds, or 89 votes, necessary to be elected.

BWARE: DRONE WARFARE IS HERE TO STAY

This can be only countered by having a robust air defence system (ADS), as displayed by India.

Elaborating on this issue, Col (ret'd) C M Chavan, who served in the Corps of Army Air Defence (AAD), said, "The ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East have demonstrated the operational effectiveness of swarm drone attacks. These systems, owing to their low cost and high impact, have emerged as potent tools for saturation strikes. Similarly, precision-guided long-range missiles, including platforms like BrahMos and hypersonic variants, serve as strategic assets capable of delivering pre-emptive psychological and structural damage to enemy forces."

Brigadier (ret'd) Neil John said that moving tanks and infantry to establish or fight a contact battle with adequate degradation would be all out war.

"Drones are the new toys of probing defences and preparedness. This medium still needs to be defined. Low-cost drones, like the Turkish Asisguard Songar or similar models, are cheap but effective. Armed with basic explosives or used for reconnaissance, they can flood the battlespace," Brig John said.

Accurate navigation and targeting systems are critical for mission success, thereby reducing reliance on manned fighter aircraft, which are now increasingly being reserved for high-value, specialised missions.

"Modern warfare now emphasises cost-effectiveness and force multiplication. Unmanned systems and precision munitions reduce the attrition risk to expensive platforms and trained personnel. Drones and missiles have become integral components of a layered offensive strategy, amplifying operational capabilities and exerting a demoralising psychological effect on adversary forces," Col Chavan said.

According to him, the psychological impact on civilian populations during sustained drone and missile strikes is significant, often leading to widespread fear and disruption.

"Maintaining public morale necessitates timely and transparent communication. Regular briefings by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), supported with verifiable evidence, are essential to reinforce trust in national defence efforts," he said.

MORE OBITS ON PAGE 14

TWO YEARS IN LORDS PARADISE

In Everloving Memory Of

MARIA FLORENCINA
ANGELICA CALDEIRA
E DA COSTA

SERAUULIM

There will be an Eucharistic Celebration for her soul on Monday, 12th May 2025 (Tomorrow) at 7.00 a.m. at Our Lady Of Pilar Church Seraulim, followed by prayers at the grave. Offered by her children, grandchildren & great grandchildren.

Relatives & friends kindly accept this as the only intimation

Rebello Publicity & Funeral Services Margao 9822383992

MONTH'S MIND

In Everloving Memory Of

AGNETA JOANA BRITO

(AROSSIM)

"Those we love don't go away;
they walk beside us every day".

There will be an Eucharistic Celebration for the soul of our beloved MUM Agneta Joana Brito on Monday, 12th May, 2025 at 7:30 am at St. Thomas Church, Cansaulim, followed by prayers at the grave. Offered by her sorrowful Children Mani/Melissa, Maurine/Ryan; Grandchildren Adelaide, Astrid, Meredith & Family.

Relatives, neighbours & friends kindly accept this as the only intimation

Rebello Publicity & Funeral Services Margao 9822383992

RETURNED TO THE LORD

BORN
25/02/1949

DIED
09/05/2025

CAETANO FRANCISCO PEREIRA

(FATORDA)

Most loving husband of Fatima Miranda e Pereira
Beloved Father/Father-in-law of Daphne / Ashutosh Jha, Natasha / Rodney Almeida, & Tania
Precious Avô of Xiyen & Deepika
Loving son of late Peter Pereira & late Rosa Maria Fernandes
Son-in-law of late Dr. Miguel Miranda & late Maria Da Gama Miranda
Brother / Brother-in-law of late Esmeralda / late Peter Fernandes, late Annie / Inacio Xavier D'Souza, late Zelia, Esperanca / late Cruz Sequiera
Brother-in-law of late Miguel (Zito) Miranda, Jose / late Terezinha, late Fr. Antonio Miranda, Sr. Maria (Nita) Miranda FMM, Francisco (Chico) / Marioneta, Roque / Doris, Jose Maria / Milena, Angelo / Sarita.

Passed away on 9th May.

The funeral will leave our residence "Vivenda Pereira" for a Eucharistic Celebration at Our Lady of Rosary Church, Fatorda, on 11th May at 4:30pm followed by burial at the Holy Spirit Cemetery.

Relatives, neighbours and friends kindly accept this as the only intimation

NO CONDOLENE VISITS PLEASE.

https://www.youtube.com/live/zAc5uypbK-o?si=eZ29oK37drJzJIBs5

Rebello Publicity & Funeral Services Margao 9822383992