



Russia's President Vladimir Putin (L) and Burkina Faso's junta leader Captain Ibrahim Traore (R) arrive for their talks in Moscow



Chairman of the Democratic Party of Albania Sali Berisha gestures after casting his vote at a voting station in Tirana

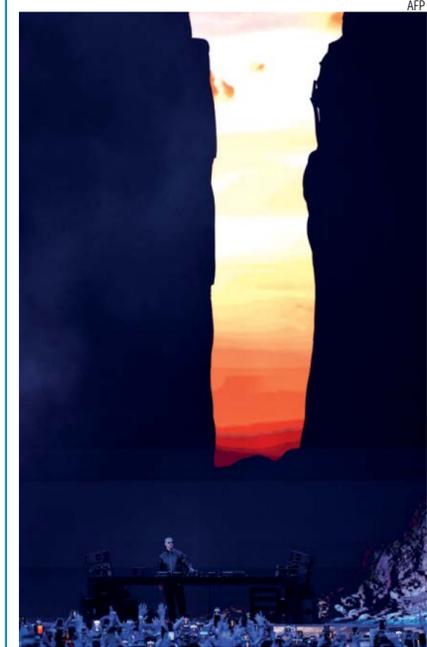


Chile's Prez Gabriel Boric and Japan's PM Shigeru Ishiba shake hands ahead of the Japan-Chile summit meeting at the Minister's Office in Tokyo



German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl, accompanied by his Israeli counterpart Gideon Saar at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial museum in Jerusalem

allovertheworld



French DJ and record producer DJ Snake performs on stage at Stade de France in Saint-Denis, on the outskirts of Paris

Former Panamanian president Martinelli leaves Nicaraguan embassy for asylum in Colombia

PANAMA CITY: Former Panamanian President Ricardo Martinelli left the Nicaraguan embassy where he had sought refuge more than a year ago after the courts upheld a money laundering sentence against him and headed to Colombia where he has received political asylum, the government said late Saturday. Panama's foreign ministry said in a statement that Colombian President Gustavo Petro sent Panamanian President Jose Raul Mulino a formal note saying that he had granted Martinelli asylum and that Panama had granted the former president safe passage to Colombia. "The Republic of Colombia is a State that has historically recognized with the utmost respect, compliance, and promotion the institutions of International Law.

Verdict due Tuesday in Depardieu sexual assault trial

PARIS, FRANCE: A Paris court is to give a verdict Tuesday in the sexual assault trial of French cinema icon Gerard Depardieu in a case that has gripped the country. The ruling will coincide with the start of the Cannes Film Festival and is likely to be among the biggest talking points at the cinema extravaganza. Depardieu, who has acted in more than 200 films and television series, is the highest-profile figure caught up in France's response to the #MeToo movement. He has been accused of improper behaviour by around 20 women, but this is the first case to come to court.

Fires at key Sudan fuel depot 'fully contained': civil defence

PORT SUDAN: Sudan's civil defence forces said on Sunday they had "fully contained" fires that erupted at the main fuel depot and other strategic sites in Port Sudan - the seat of the army-backed government which has come under drone attacks blamed on paramilitaries over the past week. In a statement posted on the force's Facebook page, civil defence director Osman Atta said the fires - involving "large quantities of petroleum reserves" - were brought under control following an intensive operation using "foam materials" and a "meticulously executed plan".

Foreign criminal and visa crackdowns part of UK plans to cut immigration

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM: The UK government on Sunday said it would give itself stronger powers to deport foreign criminals and lift the threshold for skilled worker visas in a bid to bring down immigration levels. "Net migration must come down," interior minister Yvette Cooper wrote in the Sunday Telegraph, a day before she presents the government's Immigration White Paper to parliament, which will contain its proposals. Her Labour party is under pressure to tackle the issue, with the anti-immigration Reform party scoring a resounding win in recent local elections and riding high in the polls.

Cannes film festival: what to look out for

PARIS, FRANCE: The glitz and glamour of the Cannes film festival returns to the French Riviera on Tuesday. Here is AFP's selection of the issues, stars and films likely to dominate on and off the red carpet during the May 13-24 extravaganza: - More #MeToo - He's never been a mainstay of the festival and has not made a film in three years but French cinema legend Gerard Depardieu is likely to be one of the biggest talking points on day one of the festival. A judge in Paris is set to hand down a verdict on Tuesday in the first of two criminal trials involving the "Cyrano de Bergerac" and "Green Card" star over sexual assault allegations. The problem of sexual violence in the film industry was the subject of a highly critical French parliamentary inquiry that published its findings last month.

Denmark to host meeting on Arctic security

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK: The leaders of Denmark, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Norway will meet Monday for talks on Arctic security, Denmark's government said, as US President Donald Trump's vies to gain control of Greenland. Trump has repeatedly said the US needs the strategically-located resource-rich Arctic island for security reasons, and has refused to rule out the use of force to secure it. Trump's comments have sparked concern in other Arctic regions as well, including Iceland and Norway's Svalbard archipelago.

# Pope Leo XIV urges release of Ukraine's war prisoners, welcomes India-Pakistan ceasefire

AP, VATICAN CITY: Pope Leo XIV called for a genuine and just peace in Ukraine and an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, in his first Sunday noon blessing as pontiff that featured some symbolic gestures suggesting a message of unity in a polarized Catholic Church.



"I, too, address the world's great powers by repeating the ever-present call never again war," Leo said from the loggia of St Peter's Basilica to an estimated 100,000 people below.

the greeting from the studio window of the Apostolic Palace, off to the side of the piazza, Leo went to the very centre of the square and the heart of the church.

He also offered a novelty by singing the Regina Caeli prayer, a Latin prayer said during the Easter season which recent popes would usually just recite.

Traditionalists and conservatives, many of whom felt alienated by Pope Francis' reforms and loose liturgical style, have been looking for gestures hinting at Leo's priorities. Some have expressed cautious optimism at the very least with a return to a traditional style that Leo exhibited on Thursday night, when he wore the formal red cape of the papacy that Francis had eschewed.

On hand in the square on Sunday for Leo's first noon prayer were two of Europe's more firebrand conservatives, France's Marine Le Pen and Italy's Matteo Salvini. The Italian minister has highlighted his Catholic faith in his political messaging.

On Sunday Leo wore the simple white cassock of the papacy and had reverted back to wearing his silver

pectoral cross. He had worn a more ornate one that contains the relics of St Augustine and his mother, St Monica, on Thursday night that had been given to him by his Augustinian religious order.

Leo quoted Pope Francis in denouncing the number of conflicts ravaging the globe today, saying it was a "third world war in pieces".

"I carry in my heart the sufferings of the beloved Ukrainian people," he said. "Let everything possible be done to achieve genuine, just and lasting peace as soon as possible."

He called for the release of war prisoners and the return of Ukrainian children to their families, and welcomed the ceasefire between India and Pakistan.

He also called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, and for humanitarian relief to be provided to the "exhausted civilian population and all hostages be freed".

Leo also noted that Sunday was Mother's Day in many countries and wished all mothers, "including those in heaven" a Happy Mother's Day.

The crowd, filled with marching bands in town

POPE LEO PRAYS AT FRANCIS'S TOMB: VATICAN

AFP, ROME, ITALY: Pope Leo XIV visited the tomb of his predecessor Francis on Saturday to pray for the man he follows as the head of the Catholic Church, the Vatican said. Vatican News published a photo of the white-robed American pope kneeling before Francis's simple marble tomb at Santa Maria Maggiore, the papal basilica in central Rome beloved of the Argentine pontiff, who died on April 21. In a short statement, the Vatican's press office said Leo also prayed to the icon of the Virgin Mary at the basilica. Long lines of the faithful are still queuing there to pay their respects to the former pope. Shouts and clapping greeted his successor as he exited the basilica, video posted by Vatican News showed.



The Vatican Media shows Pope Leo XIV paying his respects to late Pope Francis in front of his tomb at Santa Maria Maggiore Basilica in Rome

for a special Jubilee weekend, erupted in cheers and music as the bells of St Peter's Basilica tolled.

Angela Gentile of Bari arrived in the square three hours early to be in place. Nonplussed that cardinals had elected yet another non-Italian pope, she said she was happy Leo came to the central balcony of the basilica, so the crowd could see him face-to-face. "What's good for the Holy Spirit works for me," she said. "I have trust."

More than 50 pilgrims from Houston, Texas, were

in the square, too, waving three large American flags. They were in Rome on a pre-planned Holy Year pilgrimage and said they were proud to be part of this historic occasion.

"Words cannot express my admiration and gratitude to God," said the Rev Dominic Nguyen, who led the Vietnamese American group. He said he hoped the pope would be happy to see the Stars and Stripes but also Peruvian flags and all other countries, showing the universality of the church.

A Mass in the grottoes

and unsealing the apartment

Also Sunday, Leo celebrated a private Mass near the tomb of St Peter and prayed at the tombs of several past popes in the grottoes underneath the basilica. Vatican Media filmed him praying before a mix of more progressive and tradition-minded popes: Pope Paul VI, who closed out the modernising reforms of the 1960s Second Vatican Council, and Popes Pius XII and Benedict XVI, on the more conservative end of the spectrum.

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MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, ASSERT ARMED FORCES

To a question, Air Marshal A K Bharti said India definitely downed a few Pakistani planes but refused to hazard a guess on the numbers.

"Their planes were prevented from coming inside our border. So we do not have the wreckage with us but definitely we have downed a few planes," he said.

Asked about reports in the foreign media of losses of Indian fighter jets, Air Marshal Bharati said, "We are in a combat situation and losses are part of combat."

"All I can say is that we have achieved our objectives that we selected and all our pilots are back home," he said.

DGMO Lt Gen Ghai also paid tribute to five Indian fallen heroes and civilians who "tragically lost their lives" during Operation Sindoor.

"We have thus far exercised immense restraint and our actions have been focused, measured and non-escalatory. However, any threat to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and safety of our citizens will be met with decisive force," he said.

On losses to the Pakistani military, the DGMO said there are reports of 35-40 fatalities.

The DGMO said it was his Pakistani counterpart who made a call to him last afternoon, requesting a way out to stop the hostilities.

The two DGMOs on Saturday afternoon agreed to stop all firing and military action on land and in the air and sea with effect from 1700 hours Indian Standard Time.

The Indian military suggested that the Pakistani DGMO's call came after Indian Armed Forces launched a fierce counter-attack on several Pakistani military installations including Rafiqui, Murid, Chaklala, Rahim Yar Khan, Sukkur and Chunian on Saturday morning.

The strikes were launched after the Pakistan military attempted to target major Indian military installations on the night of May 9-10.

Lt Gen Ghai said over 100 terrorists, including high-value targets such as Yusuf Azhar, Abdul Malik Rauf and Mudasir Ahmed, who were involved in the hijacking of IC 814 and the Pulwama blast, were eliminated during Operation Sindoor on May 7.

Nine terror targets were identified after careful deliberations and they were hit using precision weapons, he said.

Operation Sindoor was launched on early May 7 to destroy nine terror infrastructures in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir in retaliation to the Pahalgam terror attack. All subsequent retaliations to Pakistani offensives were carried out under Operation Sindoor.

ANJUNA NIGHTCLUBS UNFAZED BY INDO-PAK TENSIONS

Café O2 by Levels, one of the 175 units sealed by the Goa Bench of the Bombay High Court, Sea Lounge by Curlies, ordered to be demolished by the Supreme Court and Shiva Valley in South Anjuna reportedly used sky-facing beams through the night on a full moon Saturday, with music levels soaring above 100dB.

Many locals began to question the seriousness of government-led mock drills intended to demonstrate preparedness during national security threats. "The government, very strangely, kept places visited by a majority of tourists out of the ambit of the mock drill in Goa when Pakistan attacked the part of Kashmir visited by tourists," noted Ivan Fernandes, an amused octogenarian.

Fernandes pointed out the paradox between daytime surveillance and night-time neglect. "We heard the sound of helicopters hovering around during the day but after sunset, the usual mayhem continued with no one bothered about the bright lights, the beams focusing in the sky and the loud music that went on till morning," he said.

The light beams, visible from as far as Bambolim, coupled with the relentless noise, stirred anxiety among residents. "We are fighting against the menace of noise pollution and when there was escalation of tensions with Pakistan, I thought we would have some respite from loud music but, no," said Janie Crasto from Vagator.

Crasto acknowledged a marginal improvement in noise control following the High Court's intervention but pointed to persistent violations. "Matters have improved on the noise front after the intervention of the Goa Bench of the Bombay High Court. But, we have rogue elements that connive with the authorities and flout rules set by the Supreme Court," she alleged.

When approached during this period of tension, officers at the Anjuna police station appeared dismissive of concerns about the beams posing a potential risk. "The Police Inspector has gone home and if you think there is a problem, please get in touch with him tomorrow," said a constable manning the station late Saturday night.

However, when newly appointed North Goa SP Raul Gupta was sent photographs of the beams the following day, he responded promptly: "Thanks for letting me know. This should not be happening. I will make sure it stops."

With the Indo-Pak ceasefire now holding and tensions eased, the threat posed by such lighting has diminished. Yet, residents continue to call for enforcement of existing laws on noise and light pollution, urging authorities to act before the next crisis tests the state's preparedness.

CONSUMERS FEEL BETRAYED AS FREE WATER SCHEME GETS THE AXE

Lopes said, "The government introduced the scheme after due analysis. Why is the government withdrawing it now? Obviously the government had not worked out its budget and the scheme was launched in an unprofessional manner. This is happening because the departments are run by unprofessional people and those in government service are not competent. Withdrawing the scheme is unacceptable."

AAP leader Francis Coelho said, "I denounce the BJP-led Goa government's abrupt termination of the 'Save Water to Get Free Water' scheme as a calculated betrayal of public trust."

"Launched with fanfare in September 2021, just months before the 2022 Assembly elections, this initiative was a transparent attempt to counter AAP's welfare guarantees and sway voters. Now, in May 2025, the scheme has been silently discontinued without public consultation or transparent justification, leaving nearly 60 per cent of Goan households facing new financial burdens," Coelho said.

"This move exposes the government's prioritisation of political expediency over genuine public welfare. While citizens grapple with rising living costs and inflation, the administration chooses to withdraw essential support, undermining the very people it pledged to serve. Such actions not only erode public confidence but also highlight a disturbing pattern of policy reversals that disregard the needs of ordinary Goans. I call upon the government to immediately reinstate the free water scheme and to commit to policies that genuinely reflect the interests and welfare of the Goan people," he demanded.

Former Sankhali civic body chief Rajesh Sawal said, "The 16 cubic metre free water scheme was launched to woo the voters ahead of 2022 Assembly polls. The BJP is known for giving assurances to woo voters and then withdrawing. Take the case of providing 10,000 jobs to unemployed youth and three free LPG cylinders per year per household which could not be fulfilled. The government could not run a zero water bill scheme for five years. The government is fooling the people."

Shadow Council for Margao convenor Savio Coutinho said, "I condemn the government for withdrawing the zero water bill scheme when the common man is reeling under inflation. Though the government launched the scheme, it simultaneously increased the slab by 5 per cent. When the scheme was launched in September 2021, it was Rs 3.5 per cubic metre upto 25 units it is now Rs 4.25 per cubic metre. We had requested the government to extend a 16,000 litres of water scheme to residential multi-dwelling buildings. When 16 units are multiplied by the 10 dwelling units, there was a huge difference in the number of units that were billed as compared to the units actually consumed water. We had brought it to the notice of the

then PWD Minister Nilesh Cabral; but nothing changed."

According to sources in the Department of Drinking Water, the decision was taken by the government and no information was sought from the department. The scheme was applicable to individual connections and having their water meter functional. Of the 3.47 lakh total consumers including domestic, commercial and industrial consumers about 1.5 lakh (40 per cent) are individual consumers and approximately 60,000 were receiving zero water charges.

When the scheme was launched from September 1, 2021, there were 3.19 lakh water supply connections and nearly 60 per cent were domestic water supply consumers. All individual domestic consumers whose monthly consumption was less than 16 cubic metre or 16,000 litres were receiving zero water bill.

The government was also receiving numerous applications from those residing in multi-dwelling buildings asking for separate individual water connections.

PUTIN PROPOSES DIRECT TALKS WITH UKRAINE

Putin's address came just hours after the leaders of Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Poland stood alongside Zelenskyy in Kiev and urged Putin to agree to a 30-day ceasefire starting on Monday or face possible "massive sanctions."

Root causes are generally understood to cover a range of Russian grievances, from NATO's expansion eastwards to the size of Ukraine's military, according to reports.

Putin reminded that after the beginning of Russia's special military operation (SMO) in Ukraine, the representatives of Russia and Ukraine had met for several rounds of talks in Belarus and, after advanced negotiations in Istanbul facilitated by Turkey, they finalised a joint agreement in 2022. However, after the visit of former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, this draft was trashed.

Putin categorically rejected the demand for an immediate 30-day ceasefire.

Citing a bad record of Kiev in observing ceasefire and truces, Putin accused Ukraine of not honouring a 30-day moratorium on attacks on the energy infrastructure brokered by US President Donald Trump, as well as the Easter truce.

Reacting to Putin's offer, Zelenskyy reiterated the precondition of a full, lasting and reliable ceasefire starting May 12.

"It is a positive sign that the Russians have finally begun to consider ending the war. The entire world has been waiting for this for a very long time. And the very first step in truly ending any war is a ceasefire," Zelenskyy posted on X.

"There is no point in continuing the killing even for a single day. We expect Russia to confirm a ceasefire - full, lasting, and reliable - starting tomorrow, May 12th, and Ukraine is ready to meet," he said.

For two months now, Ukraine has said it wants an immediate 30-day ceasefire. But Russia has so far refused to commit, saying it supports the idea of a pause in principle, but insists there are what it calls "nuances" that need addressing first.

The Kremlin argues that Ukraine and its European "handlers" will use the 30-day ceasefire without agreed-upon "nuances" to replenish human and hardware to resume military operations against Russia, which has an upper hand on the battlefield.

"This will be a trap for Russia, and Ukraine will rearm to continue the war with the help of its Western backers," Senator Alexi Pushkov was quoted as saying by the state-run VestiFM.

US President Trump welcomed Putin's offer of direct talks.

"A potentially great day for Russia and Ukraine! Think of the hundreds of thousands of lives that will be saved as this never-ending 'bloodbath' hopefully comes to an end," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

"It will be a whole new, and much better, WORLD. I will continue to work with both sides to make sure that it happens. The USA wants to focus, instead, on Rebuilding and Trade. A BIG week upcoming!" he wrote.