

# Pakistan bans Bollywood films

ALJAZEERA ONLINE  
Pakistan has placed a ban on the screening of all Bollywood films in cinemas across the country after Indian air raids further escalated tensions between the South Asian neighbours.  
Pakistan's Film Exhibitors Association decided to boycott Indian content, Fawad Chaudhry, the country's information minister, said on Tuesday in the wake of air attacks by Indian forces near the border with Pakistan-administered Kashmir.  
"No Indian movies will be released in Pakistan," he wrote on Twitter.  
Chaudhry said he had also instructed PEMRA, Pakistan's Electronic Media Regulatory Authority, against airing Indian advertisements on Pakistani TV channels till further notice.

# Kashmiris flee, prepare bunkers

### Cross-border shelling kills 4 in Pakistan, 7 wounded; 5 Indian soldiers injured

AFP, Chakothi  
Thousands of Kashmiris have fled their homes, some bailed water out of disused bunkers, while others dug in -- determined to see out the latest flare up of hostilities between India and Pakistan.  
Shelling across the heavily militarised Line of Control which divides Kashmir between the two South Asian countries sent many seeking shelter yesterday, even before India and Pakistan both claimed they had shot each other's warplanes down, igniting fears of an all-out conflict.  
Pakistani officials said four people, including two children, were killed and seven wounded on Tuesday by shelling from the Indian side of the ceasefire line. Meanwhile, Indian media reports said at least five of India's soldiers were also wounded in cross-border firing along the LoC.  
The death toll mounts on both sides each time sabre-rattling between India and Pakistan turns into conflict. This time, Kashmiris have watched warplanes fighting overhead and cowered under the shelling.  
At least 2,000 people left their homes near the unofficial border in the Kotli and Jhelum Valley districts on the Pakistani side, and authorities closed all public schools, said officials. Other districts also saw an exodus.  
"More people are leaving their homes and

## INDIA-PAKISTAN ALL-OUT CONFLICT FEARS



Passengers crowd a ticket counter outside an airport after their flight was cancelled following temporary suspension of flights, in Jammu yesterday. Right, workers construct a concrete bunker in a residential area near the border with Pakistan in Samba sector near Jammu. PHOTO: REUTERS



moving to safer places," said Umar Azam, a senior government official in Kotli. Internet was also cut in some zones near the frontier -- often a sign of military activity.  
Women, men and children, loaded with cases and bags, could be seen on roads. Some pulled cattle or carried other animals.  
Habib Ullah Awan, a 46-year-old grocery store owner in the nearby border village of Chakothi said shells were still falling when he left his home with eight members of his family early yesterday.  
At Kamalkote, on the Indian side, residents

said they had also faced heavy shelling.  
"We spent the night in total horror. Shells did not land in the village, but fighter jets are still flying above us," said a man who gave his name as Tariq.  
There was also heavy shelling at Poonch further south on the Line of Control. While no casualties were reported there, authorities have told villagers to prepare bunkers.  
Baseer Khan, a senior government official in Indian-administered Kashmir, said authorities are always prepared to evacuate border residents but no order to do so has yet been given.

## 'POLITICISING' SACRIFICES OF INDIAN SOLDIERS

# Opposition parties slam ruling party

INDIA TODAY ONLINE  
The Opposition expressed "deep anguish" over the "blatant politicisation of sacrifices" made by the Indian military as it attacked the Bharatiya Janata Party over the developments of the last few days.  
"National security must transcend narrow political considerations," the Opposition said in a resolution passed at a meeting held yesterday.  
The resolution also criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not calling an all-party meeting on recent developments.  
Twenty-one opposition parties met yesterday evening and issued a statement lauding the Indian Air Force's airstrike on a Jaish-e-Mohammad camp in Pakistan.  
The resolution expressed concern over the "emerging situation" as a result of the Indian Air Force airstrike. The resolution, which condemned the Pulwama terror attack of February 14, expressed "deep concern" for the safety of an Indian Air Force pilot who has gone missing.  
The pilot went missing while thwarting a Pakistani air raid this morning in Jammu and Kashmir, Indian sources claimed. Pakistan claims to have shot his aircraft down and to have taken him in custody.  
The Indian government in a statement admitted to losing an aircraft and said that the pilot was "missing in action".  
"The pilot is missing in action. Pakistan has claimed that he is in their custody. We are ascertaining the facts," MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said at a press briefing earlier today.

# Pakistan publishes video of captured Indian pilot

AFP, Islamabad  
Pakistan's state media yesterday published a video showing an Indian fighter pilot who was captured after his jet was shot down when it entered Pakistani airspace in Kashmir.  
Two Pakistani security sources told AFP the video was authentic.  
It shows a blindfolded man in an Indian Air Force uniform, his face bloodied, with his hands tied behind him, as a soldier interrogates him.  
He gives his name, rank and serial number and when pressed for further information says, "I am not supposed to tell you that."  
In a photograph, which has also been confirmed by security sources, the pilot can be seen flanked by Pakistani military personnel.  
The Pakistani military released a second video hours later showing the same man sitting in a room in an unknown location drinking a cup of tea.  
"The tea is fantastic," he says in English, adding that he is married and being treated

well, but politely declining to answer further questions.  
Both Pakistan and India Wednesday claimed they had shot down each other's warplanes, in a dramatic escalation of the dangerous confrontation between the nuclear-armed rivals.  
Islamabad said it downed two Indian jets in its airspace and captured two pilots, but insisted it does not "want to go towards war" with its neighbour.  
Pakistani military spokesman Major General Asif Ghafoor said one of the downed Indian planes had fallen in Pakistani-held Kashmir, while the other came down on the Indian side of the heavily militarised de facto border dividing the territory.  
He said one of the captured pilots was in custody and the other was in hospital.  
The Indian foreign ministry said only one of its planes had been shot down. It also said a Pakistani jet had been shot down by Indian forces. Pakistan denied that any of its planes have been downed.



## JEM'S ROLE IN KASHMIR ATTACK

# India hands over dossier to Pakistan

INDIA TODAY ONLINE  
The Indian government has handed over to Pakistan a dossier detailing terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed's role in the Pulwama attack that killed 40 CRPF jawans on February 14.  
The dossier also details the presence of JeM terror camps as well as its top leadership within the territory of Pakistan. The move comes after Pakistan had demanded India provide "actionable evidence" on the Pulwama terror attack.  
Through the dossier, India conveyed that it expects Pakistan to take immediate and verifiable action against terrorism emanating from territories under its control.  
India handed over the dossier to the acting high commissioner of Pakistan Syed Haider Shah who was summoned by the Ministry of External Affairs earlier yesterday. The MEA lodged a strong protest against the crossing of LoC by Pakistani jets yesterday.  
India said Pakistan's act of aggression was unprovoked and was in contrast to India's non-military airstrikes on the Balakot JeM camp on February 26.  
On February 24, Pakistan Prime Minister urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to "give peace a chance". Imran Khan said he "stand by his words" and Pakistan will "immediately act" if India provides "actionable intelligence" on the Pulwama terror attack.  
India had however called Pakistan's demand for proof a "lame excuse". "It is a well-known fact that Jaish-e-Mohammad and its leader Masood Azhar are based in Pakistan."

# Say 'No to War'

INDIA TODAY ONLINE  
Social media users from both India and Pakistan took to Twitter yesterday to 'Say No To War' on the micro-blogging platform.  
Tension between India and Pakistan are at an all-time high after both sides claimed to down warplanes yesterday followed by a pre-emptive strike by India on a terror base inside Pakistan a day before.  
While officials from the two countries addressed their respective nations on the state of conditions in India and Pakistan, netizens took to Twitter to trend '#SayNoToWar'.  
The hashtag was on the top trends in India on Twitter, positioned no. 1, at the time this was filed. The Twitter trends in Pakistan mirrored those in India.  
'#SayNoToWar' was trending at no. 3.  
Celebrities and general Twitter users all took to the micro-blogging platform to express their concerns about the current situation in India and Pakistan.  
Indian Musician Vishal Dadlani was one of the most vocal Twitter users to tweet using the hashtag #SayNoToWar.  
"Thank you! Only sane citizen voices can compel their governments to find some sense in these insane times. #SayNoToWar" wrote Dadlani, quoting a tweet from Pakistani Twitter user Tooba Syed.  
Syed's tweet read, "I as a citizen of Pakistan request my govt to treat the captive Indian pilot well and send him back ASAP as a gesture of peace. Come on Pakistan you can do this #SayNoToWar."  
Wednesday's developments come after 12 of Indian Air Force's Mirage 2000 fighter jets on Tuesday struck Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and eliminated training camps of terrorist organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed. The IAF's airstrikes were in retaliation to the February 14 attack by JeM on a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) convoy in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama that claimed the lives of 40 jawans.



## NEWS IN brief

### Iran president keeps FM Zarif in post

AFP, Tehran  
Iranian President Hassan Rouhani rejected Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's resignation yesterday, saying the departure of the public face of the Islamic republic's detente with the West would be against its best interests.

### Fiery crash 'kills 20' at Cairo train station

AFP, Cairo  
A fiery train crash killed at least 20 people at Cairo's main station yesterday, security and medical sources said. The train engine appeared to have slammed into the buffers at the end of the track at high speed, sparking a major blaze at the Ramses station and leaving 40 more people injured.

### Buhari re-elected as Nigerian president

AFP, Abuja  
Muhammadu Buhari was yesterday re-elected Nigeria's president after a delayed poll that angered voters and raised political temperatures, but the opposition immediately vowed to challenge the "sham" result in court. It was the second victory at the ballot box for Buhari, a one-time military ruler who was first elected in 2015.

## INDONESIA MINE COLLAPSE

# 45 feared dead

REUTERS, Jakarta  
Indonesian officials said yesterday dozens of rescuers were using shovels and ropes to dig out around 45 people who were feared buried by the collapse of an illegal gold mine on the island of Sulawesi that killed at least one person.  
Rescuers said they could hear the voices of some of those trapped in makeshift mining shafts in a muddy hillside in the Bolaang Mongondow area of North Sulawesi province and believed many were still alive.  
"We are able to detect that many of them are still alive because we can hear their voices, as there are some places where air is getting in and out and there are gaps in the mud," Abdul Muin Papatungan of Indonesia's disaster agency said by phone.  
Indonesia's disaster mitigation agency said one body had been recovered by 8:00 am yesterday after the mine collapsed the previous evening. Indonesian media reports put the death toll at three.  
The Indonesian government has banned such small-scale gold mining, although regional authorities often turn a blind eye to the practice in more remote areas. With little regulation, such mines are prone to accidents.  
Search-and-rescue teams and military officers were working together but using simple tools such as shovels and ropes because conditions remained dangerous, with the land still prone to shifting and sliding, Papatungan said.  
He said the families of victims had started gathering at the mine site to wait for news.



Hundreds of people participate in a jovial first-of-its-kind rally calling for reforms on Myanmar's military-scripted constitution in Yangon yesterday. The event follows the formation of a committee last week to discuss amending the military-scripted constitution, an unprecedented move as debates over it are highly sensitive. PHOTO: AFP

## VENEZUELA CRISIS

# China, Russia urge against military action

AFP, Wuzhen  
The Chinese and Russian foreign ministers voiced their opposition to military action in Venezuela yesterday, as President Nicolas Maduro faces increasing pressure from the United States to step down.  
Russia and China, which have had close relations with Maduro over the years, have repeatedly warned against any foreign interference in Venezuela, while Washington has backed the opposition leader.  
Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov repeated Moscow's assertion that the United States was using aid deliveries as a pretext to carry out military action in Venezuela.  
"We are working together with all the countries that are no less than us concerned by the scenario of a military interference," Lavrov at a previously planned meeting with his Indian and Chinese counterparts in the Chinese city of Wuzhen.  
"I believe the US should listen to what the countries in the region think," he added.  
The United States is among some 50 countries that recognise opposition leader Juan Guaido as Venezuela's interim president, while Maduro still enjoys the diplomatic support of Russia and China.  
US President Donald Trump has said that Washington is not ruling out armed action, while US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said he was confident that "Maduro's days are numbered."  
Earlier this week, the US said it would ask the UN Security Council to adopt a draft resolution demanding that humanitarian aid be allowed into Venezuela and announced \$56 million in aid to Venezuelans.

# Trump a 'racist', 'conman'

Former lawyer says in first Congressional hearing  
AFP, Washington  
Donald Trump's former personal lawyer and fixer Michael Cohen told Congress that the president is a "racist" and "conman" and knew in advance that WikiLeaks would publish dirt on Hillary Clinton, US media reported.  
In explosive public testimony yesterday, Cohen also stated that Trump essentially instructed him to lie about a lucrative real estate project Trump had in the works in Russia even while running for president in 2016, according to a prepared statement by Cohen that was provided to The New York Times and other US news outlets.  
Trump, in Vietnam for a second nuclear summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, responded to the release of the statement by trying to distance himself from Cohen and discredit him.  
"Michael Cohen was one of many lawyers who represented me (unfortunately)," Trump tweeted.  
Cohen testified before the House of Representatives Oversight Committee on the second of three keenly awaited days of testimony on Capitol Hill. Tuesday's first session at the Senate was held behind closed doors.  
Cohen, 52, worked closely with Trump for more than 12 years, becoming vice president of the Trump Organization, where he was the billionaire property magnate's behind-the-scenes "fixer."  
Last year, Cohen pleaded guilty to illegally using campaign funds for hush money payments to two women who said they had affairs with Trump. The president denies the liaisons.  
Cohen also pleaded guilty to lying to Congress in testimony in 2017 when he sought to cover up Trump's pursuit of the Moscow real estate project during the presidential election campaign. Cohen will soon start serving three years in prison.  
Trump in his tweet yesterday said Cohen is "lying in order to reduce his prison time", even though he has already been sentenced. Trump noted that Cohen has been disbarred in the state of New York for lying to congress.



## Sri Lanka frees Indian 'spy' linked to plot

AFP, Colombo  
A man accused by Sri Lanka's president of orchestrating a plot to assassinate him was cleared of any wrongdoing by a court in Colombo yesterday.  
Investigators said there was no credible evidence the man was plotting to kill Maithripala Sirisena, who justified sacking his prime minister in October in part because cabinet was not taking the alleged threat against his life seriously enough.  
But Magistrate Jayantha Nanayakkara discharged the accused Indian national Mercei Thomas without charge, concluding he was not a foreign spy and there was no evidence against him.  
Sirisena had expressed anger in October that his government never seriously investigated what he called a foreign plot to kill him.

## ROW OVER BORDER WALL

# House strikes down Trump's emergency

AFP, Washington  
The US House of Representatives dealt a blow to President Donald Trump on Tuesday, approving a resolution blocking him from obtaining funding for a Mexican border wall through his declaration of a national emergency.  
Dismissing a veto threat by the president, the Democratic-controlled House struck down Trump's emergency declaration by a comfortable margin of 245-182, sending the measure to the Republican-held Senate.  
Thirteen Republicans joined Democrats in voting to "terminate" Trump's emergency declaration, which the Republican president issued on February 15 after failing to secure billions of dollars from Congress for the wall.  
The emergency declaration would allow Trump to find funding for the Mexican border wall -- his signature campaign promise -- from other sources, notably the Pentagon budget for military construction projects.  
The president has threatened to veto the resolution if it passes both the 435-member House and the 100-seat Senate, where Republicans hold a 53-47 edge and its prospects are uncertain.  
Democrats have denounced the emergency declaration as a power grab by the president and a violation of the Constitution because it usurps the power of Congress to decide government spending.

## BITS OF HISTORY (FEBRUARY 27)

1990: Nelson Mandela arrived in Zambia on his first foreign trip since his release after 27 years in South African jails.  
2003: Rowan Williams was enthroned as the 104th archbishop of Canterbury, leader of the world's 70 million Anglicans.  
2003: The UN war crimes court at The Hague sentenced former Bosnian Serb President Biljana Plavsic to 11 years in jail.