

'We stopped a nuclear conflict'

Trump takes credit for ceasefire between India, Pakistan; calm returns at border as truce holds

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump yesterday said that US intervention prevented a "bad nuclear war" between India and Pakistan, after the South Asian rivals agreed to a ceasefire following a series of clashes.

"We stopped a nuclear conflict. I think it could have been a bad nuclear war, millions of people could have been killed. So I'm very proud of that," Trump, who announced the ceasefire on Saturday, told reporters at the White House.

There were no reports of explosions or projectiles fired overnight, with the Indian army saying Sunday was the first peaceful night along their border in recent days.

The ceasefire followed four days of intense exchanges of fire as the nuclear-armed arch rivals targeted each other's military installations with missiles and drones, killing dozens of civilians.

Meanwhile, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday warned Pakistan that New Delhi would target "terrorist hideouts" across the border again if there were new attacks on India and would not be deterred by what he called Islamabad's "nuclear blackmail".

Modi was speaking two days after the ceasefire.

"If there is a terrorist attack on India, a fitting reply will be given... on our terms," Modi said, speaking in Hindi in a televised address. "In the coming days, we will measure every step of Pakistan... what kind of attitude Pakistan will adopt."

"India will strike precisely and decisively



Children clean the premises of their school near a site damaged by Indian strikes, ahead of its reopening in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

his comments from Islamabad.

Modi's address came hours after the military operations chiefs of India and Pakistan spoke by phone.

"Issues related to continuing the commitment that both sides must not fire a single shot or initiate any aggressive and inimical action against each other were discussed," the Indian army said.

"It was also agreed that both sides consider immediate measures to ensure troop reduction from the borders and forward areas," it added.

There was no immediate Pakistani readout of the military operations chiefs' talks.

In Washington, Trump said the leaders of India and Pakistan were "unwavering", and the US "helped a lot" to secure the ceasefire, adding that trade was a "big reason" why the countries stopped fighting.

"We are going to do a lot of trade with Pakistan... and India. We are negotiating with India right now. We are soon going to negotiate with Pakistan," he said, just ahead of Modi's speech.

The military confrontation began on Wednesday, when India said it launched strikes on nine "terrorist infrastructure" sites in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir following an attack by militants in Indian-administered

Kashmir last month that killed 26 men. New Delhi blamed the attack on Pakistan.

Islamabad denied any links to the attack and called for a neutral investigation. It said the targets hit on Wednesday were civilian sites.

India and Pakistan both rule parts of the Himalayan region of Kashmir, but claim it in full.

Yesterday, India reopened 32 airports it had shut during the clashes, with the Airports Authority of India saying in a statement they were available for civil operations. Some schools remained closed.

Pakistan had reopened its airspace on Saturday.

Pakistan's international bonds rallied sharply, adding as much as 5.7 cents in the dollar, Tradeweb data showed.

Late on Friday, the International Monetary Fund approved a fresh \$1.4-billion loan and also the first review of its \$7-billion programme.

Pakistan's benchmark share index KSE closed up 9.4 percent on Monday, while India's blue-chip Nifty 50 NSEI index closed 3.8% higher in its best session since February 2021.

While Islamabad has thanked Washington for facilitating the ceasefire and welcomed Trump's offer to mediate in the Kashmir issue, New Delhi has not

commented on US involvement in the truce or talks at a neutral site.

India, which says disputes with Pakistan have to be resolved directly by the neighbours, has in the past rejected the involvement of any third party.

"Kashmir is a bilateral issue, not an international issue," Shilpkar Ambule, India's ambassador in Singapore, told Bloomberg TV. "For us, the word mediation does not work with the Kashmir issue."

In Beijing the foreign ministry said China, which also controls a small slice of Kashmir, was willing to maintain communication with both its neighbours, and play a "constructive role in achieving a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire" and maintaining peace.

India blames Pakistan for an insurgency in its part of Kashmir that began in 1989, but Pakistan says it provides only moral, political and diplomatic support to Kashmiri separatists.

Some in the region remained concerned despite the ceasefire.

"It is still scary," said Padam, a traveller in a train from Jammu to New Delhi.

"After blasts all over the city (Jammu), I am scared. I am going to stay in Delhi till I am sure the agreement is binding on Pakistan," added Padam, who declined to give his second name.

at the terrorist hideouts developing under the cover of nuclear blackmail," he said, and listed New Delhi's conditions for holding talks with Islamabad and lifting curbs imposed after the Kashmir attack.

"India's position is clear: terror and talks cannot go together; terror and trade cannot go together. And water and blood cannot flow together," he said, referring to a water sharing pact between the two countries New Delhi suspended.

There was no immediate response to

'Hasina mastermind of July atrocities'

FROM PAGE 1
Hefazat-e-Islam rally at Shapla Chhatra in Motijheel.

Citing the probe report, Tajul said Hasina is directly responsible for ordering all state forces, her party, and its associated bodies to carry out actions that led to mass killings, injuries, targeted violence against women and children, the incineration of bodies, and denial of medical treatment to the wounded.

He added that, according to the report, more than 1,500 individuals were killed, over 25,000 wounded, and countless others subjected to torture and other inhumane treatment.

Tajul said the prosecution will submit formal charges to the ICT for trial if, upon reviewing the report, other documents and relevant material, it finds sufficient evidence. "Once the formal charges are filed, the official trial process will begin."

He noted that it may take two to three weeks to press charges.

Detailing two of the five charges against Hasina, the chief prosecutor said the first pertains to incitement.

"During a press conference on July 14, she [Hasina] called protesting students 'children of Razakars' and 'grandchildren of Razakars'. These remarks incited law enforcement and intelligence agencies to act violently against the protesters. Alongside these forces, auxiliary groups like the Awami League, Jubo League and Chhatra League also attacked demonstrators with weapons, resulting in murder, injuries and other crimes against humanity," he said, adding. "As a result, Hasina has been charged with incitement, abetment, facilitation, conspiracy and failure to prevent."

The second charge, he said, involves direct orders.

The Investigation Agency has obtained telephonic conversations in which Sheikh Hasina clearly instructed all state forces to use

deadly weapons, helicopters, drones, and APCs [armoured personnel carriers] to annihilate protesters who were peacefully demonstrating for legitimate rights. The report contains many recorded evidences of these instructions," Tajul said.

"As such, the second charge concerns directly ordering murder, causing grievous harm by gunfire, and associated conspiracy."

The remaining three charges are based on specific incidents where crimes were allegedly committed under Hasina's directives. The chief prosecutor did not elaborate on these.

The report also reveals systematic violence against women and the deliberate targeting of children. It states that dead bodies, along with living individuals, were burned together. Simultaneously, hospitals were barred from treating the wounded, post-mortems were obstructed, and doctors were prevented from providing care.

Tajul said Hasina had visited several hospitals and instructed doctors not to treat protesters admitted there. "Those who wished to leave due to unbearable pain were not allowed to, resulting in gangrene and amputations, as per her directives. The Investigation Agency found such evidence and included it in the report."

Additionally, the agency uncovered evidence that government agents set fire to public institutions to falsely blame protesters. Telephone recordings of Hasina's involvement in these arson directives have been submitted as evidence, Tajul added.

The report includes medical certificates of injured individuals, death certificates of those killed, testimonies from doctors and victims, numerous call records, video footage, audio clips, bullets retrieved from victims' bodies, flight schedules of helicopters used, lists of weapons,

and documents from domestic and international organisations -- including a UN report -- alongside statements from witnesses and some accused individuals.

"We expect to finalise and file the formal charges soon, maintaining international standards and ensuring a flawless trial. The people of this country demand swift justice, but trials for crimes against humanity are not ordinary; they cannot proceed under street pressure. This is a matter of law and professional investigation," he said, cautioning that rushing may jeopardise the case and undermine justice.

"Let the tribunal, prosecution and investigators take the time they need."

He said investigations into many killings are still ongoing, and the aim is to identify and prosecute all actual perpetrators.

Regarding the report's contents and witness details, he said, "The probe report is a classified document. We are not obliged to share it; not even with the accused. The names and numbers of the witnesses are withheld for their security. Revealing their identities would severely compromise their safety."

In response to a query, Tajul confirmed they are aware of the amendments to the ICT Act, 1973, which state that any political organisation found guilty of crimes against humanity will face specific punishments.

"Now, we will take a decision for the future -- whether or not an investigation will be conducted against any political party, and whether they will be brought to trial."

On the classification of the July uprising crimes, he explained, "According to the report, these are crimes against humanity -- not 'genocide' -- as they do not meet the definition of the word."

The advisory council decided to slap the ban on the Awami League's

Activities of AL, affiliates banned

FROM PAGE 1
participants of the uprising, organised provocative demonstrations, distributed anti-state leaflets, made incriminating statements through social media to obstruct their trials, instilled fear among the public, and threatened Bangladesh's unity, public security, and sovereignty, it said.

And it has been noticed that the fugitive leaders, including their chief, ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, have been making different incriminating statements from abroad while there are attempts to damage individual and state property, said the notification.

Hasina fled to India on August 5. Most of the party's top leaders are either hiding or are in jail.

According to the Awami League's charter, Bangladesh Mohila Awami League, Bangladesh Krishak League, Bangladesh Awami Juba League, Awami Svechchhasebok League, Awami Ainjibi Parishad, Bangladesh Tanti League, and Bangladesh Mohila League are associate organisations of the party.

And the Jatiya Sramik League and Bangladesh Chhatra League are Awami League-backed organisations.

The interim government banned Chhatra League on October 23 last year, following demands from the Students Against Discrimination.

REGISTRATION
After the publication of the notification, the EC convened a meeting at about 5:45pm to decide the fate of the party's registration, said officials.

"As you are aware, earlier today the Ministry of Home Affairs banned the activities of the Bangladesh Awami League along with its affiliated and associate organisations. In light of that, the Election Commission has decided to suspend the Awami League's registration," Election Commission Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said around 9:30pm after the meeting.

The advisory council decided to slap the ban on the Awami League's

activities in a special meeting chaired by Yunus on Saturday night following three days of demonstrations by the National Citizen Party (NCP) and several other political and student organisations.

Since the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009, allows the banning of an entity, but does not contain any provision regarding the prohibition of its activities, the advisory council on Sunday approved the ordinance to amend the act.

AL HISTORY
The Awami League was established in 1949.

The party, along with others, was banned by the Pakistani military ruler Ayub Khan in 1958.

In 1971, the party, under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, led the struggle for independence.

After the emergence of independent Bangladesh, the Awami League won the first general election.

On January 25, 1975, Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman dissolved all political parties, including the Awami League, and introduced a one-party rule under Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League or BAKSAL.

Following his assassination on August 15 that year, all political activities were suspended under martial law. Political activities resumed later, and some leaders revived the AL.

In 1981, Hasina, the daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, became the president of the party and has continued to hold the position to this date.

The party assumed power in 1996.

After 2008, it was in power for four straight terms under Hasina.

During her tenure, voters could not cast their votes. The rule of law became a distant dream; the media faced constant restrictions; freedom of speech was curtailed; dissenting voices were gagged. Corruption and siphoning of billions of dollars in collusion with opportunist businessmen also took place.



Members of the National Citizen Party distribute sweets among themselves while celebrating the official ban on Awami League's activities. The photo was taken last night at the NCP office in the capital's Banglamotor.

Better healthcare possible with existing facilities

Yunus tells civil surgeons

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus yesterday expressed optimism about bringing significant changes to Bangladesh's health sector with the combined efforts of all involved in delivering healthcare services to better serve the people.

"A little more attention and dedication from each of you can bring a massive change," he said at a conference of district civil surgeons, a first in Bangladesh.

It is possible to attain at least 25 percent improvement in service quality within the existing structure with sincere efforts, he said.



Yunus emphasised the need for physicians to take personal responsibility in advancing the healthcare system, while urging them to act with creativity, mindfulness and professionalism.

"Too often we blame each other. But blaming will not bring about change. We must ask ourselves, if other countries can improve their healthcare systems, what is preventing us from doing the same? Let us reflect and commit to fixing this."

He, however, assured of addressing the requirements of the health sector.

"We must ask ourselves why can't we do that? I think if we have that mindset, changes are possible."

He also referred to the Health Sector Reform Commission's report, which includes a set of recommendations aimed at systemic improvements.

Health and Family Welfare Adviser Nurjahan Begum also shared her observations from surprise visits to various hospitals.

In some cases, she observed a lack of discipline and accountability. "Without addressing these issues, we cannot expect meaningful success."

Nurjahan stressed the importance of collaboration between the government and non-government organisations to improve healthcare delivery.

Echoing Yunus's ethos, she said: "Nothing is impossible. Turning the impossible into possible is your responsibility."

She stressed that civil surgeons are key to strengthening the nation's healthcare.

"Despite notable progress, our health sector still lags due to a shortage of personnel, medicines and medical equipment. But I believe civil surgeons will lead the way forward through their intellect and sense of duty."

Nurjahan also announced plans to recruit 7,000 doctors in phases, along with additional nurses, to strengthen the workforce.

Improvement of the health sector is possible only if the problems of promotion, posting, budgets and medicine shortage are resolved, said Sayedur Rahman, chief adviser's special assistant with executive power over the ministry of health and family welfare.

A unique health card will be made to restructure the health sector, he said.