DEFENCE COOPERATION

Turkey, Indonesia, Qatar, Pakistan sign accord

REUTERS, *Ankara*

Turkey, Qatar, Pakistan, and Indonesia signed an agreement yesterday to boost defence cooperation and strengthen defensive capabilities, the Turkish defence ministry said.

In a statement, the ministry said the countries signed the "Badr Memorandum of Understanding" in Doha as a sign of their desire to further deepen cooperation and develop partnerships.

"The agreement holds substantial economic importance," it said, adding the accord sought to foster cooperation in military production, boost military capabilities, and help collaboration in technical military training, research and development.

"By leveraging the unique military production capabilities of each country, the initiative will facilitate cooperation and integration, enhance defence industrial capacities, and enable the fulfilment of the needs of allied and friendly nations," it added.

Turkey, which has Nato's second-largest army and a robust defence industry, has been helping Gulf nations, including Qatar, where it has a military base, bolster their defences amid the Iran war.

In August, it signed a mutual defence pact with nuclear-armed Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, under which an attack on one party constitutes an attack on all. Ankara also has close ties with Indonesia, notably in the defence industry.

The ministry said the Badr accord would strengthen ties between the countries' defence industries and bolster collaboration to promote security and achieve shared objectives.

Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkey signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement on August, saying an armed attack on any one of the three countries would be regarded as an attack on all, in a pact the signatories said was aimed at strengthening collective deterrence and military cooperation.



PHOTO: **AFP**

Students block the main entrance of the University Institute of Technology (IUT) in Lannion, western France, yesterday, during a nationwide protest over learning conditions. The leader of France's hardline CGT union has called for strikes after talks with Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu over fresh protests collapsed.

Resume three-way Ukraine peace talks

Trump envoy asks Putin, secures release of US citizen; 4 killed in Russian strikes across Ukraine

REUTERS, *St Petersburg*

US Special Envoy Steve Witkoff yesterday urged Russian President Vladimir Putin to consider resuming US-mediated peace talks with Ukraine and to review new ideas on ending the war amid Washington's latest push to stop Europe's bloodiest conflict since World War Two.

The talks in a grand imperial palace in St Petersburg, the ninth time that Witkoff has met Putin in person, began with a goodwill gesture from Russia - the release of Stephen Hubbard, a retired US school teacher held in Russia.

Putin also offered to help US President Donald Trump in dealing with Iran, saying Russia had a decades-long relationship with Tehran which it has repeatedly offered to leverage to address US concerns about Iran's nuclear programme.

Russia could also supply large quantities of fertiliser to the United States to help US farmers, the Russian president told Witkoff, saying he wanted to discuss a potential meeting in China next month with Trump which the Kremlin has suggested could also include Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The encounter comes amid concerns in Kyiv and among its allies that the United States is backing away from Ukraine, at times holding back real-time intelligence on Russian attacks and hobbling Ukraine's military communications.

Four people were killed in a wave of Russian strikes across Ukraine yesterday, the government said. Ukraine's Prime Minister Sergiy Koretsky said two people were killed when a drone hit a 24-storey building in the capital, Kyiv, while two others were killed in the northeastern Kharkiv region.

Meanwhile, President Zelensky said he hoped for a positive outcome from US envoy Steve Witkoff's meeting in Russia and that he supports talks between the leaders of Kyiv, Washington and Moscow. Earlier on Tuesday evening, he said that intelligence on early warning systems for Russian strikes "works now", and that he is "thankful" to the US.



- Putin offers to help Trump in dealing with Iran
- Zelensky says he supports trilateral talks with US, Russia

The US has previously denied limiting intelligence sharing. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio yesterday rejected accusations Ukrainians were dying because the US was withholding intelligence.

Relations between Kyiv and Washington have soured since Trump partially lifted sanctions to strike a diesel-supply deal with Putin.

IN BRIEF



Tanker attacked near Strait of Hormuz: UKMTO

Baghdad closes border crossing with Iran under US pressure

AFP, *Dubai*

A ship was struck yesterday by an "unknown projectile" off the coast of Oman, near the Strait of Hormuz, sparking a fire, a British maritime security agency said.

The tanker, 11 nautical miles (around 20 kilometres) off the town of Bukha, is "now at anchor", the UKMTO reported. "All crew are reported as safe. There is no reported environmental impact at this time," it said.

The agency later reported another incident, which occurred on Tuesday off the coast of Iraq. A projectile hit a tanker 30 nautical miles from the town of Al Faw, causing no casualties or damage.

Meanwhile, Iraqi authorities yesterday closed a border crossing with Iran "until an unspecified date", an Iraqi source told AFP, with two other sources saying the US is pressuring Baghdad to close more crossings in order to tighten the screws on Tehran.

Bloomberg, Trump ramp up spending ahead of midterms

REUTERS, *Washington*

US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that he would spend more than $400 million on Republican campaign efforts, while the New York Times reported that former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg was spending $80 million to help Democrats ahead of the November 3 midterm congressional elections.

The financial commitments come as Democrats seek to win control of Congress from Trump's Republicans in the November 3 midterm elections.

Trump's super PAC, MAGA Inc, and an affiliated group, No Going Back PAC, have spent at least $226 million on the elections so far

"I have spent, or will be spending, over 400 Million Dollars by Election Day. More than 300 Million Dollars has already been spent on Advertising, Direct and Indirect Voter Contact, Rallies, Rally Arenas, Telerallies, Get Out the Vote Programs, Election Integrity, and more," Trump said.

Trump's super PAC, MAGA Inc., and an affiliated group, No Going Back PAC, have spent at least $226 million on the elections so far, campaign filings show.



Delhi court orders release of CJP leaders Das, Ranka

AGENCIES

A Special Executive Magistrate (SEM) yesterday ordered release of India's CJP leaders Saurav Das, Ashutosh Ranka after their five days custody was extended by two more days on October 19.

Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Ritu Raj, acting as the SEM, passed the release order after accepting the sureties furnished by Das and Ranka, according to Bar and Bench.

Delhi Police had earlier sought an extension of judicial custody by three more days.

"Truth has triumphed," said Das after the release order by SEM court, reports Hindustan Times online.

Meanwhile, UN experts called on Tuesday for an independent investigation into Indian authorities' conduct in a recent crackdown on protests, where they said demonstrators had sustained injuries and some reported being subjected to ill-treatment, reports Reuters.



PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Migrants of various nationalities take part in a caravan known as "Faith and Hope" (Fe y Esperanza), seeking migration documents that would allow them to continue their journey towards central and northern Mexico, in Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico, on Tuesday.

World falls 'dangerously short' on climate action

AFP, *Paris*

Global commitments to cut planet-heating emissions are falling far short of the Paris climate goals and put the world on course for 2.6C warming this century, the UN warned yesterday.

The report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) lays bare the chasm between rhetoric and action when it comes to tackling global warming, and the challenge before political leaders at November's COP31 climate summit.

Even if countries deliver their latest climate pledges in full, global temperatures could still rise 2.6C above pre-industrial levels by 2100, said the annual Emissions Gap Report.

That would blow past the historic goal agreed in Paris: keeping warming well below 2C while striving for a safer 1.5C. Any chance of keeping to 1.5C had been "lost" due to decades of insufficient climate action, the report said.

"The world can no longer avoid overshooting the 1.5 degree limit, and the consequences are already devastating," said UN chief Antonio Guterres in a statement to launch the closely-watched report.

"Deadly floods, brutal heatwaves, raging wildfires, lost lives, crippled economies, deepening inequalities, and those least responsible are suffering first and worst."

Overall, global greenhouse gas emissions in 2025 were broadly on a par with record levels in 2024, with the difference between the two years too small to call, the report said.

Carbon emissions just from burning coal, oil and gas rose slightly in 2025 compared to the previous year.



UN chief Antonio Guterres warns those least responsible suffer 'first and worst'

Guterres said deep and immediate cuts were needed to protect humanity from worsening impacts but instead "emissions remain at record levels. And national climate plans and current policies fall dangerously short".