

UN Chief urges immediate peace, says world is on edge of a wider war

NEW YORK, APR 3: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has warned that the Iran war which is now in its fifth week, is pushing the region toward a wider conflict that could trigger global economic and humanitarian crises.

"Every day this war continues, human suffering grows. The scale of devastation grows, indiscriminate attacks grow. The targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure grows," Guterres said during a press conference. "We are on the edge of a wider war that would engulf the whole Middle East with dramatic impacts



around the globe." The UN chief stressed on the "worldwide economic and humanitarian consequences, citing rising food and energy costs affecting vulnerable communities from the Philippines to Sri Lanka and Mozambique.

He specifically pointed to the strategic Strait of Hormuz warning that dis-

ruptions to freedom of navigation threaten the world's poorest.

Guterres called for urgent diplomatic efforts, emphasising, "Disputes must be resolved peacefully under international law." "The spiral of death and destruction must stop. Diplomatic efforts are underway to find a peaceful path forward. They deserve the space and support to succeed anchored firmly in international law, including the UN Charter," he said.

He urged an immediate halt to the war causing immense human suffering and economic conse-

Bangladesh introduces austerity measures for minimising energy expenditure

DHAKA, APR 3: In light of the country's ongoing fuel crisis, Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, along with cabinet ministers and state ministers, will now also be coming under the government's latest austerity measures, with fuel allocations for their official vehicles set to be reduced by 30 percent, with the Cabinet Division outlining a set of steps aimed at cutting public expenditure.

The meeting, which continued for several hours, was held at the National Parliament building and chaired by PM Rahman.

According to the decisions taken, the monthly fuel allocation for government vehicles will be cut by 30 percent, directing all public officials to reduce their use of fuel, electricity and gas by the same margin.

Spending for the beautification of residential buildings will be reduced by 20 percent, while expenditure for the beautification of non-residential buildings will be slashed by 50 percent, with all land acquisition now put on an indefinite suspension.

Additionally, all government and private offices will run from 9:00-4:00, while banks will conduct transactions from 9:00-3:00 and close fully for the day by 4:00 p.m.



French President Emmanuel Macron (L) shakes hands with South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol (R) during their meeting at the Presidential Blue House in Seoul.

IN BRIEF

Russian Su-30 fighter jet goes down in Crimea

MOSCOW, APR 3: A Su-30 fighter jet of the Russian Aerospace Force crashed in Crimea on Friday during a routine training flight, according to media reports. Both pilots ejected safely from the jet, which was unarmed. "The crew safely bailed out and were evacuated by the ground search and rescue team. There is no threat to the pilots' lives," the RBC business portal reported, quoting a press release issued by the defence ministry. The Su-30, a highly potent multi-role fighter, was unarmed during the training flight and was flying without ammunition. The defence ministry, however, did not provide a possible cause or other circumstances of the crash. On the evening of March 31, an An-26 military transport plane crashed in Crimea, killing seven crew members and 22 passengers on board.

Pakistan raises petrol prices amid US-Iran war

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has announced an unprecedented increase of 43 per cent and 55 per cent in the prices of petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD), respectively, in response to spiking global oil prices and the US-Israel war on Iran. The price of petrol has been increased by Rs 137.23 per litre (42.2 per cent) to Rs 484.41 from Rs 321.17, while HSD by Rs 164.49 per litre (55 per cent) to Rs 520.35 from Rs 335.86, with immediate effect. The price of kerosene was also increased by Rs 34.08 per litre to Rs 451.80. The government also adjusted the petroleum levy rates to limit the increase in diesel prices as the levy on petrol was increased to Rs 100 per litre from Rs 105, while it was reduced to zero on diesel from Rs 55. Petroleum Minister Ali Pervez Malik, while making the announcement, which he termed as a "difficult decision", said that the objective was to restrict subsidies to the most deserving segments while maintaining fiscal discipline and preserving economic stability.

French, South Korean leaders say they'll work together on Strait of Hormuz

SEOUL: French President Emmanuel Macron and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung agreed on Friday to work together to help reopen the Strait of Hormuz and ease global economic uncertainties caused by the war in the Middle East. Their summit in Seoul came as US President Donald Trump slammed allies for not supporting the US and Israeli war against Iran. Macron was making his first visit to South Korea since taking office in 2017 as part of an Asian tour that already has taken him to Japan. Macron told Lee at the start of the meeting that the two countries can play a role in helping to stabilise the situation in the Middle East, including the Strait of Hormuz, according to South Korean media. At a joint televised news conference afterwards, Macron underscored the need for France and South Korea to cooperate to help reopen the strait and de-escalate Middle East animosities, while Lee said the two affirmed "their resolve to cooperate to secure the safe shipping route in the Strait of Hormuz."

'China opposes use of force in Middle East'

NEW YORK: China's permanent representative to the United Nations has voiced Beijing's firm resistance to any measures that would allow member states to engage in military action within the Middle East. Ai Jazaira reported. Addressing the international body, Fu Cong stated that such an authorisation "would amount to legitimising the unlawful and indiscriminate use of force." Beijing's formal opposition at the UN aligns with its broader diplomatic response to recent threats from Washington. China responded to the recent "bring them back to the stone ages" remarks made by US President Donald Trump against Iran, stressing that escalation will not resolve the conflict, China Daily reported.

Elaborating on this position, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning emphasised that "military means cannot fundamentally solve any issue, and escalation of the conflict does not serve any party's interest," according to China Daily. The Chinese reaction was prompted by President Trump's warning that the United States was going to "hit Iran extremely hard over the next two or three weeks," a statement that has intensified global concerns over a broader escalation in West Asia. These remarks suggest that Washington's military campaign is "on the cusp" of what the President described as ending Tehran's "smarter threat" to the world.

Suicide car bomb blast kills five in Pakistan

PESHAWAR: A suicide car bomb blast targeting a police station in northwest Pakistan killed five persons, including four from the same family, and wounded 13 others, police said on Friday. Police said the suicide bomber rammed his explosives-laden vehicle into the rear side of the police station in Dargah-e-Banu district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, inflicting a powerful explosion. The intensity of the blast, which was heard miles away, triggered panic among residents. Gunfire erupted immediately after the explosion, further heightening tension in the area. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

Heavy rain in Karachi breaks 41-year-old record

KARACHI: Pakistan's financial capital Karachi recorded its heaviest 24-hour rainfall starting from Thursday morning, breaking a 41-year-old record, the Pakistan Meteorological Department said on Friday. The biggest city in the country and the capital of the Sindh province, Karachi received 38.6 mm rainfall during the 24 hours from Thursday 10 am, surpassing the previous record of 37.0 millimetres from 1985, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) confirmed. The current spell of rainfall, under the influence of Western Disturbance weather system, killed at least six people in rain-related incidents and left many others injured. Most of the deaths were caused by electrocution and walls collapsing in low-lying areas, officials said. The victims included a 17-year-old girl, who was electrocuted inside her home in Surjani Town.

'Strait of Hormuz open for Russia'

MOSCOW, APR 3: Yuri Ushakov, a senior aide to President Vladimir Putin, has confirmed that the "Strait of Hormuz is open to Russia," according to the Russian state-run TASS news agency. This assertion regarding Moscow's continued access to the strategic passage sets the stage for high-level diplomatic engagement. Following Ushakov's remarks, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov held talks with his Iranian counterpart, Abbas Araghchi, to discuss the "situation around the safety of navigation" within the "key waterway." As reported by Al Jazeera, this dialogue was specifically prompted by the Kremlin side's claim concerning Russia's maritime access. During their exchange, the two ministers

reviewed the broader maritime security environment, with a particular focus on maintaining the "safety of navigation" throughout the corridor. The discussions further underscore the tightening coordination between Moscow and Tehran over the "key waterway," following the earlier official confirmation that the "Strait of Hormuz is open to Russia." This diplomatic coordination builds on foundational demands recently set out by Tehran. On Wednesday, April 1, Kazem Jalali, the Iranian envoy to Russia, outlined a set of key conditions that Iran expects from the United States and Israel for achieving what he described as a "just peace and a lasting ceasefire" in the region, reported TASS.

Houthi launch ballistic missiles on Jaffa area in Israel

SANAA, APR 3: The Houthis in Yemen carried out a coordinated military operation by launching a barrage of ballistic missiles targeting strategic Israeli positions in the Jaffa area.

The operation was executed in full coordination with allied forces across the region, with support for the resistance and jihad fronts in Iraq, Iran, Palestine, and Lebanon and reportedly achieved all its operational objectives, according to the statement released by Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saeed. This marks the third

major strike by Yemeni forces since formally joining the regional resistance in support of Iran and its allied fronts against US-Israeli aggression.

The operation demonstrates a high level of integration across multiple fronts, from Yemen's Red Sea defenses to Lebanon and Iraq.

The Houthis emphasised that their engagement in this campaign remains measured but warned that future operations will be calibrated in response to enemy strategy. "Our intervention will not stop at this level," the statement

affirmed.

In the statement, the group affirms that their military intervention in this crucial and exceptional battle is gradual and will not stop at this level, warning that future actions would be determined by what he described as "enemy escalation or de-escalation."

Brigadier General Esmail Qa'ani also highlighted earlier successes, including forcing the US aircraft carrier Gerald Ford into retreat, demonstrating the operational reach of the Yemeni and allied forces.

Chinese national held in crypto currency scam

KATHMANDU, APR 3: A Chinese national has been arrested in connection with his alleged involvement in cheating people through operating a multi-million Nepalese crypto currency scam, police said on Friday.

A team of police arrested Zhu Yi, 35, from the capital Thamel area along with transaction details of crypto currency worth Nepalese rupees (NRS) 179.97 million, said Pawan Kumar Bhattacharya, spokesperson at Kathmandu District Police Circle. The police also recovered from him three mobile sets and various documents, including papers used to carry out illegal transactions. During preliminary investigation, it was found that Zhu was involved in cheating local Nepalese by contacting them through social media platforms and winning their confidence by showing various attractive offers.

US Secy of War ousts 2 more Army Generals

WASHINGTON, APR 3: US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth forced out two army generals in a major reorg after vowing for regime change in the Iran war, the Wall Street Journal reported. General David Hodges, who became the head of the service's Training and Transformation Command in October, and Major General William Green Jr., Chief of Army Chaplains, were removed after General Randy George, the Army's chief of staff, as reported by the Wall Street Journal. The removal comes late in a series of clashes between the Pentagon chief and the service's senior leadership. George had been asked to retire immediately, even though he was expected to hold the office for more than another year, until the fall of 2027, and complete what is typically a four-year assignment as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Chief

Pentagon Spokesman Sean Parnell said in a post on X, "General Randy A. George will be retiring from his position as the 41st Chief of Staff of the Army effective immediately. The Department of War is grateful for General George's decades of service to our nation. We wish him well in his retirement."

With George being out, Hegseth has remade nearly the entire Joint Chiefs of Staff, a panel of senior military officers at the Pentagon that advises both the president and the secretary, as per the Wall Street Journal. Early last year, the Trump administration fired General Claudio Q Brown Jr., then the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Admiral Lisa Fanning, head of the US Navy, Admiral Lisa Fagan, commander of the Coast Guard, and General James Slife, vice chief of staff of the Air Force, Hegseth later

asked General David Allvin, chief of staff of the Air Force, to retire early last fall, as per Wall Street Journal. Hodges was selected to lead an organisation. Training and Transformation Command, that George had prioritised, while Hegseth has sought to spend more military chaplains minister to and support service members. It was not immediately clear why Hegseth targeted George. Hodges and Green, as per the Wall Street Journal, also, in a major administrative reshuffle, US President Donald Trump has announced the departure of Pam Bondi from her role as Attorney General. Moving swiftly to fill the leadership vacuum at the Department of Justice, the President confirmed that Deputy Attorney General John Roddenberry will step in to lead the agency, as he "will serve as acting attorney general" for the interim period.

Trump imposes 100% tariff on patented drug imports; revises metal duties

WASHINGTON, APR 3: The United States has announced sweeping new trade measures targeting patented pharmaceutical imports and metals, as President Donald Trump signed two significant executive actions. Under the new framework, a 100% tariff will apply to patented drug imports from countries, including India, that have neither signed a resourcing agreement with the US Commerce Department nor a Most Favoured Nation (MFN) pricing deal with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). A senior White House official said the measure was designed to reduce America's dependence on foreign nations for essential medicines. The official

further said, "100% tariff is on patented products. Any patented drug imported from India made by companies that do not get approved for a resourcing plan will be subject to a 100% tariff." Generic medicines are currently exempt, though officials cautioned this could change if the generics industry does not move production back to the United States swiftly enough. The announcements coincide with the first anniversary of Trump's so-called "Liberation Day," the moment last year when the president unveiled a sweeping global tariff plan that sent shockwaves through international markets and fundamentally reshaped the landscape of world trade.

Nepal court grants 2-day remand to KP Oli

KATHMANDU, APR 3: A court in Nepal has granted two days remand to former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli for the atrocities committed during the Gen-Z protest last September. The bench of Judge Purushottam Khatiwada Kshetri at the Kathmandu District Court issued the order allowing investigators to continue the probe. Oli, who was arrested last Saturday, has been giving his statement on Thursday in connection with the casualties that occurred during the Gen-Z Movement held on September 8 and 9, 2025. Currently undergoing treatment at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, Oli is being questioned by a

joint team from the Kathmandu District Police Range and the District Government Attorney's Office. Since his statement recording has not been completed, the court has permitted authorities to keep him in custody for two additional days.

Police said the former prime minister is unlikely to be discharged from the hospital immediately due to multiple health issues. As a result, investigators have been taking his statement at the hospital. According to police spokesperson Pawan Kumar Bhattacharya, doctors have advised against discharging Oli at the moment, prompting investigators to conduct the questioning at the hospital.

Myanmar's parliament elects ruling general as president

BANGKOK, APR 3: Myanmar's parliament on Friday elected Min Aung Hlaing, a general who ousted Aung San Mye Kyi's civilian government in 2021 and kept an iron grip on power for the past five years, as the country's new president.

The move marks a nominal return to an elected government but is widely considered as an effort to keep the army in power after an election organised by the military that opponents and independent observers deemed neither free nor fair, and as civil war rages.

UK-led 40-nation coalition seeks end to Hormuz blockade

LONDON, APR 3: The United Kingdom has convened foreign ministers from 40 nations to deliberate on strategies for reopening the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial maritime artery currently obstructed by the ongoing conflict involving the United States, Israel, and Iran. According to Al Jazeera, the high-level meeting addressed the "vital shipping route" that has been severely impacted by the regional war. During the virtual summit, UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper criticised what she termed as Iran's "recklessness" in blocking the passage, asserting

that the disruption was "threatening our global economic security." Cooper's opening remarks, which were broadcast to the media before the session transitioned to a closed-door format, accused Tehran of using the waterway as leverage. "We have seen Iran hijack an international shipping route to hold the global economy hostage," she stated. The impact of the blockade has been profound, as retaliatory strikes on merchant vessels and the ongoing "threat of more" have effectively "halted nearly all traffic" through the strait, Al Jazeera noted.

that this closure of the path connecting the Gulf to the world's oceans has triggered a sharp rise in "petroleum prices" and interrupted the global "flow of oil." Notably, the United States was absent from the proceedings. This follows declarations from US President Donald Trump that "securing the waterway" is not the responsibility of his administration. The US President has also directed criticism toward European allies for their lack of "support for the war" and has frequently "renewed his threats" regarding a potential withdrawal from NATO.

US strikes on civilian sites show enemy in disarray: Araghchi

TEHRAN, APR 3: Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has declared that recent military actions by the United States targeting non-military targets will fail to alter the Islamic Republic's strategic stance. In a statement released on social media, the Foreign Minister asserted that the targeting of essential public works would not achieve the intended diplomatic or military objectives. Striking civilian structures, including unfinished bridges, will not compel Iranians to surrender," Araghchi said in a post on X,

which featured an image of a destroyed bridge. He further argued that the nature of these strikes reflects the internal state of the opposing forces rather than their strength, stating that such actions instead "convey the defeat and moral collapse of an enemy in disarray."

These developments occur against the backdrop of persistent US-supported Israeli military actions directed at the Islamic Republic. Tehran has repeatedly condemned these operations for targeting civilian infrastructure, which it

maintains is a "flagrant violation of international law." According to state broadcaster Press TV, Iranian officials have consistently characterised these strikes as "desperate acts" that serve as proof of the "enemy's strategic failure and frustration" across various sectors. Furthermore, the Iranian leadership has asserted that any infrastructure targeted during the conflict will be rebuilt with enhanced resilience, while the United States faces "irreparable harm" to its declining international reputation.

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