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13 MAR 2025. HIGH FLYERS - ENTREVISTA CON FRANCINA FERNÁNDEZ «LA PEQUEÑA FRANCINA NO SE CREERÍA TODO LO QUE ESTÁ PASAN- DO AHORA EN MI VIDA.» VANS BIGGER

Fotos de Ben Gea y Raisa Abal B - Entrevista de Linda Grabner
Continuando nuestra serie High Flyers con Vans Europe, en esta
oportunidad nos centramos en su última incorporación al equipo,
Francina Fernández, de Colombia a España. Han sido unos años
alucinantes para Franci, ganando reconocimiento con empresas
como Vans Europe, Cult y riders por igual; su hambre de pro-
greso y de vida es contagiosa. La interrogamos sobre todo, des-
de la añoranza de la comida casera hasta el barspinning Macba
y mucho más. Conócenos...

<https://shop.digbmx.com/collections/all-clothing> Francina 01 RGB
Raisa Abal

Antes que nada, ¡felicidades por unirse a Vans Europa y por tu
video de «High Flyers»! Como alguien que ya formó parte del
programa Vans Tribes, ¿qué se siente al continuar tu trayectoria
de esta manera?

Es un sueño. Me encanta formar parte de una de las mejores
compañías del mundo, con un equipo increíble. La pequeña Fran-
cina no se creería todo lo que está pasando en mi vida. Agra-
dezco mucho el enorme apoyo que Vans brinda a su gente, y
creo que esto me motiva a seguir en el BMX, dando lo mejor de
mí y de la escena.

¿Cuál es tu recuerdo favorito del rodaje de tu video de «High

13 MAR 2025. HIGH FLYERS - AN INTERVIEW WITH FRANCINA FERNANDEZ

«LITTLE FRANCINA WOULD NOT BELIEVE EVERYTHING THAT IS HAPPENING NOW IN MY LIFE.» VANS BIGGER Photos by Ben Gea & Raisa Abal B - Interview by Linda Grabner

Continuing our High Flyers series with Vans Europe, this time around we hone in on their latest addition to the team, with Colombia to Spain transplant, Francina Fernandez. It's been a wild few years for Franci, gaining recognition with companies like Vans Europe, Cult and riders alike - her hunger for progression and life is infectious. We quizzed her on everything from missing home food, to barspinning Macba and a whole lot in-between. Get acquainted... <https://shop.digbmx.com/collections/all-clothing> Francina 01 RGB Raisa Abal

First of all congrats for getting on Vans Europe and for your 'High Flyers' video part! As someone who has been already been part of the Vans Tribes program, how does it feel to continue now your journey like this?

This feels like a dream. I loving being a part of one of the best companies in the entire world, with an incredible team too. Little Francina would not believe everything that is happening now in my life. I really appreciate the huge support Vans give to their people, and I believe this motivates to me to continue in BMX, giving my best for me and for the scene.

What is your favorite memory from the filming process of your 'High Flyers' part? Haha, definitely barspin in the MACBA stairs. When I think about it I get 'chicken skin' haha. I was thinking about doing this trick there long long time ago. My friends were there giving to me all the support... and I feel that's essential. I believe completely in myself but they made me feel super safe. The only thing in my head was "tu puedes" (you can) many times. First try I fell, but I couldn't leave without it and went for it again. I was super scared but I was repeating to myself "feel sure that you can do it, it's gonna happen :)". I was so grateful for everybody's ener-

gy. Franci check 1 sur 1 2 Alexarnaudfranci 1 sur 1 2 Your video was filmed in Barcelona. In your opinion what's the best video of all time that has been filmed there? I really like Federal BCN 2013 and Nike Batalla BCN. Legends! Which spots or skateparks are your favorite to ride in Barcelona on a daily basis?

Well, around Barcelona San Joan Despi skatepark is a good one, but I prefer go to street sesh and Barcelona contains an infinity of spots. The entirety of BCN is a street park so with something literally around every corner, you're going to have a mix of technical and perfect spots.

Which type of music do you like to listen to to get you hyped for riding? I have many preferences haha. Hard techno, post punk, hip hop, 80's rock, old BMX video music, haha. You grew up in Colombia and live now in Barcelona. How was it growing up there and what do you miss most about it? Yep, I grew up in Colombia and I'm always gonna say it's a privilege - warm and humble people, a place with a lot of diversity and biodiversity - but also we have the other side as it's a place with a lot of social inequality. For many people to have a good quality life they need to looking for opportunities outside... but with the hope of coming back and doing something better for our country. I really miss my family, my crazy friends, the trips there to the most amazing nature places i've ever seen. I miss the skateparks too but I mostly miss is the food haha. Francituck 1 sur 1 2 «...WE ARE ALL CREATING MORE SPACES, MORE CONSCIOUSNESS, MORE ACTIVISM, MORE COMMUNITY AND GIVING TO BMX OUR ESSENTIAL FEMALE ENERGY» RELATED VIDEO HIGH FLYERS.// FRANCINA FERNANDEZ The third instalment in the series - More Info CLICHE JAM 106 How do you feel about the development of women's street riding over the last 3 years?

Wow! Definitely huge. the BMX fem street scene has been growing so fast over the last 3 years and I'm not surprised cause the level that you can find in the girls around the world is incredible and unbelievable... it's insane! I'm happy that we all support

India vs. Pakistan Is Also U.S. vs. China When It Comes to Arms Sales
Increasing Western military support to India, and China's to Pakistan, signals a shift in global alignments – and another potential flashpoint for international tensions.

May 7, 2025, 2:05 a.m. ET

A dozen or so soldiers in combat fatigues, many holding weapons, mill about on a small street that is packed with military vehicles, one of them that appears to be an armored one. Indian security forces in Wuyan, on the Indian-controlled side of Kashmir, on Wednesday. India has sharply reduced purchases of low-cost arms from Russia, its Cold War-era ally Tauseef Mustafa/Agence France-Presse – Getty Images The last time India and Pakistan faced off in a military confrontation, in 2019, U.S. officials detected enough movement in the nuclear arsenals of both nations to be alarmed. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was awakened in the middle of the night. He worked the phone "to convince each side that the other was not preparing for nuclear war," he wrote in his memoir. That clash quickly cooled after initial skirmishing. But six years later, the two South Asian rivals are again engaged in military conflict after a deadly terrorist attack against tourists in Indian-controlled Kashmir. And this time there is a new element of uncertainty as the region's most important military alliances have been redrawn. Changing patterns in the flow of arms illustrate the new alignments in this particularly volatile corner of Asia, where three nuclear powers – India, Pakistan and China – stand in uneasy proximity. Where India and Pakistan get their arms. Russia used to be India's main arms supplier ... but India now buys more from Western allies. Pakistan now buys most of its arms from China ... and much less from Western countries. India, a traditionally nonaligned country that has shed its history of hesitance toward the United States, has been buying billions of dollars in equipment from the United States and other Western suppliers. At the same time, India has sharply reduced purchases of low-cost arms from Russia, its Cold War-era ally. Pakistan, whose relevance to the United States has waned since the end of the war in Afghanistan, is no longer buying the American equipment that the United States once encouraged it to acquire. Pakistan has instead turned to China for the vast majority of its military purchases. These connections have injected superpower politics into South Asia's longest-running and most intractable conflict. The United States has cultivated India as a partner in countering China, while Beijing has deepened its investment in its advocacy and patronage of Pakistan as India has grown closer to the United States. At the same time, relations between India and China have deteriorated in recent years over competing territorial claims, with clashes breaking out between the two militaries at times. And relations between the world's two biggest powers, the United States and China, have hit a nadir as President Trump has launched a trade war against Beijing. This com-

bustible mix shows how complex and messy alliances have become as the post-World War II global order has fractured. The volatility is compounded by South Asia's history of frequent military confrontations, with armed forces on both sides that are prone to mistakes, increasing the risk that an escalation could get out of hand. "The U.S. is now central to India's security interests, while China increasingly plays a comparable role in Pakistan," said Ashley Tellis, a former diplomat who is a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. As India now takes military action against Pakistan, it has had the United States on its side more forcefully than ever in recent years. Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India spoke with both Mr. Trump and Vice President JD Vance in the initial days after the April 22 terrorist attack in Kashmir. The strong backing voiced by Trump administration officials was seen by many officials in New Delhi as a green light for India's plan to retaliate against Pakistan, even if U.S. officials urged restraint.

An indication of the changing dynamics was the conspicuous absence of President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia as Mr. Modi took calls from more than a dozen world leaders in the days after the terrorist attack. The Russian foreign minister spoke with his Indian counterpart a week after the attack, and Mr. Modi and Mr. Putin finally spoke this week, officials said. For its part, China has led public support for Pakistan, describing it as an "ironclad friend and all-weather strategic cooperative partner." These trends could increasingly be reflected in military conflicts. "If you think about what a future conflict between India and Pakistan might look like, it would increasingly look like India fighting with U.S. and European platforms and Pakistan fighting with Chinese platforms," said Lyndsey Ford, a former senior U.S. defense official who is currently a senior fellow at the Observer Research Foundation America. "The close security partners of both countries have evolved significantly in the last decade." Until recent years, Cold War calculations had shaped alliances in South Asia. India, even as it played a leading role in the nonaligned movement, grew close to the Soviet Union. Weapons and munitions from Moscow made up nearly two-thirds of India's military equipment. Pakistan, on the other hand, firmly allied itself with the United States, becoming its frontline partner in helping to defeat the Soviets in Afghanistan. In the 1980s, Pakistan's military leveraged that relationship to bolster its arsenal, including acquiring dozens of coveted F-16 fighter planes, which helped chip away at the air dominance that India had enjoyed. After the Cold War, both nations faced American sanctions for testing nuclear weapons in the 1990s. For over a decade, Pakistan was denied delivery of dozens of F-16s it had paid for. But the country's fortunes changed again after Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on New York and the Pentagon, as it once again became a frontline partner to the United States, this time in the war on terrorism. Even as Pakistan was accused of playing a double game, harbo-

ring the Taliban's leaders on its soil while aiding the American military presence in Afghanistan, the U.S. military poured in tens of billions of dollars in military assistance. The United States became Pakistan's top supplier of weapons, with China remaining second. As Pakistan's importance to the United States has declined, it has turned to China, which has long offered an open embrace. Beijing, which was the source of only 38 percent of Pakistan's weapons in the mid-2000s, has provided about 80 percent over the past four years, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which closely studies global weapons flows. At the same time, India has slashed its dependence on Russian weapons by more than half. Between 2006 and 2010, about 80 percent of India's major weapons came from Russia. Over the past four years, that figure has fallen to about 38 percent, with more than half of Indian imports coming from the United States and allies like France and Israel. The one area of exception for Pakistan's frost with the United States is the F-16 program. Pakistan has expanded its F-16 arsenal over the past two decades, and the Biden administration pushed through a contract worth nearly \$400 million for service and maintenance of the fighter jets. In 2019, Pakistan used an F-16 to down a Russian-made Indian jet. New Delhi protested that the action constituted a breach of the U.S. sales agreement with Pakistan, arguing that it allowed only for counterterrorism missions. Some American officials appeared to try to placate India by suggesting that they had admonished the Pakistanis. But U.S. diplomatic cables had long made clear that they knew Pakistan's intention in building its air force: for potential use in conflicts with India. The 2019 clash – in which one of India's own helicopters was also shot down, killing half a dozen personnel – exposed the troubles of its military. In the years since, India has been pouring in billions of dollars to modernize its forces. As India now confronts Pakistan, a bigger threat, China, is not only watching but also aiding its adversary. For many American officials who observed the 2019 developments closely, the human errors made clear how the situation could escalate out of control. U.S. officials worry that with the hyper-nationalism in both India and Pakistan, where two well-stocked militaries operate in a tight air corridor and amid mutual suspicion, even the smallest of mistakes or exceeding of orders could lead to catastrophic escalations.

"A crisis where you have cross-border airstrikes and an aerial dogfight, like we saw in 2019, carries significant escalation risks," said Ms. Ford, the former U.S. defense official. "And that's all the more problematic when it involves two nuclear-armed neighbors." Salman Masood and Hari Kumar contributed reporting. Mujib Mashal is the South Asia bureau chief for The Times, helping to lead coverage of India and the diverse region around it, including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan.