

# Iranian Prez visits injured victims of port explosion that killed 40 people

AP, DUBAI: Iran's president on Sunday visited those injured in a huge explosion that rocked one of the Islamic Republic's main ports, a facility purportedly linked to an earlier delivery of a chemical ingredient used to make missile propellant. The visit by President Masoud Pezeshkian came as the toll from Saturday's blast at the Shahid Rajaei port outside of Bandar Abbas in southern Iran's Hormozgan province rose to 40 with about 1,000 others injured.

While Iran's military sought to deny the delivery of ammonium perchlorate from China, new videos emerged showing an apocalyptic scene at the still-smoldering port. A crater that appeared meters (yards) deep sat surrounded by burning smoke so dangerous that authorities closed schools and businesses in the area.

Containers appeared smashed or thrown as if discarded toys, while the burned carcasses of trucks and cars sat around the site.

"We have to find out why it happened," Pezeshkian said during a meeting with officials aired by Iranian state television.

Authorities described the fire as being under control, saying emergency workers hoped that it would be fully extinguished later Sunday.



A container burns at the scene of an explosion that took place at the Shahid Rajaei port dock, southwest of Bandar Abbas in the Iranian province of Hormozgan



Firefighters work to extinguish the fire, near the southern port city of Bandar Abbas, Iran

Overnight, helicopters and heavy cargo aircraft flew repeated sorties over the burning port, dumping seawater on the site. Satellite pictures taken Sunday by Planet Labs PBC and analyzed by The Associated Press showed a huge plume of black smoke still over the site.

Provincial Gov. Mohammad Ashouri gave the latest death toll, Iranian state TV reported. Pir Hossein Koliwand, head of Iran's Red Crescent society, said that only 190 of about 1,000 injured remained hospitalized on Sunday, according to a statement carried by an Iranian government website. The governor declared three days of mourning.

Private security firm Ambrey says the port received missile fuel chemi-

cal in March. It was part of a shipment of ammonium perchlorate from China by two vessels to Iran, first reported in January by the Financial Times. The chemical used to make solid propellant for rockets was going to be used to replenish Iran's missile stocks, which had been depleted by its direct attacks on Israel during the war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Ship-tracking data analyzed by the AP put one of the vessels believed to be carrying the chemical in the vicinity in March, as Ambrey said. "The fire was reportedly the result of improper handling of a shipment of solid fuel intended for use in Iranian ballistic missiles," Ambrey said.

In a first reaction on Sun-

day, Iranian Defense Ministry spokesman Gen. Reza Talaeinik denied that missile fuel had been imported through the port.

"No sort of imported and exporting consignment for fuel or military application was (or) is in the site of the port," he told state television by telephone. He called foreign reports on the missile fuel baseless — but offered no explanation for what material detonated with such incredible force at the site. Talaeinik promised authorities would offer more information later.

It's unclear why Iran wouldn't have moved the chemicals from the port, particularly after the Beirut port blast in 2020. That explosion, caused by the ignition of hundreds

of tons of highly explosive ammonium nitrate, killed more than 200 people and injured more than 6,000 others. However, Israel did target Iranian missile sites where Tehran uses industrial mixers to create solid fuel — meaning potentially that it had no place to process the chemical.

Social media footage of the explosion on Saturday at Shahid Rajaei saw reddish-hued smoke rising from the fire just before the detonation. That suggests a chemical compound being involved in the blast, like in the Beirut explosion.

Meanwhile on Sunday, Russian President Vladimir Putin deployed several emergency aircraft to Bandar Abbas to provide assistance.

## Namibia dismisses minister accused of rape

AFP, WINDHOEK: Namibia's president has dismissed agriculture minister Mac Hengari, her office announced Sunday, as reports emerged that he is under investigation for alleged rape.

President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah's statement came as a police spokesperson confirmed media reports that an investigation had been opened into Hengari.

According to reports in the country's press, a minor has accused him of having raped her. Hengari had only been appointed to the government post in March.

"President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah has relieved Hon. Dr. Mac-Albert Hengari of his duties as Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform," the president's office said in a statement shared on social media.

"The termination of tenure takes effect from Wednesday, 23 April 2025 when Hon. Dr. Mac-Albert Hengari should have tendered his resignation," it added.

According to Namibian press reports, Hengari may also face prosecution for abduction and abortion, which is illegal in the conservative southern African country.

## allovertheworld



Security officials help devotees avoid chaos on the final day of public exhibition of the sacred Tooth relic of the Buddha at the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy. Buddhists flocking to see a sacred tooth in Sri Lanka were urged by authorities to stay away on April 24 after four people died and hundreds fell sick while in lengthy queues

## Japan PM goes to Vietnam, the Philippines to talk tariffs

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba left Sunday for a four-day trip to Vietnam and the Philippines, as Tokyo seeks to shore up regional ties after Donald Trump's tariff onslaught. Ishiba's trip comes after China's President Xi Jinping conducted his own Southeast Asia tour, with Beijing trying to position itself as a stable alternative to the United States as leaders battle to counter Trump's tariffs. Before leaving for the trip, Ishiba called Vietnam and the Philippines — along with the rest of Southeast Asia — a "growth centre" that is driving the world economy. But they face "major impacts" due to US President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs, he said, adding that Japanese businesses operating in the region could also be hit. Despite being the biggest investor into the United States, Japan has been pinched by steep levies imposed by Trump on imports of cars, steel and aluminium.

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## Over 11 killed in Vancouver car attack at Filipino street festival

AP, VANCOUVER: At least nine people were killed when a man drove into a crowd at a Filipino heritage festival in the Canadian city of Vancouver, and an unknown number were injured, police said Sunday. The vehicle entered the

street at 8:14 pm on Saturday and struck people attending the Lapu Lapu Day festival, the Vancouver Police Department said in a social media post.

Several other people were injured but the exact number of casualties was

not immediately available.

A 30-year-old Vancouver man was arrested at the scene and the department's Major Crime Section is overseeing the investigation, police said.

"At this time, we are confident that this incident was

not an act of terrorism," the police department posted early Sunday.

The festival was being held in a South Vancouver neighbourhood. Video posted on social media showed victims and debris strewn across a long stretch of road.

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### CRACKDOWN ON TERROR: NIA REGISTERS CASE IN PAHALGAM ATTACK

In the targeted attack, a group of terrorists killed male tourists milling around eateries, taking pony rides or just picnicking with their families including young children and parents at the meadow touted as 'Mini Switzerland' for its serene beauty.

Separate teams of NIA officials have been visiting across the country to seek details from survivors of the terrorist attack, said to be orchestrated by Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the officials said.

NIA teams have recorded accounts from victims' family members in Maharashtra, Odisha and West Bengal among other States, they said.

Initial investigations into the dastardly terror attack indicate that the number of terrorists involved could range from five to seven, they said. The attackers were also aided by at least two local militants who received training in Pakistan, the officials said.

Security agencies have released sketches of three terrorists suspected to be involved in the attack. The trio, from Pakistan, are said to be Asif Fauji, Suleman Shah and Abu Talha, they said. Jammu and Kashmir Police announced a reward of Rs 20 lakh each for information lead-ing to the neutralisation of the terrorists. The probe suggested that the terrorists used body cameras to record their barbaric act, the officials said, quoting eyewitnesses.

#### More houses of terrorists demolished

Meanwhile, authorities have demolished houses of three active terrorists in Bandipora, Pulwama and Shopian districts of Jammu and Kashmir as security forces continued their crackdown on the terror ecosystem in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack, officials said on Sunday.

The house of Adnan Shafi, who had joined terrorist ranks last year, was demolished at Wandina in Shopian district on Saturday night, they said.

They said the house of another active terrorist -- Amir Nazir -- was demolished in Pulwama district. In Bandipora district, the house of LeT ultra Jameel Ahmad Shergo-jri was demolished. Shergo-jri has been an active terrorist since 2016. With this, the total number of houses of terrorists and their overground workers demolished since the Pahalgam attack has gone up to nine.

#### Navy flexes its muscle

In another development, the Indian Navy on Sunday said its warships have successfully carried out multiple anti-ship firings, revalidating their readiness for long-range precision "offensive" strikes.

The demonstration of the Navy's combat prowess came amid heightened tensions between India and Pakistan over the dastardly Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 civilians.

Citing "cross-border linkages" to the horrific attack, India has already promised severe punishment to those involved in the strike that triggered wide-spread outrage within India and abroad.

"Indian Navy ships undertook successful multiple anti-ship firings to revalidate and demonstrate readiness of platforms, systems and crew for long range precision offensive strike," the Indian Navy said in a brief statement. "Indian Navy stands combat ready, credible and future ready in safeguarding the nation's maritime interests anytime, anywhere, anyhow," it said.

The Indian Navy also released videos of the live firings at sea but did not provide details like when the exercise was carried out. In the backdrop of the escalating tensions, the Indian Navy's guided missile destroyer INS Surat fired a medium range surface-to-air missile against a "sea skimming" target in the Western Indian Ocean last week.

#### Pak fires across LoC again

At the same time, Pakistani troops resorted to unprovoked firing, violating the ceasefire along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Sunday. This was the third consecutive night that Pakistan resorted to unprovoked firing along the Line of Control (LoC). "On the intervening night of April 26-27, Pakistan Army posts initiated unprovoked small arms fire across the LoC in areas opposite the Tutmari Gali and the Rampur sectors," the officials said. They said Indian Army soldiers "responded effectively with appropriate small arms fire". The Pakistan military had resorted to similar firings on Thursday and Friday nights as well.

### LATEST TWIST: STAY ON AIFF DECISION TO CROWN CHURCHILL I-LEAGUE CHAMPS

He claimed that they learnt about the CAS order only after the ceremony was conducted.

The AIFF, on April 18, belatedly announced Churchill Brothers as the I-League champions after its Appeals Committee ruled against second-placed Inter Kashi, who had then knocked the doors of the world's highest sports tribunal based in Switzerland.

In an order passed "on request for provisional measures", Elizabeth Steiner, the Deputy President of the Appeals Arbitration Division of the CAS, also barred the AIFF from conducting any medal ceremony till the case is decided.

"The decision rendered by the Appeal Committee of All India Football Federation rendered on 18 April 2025 is stayed," Elizabeth Steiner said in an 'ex parte' order.

"The All India Football Federation is ordered not to declare the winner of the I-League 2024/2025 or organise a medal ceremony for the I-League 2024-25 until the present arbitration has been concluded," said the Austrian jurist.

In 'ex parte' order, the proceeding or action involves only one party without notice to the other. These orders are in place only until further hearings can be held.

The CAS granted the respondents, including the AIFF and Churchill Brothers "a time limit to file a full reply to the application for provisional measures until 29 April 2025."

"The costs of the present Order shall be determined in the final award or in any other final disposition of this arbitration," the order said.

Churchill Brothers had finished provisionally on top of the table with 40 points after the final round on April 6. But, their title and Indian Super League promotion were subject to the outcome of Inter Kashi's disputed points from their January 13 match against Namdhari SC, which the latter had won 2-0.

The AIFF Disciplinary Committee had awarded a 3-0 forfeit win and three points to Inter Kashi after ruling that Namdhari fielded an 'ineligible player'.

That decision would have taken Inter Kashi to 42 points, enough to clinch the title. However, the AIFF Appeals Committee later put the Disciplinary Committee order 'inoperative and in abeyance' pending a final hearing.

After a delayed process, including a postponed April 12 hearing due to Namdhari's counsel citing "sickness", the AIFF's Appeals Committee on April 18 set aside the Disciplinary Committee's order and ruled in favour of Churchill. On the basis of its Appeal Committee ruling, the AIFF had declared Churchill Brothers as I-League champions.

Inter Kashi had, however, released a statement signalling their intent to escalate the matter to CAS.

"The conclusion of the hearing, and with it, the exhaustion of all internal dispute resolution processes, enables Inter Kashi to approach the CAS for a truly free and fair hearing of the matter. Inter Kashi will keep no stone unturned to secure justice, and any celebration in the interim may ultimately prove to be premature in nature," the

