

Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf Condemned in the Strongest Terms the Pager Detonations That Have Killed at Least Nine People in Lebanon, Saying Terrorism Is an Inseparable Part of the Sinister Nature of the Israeli Regime

IRAN NEWS

The Islamic Republic of Iran Red Crescent Society (IRCS) Has Dispatched an Aid and Medical Team to Lebanon After the Israeli Terrorist Attack Against the Arab Country as the Team Included 12 Specialists and General Practitioners and 12 Nurses and Aid Workers

2 DOMESTIC



Tehran, Budapest Explore Ways to Broaden Economic Ties

> SEE PAGE 2

3 INTERNATIONAL

Israel Planted Explosives in 5,000 Hezbollah's Pagers



> SEE PAGE 3

Iran Envoy Condemns Israel's Cyber Terrorism in Lebanon



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's UN ambassador has strongly condemned Israel's acts of terrorism against Lebanon, saying the Zionist Israeli regime must be held accountable for the heinous crime.

Amir Saeid Irvani made the remarks while addressing an emergency meeting of the UN General Assembly on Tuesday on the Illegal Israeli Actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

He condemned the Tel Aviv regime for blowing up communication systems in Beirut through cyber terrorism resulting in deaths and injuries of thousands of people, including the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Iranian envoy offered his condolences to the families of the victims and the Lebanese government, and strongly condemned the act of sabotage and terrorism.

In his speech, Irvani also called on the world body to accept Palestine as a full member and reconsider Israel's membership for its constant violations of international law and norms.

He called Israel's aggressions in Gaza and across the West Bank, long-lasting threats to peace and security.

The envoy urged the UN to find effective measures to put an end to the regime's violations.

Irvani also slammed Israel's total impunity for killing and displacing Palestinians and occupying their lands.

A number of the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah as well as civilians were killed and thousands more wounded after wireless communication devices, known as pagers, exploded in different locations across the country on Tuesday.

The Lebanese health ministry said at least nine people were killed and 2,800 others wounded in the explosions that were first reported in the southern suburbs of Beirut.

"Patients are being transferred to different governorates in Lebanon as hospitals in southern Lebanon have exceeded their capacity," the ministry stated.

Among those killed are a 9-year-old girl and son of a lawmaker affiliated with Hezbollah, Press TV correspondent in Beirut Mariam Saleh said in a report from the Lebanese capital.

The little girl has been identified as Fatima Jafar Abdullah while the young man is Mahdi Ammar, son of 'Loyalty to the Resistance' bloc MP Ali Ammar.

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



President Says Iranians Are Not Warmongers

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian underlined that Iranians are not belligerent and quarrelsome, and said that next week he will go to UN in New York to defend the rights of the Iranian people.

"We are not warmongers and we are not looking for a fight and to conquer the country. In the past 200 years, you have not seen Iran invade a country even once in history, but they have made a face of us that is unfair," President Pezeshkian said.

The Iranian president continued that they have imposed all the problems on us.

"They have established the Zionist regime in the region and armed it to the teeth, then they tell us that you should not have any weapons that the Zionists can bomb us whenever they want," President Pezeshkian added.

The Iranian president reiterated that look at it from any angle, it is against human rights and international laws, masculinity and humanity.

President Pezeshkian stressed that if they are going to say force, "we will not bow to force".

Meanwhile at the beginning of Unity Week, Pezeshkian, in a meeting with a group of Sunni scholars and elders, congratulated the occasion of the birth of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Imam Jafar Sadiq (AS). He emphasized: "From the beginning, our message and slogan were unity, coherence, and harmony, and it is by the will of God that the first press conference of the 14th government coincides with this day, which we consider a good omen."

The president, referring to the actions of the Holy Prophet in striving to create and strengthen brotherhood upon entering Medina and during the conquest of Mecca, raised the question: "Are we truly following the words and practices of the Prophet of Mercy today?" He added, "The result of our actions is the same divisions that have ensnared us, allowing the Zionist regime to dare to so brazenly shed the blood of innocent and oppressed Palestinian women and children, who are like the honor of Muslims."

The president, noting that Muslims share one God, one book, and one prophet, but still disagree on God's clear commandments, the Quran, and the Prophet's teachings on unity, described this division as a form of rebellion against God. He stated, "In our religious teachings, resolving disputes and fostering unity is more important than prayer and fasting. In the 14th government, we have so far tried to practically implement this religious command,

and we will continue to do so in the future."

Dr. Pezeshkian described the greatest virtue as unity and cohesion, and the most dangerous vice as division and discord. He emphasized, "We should worry for Islam and cry out 'Woe to Islam' when we become so consumed by our internal differences that a criminal regime, under the cover of our silence and indifference, can shed the blood of innocent women and children."

In another part of his speech, Dr. Pezeshkian reiterated, "We firmly believe that a faithful and Muslim woman should have modesty and hijab. There is no disagreement on this, but acting on this issue in a way that the enemy can exploit is dangerous and harmful. Our religious zeal should be ignited by the oppression, injustice, and shedding of the innocent blood of Palestinians in Gaza."

Dr. Pezeshkian, acknowledging the difficulty of implementing these words, said, "I know very well that it is not easy to act on this, but I will strive to the best of my ability to do so. For example, until today, there has not been a Sunni individual among the government members, but now one of the vice presidents is Sunni. We will work to appoint the most capable individuals to positions of responsibility, regardless of ethnicity, race, sect, language, or factional affiliations."

The president also expressed uncertainty about whether God would forgive us for creating the divisions that today are based solely on personal closeness and friendships rather than individuals' abilities. He added, "Let us, during Unity Week, sincerely strive to resolve our differences, strengthen coherence and unity, and thereby work to eliminate discrimination, injustice, poverty, corruption, favoritism, and bribery. The opportunity to solve problems is one of the greatest blessings God has given us, and we must be very careful not to squander this blessing."

Before the president's speech, several Sunni scholars and elders also expressed their views, demands, and criticisms of certain restrictions, including the issue of the admission of Sunni students into universities through the national entrance exam. Dr. Pezeshkian promised to address these concerns.

Iran-Russia Ties Will Continue to Expand on Lasting Basis



TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian says relations between Iran and Russia will continue to expand along a permanent and lasting path.

Pezeshkian said boosting cooperation between Tehran and Moscow will undermine the effectiveness of sanctions and the unjust actions against both countries.

Pezeshkian made the remarks in a meeting with Russia's Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu in the capital Tehran on Tuesday afternoon, emphasizing the history of constructive relations between the two sides.

"The fourteenth government will seriously pursue the ongoing cooperation and efforts aimed at enhancing the level of relations between the two countries," Pezeshkian stated.

Referring to Shoigu's comments about the preparations for a meeting between presidents of the two countries on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Kazan, Pezeshkian expressed hope that such a meeting would lead to fruitful discussions and agreements on bilateral, regional, and international cooperation between Iran and Russia, including within the frameworks of BRICS, Shanghai, and the Eurasian Economic Union.

Shoigu, for his part, emphasized that Russian President Vladimir Putin had asked him to convey to the senior Iranian officials that Russia's position on cooperation with Iran on regional issues has not changed.

"Mr. Putin is eagerly looking forward to meeting with you on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia," Shoigu told Pezeshkian.

Earlier in the day, Shoigu also met with Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Akbar Ahmadian and reviewed the agreements reached between the two countries, reiterating support for Iran's policy regarding corridors and transportation routes with the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Shoigu arrived in Tehran based on Putin's order to follow up on the agreements made during the visit of Ahmadian to St. Petersburg.

Tehran Strongly Condemns EU Statement Against Iran



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman has condemned as "destructive" the recent statement of the European Union against Tehran.

Nasser Kanaani made the remarks in a statement, a day after the High Representative of the European Union as well as the foreign ministers of the United States, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, issued separate statements regarding the human rights situation in Iran.

Kanaani said the EU has made another "strategic mistake" by repeating its baseless accusations against the Islamic Republic.

The Iranian official went on to say that the High Representative of the European Union, under the pressure of certain lobbies, is continuing to insist on previous wrong approaches without paying attention to the facts, adding that the bloc has made another strategic mistake and in a biased approach, is repeating baseless claims about the Islamic Republic.

He also urged EU officials to refrain from making "absurd and fruitless accusations and continuing their failed anti-Iranian policies, and instead have a realistic understanding of the deep connection between the nation and the government by looking at the process of the 14th presidential elections in the country.

Hezbollah Vows to Continue Pro-Gaza Ops

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Hezbollah announced the martyrdom of 12 of its fighters in the early hours of Wednesday morning. It did not say if they were killed in the pager explosions or attacks elsewhere.

Hezbollah vows to continue its anti-Israeli strikes in support of the Gaza Strip, which is subject to a genocidal Israeli war, asserting that the recent Israeli atrocity that caused casualties in Lebanon will only strengthen its determination to continue the path of struggle and resistance.

"We are absolutely certain of victory," said a Wednesday statement by the movement.

The Hezbollah statement came after deadly simultaneous explosions across Lebanon on Tuesday.

According to reports, devices planted in wireless communication devices, known as pagers, were detonated in different locations.

In its latest update, the Lebanese health ministry said at least nine people had been killed and 2,800 others wounded in the explosions. The casualties include members of the resistance movement as well as civilians.

In the early hours of Wednesday morning, Hezbollah announced the martyrdom of 12 of its fighters. It did not say if they were killed in the pager explosions or attacks elsewhere.



Earlier, Hezbollah said that after examining all facts and available information about the attacks, it holds the Israeli regime "fully responsible for this criminal aggression."

"The Islamic Resistance in Lebanon will continue, today as in all the past days, its blessed operations in support of Gaza, its people, and its resistance," the group further said in its Wednesday statement.

The operations would also serve to "defend Lebanon, its people, and its sovereignty," it added.

The group also asserted that its ongoing pro-Gaza operations are "separate from the severe reckoning that the criminal enemy must face for the massacre it committed on Tuesday."

"That reckoning is another matter and it is surely coming," it said, besides condoling with the survivors of the blasts.

The Israeli regime launched the war on the Gaza Strip on October 7 in response to a retaliatory operation staged by Gaza's resistance groups. The brutal military onslaught has so far claimed the lives of at least 41,252 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured 95,497 others.

Hezbollah has been staging hundreds of strikes both in support of the war-hit Gazans and in retaliation for intensified Israeli attacks that have been targeting the Lebanese soil since the launch of the war on the Palestini

Path of the Fourteenth Government Is Peace, Engagement, and Consensus



TEHRAN - Seyyed Reza Salehi Amiri, during a joint meeting with ambassadors from member countries of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) held at the National Museum of Iran this evening, Tuesday, September 17, expressed: "I thank all the foreign ambassadors for attending this meeting. Your presence reflects the importance of the tourism sector and also highlights the Fourteenth Government's and the Islamic Republic's emphasis on developing relations in cultural fields, including tourism."

The Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts added: "The path of the Fourteenth Government and the Islamic Republic of Iran is one of peace, dialogue, and coexistence. Our motivation for holding this meeting is to encourage greater participation of ambassadors and tourism ministers in the upcoming ACD member countries' summit in Yazd."

Salehi Amiri continued: "The Fourteenth Government promises to pave the way towards peace, dialogue, coexistence, engagement, and consensus. In this meeting, we are thinking beyond tourism; tourism is a space for dialogue among nations alongside governmental interactions."

He reminded the audience: "The potential of the ACD member countries is very high. The population of this group includes hundreds of millions of tourists, which can significantly impact the development of public and cultural diplomacy."

The Minister concluded: "I ask all of you to work with us to present a beautiful, real, and safe image of Iran to the world during the ACD tourism ministers' summit in Yazd."

Also attending the ceremony were Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mehran Fatemi, Governor of Yazd, and a group of officials from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In this meeting, Mohammad Javad Zarif, Strategic Deputy to the President, Seyyed Reza Salehi Amiri, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, and Mehran Fatemi, Governor of Yazd, delivered speeches.

IRAN NEWS



Iran, Russia Call for Expansion of Ties in Nuclear Safety System

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Islamic Republic of Iran and Russia have stressed the need to expand cooperation in the nuclear safety system. Mohammad Reza Kardan, the deputy head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran held talks with the head of the Federal Environmental, Industrial and Nuclear Supervision Service (Rostekhnadzor), Alexander Trembitsky on Tuesday on the sidelines of the 68th Regular Session of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference.

The meeting was held in a bid to deepen cooperation between Tehran and Moscow in the areas of industrial and nuclear safety as well as environmental monitoring. At the meeting, Iran's proposal to create a network of nuclear regulatory bodies of BRICS member states was welcomed by the Russian side. The proposal is to be discussed at the upcoming summit of foreign ministers of BRICS member states.

Trust in the Capital Market Has Been Lost



TEHRAN - Economy Minister Abdolnaser Hemmati, during the ceremony for the appointment of the new head of the Securities and Exchange Organization, referred to this year's slogan and discussed the country's economic situation, stating: "The Central Bank's report shows that with the current trend, it is unlikely that the economic growth rate will even reach 4% by the end of the year."

He emphasized: "The weak performance of the financial market will hinder production development and prevent economic growth."

The Minister pointed to poor economic governance and stated: "We need capital for economic development, but trust in the capital market has been lost. I believe the new head of the Securities Organization must, first of all, roll up his sleeves to pursue the interests of the capital market. Second, he must communicate with the media and the people and address the rumors. The third important task of the head of the organization is to take serious action against corruption in the capital market operations."

Hemmati criticized the current condition and value of the stock market, stating: "What good is a \$140 billion market? The Securities Organization must ensure its actions lead to an increase in the market's value."

He also criticized the power and gas cuts in industries and remarked: "Apparently, few are aware of the damages and effects of this issue."

He further stressed the need to reform the mechanism for setting the NIMA exchange rate and urged Dr. Seydi to seriously pursue the interests of the capital market during the budget drafting process.

Hemmati criticized the high interest rates and their impact on inflation and the stagnation of the stock market, stating: "The only non-inflationary way to finance is through the capital market. We all need to help restore trust in the stock market so that it can once again play a key role in financing."



TEHRAN - During the meeting between the Hungarian ambassador to Tehran and the president of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, the suitable areas for cooperation between Iran and Hungary were outlined. This came alongside a reference to the fifth joint commission between the two countries, which is scheduled to be held early next year.

Sammad Hasanzadeh, the president of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, highlighted the past meetings of the joint economic commission and said: "Considering Hungary's geographical location in Europe and the friendly relations between the two countries, we are striving to expand our economic relations with Hungary."

He continued: "We need the cooperation of embassies to advance our commercial goals, and governments need to support the private sector because there are capacities to strengthen relations in various fields. Iran has made significant progress in industries such as food, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, etc. However, achieving only \$36 million in trade between Iran and Hungary is very limited."

Hasanzadeh also mentioned Hungary's significant activity in the automotive sector and noted that Iran has also succeeded in producing auto parts to global standards. Therefore, the two countries can cooperate in car production and enter the global market together.

He believes that food industries, home appliances, electronics, petrochemicals, tourism, student exchanges, and other areas are good grounds for cooperation between Iran and Hungary. The limited volume of trade so far is due to a lack of familiarity with each other's capacities. He suggested exchanging trade delegations to overcome this issue.

The president of the Iran Chamber of Commerce also highlighted the potential for joint cooperation in mining, stating that Hungary can meet its mineral needs through effective cooperation with Iran, as Iran has

substantial capacities in various mineral products.

He emphasized that Iran, while maintaining its sovereignty, is committed to engaging with all countries, a policy that will be actively pursued under the new government. He noted that it is necessary to prepare for an increase in trade relations and to create the right infrastructure for it.

Hasanzadeh also said that they are ready to welcome a Hungarian trade delegation to become more familiar with Iran's industrial, agricultural, and service capacities.

In response, Gyula Petho, the Hungarian ambassador to Tehran, expressed satisfaction with the ongoing friendly relations between the two countries. He pointed out that there are always untapped areas in the economy that can be identified and invested in.

According to him, the fifth joint commission between Iran and Hungary will be held in the first half of next year, and preparations for this meeting are being pursued by both sides.

Petho noted that the Hungarian embassy in Tehran is working to find new ways to strengthen and elevate relations between Iran and Hungary.

The ambassador said it is essential for the business communities of both countries to get to know each other better. During the fourth joint commission meeting, a business forum was held, and a similar event will be organized during the fifth meeting. This will allow businesspeople to become more acquainted with each other.

He referenced the successful organization of an exhibition by Iran in Budapest, where various Iranian products were showcased, followed by a smaller food industry exhibition held at the Iranian embassy in Budapest last February. Such activities are effective in influencing the level of relations, although the effects may not be immediate.

Iran, Russia Negotiating to Complete North-South Transport and Railway Corridors



TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development and the Senior Aide to the President of Russia discussed completing the North-South transport and railway corridors.

Igor Levitin, the Senior Aide to the Russian President and his special representative, during his tenth visit to Iran, met with Farzaneh Sadigh, Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development, to discuss the completion of the North-South transport and railway corridors.

This meeting is part of the two countries' efforts to strengthen infrastructure cooperation and develop international transport routes, playing a crucial role in improving regional economic and trade connectivity.

Levitin, who previously served as Russia's Minister of Transport for eight years, highlighted the importance of rail transport logistics.

Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development emphasized the necessity of maximizing the commercial use of existing rail capacities.

This mega-project is one of the largest rail projects in the country, connecting Iran to Russia and European countries through Azerbaijan.

The North-South Corridor, established following the signing of an agreement on September 12, 2000, between the governments of Iran, Russia, and India, has now been approved by 13 countries, including Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Armenia, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Oman, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Ukraine. It links Northern and Western Europe, the Russian Federation, the Caucasus, the Persian Gulf (Western route), Central Asia, the Persian Gulf (Eastern route), the Caspian Sea, Iran, and the Persian Gulf (Central route).

Development of Iran-Burkina Faso Requires Enhanced Trade Information



TEHRAN - The President of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture stated that the lack of up-to-date trade information on the economic capacities and joint cooperation between traders of Iran and Burkina Faso is a major obstacle to the development of trade relations between the two countries.

In a meeting with Mohammad Kabore, the Ambassador of Burkina Faso to Iran, Samad Hasanzadeh said: "We must address this issue through cooperation between the Iran Chamber of Commerce and the embassies of both countries. In this regard, we invite a trade delegation from Burkina Faso to visit Iran and become familiar with our country's capabilities firsthand."

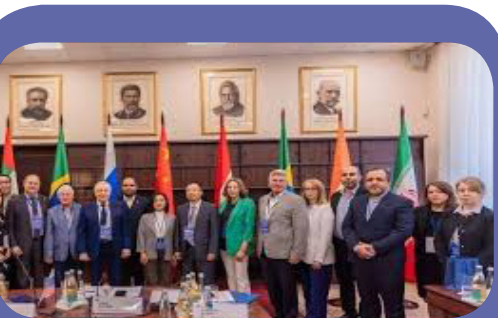
Emphasizing the importance of holding in-person and webinar sessions to familiarize traders from both countries with each other's trade potentials, he added: "Iran has significant capacities in the production of building materials, steel, cabinets, tiles and ceramics, petrochemicals and related raw materials and downstream products, minerals, precious and decorative stones, copper and cobalt, technical and engineering services, power plant construction, road building, advanced agricultural and industrial technology, and leather industries with very competitive prices."

The President of Iran's Chamber also highlighted Iran's capabilities in the production of medicine and medical equipment according to international standards, noting that, since medicine is not subject to sanctions, it provides an excellent opportunity for cooperation between the two countries.

Hasanzadeh emphasized that the Iran Chamber is ready for all kinds of cooperation with the embassies of both countries to comprehensively introduce collaboration opportunities and enhance trade relations between Iran and Burkina Faso.

During the meeting, Mohammad Kabore, the Ambassador of Burkina Faso to Iran, said that the chambers of both countries, under the umbrella of good political relations between the governments of Iran and Burkina Faso, should develop their relations. He added that the Embassy of Burkina Faso in Iran will make every effort to transfer trade information from Iran to Burkinabe traders and, conversely, to share investment opportunities in Burkina Faso with Iranian traders.

He also pointed out that the embassy is beginning to support sending trade delegations from Iran to Burkina Faso. "By sending and receiving trade delegations, we can showcase the capacities and form real partnerships between the traders of the two countries," he said.



BRICS Welcomes Iran's Proposal on Creating a Joint Spatial Data Infrastructure

MOSCOW (IRNA) - The Head of the National Cartographic Center of Iran, in a speech at the third BRICS meeting on geospatial technologies and their applications, hosted by Moscow, Russia's capital, outlined the achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran in this field. He proposed the creation of a Joint Spatial Data Infrastructure (BRICS SDI), which was welcomed by the member countries.

According to report from the delegation of the National Cartographic Center of Iran in Moscow, Ali Javidaneh, who traveled to Russia on the official invitation of Russia's Federal Service for State Registration, Cadastre, and Cartography (Rosreestr), emphasized in his speech the undeniable importance of cartography and geospatial information in achieving sustainable development.

He said: "Sharing the knowledge and experiences of BRICS members in this meeting will significantly contribute to achieving the goals of this group."

He noted that this cooperation and synergy will not only enhance the technical capabilities of the participants in cartography but will also accelerate and bring cohesion to sustainable development across the member countries.

The Head of the National Cartographic Center also stated: "Maps and geospatial information are vital tools for the sustainable development of societies, providing the necessary data for informed decision-making, effective planning, and economic growth. Therefore, this working group plays a pivotal role in achieving BRICS' objectives."

Ramin Papi, head of the National Geospatial Department of the National Cartographic Center, accompanied Javidaneh at this two-day meeting, which concluded on Tuesday, September 17, 2024.

In this meeting, representatives of the National Cartographic Center presented the organization's new actions, capabilities, and achievements in modern technologies, including aerial imaging, land and fundamental surveying, hydrography, management of spatial information infrastructure, and applied spatial analysis.

The Iranian delegation raised several topics, including the proposal to establish a Joint Spatial Data Infrastructure (BRICS SDI), which was well-received by the participants. It was decided that the necessary steps to implement this proposal would be taken.

On Tuesday, coinciding with the second day of the meeting, the text of the working group's memorandum on geospatial information was finalized with the active participation of Iranian representatives.

Iran, South Africa Collaborate to Strengthen Mineral Processing Expertise



TEHRAN - The acting head of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) announced that enhancing relations with international mineral research centers to strengthen technical knowledge in mineral processing is one of IMIDRO's key programs.

Mohammad Aghajanolou stated during a ceremony for the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Mintek Research Center of South Africa. He noted that the signing of the MoU paves the way for the development of joint relations between Iran's Mineral Processing Research Center (a subsidiary of IMIDRO) and Mintek, which can help achieve some of the objectives of the seventh development plan in the field of mineral processing.

He added that enhancing the export of processed mineral products could be one of the benefits and outcomes of strengthening ties with international research and academic centers. Aghajanolou expressed hope that this recent step would help Iran's mining sector take advantage of such opportunities.

He also highlighted that last year, significant investment was made in upgrading the equipment of Iran's Mineral Processing Research Center to open up new pathways for mineral processing development.

According to the report, in the ceremony attended by the IMIDRO acting head, the MoU was signed between Ziaeldin Pourkarimi, the head of Iran's Mineral Processing Research Center, and Mehdi Safari, the processing manager of South Africa's Mintek.

India's Disputed Kashmir Votes After Special Status Scrapped

SRINAGAR (Dispatches) - Indian-administered Kashmir began voting Wednesday in the first local elections since the cancellation of its special semi-autonomous status sparked fury in the troubled Himalayan territory, which is also claimed by Pakistan.

Many in the disputed Muslim-majority territory of 8.7 million registered voters remain bitter over the 2019 order by the Hindu-nationalist government of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to impose control from New Delhi.

A federally appointed governor has controlled the territory since, with the first regional assembly election in a decade viewed by many as being more about exercising their democratic rights than practical policies.

Voters queued under heavy security in the three-phased elections -- the first for the territory's assembly since 2014 -- staggered geographically due to security arrangements and logistical challenges in the mountainous region.



New Apparent Trump Assassination Attempt Highlights Secret Service Strains



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Two months after Donald Trump narrowly survived an assassination attempt, a gunman hid undetected for nearly 12 hours on the edge of the golf course where Trump played on Sunday under the protection of an agency that is being pushed to its limits. As the 2024 presidential election enters its final stretch, the U.S. Secret Service is operating with about 400 fewer employees than Congress has authorized, government records show.

The problem is not likely to be fixed before the Nov. 5 election, as the agency typically takes more than 200 days to fill open positions.

Since President Joe Biden ended his re-election bid in July and Vice President Kamala Harris took over as the Democratic presidential candidate in a tight race against the Republican Trump, the Secret Service has had to expand its protective coverage to a wider group of officials. That has placed unprecedented strains on the agency, according to interviews with three former Secret Service agents and a former head of the department that oversees it.

"The pace, the expectations, the pressure has never been worse than it is right now," Kenneth Valentine, a former agent, said in a phone interview. Trump's desire to golf, in private, at one of his Florida clubs on Sunday also meant that agents did not perform the sort of routine site survey that might have led them to find the alleged gunman before Trump came within a few hundred yards of where the man had holed up for hours, with food, near the fifth hole of the Trump International golf course.

Russia Intensifies Disinformation Ops Against Harris Campaign

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Russian operatives are ramping up disinformation operations to malign Vice President Kamala Harris's campaign by disseminating conspiracy-laden videos, Microsoft said Tuesday, amid heightened alert over foreign influence operations targeting the US election.

The report comes after the US government accused Russia's state news agency RT earlier this month of seeking to influence the presidential election in November and imposed sanctions on its top editors.

Starting in late August, a Kremlin-aligned influence group called Storm-1516 produced two fake videos to discredit the campaign of Harris and her running mate Tim Walz, Microsoft said in a report. Both videos garnered millions of views.

One video purported to show a group of alleged Harris supporters attacking a supposed Trump rally attendee, while the second featured an actor peddling fabricated claims that Harris paralyzed a girl in a 2011 hit-and-run case.

This second video was disseminated through a website posing as a local San Francisco media outlet, the report said.

A second Russian group, known as Storm-1679, pivoted its focus from the 2024 Paris Olympic Games to publish false videos discrediting Harris.

"The shift to focusing on the Harris-Walz campaign reflects a strategic move by Russian actors aimed at exploiting any perceived vulnerabilities in the candidates," said Clint Watts, general manager of the Microsoft Threat Analysis Center. "As we inch closer to the election, we should expect Russian actors to continue to use cyber proxies and hacktivist groups to amplify their messages through media websites and social channels geared to spread divisive political content, staged videos, and AI-enhanced propaganda," Watts added.

Israel Planted Explosives in 5,000 Hezbollah's Pagers

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Israel's Mossad spy agency planted explosives inside 5,000 pagers imported by Lebanese group Hezbollah months before Tuesday's detonations, a senior Lebanese security source and another source told Reuters.

The operation was an unprecedented Hezbollah security breach that saw thousands of pagers detonate across Lebanon, killing nine people and wounding nearly 3,000 others, including the group's fighters and Iran's envoy to Beirut.

The Lebanese security source said the pagers were from Taiwan-based Gold Apollo, but the company said in a statement it did not manufacture the devices. It said they were made by a company called BAC which has a license to use its brand, but gave no more details.

Iran-backed Hezbollah has vowed to retaliate against Israel, whose military declined to comment on the blasts.

Hezbollah said in a statement on Wednesday that "the resistance will continue today, like any other day, its operations to support Gaza, its people and its resistance which is a separate path from the harsh punishment that the criminal enemy (Israel) should await in response to Tuesday's massacre".

The plot appears to have been many months in the making, several sources told Reuters.

The senior Lebanese security source said the group had ordered 5,000 beepers from Gold Apollo, which several sources say were brought into the country earlier this year.

Gold Apollo founder Hsu Ching-Kuang said the pagers used in the explosion were made by a company in Europe that had the right to use the firm's brand, the name of which he could not immediately confirm. The company in a statement named BAC as the firm, but Hsu declined to comment on its location.

"The product was not ours. It was only that it had our brand on it," Hsu told reporters at the company's offices in the northern Taiwanese city of New Taipei on Wednesday.

The senior Lebanese security source identified a photograph of the model of the pager, an AP924, which like other pagers wirelessly receive and display text messages but cannot make telephone calls.

Gold Apollo said in a statement that the AR-924 model was produced and sold by BAC.

"We only provide brand trademark authorisation and have no involvement in the design or manufacturing of this product," the statement said.

Hezbollah fighters have been using pagers as a low-tech means of communication in an attempt to evade Israeli location-tracking, two sources familiar with the group's operations told Reuters this year.

But the senior Lebanese source said the devices had been modified by Israel's spy service "at the production level."

"The Mossad injected a board inside of the device that has explosive material that receives a code. It's very hard to detect it through any means. Even with any device or scanner," the source said.

The source said 3,000 of the pagers exploded when a coded message was sent to them, simultaneously activating the explosives. Another security source told Reuters that up to three grams of explosives were hidden in the new pagers and had gone "undetected" by Hezbollah for months.

Hsu said he did not know how the pagers could have been rigged to explode.

Israeli officials did not immediately respond to Reuters requests for comment.

Images of destroyed pagers analysed by Reuters showed a format and stickers on the back that were consistent with pagers made by Gold Apollo.

Hezbollah was reeling from the attack, which left fighters and others bloodied, hospitalised or dead. One Hezbollah official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the detonation was the group's "biggest security breach" since the Gaza conflict between Israel and Hezbollah ally Hamas erupted on Oct. 7.

"This would easily be the biggest counterintelligence failure that Hezbollah has had in decades," said Jonathan Panikoff, the U.S. government's former deputy national intelligence officer on the Middle East.

In February, Hezbollah drew up a war plan that aimed to address gaps in the group's intelligence infrastructure. Around 170 fighters had already been killed in targeted Israeli strikes on Lebanon, including one senior commander and a top Hamas official in Beirut.

In a televised speech on Feb. 13, the group's Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah sternly warned supporters that their phones were more dangerous than Israeli spies, saying they should break, bury or lock them in an iron box.

Instead, the group opted to distribute pagers to Hezbollah members across the group's various branches - from fighters to medics working in its relief services.

The explosions maimed many Hezbollah members, according to footage from hospitals reviewed by Reuters. Wounded men had injuries of varying degrees to the face, missing fingers and gaping wounds at the hip where the pagers were likely worn.

"We really got hit hard," said the senior Lebanese security source, who has direct knowledge of the group's probe into the explosions.

The pager blasts came at a time of mounting concern about tensions between Israel and Hezbollah, which have been engaged in cross-border warfare since the Gaza conflict erupted last October.

North Korea Launches Second Set of Short-Range Ballistic Missiles in One Week

SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korea continued a series of provocative maneuvers early Wednesday when, for the second time since Thursday, it fired a second round of short ballistic missiles - a move experts say could be linked to the isolated country's suspected illicit supplying of arms to Russia.

North Korea fired a salvo of short-range ballistic missiles early Wednesday, Seoul's military said, Pyongyang's second such weapons test in a week.

Leader Kim Jong Un's regime has staged dozens of launches this year, part of a testing spree that experts say could be linked to North Korea's alleged illicit supplying of weapons to ally Russia for use in Ukraine.

Pyeongyang has denied any sanctions-busting weapons trade with Russia, but with diplomacy long stalled, it declared South Korea its "principal enemy" this year and recently moved nuclear-capable weapons to border areas.

The launch follows North Korea's recent dispatch of its foreign minister to Moscow -- a key supporter of Kim's regime -- for her second visit in less than a year.

The North is also preparing for a parliamentary meeting in October that is expected to approve measures likely to escalate tensions with South Korea, including incorporating the hostile relationship between the two Koreas into its constitution.



Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said it had "detected and (was) analysing several short-range ballistic missiles launched to the northeast

around 06:50 (2150 GMT)".

"In preparation for additional launches, our military has strengthened monitoring and vigilance, while closely sharing information," with allies Tokyo and Washington, it added.

Tokyo also confirmed the launch, with the country's coastguard saying one missile had splashed down already.

"Vessels please pay attention to information coming ahead and if you spot fallen objects please don't approach closer but report it to the coastguard," it said in a statement.

Japan's Defence Minister Minoru Kihara later said the missiles "appear to have landed on around the eastern coast of North Korea's inland area," and therefore "are outside Japan's EEZ", adding no damage was reported.

Seoul's military said the missiles were fired from the North's Kaechon area in South Phyongan Province, and flew about 400 kilometres (250 miles).

"North Korea's missile launch is a clear act of provocation that seriously threatens peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, and we strongly condemn it," Seoul's JCS said in a statement.

Last Thursday, the North fired what Seoul described as multiple short range ballistic missiles into waters east of the Korean peninsula, the nuclear-armed country's first major weapons test since early July.

Venezuela Arrests Fourth American Over Alleged Plot Against Maduro



CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuela said it had arrested a fourth US citizen over what it claims was a plot to assassinate President Nicolas Maduro in the aftermath of elections the opposition claims he stole.

The American, who joins three compatriots, two Spaniards and a Czech held by Venezuela, was arrested in Caracas after "taking photos of electrical installations, oil facilities, military units," Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello said.

He told parliament the man was "part of the plot against Venezuela, the plot against our country" which he said included a plan to "assassinate President Nicolas Maduro" and others, including himself.

On Saturday, Cabello had announced the arrest of the other six foreigners, whom he claimed worked for intelligence agencies and the Venezuelan opposition in the supposed plot to get rid of Maduro.

Washington, Madrid and Prague, which have denied involvement in any such plot, on Monday demanded information from Venezuela about their citizens.

Maduro said Monday they had all "confessed."

His regime has been at loggerheads with much of the international community since disputed July 28 elections in

which the socialist strongman claimed to have won a third six-year term.

The European Union and several Latin American states have refused to accept the election result without Caracas providing a full breakdown of the vote tally, which it has not done.

The United States has said there is "overwhelming evidence" that opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia won.

Venezuela on Tuesday lodged an official protest with the European Union after the bloc's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell described Maduro's government as "dictatorial".

Borrell made the remarks in an interview broadcast in Spain Sunday.

"The head of the opposition had to flee.... What do you call all that? Of course it is a dictatorial regime," he said, adding more than 2,000 people had been "detained arbitrarily."

"Venezuela held elections, but it was not a democracy before, and it is much less so after."

Venezuela's deputy foreign minister for Europe, Coromoto Godoy, wrote on social network X Tuesday that she had handed a "note of protest" to the head of the EU delegation in Caracas.

"We will no longer tolerate any interference... The European Union should take care of its own problems," she added.

Venezuela's opposition has published its own count of polling station-level ballots, which it says show Gonzalez Urrutia had won by a landslide.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE

Switchboard: (+98) (21) 44253448
 Public Relations Tel: (+98)(21) 44253450
 Editorial Board: 44253449
 Public Relations Fax: (+98)(21) 44253395
 Advertising Department:

Tel/Fax: (+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234
 Website: <http://www.irannewsdaily.com>
 E-Mail Address: info@irannewsdaily.com
 ISSN 1024-6053 P.O. Box: 15875-8551
 Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St, Golestan

St. Marzadaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
 Distributed by: Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute
 Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl



Bayern, Mbappé and Liverpool Shine as New UCL League Phase Kicks Off

LONDON (Dispatches) - European football's most coveted competition debuted its new format on Tuesday, foregoing its classic 'group stage' games for a giant league comprised of all 36 teams. Bayern Munich scored a record-breaking nine goals against Dinamo Zagreb and Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappé registered his first for the reigning champions, while both Liverpool and newcomers Aston Villa recorded wins.

Bayern Munich became the first team to score nine goals in a game in the modern Champions League as the new format of Europe's elite club competition kicked off on Tuesday, with title holders Real Madrid and Liverpool also among the winners.

Harry Kane scored four goals, including three penalties, as Vincent Kompany's Bayern hammered Croatian champions Dinamo Zagreb 9-2 at the Allianz Arena.

Michael Olise scored twice on his Champions League debut, while Raphael Guerreiro, Leroy Sane and Leon Goretzka were also on target for the home team in Germany.

Dinamo were 3-0 down at the break but scored twice in two minutes just after half-time to give the hosts a scare, with Bruno Petkovic and Takuya Ogiwara on target. But Bayern then scored six times from the 57th minute onwards.

"An amazing game, a bit of a crazy game," Kane told broadcaster DAZN.

"It's the first time I've scored three (penalties) in a game. That doesn't happen at all really."

Bayern had been the last team to score eight in a Champions League match, when they beat Barcelona 8-2 in the quarter-finals in 2020.

It was a remarkable way to mark the opening night of the brand-new Champions League, with the

competition now featuring 36 teams all pooled together in one giant league instead of the old group stage.

Every participant now plays eight games against eight different opponents, with the top eight teams at the end of the league phase advancing automatically to the last 16.

Those finishing from ninth to 24th will go through to a play-off round to decide the remaining sides in the last 16, while the bottom 12 will be eliminated.

UEFA, European football's governing body, introduced the new format to ward off the threat of a breakaway Super League by the biggest clubs, but it also hopes the changes will breathe new life into the competition.

There was plenty of excitement around the continent on Tuesday, with reigning champions Madrid made to work hard before beating VfB Stuttgart 3-1 at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Kylian Mbappé marked his first game in the competition with Real by scoring the opening goal just after half-time.

However, Deniz Undav equalised midway through the second half for a Stuttgart side appearing in the Champions League for the first time since 2010.

Real nevertheless emerged victorious as Antonio Rudiger headed them back in front against his old side seven minutes from time, and Brazilian youngster Endrick got the third goal in stoppage time.

"I know I can do more, each game I feel better and now I'm scoring goals, and I'm happy here," new signing Mbappé told broadcaster Movistar.

"What we know is that the Champions League has changed and it's important to win quickly to see if we can qualify quickly or not."

Borg Sees Shades of Himself in Nadal



LONDON (Dispatches) - Bjorn Borg recently shared his admiration for Rafael Nadal, stating that he sees similarities between himself and the Spaniard. Both Borg and the Spaniard grew up playing on clay courts, which the Swede believes has influenced their playing styles.

Borg is widely regarded as one of the greatest tennis players of all time, having won 11 singles Grand Slam titles and achieved the World No.1 ranking. He is also the only man to have won the Channel Slam (winning both the French Open and Wimbledon in a year) three times. Borg's dominance on clay is evident in his six French Open titles, including four consecutive wins from 1978 to 1981.

In comparison, Rafael Nadal has amassed an impressive 22 singles Grand Slam titles, with a record 14 of them coming on the clay courts at Roland Garros. His 81-match win streak on clay from 2005 to 2007 is also the longest on a single surface in the Open Era.

During a recent interview with The Athletic, Bjorn Borg was asked to name a modern player who reminds him of himself. In response, Borg pointed to Rafael Nadal and expressed that it was because both he and the Spaniard grew up playing on clay courts.

Borg also praised the 22-time Grand Slam champion's "unbelievable" and "fantastic" style of play on clay courts.

"I grew up on clay. Nadal grew up on clay. He's the one. To see him play on clay courts, it's so fantastic. He's unbelievable. I can relate to how he knows how to move players around the court," Bjorn Borg said.

Earlier this year, on an episode of The AO Show podcast, Paul McNamee likened playing on clay to a game of chess. He then went on to name Bjorn Borg and Rafael Nadal as the "grand masters" of clay courts.

"Rafa and Bjorn Borg are far and away are the two grand masters, we can call them, of chess, because clay is chess at the end of the day. Hard court is draught, so they're different games. One is linear and one is angular. One has nuances, one does not. So, a clay court is a chess board," McNamee said.

Man Utd Hit Barnsley for Seven in League Cup Rout

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United crushed Barnsley 7-0 as troubled winger Antony scored his first goal this season and Marcus Rashford struck twice to extend his revival in the League Cup third round on Tuesday.

While United ran riot, Fulham made unwanted history as the Premier League club were beaten by second-tier Preston 16-15 on penalties after the tournament's longest ever shoot-out.

Languishing in 10th place in the Premier League after two defeats in their first four games, United were never in danger of an upset against their third-tier opponents at Old Trafford.

Rashford, Antony and Alejandro Garnacho all netted before half-time to effectively seal United's second successive victory after Saturday's Premier League win at Southampton.

Rashford and Garnacho each scored again after the interval and Christian Eriksen's double wrapped up United's biggest win since boss Erik ten Hag arrived from Ajax in 2022.

"It is the first time this team is playing together. Once we found our patterns we scored some great goals," Ten Hag said.

"We played with a lot of speed and were ruthless. The key was the right attitude and to be 100 percent concentrated."

"Last season was for everyone difficult, but we ended with the FA Cup. We hit our target and that is what we aim for this season, we want to progress."

Despite promising to take the League Cup "very seriously", Ten Hag made eight changes, with Manuel Ugarte handed his first start after the midfielder's arrival from Paris Saint-Germain.

Ten Hag's raft of switches were no hindrance for United as they made a flying start to their bid to win the tournament for the second time in three seasons.

The Dutchman had described Rashford as being like a bottle of



tomato ketchup after he scored his first goal of the season at Southampton last weekend.

Having rarely scored during a difficult campaign last season, Ten Hag claimed Rashford would enjoy a spurt of success after breaking his duck.

His prediction looked spot on in the 16th minute as Garnacho's raking pass picked out Rashford and he cut inside Marc Roberts before firing high past Barnsley keeper Gaga Slonina into the top corner.

It was the first time the 26-year-old had scored in successive games since March.

Antony was making his first start this season and the out-of-favour Brazilian international converted a 35th-minute penalty after being fouled by Slonina as he ran through on goal.

Garnacho stabbed in United's third goal from close range in first-half stoppage time.

Garnacho netted again in the 49th minute, sprinting onto Eriksen's pass and slotting home.

Rashford bagged his brace in the 58th minute, taking Garnacho's pass and finishing with aplomb.

With Barnsley utterly outclassed, Eriksen steered in two clinical finishes in the 81st and 85th minutes.

At Deepdale, it took 34 penalties in total before Preston beat Fulham after their 1-1 draw.

At 15-15 in the shoot-out after a miss from each team, Fulham's Timothy Castagne blazed over and Preston's Ryan Ledson calmly netted the winner.

The previous League Cup shoot-out record was set in 2016 when Derby beat Carlisle 14-13.

Djokovic Hints at Early End to ATP Tour Campaign



LONDON (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic has given an insight into the future of his tennis career, sharing with media in Bulgaria on Tuesday that he may end his season early.

"For the first time in my career, I don't have any long-term plans," said Djokovic, speaking at an exhibition in Sophia before playing long-time friend Grigor Dimitrov.

"I live in the moment and I'll see what happens."

"Today I'm going to play in Sofia against Grigor, then in China, and then in an exhibition tournament in Saudi Arabia."

"After that, I don't know. We'll see how I feel and we'll judge."

"Family life is very important to me. I want to be with my wife and children, to be part of their daily lives, which I haven't been able to do for many years."

The only ATP tournament Djokovic is registered for this year is the Masters 1000 event in Shanghai, taking place from October 2-13.

However, there are two other major competitions remaining in the tennis calendar: the Paris Masters and the ATP Finals.

If he opts to end his season after the Chinese tournament, it will be the first time since 2017 that he has not competed at the year-end finals in Turin.

The Serbian sits ninth in the Race to Turin and would need a strong performance in Shanghai to even make the top eight and qualify.

Last week, Djokovic made it clear that chasing a spot in Turin was not a priority for him this season.

"Torino is not my goal at all, to be honest," the 37-year-old explained.

"I am not chasing ATP Finals, I am not chasing the rankings etc."

"As far as I am concerned, I am done with those tournaments for my career."

"My main priorities are playing for the national team and Slams, everything else is less important."

Despite Djokovic's laissez-faire approach to his future, tennis bookmakers are still confident he will begin his 2025 season strong.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion is the early favourite to win next year's Australian Open — an event he has won 10 times.

Lionel Messi, Inter Miami Hit Road to Face Atlanta United

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Lionel Messi will travel with Inter Miami for a road match against Atlanta United, but the Herons will be short-handed when they try to move closer to securing the 2024 MLS Supporters' Shield.

Miami coach Tata Martino confirmed Messi will be with the team on a two-match road trip that begins at Atlanta and continues at New York City FC on Saturday. The plan comes after Messi played his first match in roughly two months during Saturday's 3-1 home win over Philadelphia.

However, Messi's former Barcelona teammate Sergio Busquets will serve a yellow-card accumulation suspension Wednesday. Defender David Martinez departed Saturday's victory early with a right adductor strain, and Atlanta's artificial surface could convince Martino to limit the minutes of Messi, Luis Suarez and other veterans.

As Messi pointed out, if Miami (19-4-5, 62 points) did field a weakened team on Wednesday, it wouldn't be anything new.

"The truth is that throughout the year, we had a lot of bad luck with injuries," Messi said in Spanish after his first match



following an ankle ligament injury. "We were never at full strength. Due to one thing or another, we were always missing players."

"But the team always pushed forward. Today, we are in first place with a big lead, and deservedly so. Hopefully, we can finish at the top for what it means and for what's to come after as well."

Miami leads the Los Angeles Galaxy by seven points in the Supporters' Shield race and has a match in hand, and the Herons hold a 10-point Eastern Conference advantage on FC Cincinnati.

Meanwhile, Atlanta (8-13-7, 31 points) is in 10th place in the Eastern Conference and is fighting for its playoff life after a 2-0 upset defeat to 14th-place Nashville SC on Saturday. The loss ruined a bid for the club's first back-to-back wins since mid-March.

Interim coach Rob Valentino's squad begins Wednesday two points beneath the playoff line, with a match in hand on ninth-place D.C. United.

"I'm at a loss for words for that tonight," Valentino said of the Nashville performance. "I apologize to the people that watched that, and that won't be happening again. But we have to move on. I have no choice there."

Atlanta has scored one total goal in its last three MLS matches, and the club's three active goal-scoring leaders -- Saba Lobjanidze, Daniel Rios and Jamal Thiare -- are scoreless in the last four across all competitions.