

## Bomb hoax threats to Indian airlines spark chaos

AFP, New Delhi

More than 90 fake bomb threats have been made against flights operated by multiple Indian airlines this week, Indian media reported yesterday, sparking fear among passengers and global delays.

All flights landed safely, but the spate of threats has resulted in planes being diverted to Canada and Germany, and fighter jets scrambled to escort aircraft in the skies above Britain and Singapore.

India's government and civil aviation authorities have warned that "very strict action" will be taken.

New Delhi's civil aviation authorities have not said how many threats have been received in the past week, but the Times of India and broadcaster News18 reported more than 70 hoaxes targeting both domestic and international flights since October 13.



Smoke rises from the site of an Israeli airstrike that targeted the southern Lebanese border village of Khiam, where the Lebanese official media reported 14 strikes within minutes yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## RUSSIAN MEDDLING Moldova votes on EU future

AFP, Chisinau

Moldovans voted on Sunday in a presidential election and a referendum on joining the European Union, with fears of Russian meddling amid the war in neighbouring Ukraine.

The elections are a test of the former Soviet republic's pro-European turn under incumbent President Maia Sandu, who is seeking a second term.

Police made hundreds of arrests after discovering a massive vote-buying scheme, warning this week that up to a quarter of the ballots cast in the country of 2.6 million could be tainted by Russian cash.

Sandu, who beat a Moscow-backed incumbent in 2020, cut ties with Moscow and applied for Moldova to join the EU following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

She has repeatedly sounded the alarm about Russian efforts to interfere in the vote — a claim Moscow has rejected.

"We categorically reject these accusations," Russian state news agencies quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying on Monday.

Washington issued a fresh warning this week about suspected Russian interference, while the EU passed new sanctions on several Moldovans.

## SOUTH BEIRUT

# A city silenced by war

AFP, Beirut

Just a month ago, south Beirut's bustling streets were packed with traffic, families strolling about and youths in cafes, but now silence dominates the abandoned Hezbollah bastion, interrupted only by the sound of Israeli bombs.

Escalating Israeli attacks since late September, after nearly a year of low-intensity cross-border exchanges, have reduced much of the Lebanese capital's once densely-packed southern suburbs to rubble and sent many of its residents fleeing.

Braving the smell of rotting flesh that reeks from razed buildings, a few young men stood guard, dressed in black civilian clothes and occasionally driving around the ruins on their motorbikes.

They observed the odd car and the handful of displaced residents who come on foot, hastily checking on their apartment or collecting some belongings before heading back to safety.

"The young people told me not to stay too long because drones were constantly flying over and could strike at any time," said 32-year-old Mohammed, on a brief visit home to get more clothes.

Giving his first name only for security concerns, he said he first left on September 27, days into Israel's intense air campaign on Lebanon.

That day, massive Israeli strikes killed Hezbollah's elusive leader Hassan Nasrallah in the heart of the Iran-backed group's south Beirut stronghold, toppling several

apartment buildings and spreading fear of even greater violence.

"We left in a hurry and thought we would never see our house again," said Mohammed, adding that his neighbours had also fled.

The building was still standing, but many others have been damaged or destroyed.

**ATTACKS ON INFRASTRUCTURE**  
Cracks snaked down nearby buildings as torn-off asphalt and burst pipes leaked sewage and tap

water. Generators that long made up for daily power cuts after five years of economic crisis had also been blown to bits.

"About 320 buildings were destroyed in Beirut and its suburbs" in less than a month of war, Mona Fawaz of the Beirut Urban Lab told AFP.

The devastation has surpassed the damage caused by Israel's last war with Hezbollah in 2006, said Fawaz, who records cases of "urbicide", the destruction of cities in conflict, focusing now on Lebanon and the Gaza Strip.

She accused Israel of "deliberate targeting of what allows life to continue," including vital infrastructure unrelated to Hezbollah.

Hezbollah had completely rebuilt Beirut's south based on the existing urban plans from before the 2006 war, which had displaced about 100,000 people from the area.

During that 33-day war, "surveys list 1,332 severely damaged multi-storey apartment buildings, of which 281 were completely razed to the ground" in an area of about 20 square kilometres (eight square miles), said Fawaz.

The Burj al-Barajneh neighbourhood, unscathed in 2006, has been heavily damaged in the bombardment this time around.

**CHILDHOOD MEMORIES**  
Once again, families from south Beirut are forced to seek refuge elsewhere in the country or abroad.

Many live in rented apartments or with relatives, while others are crammed in schools-turned-shelters.

Hassan, 37, grew up in the Mraijeh district of Beirut's south, where Israeli jets targeted Hashem Safieddine, widely seen as Nasrallah's most likely successor.

Despite the bloodshed, he said Mraijeh will always remind him of his "friends, the games we used to play as children, the smell of freshly-baked bread in the morning, neighbours chatting and Ramadan festivities".

The supermarket he used to shop at is in ruins, with nearby shops, schools and buildings also reduced to rubble.

former US President Barack Obama took aim at Trump, comparing him to a grandfather whose bizarre behavior would spark worry after his rambling speeches and a strange dance party.

"So you would be worried if your grandpa started acting like this. You would... right? You'd like, call up your brother... be like, have you seen grandpa lately? What we gonna do?"

"But this is coming from somebody who wants unchecked power, wants the most powerful office on Earth, with the nuclear codes and all that," said Obama.

Earlier in the day, pop star Lizzo noted that "whether you're a Democrat or Republican or neither, you deserve a president who listens when you speak."

"You deserve a president who respects you when you protest. You deserve a president who understands that their job is to be a public servant," she said before emphasising that Harris offers just that.

**'ABOUT DAMN TIME'**  
Lizzo — who sported a suffragette white pantsuit as she addressed the crowd in Motor City — also drew cheers when urging listeners that America was more than ready for its first woman president, dropping a reference to her own hit song: "It's about damn time!"

## Leaked US docs reveal Israel's plans for strike on Iran

REUTERS

The United States is investigating the leak of a pair of highly classified intelligence documents describing Israel's preparations for a retaliatory strike on Iran, House Speaker Mike Johnson said yesterday.

The documents appear to have been prepared by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, describing US interpretations of Israeli Air Force and Navy planning based on satellite imagery from Oct. 15-16.

They began circulating last week on the Telegram messaging app. Israel has been planning a response to a ballistic-missile barrage carried out by Iran on Oct. 1, its second direct attack on Israel in six months. Israel has intensified its offensive in Gaza and Lebanon, days after the killing of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar.

## I have no documentary

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constitution, the prime minister's office shall become vacant if he/she resigns from the office at any time by handing the resignation letter to the president.

During the conversation, the president said, "At 10:30am on August 5, the Bangabhaban had gotten a call from the prime minister's residence, saying the honourable prime minister would visit the Bangabhaban to call on His Excellency the President. Right afterwards, preparations began at the Bangabhaban. But within an hour, another call came saying she [Hasina] won't be coming."

There was news of unrest everywhere, he said.

"[At the time] I don't know what's going to happen. I can't sit around and depend on rumours. So, I asked Military Secretary General Adil to find out [what is happening]. He had no news either. We were waiting, even watching the television scrolls. There was no news anywhere."

"At one point, I heard she had left the country. She didn't tell me anything. I just told you [interviewer] whatever is true. Anyway, when Army Chief General Waker came to the

Bangabhaban, I tried to know if the prime minister resigned. He gave me the same answer: 'I heard she resigned'. She perhaps did not get the time to [us] know."

Shahabuddin added, "When things came under control, one day the cabinet secretary came to collect the copy of the resignation letter. I told him that I too am looking for it."

At one stage of the conversation with Matiur Rahman Chowdhury, the president said, "There is no room for debate in this regard anymore. The prime minister has left and that is the truth. Even then, just to ensure this question never arises again, I sought the Supreme Court's opinion on the matter."

In response to the reference sent by him, the Appellate Division of the SC, headed by the then chief justice Obaidul Hasan, gave its opinion on August 8.

It said an interim government may be formed to remove the constitutional vacuum and to ensure smooth operations of the executive, and also the president is allowed to swear in a chief adviser and other advisers of the interim government.

## No Indian tourist

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resuming Indian visa operations on a full scale.

The Indian envoy cited a shortage of manpower as the reason behind issuing visas only to those who need them on an emergency basis for medical purposes.

He also said the high commission was prioritising visas for those who want to travel to his country to apply for a third country's visa.

The issuance of tourist visas would resume when the activities of the high commission normalised, Verma added.

The Indian Visa Application Centre (IVAC) has been closed since the fall of the Awami League government on August 5. It later started operations on a limited scale. The Indian High Commission in Bangladesh has returned nearly 20,000 passports of Bangladeshi visa applicants in that time.

When his attention was drawn to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who is staying in India, the Indian envoy said he did not discuss the issue with Secretary Jashim. The meeting was a regular one, Verma said.

He said they focused on advancing mutual cooperation in line with the shared aspirations of both Bangladesh and India for peace, security, and development, reports BSS.

"The meeting was more about how we can take forward our relations in the coming days," Verma said. Both sides emphasised the importance of reinvigorating regular bilateral mechanisms to address key issues, he added.

The foreign ministry in a press release elaborated on the bilateral issues discussed in the meeting.

The issues included progress in the return of the Indian workforce in a few LOC projects, the current state of Indian visa operations, renewal of the Revised Travel Arrangement, and meetings of regular bilateral mechanisms, including the Foreign Office Consultations.

They also discussed early consular access for Indian fishermen who were detained in Bangladesh last week, and the repatriation of Bangladeshi fishermen held by the Indian authorities in mid-September, said the release.

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GD-733

## Harris, Trump

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**'GRANDPA'**  
Trump began his more than 90-minute rally with a lengthy monologue on the late golfer Arnold Palmer, for whom the regional airport in Latrobe, where the Republican appeared, is named.

He went so far as to praise Palmer's genitalia.

"When he took the showers with other pros, they came out of there, they said, 'Oh my God. That's unbelievable,'" Trump said with a laugh. "I had to say it."

He then launched into his routine, meandering speech that includes attacking migrants, personally denigrating Harris and repeating false claims about the 2020 election.

But his was a show of onstage endurance, which also included a number of guests and screenings of his filmed campaign ads.

Shortly after recalling his own expensive education at the private Ivy League University of Pennsylvania, Trump vied to appeal to working class voters by bringing a parade of steel workers in hard hats onstage.

He also underscored the importance of the eastern US state's electoral college delegates to the overall election: "If we win Pennsylvania, we win the whole damn thing."

At rally in Las Vegas,

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Upazilla Health & Family Planning Officer  
Keshabpur, Jessore

Memo No. <http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>/2024/987 Dated: 20.10.2024

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