

Huge blast at key Iran port kills 4, hurts hundreds

AFP, Tehran

A powerful explosion ripped through a key port in southern Iran yesterday, killing four people and injuring more than 500, state media said.

Although the cause of the blast was not immediately clear, the customs office at the port said in a statement carried by state TV that it probably resulted from a fire that broke out at the hazmat and chemical materials storage depot.

State media reported a "massive explosion" at Shahid Rajaee, the country's largest commercial port, located in Hormozgan province on Iran's southern coast.

Footage broadcast on state TV showed thick columns of black smoke billowing from the port area, where many containers are stored, with helicopters deployed to fight the fire.

Citing local emergency services,



state TV reported that at least 516 people were injured and "hundreds have been transferred to nearby medical centres".

It is located 23 kilometres west of Bandar Abbas, the Hormozgan provincial capital, and north of the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of world's oil output passes.

The explosion was so powerful that it could be felt and heard about 50 kilometres away, Fars news agency reported, with residents saying they could feel the ground shake even at a distance.

"The shockwave was so strong that most of the port buildings were severely damaged," Tasnim news agency reported.

INDO-PAK TENSIONS

Families unable to reunite as border slams shut

AFP, Attari

Indian business owner Rishi Kumar Jisrani has spent two days watching a messy scramble of people haul suitcases and drop loved ones at the border with Pakistan before it shuts, with dwindling hopes his family will be allowed across.

As relations between Islamabad and New Delhi quickly deteriorate, the neighbouring nations have scrapped visas and expelled each other's citizens, giving people just days to get to the frontier before it closes.

Jisrani, 39, fears it is already too late, with his Pakistani wife and their two children now stuck on the other side.

"They have told her that they can allow my children to come back, since they are Indian passport holders, but not her," he said, adding that he has received no advice from the Indian side.

"How can we separate a mother from her children?"

India has accused Pakistan of backing a deadly April 22 attack on tourists in Pahalgam, claims Islamabad denies. There were no immediate figures on how many citizens of either nationality are in each other's country and are expected to cross.



Yesterday, a steady trickle of cars and rickshaws brought those leaving to the border, with relatives waving farewell at a police barricade.

Indian citizen Anees Mohammad, 41, managed to get his 76-year-old aunt, Shehar Bano, to the border just ahead of India's April 29 deadline to leave.

"She is old and sick and had come here to meet everyone in the family," said Mohammad, from Indore in India's Madhya Pradesh state.

Exhausted and emotional, he mopped his brow in the blazing midday heat as he bid his aunt goodbye.

"No one knows when and if we will meet again."

At the frontier, the cleavage of families has painful historical precedent. The end of British rule in 1947 violently partitioned the sub-continent into Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan.

This week's expulsion orders add to longstanding distress for families of mixed nationalities, who often struggle to obtain visas.

Jisrani said his wife, Savita Kumari, 35, is a Hindu like him and has a long-term Indian visa.

She has previously used that to travel from her home in India to visit her wider family in Pakistan. But that did not make a difference amid the latest tumult.



Thick, black smoke rises as rescuers arrive near the source of an explosion at the Shahid Rajaee port dock southwest of Bandar Abbas in the Iranian province of Hormozgan yesterday. Several containers exploded on April 26 at Iran's largest commercial port, authorities said, causing a major blast and fire, and leaving hundreds injured.

PHOTO: AFP

Iran, US talks end in Oman

Mediator Oman says talks to continue next week to resolve nuclear disputes

REUTERS, Muscat

Indirect talks between Iran and the United States aimed at resolving a decades-long nuclear dispute have ended in Oman, Iranian state media reported, while US President Donald Trump has signalled confidence in clinching a new pact that would block Iran's path to a nuclear bomb.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff held talks in Muscat through Omani mediators for around six hours, a week after a second round in Rome that both sides described as constructive.

Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi said talks would continue next week, with another "high-level meeting" provisionally scheduled for May 3.

Ahead of the lead negotiators' meeting, expert-level indirect talks took place in Muscat to design a framework for a potential nuclear deal.

"The expert-level negotiations have



reached the stage of detailed specifics and mutual demands ... the delegations are returning to their capitals for consultations," state TV said.

An Iranian official, briefed about the talks, told Reuters earlier that the expert-level negotiations were "difficult, complicated and serious", without elaborating.

Trump has spent the beginning of his second term in office trying to broker deals on some of the world's biggest conflicts

and crises, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Israel's assault on Gaza and the thorny issue of Iran's nuclear programme.

The Islamic Republic, for its part, has signalled it is keen to get sanctions relief as its economy continues to suffer, and after more than a year of military setbacks at the hands of its regional foe Israel.

"Iran remains steadfast in its principled stance on the need to end unjust sanctions and is ready to build confidence about the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme," Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei told reporters in Oman.

Trump, in an interview with Time magazine published on Friday, said "I think we're going to make a deal with Iran", but he repeated a threat of military action against Iran if diplomacy fails.

However, ending Iran's enrichment programme or surrendering its enriched uranium stockpile are among "Iran's red lines that could not be compromised" in the talks.

Kursk retaken from Ukraine with North Korean help: Russia

AFP, Moscow

The Russian army has fully liberated the border Kursk region from Ukrainian control with the help of North Korean soldiers, Chief of Staff Valery Gerasimov said on Saturday, admitting their participation in the conflict for the first time.

Gerasimov especially hailed the "heroism" of the North Korean soldiers taking part in the operation, who "provided significant assistance in defeating the group of Ukrainian armed forces".

But shortly after, the Ukrainian army denied Russia's claim to have driven Kyiv's forces out of Kursk, saying that "statements by the enemy leadership about the 'defeat' of the Ukrainian troops are nothing more than propaganda tricks".

However, the Ukrainian Chief of Staff acknowledged the situation on the battlefield was "difficult", while insisting Ukrainian forces were still holding positions in Kursk.

According to South Korean and Western intelligence agencies, more than 10,000 soldiers from North Korea were sent to Russia last year to help Moscow fight Ukraine's shock offensive in Kursk.

China hits out at 'extreme selfishness' of tariffs

AFP, Beijing

China's foreign minister has hit out at the "extreme selfishness" of tariffs, hinting at the steep levies imposed on Beijing by US President Donald Trump.

"Certain countries" resort to "pressure and coercion, and trigger unjustified trade wars... This extreme selfishness only harms their credibility," top diplomat Wang Yi told his Uzbek counterpart Bakhtiyor Saidov, according to a ministry statement released on Saturday.

This will "only undermine their credibility", added Wang, who was speaking on Friday on the sidelines of a foreign ministers' meeting in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

China and the United States, the world's two biggest economies, are locked in an escalating tit-for-tat trade battle triggered by Trump's levies on Chinese goods, which have reached 145 percent on many products.

Beijing has responded with 125 percent tariffs of its own on US goods.

Premier Cement Mills PLC

T.K Bhaban, 13 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka 1215 (the "Company")

NOTICE OF EXTRA-ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

This notice is hereby given to all the shareholders and members of the Company that in accordance with the direction of the of the Company Bench of the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, comprising His Lordship, Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel, Hon'ble Justice of the High Court Division, by an order dated 24.03.2025 passed in the Company Matter No. 523 of 2025, an Extra-Ordinary General Meeting of the shareholders and members of the Company will be held on **Wednesday the 21st May 2025 at 2.30 PM at City Hall, Agrabad Access Road, Chittagong-4100, Bangladesh** to consider the following agenda and accordingly pass a special resolution:

"To consider and approve, with or without modification, the Scheme of Amalgamation for the amalgamation of the National Cement Mills Limited and Premier Power Generation Limited (collectively the "Transferor Companies") with Premier Cement Mills PLC (the "Transferee Company") under Section 228 read with Section 229 of the Companies Act, 1994, whereby the entire undertaking of the Transferor Companies as a going concern is proposed to be transferred and vested in Transferee Company, with the Transferee Company being the surviving entity"



Kazi Md. Shafiqur Rahman, CMA
Company Secretary

Notes:

- Shareholders, whose names appear on the members/Depository Register on the Record Date i.e. on 30 April 2025, shall be eligible to attend the 2nd Extra-Ordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the Company.
- A member eligible to attend and vote at the 2nd EGM may appoint a proxy on his/her stead. The proxy form attached with Scheme of Amalgamation, duly filed in, signed and stamped, must be submitted to the Corporate Office of the Company not later than 48 hours before the time fixed for the meeting.
- Only shareholders or their validly appointed proxies will be allowed to have access to the registration process to attend the meeting.
- To attend into the 2nd EGM auditorium will be allowed strictly on submission of the attendance slip sent with the Proxy form.
- Shareholders are requested to submit their queries on the Scheme of Amalgamation at the Corporate Office of the Company at least 3 (three) working days before the day of Extra-Ordinary General Meeting.
- As per Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh in the Company Matter No. 523 of 2025 the copy of the Scheme will be sent through registered post along with the e-mail address of the Member mentioned in their respective Beneficial Owner (BO) account maintained with the Depository based on the Record Date information.
- The Extra-ordinary General Meeting will be telecast on the link: <https://premiercement2ndegm.hybridegmbd.net>

Special Notes:

No special benefit, refreshment or gift in cash shall be given to the shareholders for attending the 2nd Extra-Ordinary General Meeting as per Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission's circular no. SEC/CMRRD/2009-193/154 dated October 24, 2013.

A copy of the Scheme of Amalgamation may be collected from the undersigned.

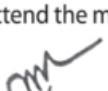
Premier Power Generation Limited

T.K Bhaban, 13 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka 1215 (the "Company")

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"To consider and approve, with or without modification, the Scheme of Amalgamation for the amalgamation of the National Cement Mills Limited and Premier Power Generation Limited (collectively the "Transferor Companies") with Premier Cement Mills PLC (the "Transferee Company") under Section 228 read with Section 229 of the Companies Act, 1994, whereby the entire undertaking of the Transferor Companies as a going concern is proposed to be transferred and vested in Transferee Company, with the Transferee Company being the surviving entity"



Kazi Md. Shafiqur Rahman, CMA
Company Secretary

A copy of the Scheme of Amalgamation may be collected from the undersigned.

National Cement Mills Limited

Seacom Center, 10 Sk Mujib Road, Agrabad CA, Ctg-4100, BD(the "Company")

NOTICE OF EXTRA-ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

This notice is hereby given to all the shareholders and members of the Company that in accordance with the direction of the Company Bench of the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, comprising His Lordship, Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel, Hon'ble Justice of the High Court Division, by an order dated 24.03.2025 passed in the Company Matter No. 523 of 2025, an Extra-Ordinary General Meeting of the shareholders and members of the Company will be held on **Wednesday the 21st May 2025 at 3.30 PM at City Hall, Agrabad Access Road, Chittagong-4100, Bangladesh** to consider the following agenda and accordingly pass a special resolution:

"To consider and approve, with or without modification, the Scheme of Amalgamation for the amalgamation of the National Cement Mills Limited and Premier Power Generation Limited (collectively the "Transferor Companies") with Premier Cement Mills PLC (the "Transferee Company") under Section 228 read with Section 229 of the Companies Act, 1994, whereby the entire undertaking of the Transferor Companies as a going concern is proposed to be transferred and vested in Transferee Company, with the Transferee Company being the surviving entity"

The shareholders and members of the Company are requested to attend the meeting on the date, time and at the place mentioned above.



Golam Kibria, FCMA
Chief Financial Officer & Company Secretary

A copy of the Scheme of Amalgamation may be collected from the undersigned.