

# Huge blast at key Iran port kills 5, hurts hundreds

AFP, Tehran

A powerful explosion ripped through a key port in southern Iran yesterday, killing five 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 Rajaei, 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.



Thick, black smoke rises as rescuers arrive near the source of an explosion at the Shahid Rajaei 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

# Progress made in nuclear talks

## Say US, Iran; agree to meet next week to resolve remaining disputes

AFP, Muscat

The United States and Iran reported progress in their latest round of nuclear talks yesterday and agreed to meet again next week as they pursue a deal that could help ease soaring Middle East tensions.

A US official called the talks “positive and productive”, and Iran’s top diplomat said the two sides will study how to narrow their differences on a range of subjects before next week’s fourth round.

The highest-level contact in years between the long time foes is targeting a new deal that would stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons – an objective Tehran denies pursuing – in return for relief from sanctions.

“There is still much to do, but further progress was made on getting to a deal,” the senior US official said on condition of anonymity, adding that the next talks would be in Europe.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi



called yesterday’s talks, which included technical-level teams for the first time, “serious and businesslike”.

“There are differences both in the major issues and in the details,” he told Iranian state TV.

“Until the next meeting, further studies are to be conducted in the capitals on how to reduce the differences.”

Araghchi added: “I think our progress has been good so far. I am satisfied with the process of the negotiation and its speed. I

think it is proceeding well and satisfactorily.”

US special envoy Steve Witkoff again led the American delegation while Michael Anton, the State Department’s head of policy planning, headed the US expert-level negotiators.

Deputy foreign ministers Kazem Gharibabadi and Majid Takht-Ravanchi led Tehran’s technical team, according to Iran’s Tasnim news agency.

The delegations were in separate rooms and communicated in writing via the hosts, Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei and Araghchi said.

Iran’s defence and missile capabilities were not discussed, Baqaei told state TV, while an Iranian negotiator said the talks were “uniquely about sanctions and nuclear questions”, according to Tasnim.

Araghchi had earlier expressed “cautious optimism”, saying this week: “If the sole demand by the US is for Iran to not possess nuclear weapons, this demand is achievable”.

# 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.

# No reason to assume

FROM PAGE 2

The adviser also reason to assume that I will stressed the importance of join the new political party. Naturally, I am interested of transparency and merit-based recruitment.

“The mass uprising in it, as I am from the young stemmed from our demand for merit-based recruitment. generation, and people of my Merit must be prioritised. We age are involved in it.” will prioritise merit in this and all future appointments,”

“But when I decide, I will choose the best option for me, and that could be any political party. Not Asif said. necessarily the new one.”

# Yunus pays last respect

FROM PAGE 2

Besides, he also met the Kenyan president, Montenegro president, grand duke and grand duchess of Luxembourg, president of Ecuador, president of East Timor, prime minister of Honduras, president of Iceland, president of Portugal, the king and queen of Belgium, prime minister of Belgium, Prince Albert of Monaco, prince and princess of Norway, prime minister of Tunisia, prince and princess of Liechtenstein, director general of WHO, foreign ministers of Sri Lanka, Bahrain and Syria, and former US secretary of state John Kerry.

Pope Francis was laid to rest yesterday following the funeral Mass at St Peter’s Square attended by presidents, princes and as many as a quarter million more.

Late Pope Francis was a big admirer of Prof Yunus’s work for the marginalised people across the globe and

his vision for a three-zero world where there will be no unemployment, no poverty and zero carbon emissions.

The Vatican also launched a joint Three Zero Initiative in Rome with the 2006 Nobel Peace Laureate.

Earlier, Chief Adviser Prof Yunus visited the Bangladesh House in Rome on Friday and signed the visitors’ book.

An hour after his arrival in Rome from Doha, Qatar, the Chief Adviser visited St Peter’s Square on Friday afternoon to pay homage to the mortal remains of Pope Francis.

The chief adviser was received by the Bangladesh ambassador to Italy and the Bangladesh ambassador to the Vatican City.

He will depart the Leonardo da Vinci Rome Fiumicino Airport around 8:00am (12:00pm Bangladesh Standard Time) today and is expected to reach home in the early hours tomorrow.

# Rivals exchange

FROM PAGE 1

airspace to Indian airlines, and India suspending the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty that regulates water sharing from the Indus River and its tributaries.

The two sides, who both fully claim Kashmir while partly ruling it, have also exchanged fire across their de facto border after four years of relative calm.

The Indian Army said it had responded to “unprovoked” small arms fire from multiple Pakistan Army posts that started around midnight on Friday along the 740-km (460-mile) de facto border separating the Indian and Pakistani areas of Kashmir.

“Indian troops responded appropriately with small arms,” it said in a statement. “No casualties reported.”

There was no immediate confirmation from Pakistan, but the two sides had

confirmed gunfire between their respective forces the previous night.

Indian security forces have continued their hunt for the suspects and have demolished the Kashmiri houses of at least five suspected militants, including one they believe took part in the latest attack.

Pieces of broken glass littered the site of one such house in Murram village in Pulwama district yesterday. Locals said they had not seen Ehsan Ahmed Sheikh, a suspected militant whose house got destroyed, in the past three years.

His family declined to speak with reporters.

The rising tensions have had business implications, too.

Indian airlines such as Air India and IndiGo are bracing for higher fuel costs and longer journey times as they reroute international flights.

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 21<sup>st</sup> 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”

Date : April 27, 2025  
Issue: Dhaka

  
**Kazi Md. Shafiqur Rahman, CMA**  
Company Secretary

Notes:

1. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Extra-Ordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the Company.

2. A member eligible to attend and vote at the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

3. Only shareholders or their validly appointed proxies will be allowed to have access to the registration process to attend the meeting.

4. To attend into the 2<sup>nd</sup> EGM auditorium will be allowed strictly on submission of the attendance slip sent with the Proxy form.

5. 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.

6. 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 to 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.

7. The Extra-ordinary General Meeting will be telecast on the link: <https://premiercement2ndegm.hybriddegmbd.net>

Special Notes:

No special benefit, refreshment or gift in cash shall be given to the shareholders for attending the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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”)

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 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 at 4.30 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.

Date : April 27, 2025  
Issue: Dhaka

  
**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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

Date : April 27, 2025  
Issue: Chittagong

  
**Golam Kibria, FCMA**  
Chief Financial Officer & Company Secretary

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