

Iran mourns tragic blast at major southern port

90% of fire under control

National Desk

Iran declared Monday a day of national mourning after a key port in southern province of Hormozgan rocked by a deadly massive explosion on Saturday. According to the country's Red Crescent Society, the incident, which occurred at the Shahid Rajaei port in Bandar Abbas, has killed 36 people and injured over 1,240 others so far. Authorities said only 10 of the dead, including two women, have been identified so far. Hormozgan Governor Mohammad Ashouri Taziani has also announced three days of public mourning over the deadly explosion at Shahid Rajaei Port which is the most advanced container port in Iran. The iconic Milad Tower in Tehran and Tabiat Bridge turned off their lights to show solidarity with the families of the victims. Meanwhile, cinemas and comedy shows cancelled their programs.

Damage extent

The explosion at the port destroyed some nearby buildings and damaged vehicles parked near the site of the

incident. Shipping containers burned, goods inside were badly damaged and the explosion was so powerful that windows several miles away were shattered. The blast was also heard in Qeshm, an island 26 kilometers south of the port.

Fire under control

It has also caused a massive fire which has led to extensive material damage in the port. Helicopters and aircraft dumped water from the air on the raging fire through the night into Sunday morning at the Shahid Rajaei Port, where thick smoke continued to billow on Sunday. With choking smoke spreading throughout the area, schools and offices 23km away in Bandar Abbas, the Hormozgan provincial capital, were ordered closed on Sunday to allow authorities to focus on the emergency effort. The health ministry urged residents to avoid going outside until further notice and to use protective masks. Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni, who visited the port on Sunday, said that firefighters have managed to bring around 90 percent of the fire under control.

Pezeshkian's visits explosion site

President Masoud Pezeshkian also traveled to Bandar Abbas to review the latest situation. He emphasized the need to expedite the complete extinguishing of the fire and prevent the spread of damage. He also visited a hospital in Bandar Abbas, where some of the affected people have been hospitalized. Some of the injured victims have been taken to other cities, including in Shiraz. Some of the injured were also airlifted for treatment in the capital Tehran. The president expressed his appreciation to first responders, adding "We have come to see first-hand if there is anything or any issue that the government can follow up on". "We will try to take care of the families who lost their loved ones, and we will definitely take care of the dear people who got injured," he said.

Oil facilities not affected

National Iranian Oil Products Refining and Distribution Company issued a statement saying that oil facilities in the area were not affected by the blast. Authorities have launched an investigation to determine the



A charred truck lies at the scene of an explosion that took place at the Shahid Rajaei port dock, southwest of Bandar Abbas in the Iranian province of Hormozgan, on April 27, 2025.
● MEYSAM MIRSADEH/TASNIM

cause of the incident which is currently unknown.

Messages of condolences

Global condolences have been pouring in since Saturday over the tragic incident.

The United Arab Emirates expressed "solidarity with Iran" and Saudi Arabia sent condolences, as did Pakistan, India, Turkey, Jordan, Cuba and the United Nations as well as Russia.

Stephane Dujarric, the spokesperson for the UN Secre-

tary-General, expressed the UN's solidarity with the government and people of Iran during this difficult time on Saturday.

"We express our condolences to the families of the victims and to the people and government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. We wish the injured a swift recovery," he said. The Lebanese movement Hezbollah also offered condolences, saying Iran, with its "faith and solid will, can overcome this tragic accident".

In the first reaction from a major European country, the German Embassy in Tehran said on Instagram: "Bandar Abbas we grieve with you."

Russian President Vladimir Putin was one of the first world leaders to offer help to Iran, dispatching several emergency planes to the area. Putin has expressed his condolences over the loss of life and offered to provide help to Iran dealing with the aftermath of a blast, the Kremlin said.

Defense Ministry denies military cargo at port explosion site

National Desk

A spokesperson for Iran's Defense Ministry on Sunday denied media reports that a deadly blast in a southern port in Hormozgan Province may have been linked to the mishandling of solid fuel used for missiles, stating that no military-grade material was present at the site.

Ambrey, a private security firm, earlier claimed that the port took in a shipment of a missile fuel chemical in March. The fuel is part of a shipment of ammonium perchlorate from China by two vessels to Iran first reported in January by the Financial Times.

"The fire was reportedly the result of improper handling of a shipment of solid fuel intended for use in Iranian ballistic missiles," Ambrey added. In a first reaction, the spokesman of Iran's Defense Ministry General Reza Talei-Nik, denied the reports.

"No sort of imported and exporting consignment for fuel or military application was (or) is in the site



Reza Talei-Nik

of the port," he told state TV by phone. He called foreign reports on the missile fuel baseless. He added that the claims are part of the psychological operations carried out by enemies. The spokesperson said the authorities will announce the primary and secondary causes of the incident at Shahid Rajaei Port at the appropriate time.

No evidence of...

Observing strict safety and preventive measures is particularly crucial at Shahid Rajaei port, a major hub for the country's exports and imports. Meanwhile, the government must step in swiftly to make amends for the physical and financial losses suffered by the victims and their families, offering both compensation and moral support to help ease the burden of their grief. Of course, no compensation can fill the void left behind by those who lost their lives.

As for the possibility of sabotage by hostile groups or individuals, no hard evidence has yet turned up, and no signs of deliberate foul play

have been reported. Nevertheless, the causes and full dimensions of the explosion must be thoroughly looked into by expert teams, and the findings should be made public without delay. To get a handle on the full scope of the incident and to monitor the relief efforts for the injured, a parliamentary delegation has been dispatched to region to draw up a comprehensive report for legislature. In addition, lawmakers in various parliamentary committees are following up on the situation closely, and the results will be shared with the public as soon as possible.

Given Shahid Rajaei port's key role in national trade and transit,

particularly in the Persian Gulf and southern regions, urgent measures must be taken to bring back online all its sections. While the part dealing with chemical storage suffered direct damage, other sections are operational, and once authorities give the all-clear regarding secondary hazards, maritime and port operations will resume in full swing.

It should also be noted that the explosion did not cause any damage to the refineries, fuel storage facilities, distribution networks, or the oil and petrochemical pipelines in the region. Operations in Bandar Abbas' oil-related infrastructure are currently running without a hitch.

India, Pakistan exchange fire for third day after Kashmir attack

Troops from Pakistan and India exchanged fire in disputed Kashmir for a third night in a row, officials said Sunday, as relations between the nuclear-armed rivals plunged to their lowest level in years.

India has accused Pakistan of supporting "cross-border terrorism" after gunmen killed 26 people in the worst attack on civilians in contested Muslim-majority Kashmir for a quarter of a century, AFP reported. Islamabad has denied any involvement, calling attempts to link Pakistan to the attack "frivolous" and vowing to respond to any Indian action.

Pakistan's army, meanwhile, claimed Sunday that it had killed 54 militants who tried to enter the country through its northwestern border with Afghanistan – suggesting the incursion was orchestrated by New Delhi.

The Indian military earlier Sunday held naval drills – releasing images of warships firing missiles – while the country's security forces pressed on with their hunt for those behind the April 22 attack at a tourist hotspot in Pahalgam in Kashmir.

The military blamed Pakistan for the "unprovoked" firing of small arms along Kashmir's Line of Control that separates the two countries.

"(Our) own troops responded effectively with appropriate



Indian Border Security Force soldiers stand guard at the India-Pakistan Wagah border post on the outskirts of Amritsar on April 24, 2025.
● NARINDER NANU/AFP

small arms fire," it said of the latest incident.

Speaking to reporters on Sunday in Islamabad, Pakistan's Information Minister, Attaullah Tarar, said there was "no official confirmation" of any clashes at the border with India.

Indian police have issued wanted posters for three suspects in the Pahalgam attack – two Pakistani men and an Indian – who they say are members of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba group, a UN-designated terrorist organization.

India's federal home ministry has handed over the attack probe to the National Investigation Agency, which focuses on counter-terrorism.

"The eyewitnesses are being questioned in minute detail to piece together the sequence of events that led to one of the worst terror attacks in Kashmir," an agency statement said Sunday.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday said the country was "open to participating in any neutral, transparent and cred-

ible investigation" into the attack.

India's navy meanwhile said it carried out exercises to "revalidate and demonstrate readiness of platforms, systems and crew for long range precision offensive strike", without detailing where the drills took place.

The Indian Express newspaper on Sunday quoted a top government source as saying "there will be military retaliation" and officials "are discussing the nature of the strike".

Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since their independence in 1947. Both claim the territory in full but govern separate portions of it.

India's Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday reiterated his pledge that the Pahalgam victims "will get justice".

"Terrorists and their patrons want Kashmir to be destroyed again, that is why such a big conspiracy was hatched," he said in his monthly radio address to the nation.