

Ministry: Embassy Closure Rumors Zionist Psychological Warfare

TEHRAN -- Iran's Foreign Ministry on Saturday dismissed reports of foreign embassies closing in Tehran as baseless and part of a psychological warfare campaign by Zionist media.

The ministry attributed the rumors to Telegram accounts linked to the Zionist regime and opposition groups, describing them as deliberate attempts to sow unrest and instability. Officials emphasized that no foreign missions have ceased operations in the Iranian capital, reaffirming Tehran's commitment to maintaining diplomatic relations. The claims followed earlier posts by a Telegram channel alleging that some Western countries had shut their embassies in Tehran—an assertion firmly denied by Iranian authorities.

Kayhan International

Aragchi Calls for Joint Japan-Iran Effort to Abolish WMDs

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi urged Japan and Iran to jointly lead global efforts to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), including nuclear, chemical, and biological arms.

In an opinion piece published in The Asahi Shimbun ahead of the 80th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings, Araghchi condemned U.S. President Donald Trump's comparison of recent U.S. actions against Iran to the 1945 bombings. Highlighting Iran's own suffering from chemical weapons during the 1980s Iraq war, he described the bombings as a stark reminder of nuclear devastation and called for strengthened peace and disarmament advocacy.

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Viewpoint

US Nuclear Hypocrisy Pushing World to the Edge

Tehran's Theatres Shine Bright in Busy Summer Season

U-16 Girls Team Crowned West Asian Basketball Champions

Yemen Strikes Ben Gurion Airport With Hypersonic Missile

Senior Foreign Ministry Official: Military Power a Necessity, Not an Option

TEHRAN – Iran's top diplomats have emphasized the critical importance of bolstering the country's military capabilities as an indispensable element of national security and regional stability, amid heightened tensions in West Asia and persistent threats from hostile powers.

Muhammad Keshavarzzadeh, former Iranian ambassador to China and a senior foreign ministry official, underscored Tehran's position that increasing military strength is not only necessary but essential for protecting the Islamic Republic from external aggression.

"Military power is a necessity, not an option," Keshavarzzadeh said in a recent interview. "We must never neglect our defense capabilities, especially in these sensitive times. Our military strength must be maintained at the highest possible level alongside our diplomatic efforts."

Iran's foreign ministry is currently navigating a challenging geopolitical environment, marked by the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestinian groups in Gaza, escalating tensions across Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, and confrontations with the United States. The ministry's dual approach emphasizes robust defense readiness paired with sustained diplomatic engagement.

The diplomat recalled how previous U.S. administrations, particularly under President Donald Trump, grossly misjudged Iran's resilience, wrongly assuming Tehran could be swiftly subdued by military force. "They underestimated Iran's domestic strength and regional alliances," Keshavarzzadeh noted.

Iran has long faced hostility from the United States and Israel, which Tehran considers its primary adversaries. Officials emphasize that trust has never been the basis for Iran's international negotiations, but rather a pragmatic calculation of national interests.

"Negotiations are conducted based on interests, not trust," Keshavarzzadeh said, reflecting on decades of U.S. sanctions and hostile policies targeting Iran. "We have never had any illusions about American goodwill."

Despite these challenges, Iranian officials stress that diplomatic dialogue remains crucial. "Negotiations should continue under all circumstances, with clear and non-negotiable principles," Keshavarzzadeh said. "Engagement with Europe and the United States is important, but never at the expense of our defense capabilities."

Iran is also working to diver-

sify its international relations by strengthening ties with Eastern powers like China, aiming to reduce regional tensions and counterbalance Western pressure.

Public diplomacy is another key component of Tehran's strategy. Officials encourage increased cultural and academic exchanges with the United States and other countries to foster mutual understanding despite political hostilities.

Keshavarzzadeh cited the importance of engaging directly with the people of America to counteract what Iran describes as the influence of hostile lobbying groups.

"As we have seen, the U.S. government is often influenced by pro-Israeli lobbies that seek to marginalize Iran's role," he said. "Direct people-to-people contacts can help change perceptions."

Iran's leadership appears committed to maintaining a balanced policy that combines military deterrence with diplomatic outreach. The government sees this dual-track approach as essential for safeguarding its sovereignty and promoting regional peace.

"The foundation of our security lies in the synergy between a strong military and capable diplomacy," Keshavarzzadeh said. "We must strengthen both to ensure Iran's stability and influence."

The call to increase military power comes amid ongoing regional instability and unresolved conflicts, with Tehran signaling that it will neither back down nor reduce its defense readiness despite external pressures.

President Pezeshkian's Mission in Islamabad: Pushing for Resilient Neighborly Ties



President Pezeshkian is welcomed by Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and senior officials at Nur Khan Airbase in Islamabad on Saturday.

TEHRAN/ISLAMABAD — Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian arrived in Islamabad on Saturday for a pivotal two-day official visit aimed at strengthening Iran's political and economic relations with Pakistan.

Welcomed by Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and senior officials at Nur Khan Airbase, Pezeshkian's trip underscores Tehran's commitment to deepening regional cooperation amid evolving geopolitical challenges.

The visit comes at a crucial moment, as both countries navigate regional tensions following recent wars in West Asia and ongoing security concerns. It also reflects Iran's strategic focus on

economic diplomacy as a pillar of its foreign policy, particularly with neighboring states.

President Pezeshkian's first stop was Lahore, where he paid respects at the mausoleum of Allama Muhammad Iqbal, the renowned Persian-speaking poet and thinker whose vision inspired the creation of Pakistan. Accompanied by Punjab's Chief Minister Nawaz Sharif and other dignitaries, Pezeshkian laid a wreath and signed the memorial guestbook, reaffirming the cultural and historical ties between the two nations.

Iqbal's emphasis on Islamic identity, social justice, and spiritual awakening resonates deeply in both Iran and Pakistan. His leg-

acy continues to inspire political and intellectual discourse across the Muslim world.

The core focus of Pezeshkian's visit centers on enhancing economic cooperation and expanding bilateral trade, which has steadily grown despite regional headwinds. In the Iranian calendar year 1403 (March 2024–March 2025), trade between Tehran and Islamabad rose by 13.6 percent to an estimated \$3.1 billion, with Iran maintaining a trade surplus nearly 3.5 times that of Pakistan.

Iran's exports to Pakistan include petroleum products, dried milk, and dates, while Pakistan primarily exports rice and oilseeds to Iran. However, preliminary data from early 2025 indi-

cate a 15 percent decline in trade volume due to ongoing security challenges and economic uncertainties.

President Pezeshkian announced ambitious plans to increase bilateral trade to \$10 billion annually. "Our shared border and historical ties create unmatched opportunities for cooperation," Pezeshkian said. "We must invest in infrastructure, logistics, and regulatory frameworks to realize this potential."

A vital aspect of this strategy involves integrating Iran more closely with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship Belt and Road Initiative project connecting western China to the Arabian Sea via Pakistan's Gwadar port. Iran's geographic position offers the most direct link between CPEC and broader West and Central Asian markets.

Officials from both countries emphasized upgrading port facilities, improving maritime logistics, and modernizing rail and road links to boost transit and trade flows. Expanding free trade zones and establishing joint industrial parks along the border were also discussed to stimulate regional development and employment.

Iran's role as a regional energy supplier featured prominently in discussions, with plans to enhance cooperation on pipelines and electricity grid interconnections. Diversifying bilateral trade beyond energy and raw materials into pharmaceuticals, industrial goods, and agriculture could help build more resilient economic ties.

The presence of Iran's Ministers of Defense, Road and Urban Development, and Foreign Affairs, alongside their Pakistani counterparts, highlights the visit's multifaceted agenda, covering security, (Continued on Page 7)

Hamas Vows to Continue Resistance Amid Gaza Genocide

GAZA CITY (Dispatches) — At least 51 Palestinians were killed in a new wave of Israeli attacks across the Gaza Strip Saturday, citing local hospital sources said.

The death toll included at least 27 civilians seeking humanitarian aid, underscoring the devastating toll of Israel's relentless military campaign against the besieged territory.

The Israeli assaults targeted multiple locations, including Khan Younis and Gaza City, where five Palestinians — among them two women — lost their lives, Wafa news agency reported, quoting local officials. Drone strikes struck the Al-Tuwam area in northern Gaza City, killing three Palestinians and wounding dozens more.

A separate air attack on the Al-Shurafa family home in Gaza's Al-Tuffah neighbor-

hood resulted in an unknown number of casualties, further deepening the human tragedy.

Meanwhile, Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis confirmed that a woman was killed during an air strike on the Al-Amal neighborhood, while another woman was fatally shot near an aid distribution point southwest of the city.

In a particularly harrowing detail, emergency teams retrieved eight bodies from rubble in Gaza City's Zeytoun neighborhood following heavy Israeli bombardments. The ongoing strikes continue to exacerbate the already dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where hospitals, schools, and residential areas are under constant threat.

Since October 2023, Israeli attacks have killed about 60,300 Palestinians and injured nearly 150,000 across

Gaza, a staggering human cost documented by local health authorities. These figures paint a grim picture of the systematic violence inflicted upon Gaza's population amid a blockade and military siege widely condemned as collective punishment.

Israeli writer David Grossman has publicly denounced the onslaught on Gaza as "genocide," marking a rare and powerful acknowledgment from within settler society of the magnitude of the atrocities.

"For years I refused to use the term 'genocide'. But now I can't help but use it," Grossman told the Italian newspaper La Repubblica, describing the ongoing massacre as a "broken heart" and an "avalanche" of destruction and suffering.

Hamas, the Palestinian resistance movement governing

Gaza, reaffirmed its unwavering stance on Saturday, declaring it will not lay down arms unless the full rights of Palestinians are restored, especially the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

"Our armed resistance cannot be relinquished except through the full restoration of our national rights," Hamas stated. The movement also emphasized that it remains ready to resume negotiations only after urgent humanitarian aid reaches Gaza and the siege is lifted, a condition Israeli officials appear increasingly unwilling to meet.

Last week, the United States and Israel abruptly pulled out of ceasefire talks with Hamas despite reports of progress, signaling a hardening stance that demands total disarmament of Palestinian resistance

and the return of all Israeli captives. Israeli officials, including extremist finance minister Bezalel Smotrich, have publicly rejected partial agreements, instead insisting on the complete dismantling of Hamas and exile of its members as the sole "acceptable deal."

In response, Palestinian leaders have stressed that any surrender of arms without achieving sovereignty and justice would amount to surrendering their legitimate rights under international law.

Meanwhile, U.S. officials visiting Gaza attempted to portray their humanitarian efforts as substantial. Envoys Steve Witkoff and Mike Huckabee toured aid distribution points managed by the controversial Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, even as at least 859 (Continued on Page 7)