

TEHRAN – Spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry Esmail Baqaei on Saturday offered his condolences to the people and government of India on the passing of former prime minister Manmohan Singh.

He referred to the role of Singh in the economic development of India and in the expansion of ties between Tehran and New Delhi during his tenure. He also extended his sympathies to the family of the late Indian prime minister and prayed for divine mercy on him, the Foreign Ministry's website reported.

BEIJING (Dispatches) -- Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi of Iran says the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) can play a vital role in strengthening multilateralism and safeguarding the security and political interests of member states. He made the remarks in a meeting with SCO's new Secretary-General Nurlan Yermekbayev who described Iran's capacities to further strengthen the organization's position and role as very important.

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Viewpoint

Iran's Sanctions-Busting Non-Oil Exports

Mystical Power of Persian Poets



Iran to Send Three Players to 2025 ITTF-ATTU Asian Cup



UNRWA: Gaza Children Freezing to Death Amid Zionist Blockade



Yemen Hit Nevatim Airbase With Hypersonic Missile

SANA'A (Dispatches) – Yemeni armed forces on Saturday carried out a missile strike against a strategic Israeli military position in the northern part of the Negev Desert in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza.

Brigadier General Yahya Saree, the spokesperson for the Yemeni military, announced in a statement that the Arab nation's missile units successfully hit Nevatim Airbase, using a Palestine-2 hypersonic ballistic missile.

Saree saluted the Yemeni nation for holding mass pro-Palestine rallies across the country on Friday to reaffirm their commitment to their religious, ethical, and humanitarian obligations.

He said the Yemeni forces will step up their retaliatory operations against the Israeli enemy as long as the ongoing aggression on Gaza continues and the siege is not lifted.

The retaliation came after U.S. and British aircraft conducted new airstrikes on the Yemeni capital on Friday. The strikes targeted the Ma'een district, with no casualties reported.

Israeli media promptly denied any involvement of the regime in these operations.

Nasr al-Din Amer, an official from the Ansarullah movement, emphasized that Yemen's attacks

against Israel will intensify and not decline.

Amer asserted that halting the aggression in Gaza is the only way to prevent further anti-Israeli operations by the Yemeni army.

Israeli "aggression will only increase the determination and resolve of the great Yemeni people to continue supporting the Palestinian people", an Ansarullah statement said Friday.

The assault followed Israel's bombing of Yemen's infrastructure, including Sana'a's international airport which left six people dead, on Thursday.

Tens of thousands of people gathered in Sana'a Friday to protest against the Israeli strikes and express solidarity with the Palestinians.

"The equation has changed and has become airport for airport, port for port, and infrastructure for infrastructure," protester Muhammad al-Gobisi said.

"We will not get tired or bored of supporting our brothers in Gaza."

Demonstrators staged rallies in Sana'a and the provinces of Sa'ada, Hudaydah, Hajjah, and al-Mahwit under the slogan "We firmly stand with Gaza".

Similar rallies also took place in the provinces of Raymah, 'Amran, Dhale, Lahij, Ma'rib, al-Bayda, Ta'izz, Ibb, and Dhamar.

Iran, China Agree:

West Asia 'No Battleground for Big Powers'



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (3rd L) and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi (3rd R) meet in Beijing on Dec. 28, 2024.

BEIJING (Dispatches) -- The top diplomats of China and Iran agreed Saturday that West Asia is "not a battleground for the big powers" and should not be an arena of geopolitical competition between countries outside the region.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi agreed that "the international community should respect the sovereignty, security, stability, unity and territorial integrity of Middle East countries," according to a read-

out from Beijing's foreign ministry. Araghchi is on his first visit to China since being appointed foreign minister of Iran.

The two major trading partners reiterated calls for a ceasefire in Gaza, the proper implementation of the ceasefire in Lebanon, and the "integrated promotion of counter-terrorism, reconciliation and humanitarian processes in Syria", according to the readout.

"The two sides agreed that the Middle East belongs to the people

of the Middle East, and is not a battleground for the big powers, and should not be a victim of geopolitical competition and conflicts between countries from outside the region," the ministry said.

Araghchi and Wang also discussed Iran's nuclear program. Wang told Araghchi that Beijing "firmly supports the Iranian side in safeguarding its legitimate rights and interests".

China is Iran's largest trading partner and a top buyer of its sanc-

tioned oil.

"The Iran-China strategic partnership is ironclad because it's underpinned by cultural & civilizational bonds and rooted in shared values & interests," Araghchi wrote on X.

"With expanding conflict & terrorism in our region - amid malign attempts at domineering on the global level - Iran and China are determined more than ever to uphold the rule of law and preserve stability.

"As our joint statement today in Beijing aptly underscores: The Middle East belongs to the people of Middle East...its future and destiny should be determined by its own people."

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei wrote that Tehran and Beijing are determined to help enhance peace and security at the international level.

Araghchi held "very fruitful comprehensive talks with his Chinese counterpart, Member of the political bureau of CPC Central Committee and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, on a wide range of bilateral, regional and international issues of common interest," the spokesman wrote on X.

"Iran and China, as comprehensive strategic partners are determined to expand their close consultations with a view to deepening their bilateral ties for the good of their peoples and for further contributing to the rule of law at the int'l level, peace and security."

Zionist Troops Burn Hospital, Expand Bases in Gaza

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) -- Medical staff at the Kamal Adwan Hospital in Gaza were burned alive when Israeli forces set fire to it on Friday, reports said on Saturday, citing medical sources.

They said some people had fled the hospital, located in the Beit Lahia project in northern Gaza, and walked dozens of kilometers to Gaza City.

They said that as a result of the fire which Israeli forces started, some people had died in the hospital and their bodies had been burnt as a result.

Zionist forces set fire to the hospital and stormed it on Friday, ordering medical staff and patients to leave. They had been besieging and attacking the facility – the last remaining hospital operating in northern Gaza – for weeks.

The Palestinian news agency Wafa reported that around 350 people inside, including 170 medical staff, were ordered to gather in the hospital's courtyard by the Israeli army.

Dozens of staff, including the hospital's director, Hossam Abu Safiyeh, were detained by Israel

and taken for interrogation.

Israeli television broadcast a clip showing the emptying of the hospital from "suspects". It showed men who had been stripped of their clothing with their hands of their air, being led away under the threat of fire from an armored vehicle.

Shrouq al-Rantisi, a nurse at the hospital, told Al-Jazeera that Israeli forces beat the detained hospital staff after burning it and deliberately humiliated them.

Reports said that around 30 patients from Kamal Adwan reached the Indonesian Hospital, which has also been closed by Israeli forces, in critical condition.

With the destruction of the Kamal Adwan Hospital, there is no remaining functioning hospital in northern Gaza.

The Zionist regime has attacked the hospital for weeks, killing patients and staff, including doctors. It has imposed an intensified siege on the north of the Gaza Strip accompanied by ferocious attacks which kill dozens of people every day.

ing a scheme known as the "General's Plan" designed to kill, starve, or expel the area's remaining inhabitants.

Commenting on the destruction of the Kamal Adwan Hospital, UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese blamed Israel's western allies for their continued support.

"Israel is writing one of the darkest pages in the history of genocides, with 'Made in the West' ink," she wrote on the social media platform X.

The Zionist regime has so far martyred at least 45,436 people, injured over 100,000 more, and displaced the vast majority of Gaza's population in its brutal campaign against the territory, which is now in its 15th month.

Latest health ministry figures showed Israeli forces had killed 48 Palestinians in Gaza and injured 52 across the besieged enclave.

The Times of Israel is reporting that the Zionist regime has "vastly expanded" its army bases in the centre of Gaza and is preparing to stay in the strip indefinitely.

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Video Shows U.S. Officers Fatally Beating Prisoner

NEW YORK (Guardian) -- Footage from body cameras worn by four of more than a dozen correction officers present when the New York prisoner Robert Brooks was allegedly assaulted has been released by the state attorney general's office.

Fourteen corrections department employees – two sergeants, 10 correction officers and a nurse – were suspended earlier this month pending the outcome of investigations after Brooks, 43, died following the 9 December encounter.

The videos released on Friday confirm details of the incident that were listed in court documents filed by state police earlier this week, including the fact that Brooks was handcuffed as he was being beaten.

"I do not take lightly the release of this video, especially in the middle of the holiday season," the state attorney general, Letitia James, said in a video statement.

She added: "As attorney general, I release these videos because I have a responsibility and duty to provide the Brooks family, their

loved ones and all New Yorkers with transparency and accountability."

In the body-cam footage, Brooks' face is seen covered with blood two minutes into the incident that started when correction officers at Marcy correctional facility in Oneida county beat him. Brooks died the following morning at a Utica hospital.

Ryan Paparella, a former correction officer now heading the investigation into Brooks' death, earlier said there was no apparent motivation for the attack, which was witnessed by two male nurses and other officers, including the sergeants, who declined to intervene.

Officials are now bracing for protests and public outcry following the release of the video that shows several officers standing around a handcuffed Brooks as he was placed on an infirmary examination table.

One of the officers is seen to remove the prisoner's shoes and begin to strike him. The assault shows officers repeatedly striking Brooks for about 10 minutes.

He does not appear to be resist them or threaten them. At times, Brooks looked dazed from the physical assault and several times an officer could be seen rubbing Brooks' sternum briskly with his knuckles – apparently to revive him.

While Brooks was still being restrained by multiple officers, another officer punched him three times in the buttocks, according to the court records. That officer also lifted his leg at one point and appeared to stomp on Brooks' genital area.

The video footage then shows two officers pull Brooks up to a seated position on an exam table in the infirmary – his face dripping blood – before one of them could be seen striking Brooks in the chest with a closed fist.

That officer, who had been the first to start punching Brooks, subsequently put a new set of latex gloves on – apparently because the gloves he replaced had Brooks' blood on them.

Body-camera footage also shows two male nurses standing (Continued on Page 7)