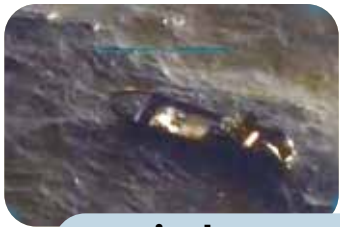


News in brief

◆ **Russia yesterday** denounced as illegal and “unacceptable” US strikes on boats from Venezuela -- a Moscow ally -- that Washington says are transporting drugs. Tensions between Washington and Caracas have dramatically risen in recent days, with US President Donald Trump launching a military deployment in the Caribbean Sea and conducting strikes on Venezuelan boats. This is how, in general, lawless countries act, as well as those who consider themselves above the law,” Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in televised remarks, questioning what he called the United States’ “pretext of fighting drugs”. Venezuela is led by President Nicolas Maduro, who has relied on the Kremlin for political and economic support. Lavrov said the United States had been “destroying (the boats) without trial or investigation, and not only without trial and investigation, but without presenting any facts to anyone”.



Russia slams ‘unacceptable’ US strikes on boats from Venezuela

◆ **Russia says ‘ready’ to discuss US accusations of secret nuclear tests**

◆ **Russian Foreign Minister** Sergei Lavrov said Tuesday that Moscow was “ready” to discuss with Washington accusations by President Donald Trump that it had carried out secret underground nuclear tests. Tensions have risen between the world’s two largest nuclear nations after the latest attempt to resolve the Ukraine war failed, with Russia carrying out tests

of its nuclear-powered, nuclear-capable weapons systems and Trump saying he was ordering the test of atomic weapons. He accused Moscow of having secretly carried out nuclear detonations -- not just the testing of delivery systems, which all nuclear-armed states do regularly. “We are ready to discuss the suspicions raised by our American colleagues regarding the possibility that we might be secretly doing something deep underground,” Lavrov told state media in a televised interview. He denied Trump’s claims and said the United States could check whether Russia tested a nuclear warhead via the global seismic monitoring system.

◆ **French President** Emmanuel Macron will meet Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas in Paris on Tuesday to discuss the “full implementation” of the Gaza ceasefire agreement, the Elysee said. The meeting comes a month into a fragile truce between Hamas and Israel, following two years of war triggered by the Palestinian militant group’s October 7, 2023 attack against Israel. Abbas, 89, is the longtime head of the Palestinian Authority, which exercises limited control over parts of the West Bank and is being considered to assume governance in Gaza under the deal. The two leaders “will discuss the next steps in the peace plan, particularly in the areas of security, governance and reconstruction”, said the French presidency.



France’s Macron to meet Palestinian president Abbas

SPOTLIGHT

Modi visits Bhutan to open hydropower project



India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi (L) shaking hands with Bhutan’s King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck during the Fourth King’s 70th Birth Anniversary celebrations at Changlimethang Celebration Ground in Thimphu.

AFP | New Delhi, India

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi flew to neighbouring Bhutan on Tuesday to open a giant hydropower project with the king of the Himalayan nation, where electricity is its key export.

Carbon-negative Bhutan has aggressively promoted hydro-power projects, earning substantial revenue by exporting electricity to energy-hungry India, as well as utilising the cheap power for its own drive to mine cryptocurrency.

Modi and King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck are scheduled to inaugurate the 1020 megawatt Punatsangchhu-II hydropower project, co-developed with India and among the biggest in Bhutan.

“The visit will also mark another major milestone in our successful energy partnership”, Modi said in a statement as he departed New Delhi.

Tiny but strategic Bhutan is squeezed between giants China and India, and courted by both.

Modi said his visit would deepen ties and that their partnership was a “key pillar” of India’s “neighbourhood first” policy.

India is Bhutan’s main trading partner, making up more than 80 percent of its trade -- \$1.78 billion overall in 2024–25 -- according to India’s commerce ministry.

Bhutan’s embassy in New Delhi says hydropower contributes nearly two-thirds of its total exports.

Indian PM calls deadly Delhi blast ‘conspiracy’

Police are yet to give exact details of the incident near the historic Red Fort



Security personnel stand beside charred vehicles at the blast site after an explosion near the Red Fort in the old quarters of Delhi

◆ **Indian authorities have stepped short of calling the blast an attack**

◆ **Police said they had arrested a gang and seized explosive materials and assault rifles**

◆ **Police said the men were linked with Jaish-e-Mohammed and Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind**

AFP | New Delhi, India

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday called a deadly car explosion in the heart of the capital a “conspiracy”, vowing those responsible will face justice.

Police are yet to give exact details of what caused Monday’s incident near the historic Red Fort, one of India’s most well-known landmarks, and the site of the prime minister’s annual Independence Day speech.

The blast killed at least eight people, and 19 others were injured when flames ripped through several vehicles.

It was the first significant security incident since a shooting attack in late April that left 26 mainly Hindu civilians dead at the tourist site of Pahalgam in Indian-administered Kashmir, triggering clashes with Pakistan.

“I assure everyone that the agencies will get to the bottom of the entire conspiracy,” Modi said, in a speech during a state visit to neighbouring Bhutan,



Family members of a victim mourn his death a day after a blast near the Red Fort in the old quarters of Delhi, inside their residence in New Delhi



Security personnel check for evidence at the blast site following an explosion near the Red Fort in the old quarters of Delhi

without giving further details. “All those involved will be brought to justice.”

Indian authorities have stepped short of calling the blast an attack, saying they were awaiting forensic analysis.

But on Tuesday, the home affairs ministry said that India’s anti-terrorism force, the National Investigation Agency, are leading the probe.

The explosion on Monday came hours after Indian police said they had arrested a gang and seized explosive materials and assault rifles.

Police said the men were linked with Jaish-e-Mohammed, a Pakistan-based Islamist group, and Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind, a Kashmir offshoot of jihadist group Al-Qaeda.

Both groups are listed as ter-

rorist organisations in India.

Home Minister Amit Shah, after chairing security talks following the blast, said he had instructed officials “to hunt down each and every culprit behind this incident”, he said in a statement.

“Everyone involved in this act will face the full wrath of our agencies,” he added.

‘People were burning’

New Delhi’s deputy chief fire officer AK Malik told AFP shortly after the explosion that eight people had been killed.

The Press Trust of India news agency reported on Tuesday that the death toll had risen to 12, although that figure has not been confirmed.

Witnesses described to AFP how the car exploded in traffic and how people caught up in the surge of flames were set on fire.

“People were on fire and we tried to save them... Cars and people were burning -- people inside the cars were burning,” said Dharmintra Dhaga, 27.

“I was telling the public to save them, rescue them, and get them out. The public was busy making videos and taking photos.”

The emergency ward at Delhi’s LNJP hospital was chaotic after the explosion as wounded people streamed in and doctors rushed to treat them.

In the attack in April in Pahalgam, Indian authorities were swift to accuse Pakistan of backing the gunmen -- claim denied by Islamabad.

That attack sparked clashes between the nuclear-armed arch rivals in May, when more than 70 people were killed in missile, drone and artillery exchanges before a ceasefire was struck.