

# Iran will never seek **nuclear weapons**, president tells UN

US intelligence has not concluded that the country has decided to build a nuclear weapon

● The sanctions are set to go into effect on Saturday

● Pezeshkian accused the Europeans of bad faith

AFP | United Nations, United States

Iran's president repeated yesterday that his country is not seeking nuclear weapons, after military strikes by Israel and the United States earlier this year, and impending sanctions triggered by European powers.

"I hereby declare once more before this assembly that Iran has never sought and will never seek to build a nuclear bomb,"



French President Emmanuel Macron (R) and Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian (L) shake hands during a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly at UN headquarters in New York City

President Masoud Pezeshkian told the United Nations General Assembly.

"The one disturbing peace and stability in the region is Israel,

but Iran is the one that gets punished," he said.

Iran has long contended that it is not seeking nuclear weapons, pointing to an edict by Supreme

Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and US intelligence has not concluded that the country has decided to build a nuclear weapon. But Israel, the United States

and European countries have long been skeptical due to the country's advanced nuclear work, believing it could quickly pursue a bomb if it so decided.

Britain, France and Germany have moved to reimpose UN sanctions that had been suspended under a 2015 nuclear deal that was negotiated by the United States and then torn up by US President Donald Trump.

The sanctions are set to go into effect on Saturday. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met Tuesday with his European counterparts, leading to no clear headway other than an agreement to keep talking.

Pezeshkian accused the Europeans of bad faith, saying that Iran's lack of cooperation was in response to Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehen-

sive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"They falsely presented themselves as parties of good standing to the agreement, and they disparaged Iran's sincere efforts as insufficient," Pezeshkian said.

"All of this was in pursuit of nothing less than the destruction of the very JCPOA which they themselves had once held as a foremost achievement."

Standing at the General Assembly rostrum, Pezeshkian showed pictures of people killed in the Israeli military campaign against Iran, which Tehran says killed more than 1,000 people.

"Aerial assaults of the Zionist regime and the United States of America against Iran's cities, homes and infrastructure at the very time we were treading the path of diplomatic negotiations constituted a grave betrayal of diplomacy," he said.

# Typhoon Ragasa slams into south China after killing 17 in Taiwan

● Taiwan authorities earlier said 152 people were unaccounted for, but later revised that figure down to 17

AFP | Yangjiang, China

Fierce winds, pounding rain and rough seas battered southern China on Wednesday as powerful Typhoon Ragasa made landfall in Guangdong province after killing at least 17 in Taiwan.

Ragasa churned into Guangdong, home to tens of millions of people, and AFP journalists at the impact point in the city of Yangjiang saw flying debris and gusts ripping advertisements off of buildings.

The typhoon had hours earlier swept past Hong Kong, with the densely-populated city's weather service ranking the storm the strongest yet in the northwest-



Residents clear mud from their property, while damaged cars are seen in the background, in Hualien

ern Pacific this year.

Ragasa's passage in Taiwan killed at least 17 and injured 18 when a decades-old barrier lake burst in eastern Hualien county under the storm's heavy rains, according to regional officials.

Authorities earlier said 152 people were unaccounted for, but later revised that figure down to 17, saying they had made contact with more than 100 of those previously deemed missing.

More than 7,600 people were evacuated due to Ragasa and footage released by the fire agency showed flooded streets, half-submerged cars and uprooted trees.

Authorities across mainland China ordered businesses and schools to shut down in at least 10 cities across the nation's south, affecting tens of millions of people.

More than 1.89 million people across different cities in Guang-

dong had been relocated as of Tuesday night, its emergency management said in an online statement.

The storm made landfall along the coast of Hailing Island, near Yangjiang City around 5:00 pm (0900 GMT), Chinese meteorologists said.

Ferocious winds destroyed fences and downed trees, leaving fallen branches on the ground, AFP journalists saw.

The Yangjiang train station -- normally bustling with activity, locals said -- stood empty, with rail travel suspended Wednesday across Guangdong.

For a period of several hours, the powerful typhoon shook buildings as sheets of rain poured down on the city.

Fire trucks drove through mostly deserted streets as the winds whipped branches along the road and toppled motorbikes that had been parked along the pavement.



A man walks past a damaged car, swept away by floodwaters, in Hualien

The weather service said that at the time of landfall, the maximum wind speed near the centre of the storm was 145 kilometres per hour (90 miles per hour).

## Hong Kong battered

Hong Kong authorities said 90 people have been treated for injuries sustained during the typhoon period at public hospitals as of Wednesday nightfall.

More than 860 people sought refuge at the 50 temporary shelters across the city.

The Chinese finance hub recorded hundreds of fallen trees and flooding in multiple neighbourhoods. Many of the city's tall buildings swayed and rattled in the harsh winds.

At the Fullerton Ocean Park Hotel, next to a theme park, a man was seen losing his balance after a storm surge shattered the glass front doors and swept into its lobby, according to a video circulated online and verified by AFP.

A hotel spokesperson said there were no injuries.

Floodwaters rushed into the seaside Heng Fa Chuen residential estate and covered its interior courtyards, another video clip showed.

"It's like the end of the world... I never expected to see it as bad as this," said IT manager Paul

Yendle near a heavily damaged restaurant in the Tseung Kwan O area, another area near the harbour.

An off-duty firefighter surnamed Tse told AFP he was "a bit worried" about the safety of nearby bamboo scaffolding as he walked home after an 11-hour shift of "non-stop" work.

Rail operator MTR said it would take time for workers to check and repair outdoor sections of train tracks.

The Airport Authority said "only a limited number of cargo flights" were scheduled for Wednesday, with its website listing hundreds of cancelled passenger flights.

A five-year-old boy and his mother fell into the sea on Tuesday afternoon while they were watching the waves in the Chai Wan district, according to police.

Both were rushed to hospital and the mother remained in critical condition on Wednesday morning.



Part of the bridge over Mataian Creek is seen damaged after a barrier lake burst in Hualien



Scientists warn that storms are becoming more powerful as the world warms due to the effects of human-driven climate change.