

Damascus killed at least six people

Hezbollah's intel headquarters hit as Israel's 'ground raids' continue

Israeli military said an overnight strike killed 15 Hezbollah fighters in Bint Jbeil; Israel earlier carried out a deadly air strike in downtown Beirut, hitting an emergency services rescue facility run by Hezbollah, killing seven workers, the service said

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

Israel's military said on Thursday it had hit Hezbollah's intelligence headquarters in the Lebanese capital, as troops battled militants near the border and warplanes bombarded their strongholds around the country. Israel announced this week that its troops had started "ground raids" into parts of southern Lebanon, a stronghold of Hezbollah, after days of heavy bombardment of areas across the country where the group holds sway. The bombing has killed more than 1,000 people,



Attack's aftermath: Smoke rises from the site of an Israeli air strike at a neighbourhood in Beirut's southern suburb on Thursday. AFP

according to Lebanon's Health Ministry, and forced hundreds of thousands to flee their homes in a country already mired in economic and political crisis.

In Lebanon, the Israeli military said it hit "targets belonging to Hezbollah's intelligence headquarters in Beirut".

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency report-

ed three air strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs, with a source close to Hezbollah saying the target was an evacuated building that housed the group's media relations office.

Central Beirut strike

Hezbollah said it fought off a bid by Israeli troops to advance at Fatima's Gate on the border. It also said it set off two explosive devices against advancing Israeli forces as it kept up its cross-border rocket fire.

The military said an overnight strike killed 15 Hezbollah fighters in Bint Jbeil, an area heavily damaged during Israel's last war with the militant

group in 2006.

Later the Lebanese Army said one of its soldiers was killed when "the Israeli enemy targeted an Army post in the Bint Jbeil area" prompting retaliatory fire.

A Lebanese military official said it was the Army's first response to Israeli fire since last October.

Israel earlier carried out a deadly air raid in downtown Beirut, hitting an emergency services rescue facility run by Hezbollah, killing seven workers, the service said.

Israel has yet to comment on the strike, but said it had hit about 200 Hezbollah targets "in Lebanese territory".

Suhasini Haidar
Meera Srinivasan

NEW DELHI/COLOMBO

In a visit expected to set the course for India-Sri Lanka ties, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will travel to Colombo on Friday to meet the Sri Lankan "leadership", less than a fortnight after President Anura Kumara Dissanayake was sworn in, the Ministry of External Affairs announced on Thursday.

"In keeping with India's Neighbourhood First Policy and SAGAR outlook, the visit underlines the shared commitment of the two countries to further deepen the longstanding partnership for mutual benefit," the MEA said in its statement.

During his day-long visit to Sri Lanka, Mr. Jaishankar will hold talks with the new Foreign Minister Vitha Herath and is expected to call on Mr. Dissanayake, Sri Lankan Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya and meet leaders of oth-

er parties, depending on his schedule, said officials.

In particular, discussions over the future of Indian projects, including the Trincomalee infrastructure and energy projects, and private investments such as the wind power project of the Adani Group, whose selection process Mr. Dissanayake has questioned, are expected. In addition, the new government's stance on issues of devolution and Tamil rights, which New Delhi has been vocal about in the past, will be watched most closely.

The visit will also be an opportunity to gauge future policies of the newly elected National People's Power [NPP] government – led by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna [JVP] – in Sri Lanka, which has never held power before, towards investment from China and the access to Chinese military and research vehicles as well as other "dual use" projects, officials said.

Mr. Jaishankar will also

What is the status of the Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0?

What are the various health and environmental risks arising from legacy waste dumpsites?

Sreeparna Chakrabarty

The story so far:

India has more than 3,000 legacy waste dumpsites, with 2,424 of them having a waste load of more than 1,000 tonnes. The Central government launched the legacy waste management project as part of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) 2.0 in October 2021, for a period of five years till 2026. However, more than halfway through the time period, only 471 out of the 2,424, that is 19.43% of dumpsites have been completely remediated.

What are legacy waste dumpsites?

Legacy waste dumpsites are dumpsites that contain solid waste that have been collected and stored for years in an unscientific and uncontrolled manner. Municipal solid waste generation in India is estimated to be around 1,50,000 tonnes per day, according to the State of India's Environment 2023 report. With almost no installed facility in India for handling solid

waste, the municipal corporations, municipal councils and *nagar* (city) panchayats have traditionally opted for creating man-made garbage hills.

These dumpsites originally developed on the outskirts of the cities. However, with the expansion of cities, these sites are now often found in the heart of cities on barren land or in landfills. According to estimates of the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, approximately 15,000 acres of prime real estate is buried under nearly 16 crore tonnes of legacy waste across the country.

What are the health hazards?

Legacy waste dumpsites can pose a number of health hazards for citizens. Exposure to emissions from hazardous waste can irritate the mouth and throat. Inhaling methane from landfills can cause nausea, vomiting, and loss of coordination. Ragpickers who work at landfills can develop skin allergies from years of exposure to waste. People who live near landfills may be prone to

developing tuberculosis, asthma, diabetes, depression, cholera, malaria, and other diseases. They are also a source of greenhouse gas emissions, such as methane and carbon dioxide.

What is the Swachh Bharat Mission?

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) or Clean India Mission is a country-wide campaign launched by the Central government on October 2, 2014 to eliminate open defecation and to create Open Defecation Free (ODF) villages. The mission aimed to achieve an "open-defecation free" India by October 2, 2019 coinciding with the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi through the construction of toilets.

In 2021, the Government launched its second edition – the five-year Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0), committing to making all cities "garbage-free cities" by 2026, while maintaining ODF status across 4,372 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). It also has a vision of 100% source segregation, door

NATO chief Rutte visits Ukraine, vows to shore up support

Associated Press

KYIV

New NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte visited Ukraine on Thursday in his first official trip since taking office and pledging the alliance's continued support for Kyiv in its war with Russia.

Mr. Rutte met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv as air raid sirens twice went off in the Ukrainian capital.

The new head of NATO vowed when he took office on Tuesday to help shore up Western support for Ukraine, which has been fighting Russia's full-scale invasion since February 2022 and has for most of



Mark Rutte

this year been on the defensive due to a relentless Russian Army push in the country's eastern regions.

Mr. Rutte expressed confidence that he can work with whomever is elected President of the United States, the alliance's most powerful member, in November.

Pilot project for internships takes off

The portal, pminternship.mca.gov.in, is likely to be opened up for youngsters in the age group of 21 to 24 years to enroll for consideration by companies on Vijaya Dasami, October 12. This window will be open till October 25 for the first batch of internships. Candidates must share and self-certify some data about their educational qualifications and residential pin codes.

Candidates' data will be matched with companies' needs and locations using Artificial Intelligence tools, and a shortlist of candidates will then be generated for companies to consider. "The effort would be to offer internships in the same districts that the candidates reside, or a neighbouring district if that is not possible or will be placed within their own State," an official said.

The scheme is not open to post-graduates, children of regular and permanent employees in the Central or State governments, graduates from premier institutes like IITs, IIMs and NIDs, and professionals with qualifications such as CA, CS, and MBBS. Moreover, anyone from a household that includes a person who earned an income of ₹8 lakh or more in 2023-24, will not be eligible.

Internships under the scheme will be granted to candidates who have passed high school or higher secondary school, possess a certificate from an industrial training institute (ITI), hold a diploma from a polytechnic institute, or are graduates with degrees such as BA, B.Sc, B.Com, BCA, BBA, or B.Pharm. Those unemployed youth enrolled in online or distance learning courses are also eligible to apply, but anyone undergoing any skilling, apprenticeship, internship, or student training programme under a Central or State government scheme will not be allowed to apply.