

News in brief

◆ **The Philippine military** on Saturday accused China's air force of "dangerous and provocative actions" against one of its planes patrolling over a disputed South China Sea reef. Two China air force aircraft "executed a dangerous manoeuvre at around 9:00am and dropped flares in the path of our NC-212i," armed forces chief General Romeo Brawner said in a statement, recounting the alleged incident Thursday "over" Scarborough Shoal. He said the Chinese action "endangered the lives of our personnel undertaking maritime security operations," adding that the pilot and crew were unharmed and "safely returned" to a northern Philippines air base. China defended its operations on Saturday, saying it had "organised naval and air forces to lawfully... (drive) away" the Philippine plane, following "repeated warnings", according to a statement by the Southern Theater Command of the People's Liberation Army.



**Philippines says China air force harassed its plane over disputed reef**

◆ **North Korea** is launching more balloons believed to be carrying trash southward, South Korea's military said Saturday, the latest in a series of border barrages that have ignited a tit-for-tat propaganda war. North Korea has sent thousands of trash-filled balloons southward since May, saying they are retaliation for propaganda balloons launched by South Korean activists. The latest launch comes as relations between the two Koreas are at one of their lowest points in years, with the North recently announcing the deployment of 250 ballistic missile launchers to its southern border. The nuclear-armed North was "again launching (suspected) trash balloons aimed at the South," Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement late Saturday.

**N. Korea launches more suspected trash balloons: Seoul military**



◆ **A slew of pilot errors** caused the fatal crash of a US military Osprey aircraft in Australia last August, the Pentagon said Friday in an investigation that also slammed a lax attitude towards safety. Three US Marines died in the August 27 crash after the crew lost control of their MV-22B Osprey during war games near a remote tropical island off Australia. The deadly accident was one of several involving Ospreys in the past few years, prompting renewed scrutiny of the tilt-rotor aircraft, a mix between a helicopter and a plane. "Ultimately, based on the evidence available, the primary cause for this mishap was pilot error and complacency," the report said. But the probe also found "several concerning maintenance practices" by the squad, including falsified paperwork about the aircraft's weight and load, and incomplete turnaround inspections prior to flight.

**Pilot error, lax safety blamed in US Osprey crash off Australia**



**Russia evacuates tens of thousands amid Ukraine incursion**



Representative picture  
Moscow, Russia

Struggling to put down a major Ukrainian incursion for a fifth day, Russia on Saturday said it had evacuated tens of thousands of people from its border region, launched a "counter-terror operation" and warned that the fighting was endangering a nuclear power plant. Ukrainian units stormed into Russia's western Kursk region on Tuesday morning in a shock attack, the largest and most successful cross-border offensive by Kyiv of the two-and-a-half year conflict. Its troops have advanced several kilometres and Russia's army has rushed in reserves and extra equipment -- though neither side has given precise details on the forces they have committed.

**Sinaloa cartel leader flew 'against his will' to US: ambassador**  
Mexico City, Mexico

The US ambassador to Mexico on Friday revealed new information about the arrest of Sinaloa cartel co-founder Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, details of which remain murky two weeks later. Zambada, 76, was arrested in the United States after flying there on July 25 along with Joaquin Guzman Lopez, the son of former Sinaloa leader Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman. Zambada was taken "against his will" while Guzman "voluntarily surrendered," Ambassador Ken Salazar said at a news conference, two weeks after the Sinaloa cartel leaders landed in a private plane just outside the Texas border city of El Paso. "I want you to understand very clearly, there were no resources from the United States in this operation," Salazar continued. "It was not a United States plane, it was not a United States pilot, it was not our agents or our people in Mexico," who transported the drug traffickers, the ambassador said. Salazar emphasized that actions taken by the United States and Mexico against organized crime are carried out "with respect for the sovereignty" of both nations.

**Israel strike on Gaza**

AFP | Palestinian Territories

Rescuers in Gaza said an Israeli air strike on a religious school housing displaced Palestinians killed 93 people yesterday, sparking international condemnation despite Israel's insistence that it was targeting Hamas. AFP could not independently verify the toll which, if confirmed, would be one of the largest from a single strike during 10 months of war between Israel and Palestinians since Hamas's October 7 attack. The bombardment of Al-Tabieen school and mosque drew criticism from across the Middle East and beyond alongside calls for a ceasefire, after international mediators invited the warring sides to resume talks towards a long-sought truce and hostage-release deal. Civil defence rescuers in the Hamas-ruled territory said three Israeli missiles hit the complex in Gaza City while people were performing dawn prayers. "They dropped a missile on them while they were just praying," said one woman, mourning over a dead child shrouded in a plastic body bag. Israel's military said it had "pre-



A young girl cries inside a school used as a temporary shelter for displaced Palestinians killed more than 90 people.

cisely struck" Al-Tabieen, which spokesman Nadav Shoshani added on social media platform X housed approximately 20 Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters. Hamas denounced the "daunting escalation", while the Palestinian military said it had "pre-

**Modi, Vietnam counterpart Pham Minh Chinh talks, Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**

ANI | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Vietnamese counterpart Pham Minh Chinh held a meeting at Hyderabad House in Delhi on Thursday. The two leaders will hold discussions to further energise the India-Vietnam ties, including the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. In a post on X, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated, "Taking India-Vietnam partnership to new heights! PM @narendramodi extended a warm welcome to PM Pham Minh Chinh of Vietnam at Hyderabad House. Substantive discussions to further energise the India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership on the agenda." Earlier, Pham Minh Chinh paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat. He paid his tribute by laying floral wreaths at the memorial site where Mahatma Gandhi was laid to rest. In a post on X, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated,



Vietnam PM Pham Minh Chinh with PM Narendra Modi

"Remembering Bapu and his timeless ideals! PM Pham Minh Chinh of Vietnam paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat." Pham Minh Chinh, who is on a three-day State visit to India, was accorded a ceremonial reception at the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhavan. PM Modi received his Vietnam counterpart at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The two leaders shared a warm hug as they greeted each other. He then inspected a Guard of Honour by the combined defence services. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Anupriya Patel, and Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal were present on the occasion. PM Modi and Pham Minh Chinh met delegates and ministers from each other's countries.

**SPOTLIGHT**

**Workers begin recovering bodies from Brazil plane crash**



Aerial view of the wreckage of the crashed airplane

Vinhedo, Brazil

Emergency crews on Saturday began removing the victims of a plane crash in Brazil's Sao Paulo state that killed all 62 people aboard, as authorities sifted through the wreckage to try to determine what caused the plane's dramatic plunge. Videos showed the ATR 72-500 plane in a sickening downward spin Friday before it crashed into a residential area of the town of Vinhedo, some 80 kilometers (50 miles) northwest of Sao Paulo city. The Voepass airlines said Saturday that verification of the passenger list showed there were 62 people on board, not 61 as reported earlier. All 62 were Brazilian; there were no survivors. While some houses at the crash site were damaged, no

injuries or deaths were reported among their residents. The crash transformed the plane's fuselage into a mass of twisted iron. As of Saturday morning, 16 bodies had been removed, firefighters said. In all, some 200 people were working on the recovery effort. The dead are being transported to the Sao Paulo morgue. The normally peaceful, wooded enclave where the plane came down was swarming Saturday with police cars, ambulances and firetrucks. A steady overnight rain complicated recovery work, which could "take days," according to Captain Maycon Cristo, a spokesman for local firefighters. The twin-engine turbo-prop, built by French-Italian aviation firm ATR, was on a flight from Cascavel in southern Parana state to Sao Paulo's Guarulhos international airport.

**Japanese urged to avoid panic-buying**

AFP | Tokyo, Japan

Authorities in Japan urged people to avoid hoarding as anxiety over a possible megaquake triggered a spike yesterday in demand for disaster kits and daily necessities. In its first such advisory, the weather agency said a huge earthquake was more likely in the aftermath of a magnitude 7.1 jolt in the south on Thursday which left 14



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