



Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte (L) walks with Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah (R) as he inspects a guard of honour in Manila ahead of ASEAN summit.

Duterte says he is helpless against China

Manila Philippine President

Rodrigo Duterte said there was no point protesting Chinese artificial island building in disputed areas of the South China Sea because it could not be stopped.

Duterte made the comments ahead of an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit this week, and he confirmed he would not use the event to pressure China on its expansionism in the strategically vital waters.

"It cannot be an issue anymore. It's already there.

What would be the purpose of discussing it if you cannot do anything," Duterte said.

China has been turning reefs and shoals in areas of the sea claimed by the Philippines and other nations into artificial islands, and installing military facilities there.

The United States has criticised the construction work, warning against militarisation in the waterway where \$5 trillion in annual trade passes.

China's reclamation has also rattled other claimants, which include ASEAN

members Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei.

Duterte's predecessor, Benigno Aquino, had challenged China by asking a UN-backed tribunal to outlaw Beijing's sweeping claims to the sea and its reclamation work.

The tribunal last year ruled largely in the Philippines' favour.

However Duterte, who came to office shortly before the ruling was issued, adopted a pragmatic approach to dealing with China in a bid to win billions of dollars worth of trade and aid. (AFP)

#PollToday



The US accuses China of militarisation of the South China Sea where \$5 trillion in annual trade passes. And Duterte yesterday said he is helpless. Do you think China is pushing the region into chaos?

Yes No Cant Say



We can only successfully strengthen the monetary union if responsibility and solidarity are closely linked. One way to work for that is to continue working at turning the ESM into a European monetary fund,"

Jeroen Dijsselbloem
Eurogroup chairman

Rest in sight

China-bound illegal donkey hide haul seized



Pakistani police have confiscated more than 4,000 donkey hides that were set to be illegally exported to China where they are highly sought after for their use in traditional medicine.

Four Thai rangers killed by bomb in restive south

Four Thai army rangers were shot dead in an ambush after a roadside bomb toppled their truck in Thailand's insurgency-plagued south, police said.

Russia, Iran abusing Interpol to arrest foes

Russia and Iran are among countries increasingly abusing Interpol red notices to seek the arrest of political opponents, European lawmakers warned Wednesday.

Rare vaquita porpoise found dead in Mexico

An endangered vaquita porpoise was found dead in the Gulf of Mexico, raising the number of dead vaquitas found in 2017 to four.

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10 dead after strikes on rebel-held hospitals



Damage caused by air strike on a hospital

Deir Sharqi

Air strikes on two hospitals in rebel-held northwestern Syria yesterday left 10 people dead including two babies in incubators, a monitor said.

They were among 19 people killed as a result of strikes across rebel-held Idlib province yesterday, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

A correspondent in the village of Deir Sharqi, where one of the hospitals was hit, saw extensive damage and wards buried in rubble.

It was the third time in

less than a week that medical facilities in the province, controlled by rebels and jihadist groups, had been hit in air strikes.

"Apparently Russian aircraft... carried out four successive raids at dawn on a hospital on the outskirts" of Deir Sharqi, it said.

"Six civilians in the emergency department were killed, including two babies in incubators, after the destruction of the facility's oxygen generator" which was keeping them alive, Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman said.

Brazil arrests 14 over explosive Paraguay heist

Brasilia

Brazilian police said yesterday they had arrested 14 people and seized more than a million dollars of stolen cash after an explosive heist by suspected Brazilian gangsters in neighbouring Paraguay.

Dubbed "the robbery of the century" by officials, the raid in the city of Ciudad del Este near Brazilian border left three robbers and a policeman dead.

The robbers made off with \$8 million, said Prosegur,

the secure cash-transporting company targeted in the operation which saw some 50 gunmen with explosives and military-grade weaponry blast into a secure vault.

On Wednesday Brazilian federal police said in a report they had seized the equivalent of about \$1.4 million in various currencies as well as firearms and explosives.

An official of the force said that two more suspects had been arrested over the heist, bringing to 14 the total arrested since the raid.

Thai mother saw daughter's Facebook Live murder

Phuket

The distraught Thai mother of a baby girl killed by her boyfriend in a murder he broadcast on Facebook Live has described the harrowing moment she stumbled across the video and rushed to alert police.

The killing on Monday evening caused revulsion both in Thailand and around the world, sparking renewed debate about what can be done by social media giants to more quickly remove live broadcasts of violent crimes, suicides and murders.



Jiranuch Trirat in front of the coffin of her daughter Natalie

Jiranuch Trirat, a 22-year-old from Phuket, was left devastated after her boyfriend Wuttisan Wongtalay hanged their 11-month old daughter Natalie from the side of an

abandoned building before taking his own life.

He broadcast Natalie's murder on Facebook Live, a video that Jiranuch came across that evening.

Jail terms over death of Moroccan fishmonger

Rabat

A Moroccan court has sentenced seven people to between five and eight months in prison over the death of a fish seller crushed in a rubbish truck.

Mouhcine Fikri, 31, was killed on October 28 as he protested against the authorities' seizure and destruction of his swordfish, which had been caught out of season.

His death in the northern port of Al-Hoceima sparked nationwide protests.

The Criminal Chamber of Al-Hoceima handed down the sentences Wednesday after a manslaughter trial of 11 people including officials from the fisheries authority and the interior ministry along with employees of the cleaning company, the local prosecutor said.

In a statement carried by the official MAP news agency, the prosecutor said those sentenced to prison also faced fines of \$55 (50 euros) and that the other four suspects were acquitted.