

Philippine couple married in hip-deep floodwaters



Bride Leian Lieza Galang walking down the aisle during her wedding ceremony in a flooded church in Hagonoy town.

AFP | Manila, Philippines

A Philippine couple tied the knot yesterday at a Catholic church swamped in hip-deep waters, as heavy rains have pummeled large parts of the country for a month.

Clutching a bouquet of white blooms and clad in an off-shoulder white gown, Leian Lieza Galang gingerly waded into the murky brown floodwaters inside the Saint John the Baptist church in Hagonoy town, north of Manila, to wed Gilbert Chico.

"We were in complete uniform. We did not mind that our gown and coat got soaked," the groom told AFP.

The parish priest declared the couple, both in their 30s, husband and wife at an abbreviated late-morning ceremony,

said wedding photographer Mikko Rey Alfonso.

"The parish had advised them to postpone the wedding due to the rising floodwaters from upstream. It was their decision to proceed," Alfonso told AFP, adding the church had been partially underwater for nearly a month.

"Since they wanted to see it through, we the servants of the parish did the best we could to make this a special day for them." Heavier-than-usual seasonal monsoon rains pounded the northern third of the mainly Catholic archipelago in August, with resulting landslides and flash floods killing 34 people, according to the latest official tally.

"They love each other. Nothing could stop their union," Alfonso said.

NATO will defend against 'any threat', Rutte says

Brussels, Belgium

NATO chief Mark Rutte yesterday vowed the alliance's "full solidarity" with Berlin, after the German government said Moscow was behind an incident involving an explosive-laden drone at Leipzig airport last month.

"NATO will continue to strengthen our ability to

deter and defend all Allies against any threat -- including malign actions like those seen in Leipzig and elsewhere across the Alliance," Rutte wrote on X after talks with Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

"Russia's attempts to intimidate us, to undermine our unity and our willingness to support Ukraine are futile and will fail," he added.

Israeli settlers try to torch West Bank mosque, Palestinians say

AFP | Bazzaryah, Palestinian Territories

Israeli settlers tried to set fire to a mosque in the north of the occupied West Bank yesterday, Palestinians said, in the latest such attack in the territory.

The Palestinian ministry of religious affairs said that "a group of settlers tried to burn parts of the Nur al-Din Zanki Mosque" in Bazzaryah, near Nablus, describing the incident as a "criminal attack".

AFP photos and video from Bazzaryah showed blackened burn marks around a window of a room belonging to the mosque building and threatening Hebrew messages written on the exterior walls.

"At around 2:45 am, all of a sudden the settlers attacked it. There was a small explosion that caused a fire inside the



A man stands by graffiti in Hebrew left by Israeli settlers following a reported arson attack on a mosque in the Palestinian village of Bazzaryah

mosque building," said Majed Nasr, who lives nearby, adding that the settlers then fled the scene.

"We managed to contain the blaze before things could get worse and reach the main upper part of the building," he told AFP.

The Israeli military did not immediately respond to AFP's request for comment on the incident.

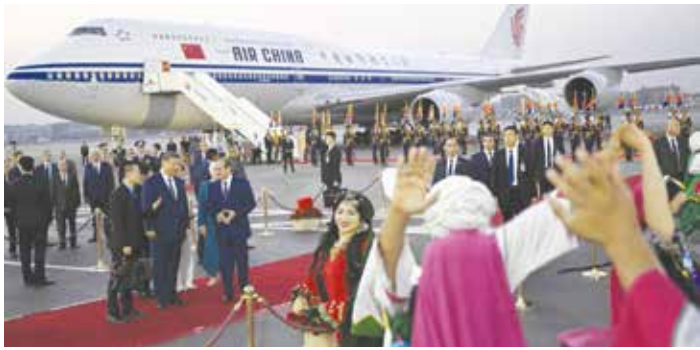
Xi arrives in Egypt as US sanctions threat looms over Iran links

AFP | Cairo, Egypt

Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived in Egypt yesterday on a rare trip to the Middle East as both countries face the threat of US sanctions over financial links to Iran.

Xi and his wife were greeted on the tarmac by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and the first lady, as well as a performance by an Egyptian folk dance troupe.

The two-day visit comes as both countries seek to manage



the fallout of the months-long Middle East war, which began when the United States and Is-

rael launched strikes against Iran on February 28, throwing the crucial trade region into

crisis.

Xi's visit "comes at a time when China's economic interests are directly exposed to the US-Iran war", said Gamal Salama, political science professor at Egypt's Suez University.

China, a major buyer of Iranian oil, has presented itself as a neutral party in the Middle East conflict, repeatedly calling for a lasting ceasefire.

Both China and Egypt support an independent Palestinian state as part of a two-state solution.

China-Nepal toll tops 1,000 as tunnel rescue offers last hope



Six-year-old Manisha Magar was pulled alive from beneath mud and rubble in Timure after being trapped for hours.

AFP | Nuwakot, Nepal

The death toll from devastating Himalayan glacial floods crossed the grim 1,000 mark yesterday, as Chinese and Nepali teams searched for survivors including dozens feared trapped in hydropower tunnels.

Nearly 4,500 people are missing after the gigantic wave of freezing water, rocks and debris triggered by a high-altitude glacial collapse roared downstream on Wednesday, wiping out entire settlements and carving a path of destruction across Nepal.

Nepali rescue teams are digging, drilling and blasting through debris in a desperate race against time to free around 100 hydropower workers believed trapped in multiple tunnels.



Nepal Army personnel arrive by helicopters to provide medical treatment for flood affected people in Nepal's Rasuwa district



The 2026 Nepal disaster was initially reported as a magnitude 4.4 earthquake, but the US Geological Survey later determined that the seismic signal was generated by a massive landslide/glacial collapse – not an earthquake. The slope failure released energy equivalent to about a magnitude 5.2 earthquake, and the resulting debris flow travelled roughly 100 kilometres downstream

So far, rescuers have recovered only bodies from tunnels blocked by sludge, and hopes of finding survivors are fading.

Excavators worked into the night on Tuesday, but an army update noted that "a large amount of water started flowing" into a hole they were digging, forcing them to start a new opening.

Nepal's Prime Minister Balendra Shah has called the catastrophe "unimaginable and heartbreaking".

With mortuaries overflow-

ing in Nepal, authorities have begun burying hundreds of unidentified bodies after DNA sampling.

At least 17 bodies have also been pulled from rivers downstream in India.

Police, using a drone to search for survivors, said on Tuesday that they had located 24 corpses inside a single house in Nuwakot district.

Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal said he still hoped some of the thousands missing could be alive. "Miracles do happen," he told

AFP in an interview. "At this point, I do not want to completely give up hope."

Aid needs are enormous. Entire communities have been swept away, leaving families homeless and using makeshift shelters as heavy rain lashes down.

Roads and dozens of bridges have been smashed, and power plants destroyed.

"There are too many challenges," said police officer E. Hawadi in badly affected Nuwakot district.

Netanyahu says Israel captured head of Hamas internal security in Gaza

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday that Israeli forces captured the head of Hamas's internal security apparatus in Gaza, without giving his name.

Israel's Shin Bet inter-

nal security agency and the military "in a daring operation today arrested the head of Hamas's internal security apparatus near his home in Gaza... He is one of the most senior Hamas leaders," Netanyahu said, according to a statement released by his office.

Germany says will close Russia's Bonn consulate, Berlin cultural centre

Berlin, Germany

The German government announced yesterday it would shut Russia's consulate in Bonn and its cultural centre in Berlin after saying Moscow was responsible for a drone incident at a strategic

airport.

Foreign Minister Johann Wadepful said that "the Russian general consulate in Bonn will be closed by September 18" and added that "the lease for the Russian House in Berlin will be cancelled".