

One dead, 24
missing after
boat sinks in
Indonesia, report
rescuers

AFP | Jakarta

A passenger boat sank off an Indonesian island, killing at least one person and leaving 24 others missing, the local search and rescue agency said yesterday.

An engine failure caused the boat to sink as it sailed near Selayar, a small island south of the larger Sulawesi, said the head of the local search and rescue agency, Muhammad Arif Anwar.

The crew was unable to repair the engine, prompting the skipper to call local authorities requesting evacuation, he said.

The boat was already partially sunken when rescuers reached it yesterday, according to Arif.

South Africa's
rooibos heads
to space

AFP | Cape Town

Seeds from South Africa's world-famous rooibos tea are headed to the International Space Station to see how they respond to space conditions, in the first such experiment for Africa, organisers announced yesterday.

Uniquely South African, the rooibos plant is used to make a sweetish, caffeine-free infusion that is high in antioxidants and sold across the world.

The mission facilitated by MaxIQ Space is set for October and the seeds are expected back on Earth by December or January, the South African Rooibos Council (SARC) said.

Over 500
feared dead in
two suspected
shipwrecks off
Myanmar: UN

AFP | Geneva

The United Nations warned yesterday that more than 500 people were feared dead following reports of two large shipwrecks off Myanmar since late June.

The UN's International Organisation for Migration and its refugee agency UNHCR voiced alarm in a joint statement at reports "that two boats carrying more than 500 people may have capsized off the coast of Myanmar in recent days".

Preliminary information indicated that the two vessels in question departed from war-torn Myanmar's Rakhine State in late June, with mainly members of the country's mostly Muslim Rohingya minority onboard, the statement said.

US, Iran exchange blows in rekindled Mideast war

Pakistan urges renewed negotiations as strikes intensify and Hormuz tensions threaten regional stability

● US strikes Iranian military targets

● Iran fires ballistic missiles at US base in Jordan

● Trump issues fresh warning

AFP | Tehran

The United States struck Iran and Tehran hit back at US allies in the Gulf yesterday, as the foes battled over the vital Strait of Hormuz in the renewed Middle East war, despite a call from mediator Pakistan to resume talks.

The rekindled fighting came a month after a preliminary deal was signed that aimed to end the conflict, which broke out in late February with massive US-Israeli strikes on Iran.

Yesterday, Tehran threatened to target infrastructure across the region if US President Donald Trump followed through on a threat to attack power plants and bridges in Iran.

It followed another exchange of strikes between the two countries, with Iran's Revolutionary Guards saying they struck a US air base in Jordan with ballistic missiles, in response to an American attack.

The US military's Central Command (CENTCOM) said its forces hit Iranian military targets in multiple locations including



A screen grab from a video released by US Central Command shows what the US military says is a strike in Iran

coastal Bandar Abbas to "degrade Iran's ability to threaten innocent mariners" in the Strait of Hormuz.

Earlier strikes had targeted coastal defence and cruise missile sites on Greater Tunb Island in the Gulf, CENTCOM added.

Iranian state news agency IRNA said a projectile struck parts of Semnan airport in the north,

without injuring anyone. It also reported explosions elsewhere in the country, including Lorestan in the west, while air defences were triggered in parts of Tehran.

Soon after, US allies in the Gulf began reporting attacks.

'End violence'

At the heart of the fighting is the Strait of Hormuz, a water-

way crucial to global oil and gas flows.

Iran blockaded Hormuz after the war erupted on February 28, using the waterway for leverage against its foes for months.

The strait was briefly reopened after the US-Iran deal last month, before Tehran vowed last week it would be closed again "until the US ends its aggression".

The United States has also

Delhi urges halt to Indian seamen on Hormuz ships

AFP | New Delhi

India urged local shipowners and firms that recruit sailors not to deploy seafarers on vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz, as fighting intensifies.

India is one of the largest contributors of sailors to merchant shipping worldwide, with more than 320,000 active seafarers in 2025, according to its shipping ministry.

India's Directorate General

of Maritime Administration (DGMA) appealed in a statement on Wednesday that there should be "no deployment of Indian seafarers on vessels undertaking voyages involving passage through the Strait of Hormuz

until further orders."

"The DGMA continues to closely monitor the evolving security situation and remains committed to safeguarding the safety, security and welfare of Indian seafarers," it said.

Orphanage fire kills 11 as Algeria struggles in heatwave

AFP | Algiers

A fire burning at an orphanage in Algeria's capital has killed at least 11 people including children, authorities said yesterday, amid a heatwave that has sparked hundreds of blazes in the country's north.

Firefighters had been battling to extinguish the flames since before dawn in the Mohammadia suburb of Algiers.

"At around 3:00 am, we heard the fire engines arriving and the children screaming," said Abdessalam Merrah, 41, who lives nearby.

"We helped as much as we could, but unfortunately we were told that 11 people had already died."

Journalists saw black stains around the building's windows yesterday morning. A witness said firefighters had used a chainsaw to



Police officers stand guard as vehicles leave through the entrance of an orphanage

remove metal bars from a window.

The Algerian civil defence said the toll was provisional and added that another 19 people were injured in the fire, the cause of which is unknown.

Rachid Belhadj, head of the forensic medicine department

at Mustapha Bacha Hospital, told local television that some of the bodies were completely burned and required DNA tests to be identified.

Algeria's President Abdelmadjid Tebboune later said "several children" were among the dead.

Israel tells Pentagon chief will keep troops in Lebanon, Syria, Gaza 'security zones'

AFP | Jerusalem

Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz told his US counterpart Pete Hegseth early yesterday (Jul 16) that Israel is determined to keep its forces in "security zones" it has carved out inside Lebanon, Syria and the Gaza Strip.

In a statement, Katz's office said the two men spoke overnight and the minister "emphasised Israel's determination to remain in the security zones in Syria, Gaza, and Lebanon in order to protect Israel's borders and the communities near the border from the threats posed by militant forces".

"We have never asked the United States to act in our place along our borders," Katz said.

His comments come days after US President Donald Trump asked Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to pull



Israeli army tanks positioned along the Israel-Lebanon border

Israeli forces out of Syria and Lebanon, according to US news outlet Axios.

Citing a US official, Axios reported that Trump told Netanyahu the Israeli deployment was fuelling tensions in Syria.

"They don't want you there. You should redeploy," Trump told him, according to Axios.

After the December 2024 overthrow of Syria's longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad, Israel sent troops into a UN-patrolled buffer zone that separated Israeli and Syrian forces on the Golan Heights.