

News in brief

◆ **The UN said Monday** that its international staff held by Yemen's Huthi rebels in a raid on its Sanaa compound were now free to move inside and all five national staff had been freed. On Saturday, the United Nations office in Yemen said Huthi security forces had made an "unauthorised entry" into its compound in the city. Twenty staff were being held, including Peter Hawkins, the Yemen representative of the UN children's agency UNICEF. "All 15 UN international staff are now free to move inside the UN compound in Sanaa and are in contact with their respective UN entities and families," the UN said in a brief statement. "The five national staff who had been detained since October 18 within the same UN compound have been released."

◆ **Russian Foreign Minister** Sergei Lavrov and US counterpart Marco Rubio on Monday discussed preparations for a presidential summit between Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump, Moscow said. In a statement, the Russian foreign ministry said they had a "constructive discussion on possible concrete steps" associated with the meeting.

◆ **The European Union** is leaving the door open to sanctioning Israel to maintain leverage to ensure the Gaza ceasefire deal is fully implemented, the bloc's foreign policy chief said yesterday. "The ceasefire has changed the context -- that is very clear for everybody," Kaja Kallas said after a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels. "However, unless we see real and sustained change on the ground, including more aid reaching Gaza,

the threat of sanctions remains on the table". Brussels proposed measures against Israel including blacklisting ministers and curbing trade ties before a truce deal to halt the war in Gaza was brokered by US President Donald Trump. "We don't move with the measures now, but we don't take them off the table either, because the situation is fragile," Kallas said. She said the EU wanted to see Israel take a raft of steps including "the improvement of humanitarian aid reaching Gaza", handing revenues to the Palestinians, allowing journalists into Gaza and registering NGOs.

SPOTLIGHT

Nepal PM honours slain  
hostage returned from Gaza



Family members pay their last respects to the coffin of Bipin Joshi, a deceased Nepali student who was killed while being held hostage in Gaza, at the Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu

AFP | Kathmandu, Nepal

Nepal's interim prime minister yesterday draped a national flag over the coffin of returned Gaza hostage Bipin Joshi, released under the ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas.

"Bipin is a son of all Nepali mothers," Sushila Karki said at a ceremony held at the airport in Kathmandu, after his body was flown back to the capital.

"The name Bipin will be immortal, no one can forget him for his bravery and the hardships he had to face."

Joshi, an agriculture student who was 22 when kidnapped, had arrived in Israel just weeks before Hamas's attack on October 7, 2023, during which Palestinians took 251 hostages to Gaza.

He was taken from a kibbutz in southern Israel, where 10 Nepali nationals were killed.

Joshi was reported to have saved his friends by throwing a

grenade back at the assailants storming the community, according to a survivor.

The family's only sign of life from Joshi was a short video clip, believed to have been filmed in November 2023, and later recovered by the Israeli military.

His family had held out hope he was alive, until the Israeli government informed Kathmandu that he had been confirmed dead on October 14, according to Nepal's foreign ministry.

"We waited for two years, and really hoped he would come home -- but in vain," his cousin Kishor Joshi told AFP.

Israel's government said Joshi had been a student who came "to learn agriculture and build a better future", in a post on social media.

His remains will be flown on to his family in Kanchanpur in southwestern Nepal.

"An innocent life, full of promise, stolen too soon," Israel said.

Cargo plane skids off  
Hong Kong runway, **kills 2**

Emirates airlines said the plane's crew were confirmed to be safe

● A 30-year-old man aboard the ground vehicle was confirmed dead

● Another, aged 41, died after being rushed to hospital

● The plane's damaged fuselage was left partly submerged in the seawater



A Boeing 747-400 cargo aircraft after it hit a ground vehicle during landing on the north runway of Hong Kong's international airport and skidded into the sea, killing two

Officials provided a diagram that showed the plane abruptly turning left halfway down the length of the runway.

A cargo plane veered off a runway yesterday during landing in Hong Kong, hit a security patrol car and then skidded into the sea, leaving two men in the vehicle dead, authorities said.

Officials said an investigation would aim to determine what caused the Boeing aircraft to leave the tarmac at Hong Kong International Airport, the world's busiest for cargo last year, according to an industry ranking.

The plane's damaged fuselage was left partly submerged in the seawater that borders the air-

port, with its emergency evacuation slides extended, following one of the most serious incidents since the airport began operations in 1998.

Steven Yiu, executive director of airport operations at Airport Authority Hong Kong, said the cargo plane from Dubai "went off from the north runway upon landing and crashed through the fence and into the sea" at around 4 am (2000 GMT Sunday).

Yiu said the patrol car was not on the runway at the time of the accident, and that "it was the aircraft that veered off the runway to hit the patrol car, which was outside the fence" and pushed it into the water.

A 30-year-old man aboard the ground vehicle was confirmed dead at the

scene while another, aged 41, died after being rushed to hospital. Both men were retrieved from the sunken car by divers around five metres (16 feet) from the shore.

Emirates airlines said the plane's crew were confirmed to be safe and there was no cargo on board.

Emirates added the involved plane was on a temporary short-term, or "wet", lease from the Istanbul-headquartered Act Airlines, which operated the aircraft.

**Abrupt turn**

Hong Kong's airport handled 4.9 million tonnes

of cargo in 2024 and was ranked the world's busiest cargo airport by Airports Council International (ACI) World in April.

Monday's incident happened at the airport's northernmost and newest runway, part of a HK\$142 billion (\$18 billion) expansion project that was completed last year.

The cargo plane's visibly cracked fuselage was seen floating on the water with its green tail section torn off, according to an AFP reporter at the scene.

Police patrol boats moved around the wreckage as authorities used cranes and tow trucks to search for the aircraft's "black box", which contains recording devices that may shed light on how the incident occurred.

Yiu said that "weather and runway conditions were safe and meet all conditions for runway operation" at the time of the incident.

Officials provided a diagram that showed the plane abruptly turning left halfway down the length of the runway.

The aircraft did not send an emergency signal and gave no reply when radioed by the airport, officials added.

Israel dropped **153 tonnes**  
of bombs Sunday on Gaza

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Israeli forces dropped 153 tonnes (337,307 pounds) of bombs on targets in Gaza in response to what it said was a ceasefire breach by the Palestinian group Hamas, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told parliament yesterday.

"One of our hands holds a weapon, the other hand is stretched out for peace," Netanyahu told members of the Knesset. "You make peace with the strong, not the weak. Today Israel is stronger than ever before."

Israel said Sunday that it had launched a wave of air strikes against targets in Gaza after two of its soldiers were killed in an attack by Hamas.

Netanyahu also met yesterday with top US envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner after weekend violence threatened wreck a fragile US-brokered ceasefire



Displaced Palestinians gather around a truck to receive aid supplies that entered Gaza in the morning at the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip

in Gaza. "Prime Minister Netanyahu met earlier today with special envoy Steve Witkoff and (US) President (Donald) Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner on the developments and updates in the region," Shosh Bedrosian, spokeswoman for the prime minister's office, told journalists.

She added that US Vice President JD Vance and his wife were due to visit Israel "for a few days and will be meeting with the prime minister".

Later, Netanyahu himself confirmed that the visit would begin on Tuesday.

Netanyahu told the Israeli parliament on Monday that "tomorrow, Vice President JD Vance will arrive... and we will discuss two things... the security challenges we face and the diplomatic opportunities before us."

"We will overcome the challenges and seize the opportunities," he added.