

845

Paris is sacked by Viking raiders, probably under Ragnar Lodbrok, who collects a huge ransom in exchange for leaving

1549

The city of Salvador da Bahia, the first capital of Brazil, is founded



1901

Edmund Barton is elected Prime Minister in Australia's first parliamentary election

1947

Chinese farmers discover the Terracotta Army near Xi'an, 8,000 clay warrior statues buried to guard the tomb of China's 1st emperor, Qin Shi Huang

ent in Gaza as talks with US

ceasefire and humanitarian



Israeli tanks and armoured vehicles have also massed around the Nasser Hospital, the health ministry said, adding that shots were fired but no raid had yet been launched

The war began when Hamas launched an unprecedented October 7 attack that resulted in about 1,160 deaths in Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures.

Israel's retaliatory campaign has killed at least 32,490 people, most of them women and children, according to the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza.

The health ministry, in a preliminary toll issued early yesterday, said 66 people were killed overnight.

Fighting continued around three of the Strip's hospitals, raising fears for patients, medical staff and displaced people inside them.

The Al-Amal hospital in Khan Yunis, near Rafah, "has ceased to function completely", the Palestine Red Crescent said earlier this week, following the evacuation of civilians from the medical centre.

Israel's military accuses Hamas fighters of hiding in medical facilities and using civilians as shields.

Early yesterday, the army said Hamas had been firing on troops "from within and outside the emergency ward at Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City.

Troops began raiding Al-Shifa early last week, and on Wednesday night carried out an air strike on the emergency ward "while avoiding harm to civilians, patients, and medical teams," the army said.

The UN has reported "intensive exchanges of fire between the Israeli military and armed Palestinians". It cited the health ministry as saying the army has confined medical staff and patients to one building, not allowing them to leave.

Marcos says Philippines will not be 'cowed into silence' by China

AFP | Manila

President Ferdinand Marcos said yesterday the Philippines will not be "cowed into silence" by Beijing after confrontations in the South China Sea that injured Filipino troops and damaged vessels.

Marcos's remarks came as China blamed the Philippines for raising tensions in the hotly contested waterway, which Beijing claims almost entirely.

Beijing and Manila have a long history of maritime territorial disputes in the South China Sea and there have been repeated confrontations between their vessels near disputed reefs in recent months.

Manila summoned a Chinese envoy over the latest incident near Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly Islands, which occurred last Saturday during a Philippine mission to resupply troops garrisoned on the BRP Sierra Madre, a grounded navy ship.

The Philippines said the China Coast Guard blocked its supply vessel and damaged it with water cannon, injuring three soldiers.

The China Coast Guard has defended its actions, describing them as "lawful regulation, interception and expulsion" of a foreign vessel that "tried to forcefully intrude" into Chinese waters.

Beijing has urged Manila



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos inspecting a high mobility artillery rocket system (file photo)



We seek no conflict with any nation, more so nations that purport and claim to be our friends but we will not be cowed into silence, submission, or subservience

Ferdinand Marcos

to "pull back from the brink" and stop "provoking trouble at sea", but Marcos hit back yesterday.

"We seek no conflict with any nation, more so nations that purport and claim to be our friends but we will not be cowed into silence, submission, or subservience," Marcos said in a statement.

He said the Philippines would respond with a "countermeasure package that is proportionate, deliberate, and reasonable in the face of the open, unabating, and illegal, coercive, aggressive, and dangerous attacks by agents of the China Coast Guard and the Chinese Maritime Militia".

"Filipinos do not yield," Marcos said.

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, brushing off rival claims from other countries, including the Philippines, as well as an international ruling that its assertion has no legal basis.

Among the claimants, China has been the most assertive, deploying ships to patrol the waters and building artificial islands which it has militarised.

Bhutanese government confers highest civilian award on Narendra Modi

AFP | New Delhi

The Bhutanese government on Friday conferred Order of the Druk Gyalpo, the highest civilian honour of the Himalayan nation, on visiting Indian PM Narendra Modi.

He posted on X: "Honoured to be conferred with 'Order of the Druk Gyalpo' Award by Bhutan. I dedicate it to 140 crore Indians."

He is the first foreign head of government to receive the honour.

Earlier, Modi thanked people of Bhutan and his Bhutanese counterpart Tshering Tobgay for the 'warm welcome' he received at the airport after reaching the country.



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (L) and Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck during a meeting

Modi will be visiting Bhutan from March 22 to March 23.

"The visit is in keeping with the tradition of regular high-level exchanges between India and

Bhutan and the Government's emphasis on its Neighbourhood First Policy," read a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office.

After his arrival in Bhutan, the Indian PM posted on X: "Thank you for the warm welcome to Bhutan, PM @tsheringtobgay. May India-Bhutan friendship keep scaling new heights."

During the visit, the Prime Minister will receive audience with King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Fourth King of Bhutan.

The Prime Minister will also hold talks with the Prime Minister of Bhutan Tshering Tobgay.

Prime Minister will inaugurate the Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Mother and Child Hospital in Thimphu, a state-of-the-art hospital, built with the assistance of the Government of India in Thimphu.

Japan drugmaker reports two more deaths in supplement scare



People enter to the Kobayashi Pharmaceutical's annual general meeting of shareholders in Osaka

AFP | Tokyo

A Japanese drugmaker whose dietary supplements are at the centre of a growing health scare reported yesterday two more deaths potentially related to its tablets.

Last week, Kobayashi Pharmaceutical recalled three supplement brands -- "Beni Koji Choleste Help" and two others -- after customer complaints of kidney problems.

The over-the-counter products contain an ingredient called red yeast rice, or "beni koji", which is supposed to help lower cholesterol.

Yesterday's announcement brings the total number of deaths under investigation by the company and health ministry to four, with more than 100 other people hospitalised.

"We were told yesterday by a bereaved family that a person who had been using Choleste Help had passed away due to kidney disease," the drugmaker said in a statement.

It added it had been told separately that another person who had used Choleste Help in recent years had died.

"We are in the process of confirming the facts and causal relationships in both of these cases," the statement said.

Macron and Lula's 'bromance' sets social media fans alight

AFP | Rio De Janeiro

Wedding photos or a diplomatic visit? The apparent "bromance" between French President Emmanuel Macron and his Brazilian counterpart Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has set social media fans alight.

During his three-day visit to Brazil, 46-year-old Macron was pictured smiling and warmly embracing Lula, 78, during a trip to the Amazonian rainforest.

Many of the images have since circulated wildly among social media users in Brazil alongside montages and witty comments.

One picture showing the leaders raising their arms underneath a large tree has been



Brazil President Lula and French President Emmanuel Macron hold hands as they share a bilateral meeting while sailing at Guajara Bay off Belem, Brazil

edited to show them holding red balloons in the shape of a heart.

Another portrays the pair hand in hand, smiling as they look at the horizon while floating in a boat along the Amazon

River.

"They are going to marry in the Amazon and have their honeymoon in Paris," joked one user on X, while others said pictures from the trip could make up a

wedding album.

Macron's warm relations with Lula mark a departure from the frosty ties between the French leader and Brazil's former right-wing president Jair Bolsonaro, who led the country from 2019 to 2022.

His trip, which was to end yesterday in Brasilia when he meets Lula at the presidential palace, saw the two leaders announce a billion-dollar green investment plan for the Amazon.

France, the seventh-largest economy in the world, and Brazil, the ninth-largest, are considered key players in a geopolitical scene marked by rivalry between China and the United States.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



I can't shake the heart-break I witnessed while meeting with Palestine & Sudanese refugees during my Ramadan solidarity visit to Egypt & Jordan. But I will not give up. We must keep doing all we can to allow our common humanity to prevail in Gaza & other places around the world.

@antonioguterres

02



At the first-ever Global AI Summit last year, I laid out our vision for a future where AI advances the public interest. To help build that future, I am announcing our first government-wide policy to promote the safe, secure, and responsible use of AI.

@VP

03



Going forward, all X accounts with over 2500 verified subscriber followers will get Premium features for free and accounts with over 5000 will get Premium+ for free

@elonmusk

04



I began my visit to New Delhi upon @DrSJaisankar's invitation. The Ukrainian-Indian cooperation is important and we will be reinvigorating ties. Building on the dialogue between @ZelenskyyUa and @NarendraModi, we will pay specific attention to the Peace Formula.

@DmytroKuleba

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