

## SOUTH CHINA SEA ROW

# Philippines condemns Chinese 'floating barrier'

REUTERS, Manila

The Philippines yesterday accused China's coast guard of installing a "floating barrier" in a disputed area of the South China Sea, saying it prevented Filipino fishermen from entering and fishing in the area.

Manila's coast guard and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources "strongly condemn" China's installation of the barrier in part of the Scarborough Shoal, Commodore Jay Tarriela, a coast guard spokesperson, posted on the X social media platform, formerly Twitter.

The barrier blocking fishermen from the shoal was depriving them of their fishing and livelihood activities", he said.

"The (Philippine Coast Guard) will continue to work closely with all concerned government agencies to address these challenges, uphold our maritime rights and protect our maritime domains," Tarriela said.

The Chinese embassy in Manila did not immediately reply to requests for comment.

China claims 90 percent of the South China Sea, overlapping with the exclusive economic zones of Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia and the Philippines. Beijing seized the Scarborough Shoal in 2012 and forced fishermen from the Philippines to travel further for smaller catches.

Beijing allowed Filipino fishermen to return to the uninhabited shoal when bilateral relations were improving markedly under then-President Rodrigo Duterte. But tension has mounted again since his successor, Ferdinand Marcos Jr, took office last year.

Philippine coast guard and fisheries bureau personnel discovered the floating barrier, estimated at 300 m (1,000 feet) long, on a routine patrol on Friday near the shoal, locally known as Bajo de Masinloc, Tarriela said.

Three Chinese coast guard rigid hull inflatable boats and a Chinese maritime militia service boat installed the barrier when the Philippine vessel arrived, he said.

Filipino fishermen say China typically installs such barriers when they monitor a large number of fishermen in the area, Tarriela said.



Local resident Tatyana Gerpuleva, 75, injured by recent shelling stands outside her destroyed house in the course of Russia-Ukraine conflict in Donetsk, Russian-controlled Ukraine yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Iran defuses 30 bombs in Tehran Detains 28 terrorists linked to IS

REUTERS, Dubai

Authorities in Iran have neutralised 30 bombs meant to go off simultaneously in Tehran and detained 28 terrorists linked to Islamic State, Iran's Tasnim news agency reported yesterday, citing the intelligence ministry.

"Some of the members are of Islamic State (IS) and the perpetrators have a history of being affiliated with Takfiri groups in Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Kurdistan region of Iraq," Iran's intelligence ministry added in a statement.

The militant group has claimed several attacks in Iran, including deadly twin bombings in 2017 that targeted Iran's parliament and the tomb of the Islamic Republic's founder, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

More recently, IS claimed responsibility for an attack on a Shia shrine last October, where 15 people were killed in the southwestern city of Shiraz.

Last Friday, an overnight fire at the Iranian defence ministry's battery warehouse was extinguished, state media reported.

# 120,000 Armenians may flee Nagorno-Karabakh

Armenian PM warns amid fears of ethnic cleansing by Azerbaijan, blames Russia for failing to ensure security

REUTERS, Moscow

Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said yesterday the likelihood was rising that ethnic Armenians would flee the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh and blamed Russia for failing to ensure Armenian security.

If 120,000 people go down the Lachin corridor to Armenia, the small South Caucasian country could face both a humanitarian and political crisis.

"If proper conditions are not created for the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh to live in their homes and there are no effective protection mechanisms against ethnic cleansing, the likelihood is rising that the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh will see exile from their homeland as the only way to save their lives and identity," Pashinyan said in address to the nation.

"Responsibility for such a development of events will fall entirely on Azerbaijan, which adopted a policy of ethnic cleansing, and on the Russian peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh," he said, according to a government transcript.

He added that the Armenian-Russian strategic partnership was "not enough to ensure the external security of Armenia". Hundreds of recently arrived ethnic

Armenian refugees from the enclave were seen at a town near Armenian border, Reuters reporters said.

Last week, Azerbaijan scored a victory over ethnic Armenians who have controlled the Karabakh region since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. An adviser



to the leader of the Karabakh Armenians told Reuters earlier yesterday that the population would leave because they feel unsafe under Azerbaijani rule.

Russia had acted as guarantor for a peace deal that ended a 44 day war in Karabakh three years ago, and many Armenians blame Moscow for failing to

protect the region.

Russian officials say Pashinyan is to blame for his own mishandling of the crisis, and have repeatedly said that Armenia has few other friends in the region.

"The government will accept our brothers and sisters from Nagorno-Karabakh with full care," Pashinyan said. Pashinyan has warned that some unidentified forces were seeking to stage a coup against him and has accused Russian media of engaging in an information war against him.

"Some of our partners are increasingly making efforts to expose our security vulnerabilities, putting at risk not only our external, but also internal security and stability, while violating all norms of etiquette and correctness in diplomatic and interstate relations, including obligations assumed under treaties," Pashinyan said in his address yesterday.

"In this context, it is necessary to transform, complement and enrich the external and internal security instruments of the Republic of Armenia," he said.

For Azerbaijan, the exit of Armenians from Karabakh is a major victory that brings an apparent close to many years of war and squabbling over the region.

## BUDGET IMPASSE Biden blames Republicans

AFP, Washington

President Joe Biden on Saturday blamed "a small group of extreme Republicans" for a budget impasse that has placed the US government a week away from a shutdown, urging the lawmakers to resolve the issue. Speaking at a Congressional Black Caucus awards dinner, Biden said he and top House Republican Kevin McCarthy had previously agreed on government spending levels. "Now a small group of extreme Republicans don't want to live up to the deal so now everyone in America could be forced to pay the price," he said.

## SOUTHEASTERN BENIN Fire in shop kills 35 people

REUTERS, Cotonou

At least 35 people were killed in southeastern Benin on Saturday after a fire broke out at a shop where witnesses said gasoline was being unloaded, a justice ministry representative said. The fire broke out at 0930 local time in Seme-Podji municipality, near the border with Nigeria. "The fire burned down the store and according to an initial assessment resulted in 35 deaths including one child," said Prosecutor Abdoukaki Adam-Bongle in a ministry statement, adding that an investigation had been opened to determine the cause.



A family holds on as they try to navigate swift currents in the Rio Grand river as they cross the US-Mexico border to Eagle Pass, Texas, US on Saturday. The dramatic increase in migrants crossing the US border from Mexico has pushed the city of El Paso, Texas, to "a breaking point," with more than 2,000 people per day seeking asylum, exceeding shelter capacity, its mayor said. PHOTO: AFP

## Armed men storm Kosovo village Cop killed; key border crossings with Serbia closed

REUTERS, North Mitrovica

A group of about 30 "heavily armed" men opened fire at Kosovo police in a northern Kosovo village early yesterday, killing a policeman, and the same armed men also stormed a nearby Serbian Orthodox monastery in the first such major regional violence since May, Kosovo officials said. Kosovo Prime Minister Albin

Kurti and the interior minister Xhelal Svecla blamed the attack on police in the village and the storming of the monastery on "Serbia-sponsored criminals".

The Serbian Orthodox Church Diocese of Raska-Prizren said masked men forced their way into the monastery near Banjska in an armoured vehicle. Priests and pilgrims locked themselves inside the

monastery's temple for safety, the diocese said, adding that gunfire was occasionally heard and that the armed men were moving around the monastery's courtyard.

There was no immediate reaction on the incident from Serbian officials. Local media reported that border police had closed two key border crossings with Serbia.

## 'Still a world of double standards'

Indian FM swipes at 'dominant' nations

NDTV ONLINE

India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said that it is still a world of "double standards" and those countries which are occupying positions of influence are resisting the pressure to change and those with historical influence have weaponised a lot of those capabilities.

Jaishankar was speaking at a Ministerial Session titled 'South Rising: Partnerships, Institutions and Ideas' hosted by the Observer Research Foundation, in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of India to the UN, UN India and the Reliance Foundation.

"I think more than political will, there is political pressure for change," he said here on Saturday. There is a growing sentiment in the world and the global South in a way embodies it. But there's also political resistance, he said.

"Those who are occupying positions of influence, we see this in the UN Security Council most of all, are resisting the pressure to change."

"Those who are economically dominant today are leveraging their production capabilities and those who have institutional influence or historical influence have actually weaponised a lot of those capabilities as well," Jaishankar said.

"They will all mouth the right things, but the reality is still today, it's a world very much of double standards," Jaishankar said.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
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Reference No. 46.02.4700.000.07.387.23.3156 Date: 21/09/2023

**e-Tender Notice No. 15/2023-2024 (OTM)**  
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works mentioned below under LGED, District: Khulna.

Sl No.	Tender ID	Package No. & name of work	Tender closing date & time
1	876084	KBS-RIDP/KHUL/UNR-08/23-24 (a) Improvement Koyra U.P-Gobra Bazar Road by BC from Ch. 3090m-4520m. Road ID: 247533007 (b) Improvement of Hogla GC-Moharajpur UP-Suti Bazar Road by BC from Ch. 3620m-8000m. Road ID: 247533010, under upazila: Koira.	28-10-2023 12:00pm
2	876085	KBS-RIDP/KHUL/HBB-03/23-24 Improvement of Upazila HQ (Dighirpur)-Golkhali Road from Ch.10700m-14000m, Road ID: 247532004, under upazila: Koira.	17-10-2023 12:00pm
3	876086	KBS-RIDP/KHUL/HBB-02/23-24 Improvement of Upazila HQ (Dighirpur)-Golkhali Road from Ch. 7000m-10700m, Road ID: 247532004, under upazila: Koira.	
4	878763	KDRIDP/Khul/W-194/2023-24 (a) Improvement of Kalinagor R&H to Jailkhalhi WDB Embk. via N/H/O Onil Bairagi Road by BC from Ch. 00-500m. Road ID: 247174022 (b) Improvement of Laxmikhola H/School to Laxmikhola U/Z road N/H/O None Gopal Sarder via Balabari road by BC from Ch. 00-500m. Road ID: 247175162, under upazila: Dacope.	
5	878558	IRIDP-3/KLN/MW-81 Maintenance of Teligati Pakar Matha-Khulna Mongla Highway KDA Bi-pass road Ch. 00m-1230m under upazila: Dighalia.	

This is the online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.  
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.  
The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to 17:00 on 25-09-2023 for ID No. 876084 and 16-09-2023 for ID No. 876085, 876086, 878763 & 878558.  
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

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GD-1468