

Saudi Aramco cuts oil shipments to Europe; Midterm voting begins; 16 killed in Pakistan mosque bombing

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Yemen

- **Ansarallah leader claims U.S. is directly supporting Saudi Arabia, rejects accusations of striking Mecca:** Ansarallah leader Abdul-Malik al-Houthi claimed the U.S. is directly supporting Saudi military operations against Yemen, saying Washington has deployed “a joint force of 200 military experts” who are “managing the operations” from Saudi Arabia. He said Saudi forces are fighting “with aircraft obtained from America” and “bombs purchased from America,” and claimed Riyadh is seeking greater direct U.S. involvement in the war.

- On Sunday, Ansarallah told U.S. officials it would limit Red Sea attacks to Saudi ships and continue to uphold the U.S.-Ansarallah ceasefire during Oman-facilitated talks in Muscat, Reuters reported.

- Al-Houthi said that an end to the conflict requires Saudi Arabia to halt its attacks on Yemen and lift its blockade. “This is what we want, this is our issue: for Saudi Arabia to stop its aggression against us,” he said, adding that Riyadh must “end its blockade of our people” and stop depriving Yemenis of the country’s oil and gas resources.

- Al-Houthi also rejected Saudi allegations that Ansarallah had targeted Mecca, calling the accusation “a great lie” and accusing Riyadh of using it to encourage other countries to join the conflict. “Our lives, our souls, our wealth, and everything we possess are a sacrifice for Mecca and the Islamic holy sites,” he said.

- **Fighting continues in Taiz as government forces claim 30 Ansarallah fighters killed:** Yemeni forces, backed by Saudi airstrikes, are attempting to regain a foothold in the contested mountainous district of Al-Waziyah in western Taiz governorate, along the approaches to Yemen’s Red Sea coast and the Bab al-Mandab Strait. Saudi-backed forces claimed 30 Ansarallah fighters were killed and 60 wounded, figures that could not be

independently verified. They also reported airstrikes on positions around Al-Dhikra Junction, Al-Damna and Al-Rahida.

- In nearby Mocha, a strategic Red Sea port captured by Ansarallah last week, Saudi-backed forces said airstrikes targeted Ansarallah movements, reinforcements, and supply routes as they seek to regain territory along the coast.
- **One killed, two wounded after Saudi intercepts drone over Taif:** one person was killed and two others wounded, one critically, by falling debris after an Ansarallah drone was intercepted and destroyed over Taif, Saudi Civil Defense [said](#) on Thursday. Several buildings and vehicles were also damaged.
- **Over 112,000 displaced in Yemen:** More than 112,000 people have been displaced in Yemen in the last two weeks amid renewed fighting between Ansarallah and Saudi-backed government forces, [according](#) to the UN migration agency. Nearly 3,000 others have fled by sea to Djibouti, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said.
 - “Our resources are very, very, very limited and our stocks will be depleted very soon,” Abdusattor Esoev, IOM’s Chief of Mission in Yemen, said in a statement.
- **Saudi Aramco tells European customers they will receive no crude next month after pipeline attack:** Saudi Aramco [told](#) at least two European refiners they will receive no Saudi crude under their regular contracts next month, with the decision applying to all European buyers, Bloomberg reported on Friday.
 - The move follows last week’s drone attack that forced Saudi Arabia to shut its key East-West pipeline to the Red Sea. The pipeline is expected to partially restart within days but could take up to six weeks to return to full operation.
- **U.S. clears possible \$24.3 billion sale of 48 F-35s to Saudi Arabia:** The State Department approved a possible Foreign Military Sale of 48 F-35 Lightning II fighter jets and related equipment to Saudi Arabia and notified Congress of the proposed deal.
 - The Saudi Embassy in Washington welcomed the proposed sale, saying, in a [post](#) on X, it reflects the “strength and enduring nature of the Saudi-U.S. strategic partnership” and the continued advancement of defense cooperation between the two countries.
- **Italy prepares naval mission, calls for more ships in Red Sea:** Italy is [preparing](#) to deploy additional naval assets to the Red Sea and Bab al-Mandab amid concerns over merchant shipping, Al-Monitor reported.

- Italy, which participates in Aspides, the European Union's naval mission to protect commercial shipping in the Red Sea, said Thursday it was preparing its own naval mission rather than waiting for a broader EU response. "After what I said, something moved within Aspides, but we need more ships," Defense Minister Guido Crosetto told Reuters, adding that "the only nations really supporting [security efforts] are Italy and Greece."
- Rome has not specified how many ships it could send or detailed the measures under consideration.

Iran

- **Iran strikes tanker in Hormuz:** Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said it struck a Togo-flagged oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz on Friday, according to the state broadcaster. The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations separately said a tanker had been hit by an unknown projectile in the strait, though it was unclear if it was referring to the same incident.
- **Massive government rally in Tehran:** Hundreds of thousands of Iranians rallied in Tehran on Friday in the biggest government-organized demonstration since the U.S. and Israel launched the war on Iran in February. The state broadcaster estimated over 300,000 people in the demonstration, which featured drones and weaponry on parade.
 - Tens of thousands of Iranians who have registered with volunteer units, or who wish to sign up, joined the rally. Tehran's Republican Guard chief, Gen. Hassan Hassanzadeh, told the state broadcaster that over 600,000 had registered to participate in the training.
- **U.S. approves visas for Iranian president, foreign minister to attend UN General Assembly:** The Trump administration approved visas for Iran's "core delegation," including President Masoud Pezeshkian and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, to attend next week's UN General Assembly meetings in New York.
 - The decision comes more than six months into the U.S.-Iran war, with negotiations over reopening the Strait of Hormuz and returning to nuclear talks remaining stalled.
 - On Wednesday, the Trump administration denied visas to a high-level Palestinian delegation, including Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, for the same UN General Assembly gathering, marking the second consecutive year Palestinian officials have been denied entry. The State Department cited, among other reasons, the Palestinian Authority's pursuit of legal action against Israel at the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court.

- The U.S. is barring Iranian officials attending the UN General Assembly from purchasing luxury goods or obtaining wholesale club memberships. “On one side stands a brutal economic war, deliberately designed to inflict maximum pain and suffering on every Iranian citizen,” Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei wrote on X, criticizing the measure. “On the other stands the theatrical announcement of measures to stop Iranian officials from supposedly shopping at an American wholesale club.”

- **South Korea rules out involvement in Hormuz “conflict,” says “minimum level” of action needed to protect shipping:** South Korean President Lee Jae Myung [said](#) Friday that Seoul will not deploy troops in a way that could involve the country in an overseas conflict, Yonhap reported.

- Lee said South Korea nevertheless needs to undertake a “minimum level of activities” to protect its citizens, vessels, and crude oil transportation routes. Seoul is reviewing ways to strengthen those measures, while its Cheonghae naval unit has expanded the scope of its activities in the region.

- Last week, a South Korean assessment team returned from the United Arab Emirates after reviewing security conditions in the region. U.S. President Donald Trump is pressing allies to contribute to securing freedom of navigation through the Strait.

- **FT: Iran shifts trade overland as U.S. blockade disrupts Gulf routes:** Iran is [increasingly routing](#) trade through its land borders, particularly Turkey, after the U.S. naval blockade and disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz curtailed maritime trade, the Financial Times reports.

- Before the war, more than 80% of Iran’s roughly 180 million tons of annual trade moved by sea from its Gulf coast. Iran’s non-oil exports fell 28% and imports 26% in the five months ending August 22 compared with last year.

- Trade with Turkey rose 19% to \$3.2 billion in the first half of the year, while imports through the Gürbulak-Bazargan land crossing surged 250% in the five months to August 12.

- But long border delays and limited infrastructure mean even doubling overland and Caspian trade cannot replace lost maritime trade, experts told the FT. Moving Iran-China trade overland rather than by sea could also add an estimated \$18 billion a year in costs.

- **Iran-U.S. war and Hormuz disruption cost Arab economies nearly \$150 billion in the first month, UN agency says:** The ongoing conflict and disruption to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz caused losses equivalent to roughly 4% of Arab states' combined GDP during the first month alone, according to the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

- ESCWA Executive Secretary told a UN Security Council meeting on maritime security that the disruption is affecting far more than oil and gas, driving up freight and insurance costs, threatening food security, and weighing on investment across the region.

- Around 25% of global seaborne oil trade and 19% of LNG shipments have historically passed through Hormuz.

- **U.S. sanctions on Iranian airlines threaten supply chain for essential medicines, researchers warn:** The Trump administration's latest sanctions on Iran's aviation sector [threaten](#) the supply chain for essential medicines and medical supplies in Iran, Bourse & Bazaar Foundation researchers wrote.

- Over 60% of Iran's medical imports arrive by air, making them roughly seven times more dependent on aviation than Iranian imports generally.

- Over 30% of medical imports through Tehran's main airport are hormone-based medications, including insulin and cancer treatments, the report noted. Another 10% are vaccines and 6% blood products.

- **U.S. offers up to \$15 million for information on IRGC financial networks:** The State Department's Rewards for Justice program [issued](#) a new appeal for information about Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps's (IRGC) alleged use of digital asset exchanges and other financial mechanisms to evade sanctions and access international financial systems. The reward offers up to \$15 million for information leading to the disruption of the IRGC's financial mechanisms.

- **Amnesty: Iranian authorities committed crimes against humanity in 2022 protest crackdown:** A new [report](#) by Amnesty International has found that Iranian authorities committed crimes against humanity during their suppression of the nationwide "Woman Life Freedom" uprising in 2022. The report, more than 1,000 pages long, details the use of "murder, torture, enforced disappearance, imprisonment, rape and persecution on political, gender, ethnic and religious grounds." It also identifies 87 officials it says should be criminally investigated for crimes against humanity.

- “[Iranian authorities] waged a widespread and systematic attack against a civilian population demanding dignity, human rights and fundamental political change, pursuant to a state policy of using lethal force to obliterate dissent,” Agnès Callamard, Amnesty International’s Secretary General, said in a statement. “This report is being published at a time when people in Iran are also facing the devastating consequences of unlawful attacks by the USA and Israel. Amnesty International unequivocally opposes violations of international law by all parties and rejects any attempt to instrumentalize the suffering of victims of human rights violations in Iran to justify unlawful attacks that inflict further civilian harm.”

Palestine

- **Two women shot by Israeli forces in central Gaza:**

- Two Palestinian women were [wounded](#) by Israeli gunfire toward residential homes and tents sheltering displaced Palestinians in the Nuseirat and Bureij refugee camps in Central Gaza on Friday, according to WAFA.

- **Five children rescued from damaged home as Gaza government announces emergency plan for buildings at risk of collapse:**

- Civil Defense crews rescued five children who became trapped on the second floor of their home after its staircase collapsed in the Sabra neighborhood, south of Gaza City. The families were evacuated and warned not to return to the house, which had been damaged by Israeli attacks and remains at risk of collapse.

- Two days ago, the collapse of another residential building in Gaza City killed 21 Palestinians, including 12 children and five women.

- The IDF [responded](#) to Drop Site on the collapse, saying “the IDF did not strike the building in question during the war.” The building, however, showed visible cracks and signs of damage from Israel’s assault on Gaza, which damaged 80% of structures across the Strip, including two-thirds that were destroyed, according to the UN.

- More than 2,000 damaged buildings across Gaza are at risk of collapse, according to Civil Defense. Gaza authorities and representatives from international, UN, and Arab organizations agreed Friday on an emergency plan to address hundreds of war-damaged buildings at risk of collapse across the Strip, according to Gaza’s Government Media Office. The meeting called for the immediate entry of heavy machinery, specialized equipment, fuel, and oil, as well as the allocation of land for shelters for residents living in unsafe buildings.

- **Israeli settler attacks injure at least six Palestinians across the occupied West Bank:**

- **Hebron:** Armed Israeli settlers, protected by Israeli forces, [attacked](#) Palestinian farmers trying to reach their land in Wadi Al-Shannar, east of Halhul, on Friday. The settlers assaulted and detained several farmers, according to WAFA.
- **Ramallah:** Five Palestinians were injured after Israeli settlers [threw stones](#) at their vehicle near the entrance to Yabroud, east of Ramallah, causing the vehicle to overturn.
- **Jericho:** A Palestinian was injured when Israeli settlers [attacked](#) families in Khirbet Allan, north of Jericho in the Jordan Valley. The settlers attempted to steal sheep, attacked residents with stones, and damaged a Palestinian-owned vehicle.
- **East Jerusalem:** Israeli forces [beat](#) a Palestinian man outside Lions' Gate, one of the entrances to Al-Aqsa Mosque.

- **Israel adds 2,167 units to E1 settlement plan, bringing total to 3,401:** Israel added a tender for 2,167 housing units to its E1 settlement expansion plan in the occupied West Bank, Reuters reported, on top of 1,234 units announced in August.

- The E1 project would cut the occupied West Bank off from East Jerusalem and disrupt territorial contiguity between its northern and southern areas. Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has said the plan would “bury” the idea of a Palestinian state.

- Bidding is scheduled to open October 25, two days before Israel’s parliamentary election.

- **“The whole case is related to her journalistic work”: Palestinian-American journalist detained by Israel at Hasharon:** Palestinian-American journalist and Drop Site contributor Naqaa Hamed is [being held](#) in Hasharon, a temporary detention facility in central Israel, and is expected to be transferred to Damon Prison, where most Palestinian female prisoners are held.

- Hamed’s lawyer told Drop Site she was accused of incitement against Israeli settlers and the army, communicating with the enemy, and cooperating with the enemy during a military court session on Thursday.

- Her lawyer argued that Hamed was a professional journalist and her arrest came solely because of a campaign targeting her by Israeli settlers. He told Drop Site “the whole case is related to her journalistic work.” The military court ruled to extend her detention by six days to complete their “investigation.” Mahajneh submitted an appeal.

- The Committee to Protect Journalists condemned Hamed's detention, saying "Unsubstantiated espionage allegations must not be used to criminalize journalism, and the systemic harassment and intimidation targeting her work in the occupied West Bank must end."

- Maryland Senator Chris Van Hollen called for her immediate release, saying in a [post](#) on X, "Another American citizen wrongfully detained by the Israeli govt."

- **Report: Israel kills one, wounds 15 on Thursday, total ceasefire violations reach 4,931:**

Israel committed 19 ceasefire violations in Gaza on Thursday, killing one Palestinian and wounding 15 others, bringing the total documented violations since the ceasefire took effect to 4,931, according to a [document](#) shared by the Palestinian side with mediators and obtained by Drop Site News.

- Since the ceasefire took effect, 1,387 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli attacks—including 297 children, 140 women, and 42 elderly people—and 4,784 wounded, nearly half of them children, women, or elderly.

- Only 35% of the agreed humanitarian and commercial aid has entered Gaza since the ceasefire began, according to the document, while overall movement of people through the crossing has reached just 39.1% of the agreed level.

- **Qatar pledges 1.3 million liters of fuel for Gaza, enough for just 16 days of health sector needs:** Qatar [signed](#) an agreement with the United Nations to provide Gaza with approximately 1.3 million liters of fuel, its Foreign Ministry announced on Thursday. The grant is intended to keep hospitals, medical centers, and other essential humanitarian infrastructure operating, amid severe shortages resulting from Israel's restrictions despite the nominal ceasefire.

- The World Health Organization estimates that Gaza's health sector needs about 80,000 liters daily. At that rate, Qatar's 1.3 million-liter grant would cover only about 16 days of healthcare operations. If shared with water, sanitation and other humanitarian services—as Qatar says it will be—it will last considerably less.

- The announcement provides no delivery schedule.

- **Trump's "Board of Peace" to brief countries at UN on stalled Gaza reconstruction and governance plans:** The U.S.-controlled Board of Peace will [brief](#) representatives from dozens of countries, the EU, and UN agencies on September 23, during the UN General Assembly, on its stalled plans to rebuild and govern Gaza, The Times of Israel reported.

- The meeting will cover negotiations over Hamas's weapons and hear from the Palestinian technocratic committee (NCAG) about 71 projects for its first six months.
- None of the projects has a start date as the initiative remains frozen because Israel rejects the Board's plan to decommission the weapons of all armed factions, despite Hamas accepting its terms on July 30.

Lebanon

- **Two wounded as Israeli ceasefire violations continue in southern Lebanon:**
 - **Bint Jbeil:** Two people were [wounded](#) in Israeli shelling in the Chaqra area on Friday, Lebanon's National News Agency reported. Israeli artillery also targeted Wadi Nahle on the outskirts of Chaqra.
 - **Marjayoun:** Israeli forces [raided](#) Deir Mimas and searched several homes. Israeli troops also [threw](#) six stun grenades around the position they had taken near the town's inner entrance, as the Lebanese army deployed reinforcements nearby.
 - **Tyre (Sour):** Israeli artillery shelling [targeted](#) the towns of Mansouri and Majdal Zoun on Friday morning, following intense shelling before and after midnight.

U.S. News

- **Early voting begins in midterm elections:** In-person voting early voting for the midterm election began on Friday in a handful of states. More expansive early voting is scheduled to begin in the coming weeks.
 - Earlier this week, the Supreme Court rejected President Donald Trump's bid to restrict mail ballots.
 - One tenth of all Americans this year is a resident of a different congressional district than in 2024, according to a [report](#) by Project Democracy, following an unprecedented flurry of redistricting in the House that has redrawn the congressional map.
- **46 Senate Democrats demand Pentagon accounting of Iran war costs:** Forty-six members of the Senate Democratic caucus, [led](#) by Michigan Sen. **Elissa Slotkin**, sent a letter demanding Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth provide a full breakdown by Sept. 30 of costs incurred in the Iran war and details on the administration's \$67 billion supplemental funding request.

- The lawmakers accused the Pentagon of failing to provide “basic information,” despite its requests for tens of billions in additional funding.

- The letter, signed by every Democratic caucus member except Sen. **John Fetterman**, comes a day after the Congressional Budget Office put the war’s cost at \$38 billion through its first five months and projected ongoing costs of \$2 to 3 billion monthly.

- **White House withdraws Lance Schroyer’s nomination to lead ICE:** The White House [withdrew](#) its nomination of **Lance Schroyer**, a former Oklahoma Highway Patrol major and ally of DHS Secretary **Markwayne Mullin**, to lead Immigration and Customs Enforcement on Thursday, less than three months after President Donald Trump nominated him.

- The nomination’s rescission surprised officials in the Department, according to several DHS insiders cited by the Washington Post.

- Schroyer faced mounting resistance in the Senate, where Homeland Security Committee Chairman **Rand Paul** had not scheduled a confirmation hearing, and border czar **Tom Homan** had suggested the role should go to someone “who knows the job.” ICE has not had a Senate-confirmed director in over a decade.

- **Trump administration weighs at least 12 data center projects on federal public lands:**

The Bureau of Land Management is [reviewing](#) proposals covering more than 17,600 acres across Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming for data centers and related infrastructure, an unprecedented use of public land that local officials in several states told The Washington Sun they were unaware was under consideration.

- The largest proposal, a 10,200-acre project from nuclear startup Valar Atomics near Green River, Utah, would co-locate a data center with small nuclear reactors.

- Another case involves the Idaho-based firm Rhea Data, which has proposed a 4,000,000-square-foot data center near Boise powered partly by a new natural gas facility. Only one such project, on federal land in Nevada, has been approved so far. It remains on hold amid a legal challenge.

- **Microsoft executive calls AI “largest theft of labor in human history”:** Microsoft’s director of applied science called the training of large language models the “largest theft of labor in human history” and “an astonishing theft of unprecedented proportions,” the Washington Post [reported](#), according to a document unsealed Thursday as part of a lawsuit filed by the New York Times against Microsoft and OpenAI. The unsealed legal brief quotes internal documents obtained via legal discovery.

- Separately, Anthropic **said** yesterday in a blog post that its Claude chatbot “‘leads’ 26% of Anthropic’s AI R&D work,” and that “AI systems are increasingly being used to build the next version of themselves,” The Post **reported**.
- **Man who sprayed Rep. Ilhan Omar with vinegar sentenced to 14 months in prison:** **Anthony Kazmierczak**, 56, was **sentenced** Thursday to 14 months in prison and three years of supervised release, during which he cannot make contact with Rep. **Ilhan Omar**, who he assaulted with a water-and-apple-cider-vinegar spray during a Minneapolis town hall in January.
 - U.S. District Judge **Joan Ericksen** noted that the attack “wasn’t a spur-of-the-moment act,” given that Kazmierczak had secured tickets weeks in advance. He also texted acquaintances before the attack indicating he planned to “do something” involving Omar.
 - Kazmierczak, who has Parkinson’s disease and whose attorney argued that he had not taken his mental health medications prior to the attack, apologized to Omar in court on Thursday.
- **Pentagon reinstates mandatory testosterone screening for male service members over 30:** The Pentagon **issued** updated guidance Thursday requiring mandatory testosterone deficiency screening for male active-duty and reserve service members over 30, after temporarily rescinding earlier guidance this month. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said in July the screening and testosterone replacement therapy initiative was an effort to keep troops “on the leading edge of lethality.”
 - The screening will reportedly assess military personnel for symptoms including erectile dysfunction, reduced sexual desire, and diminished physical performance, and will also document risk factors like obesity and diabetes.
 - A corresponding clinical guideline for female service members remains under review, the director of the Defense Health Agency added.

 Have a tip on Capitol Hill? Email DC Correspondent Julian Andreone at Julian@dropsitenews.com

Other International News

- **Pakistan mosque bombing kills at least 16:** A suicide car bomb **struck** a mosque inside a police headquarters in Kohat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, during Friday prayers, killing at least 16 people and injuring more than 56.

- After the bombing, gunmen then tried to enter the police complex and exchanged fire with officers. At least five police officers and 10 civilians were among those killed, and several of the wounded were reported in critical condition.
- No group immediately claimed responsibility. Both the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP, and an ISIL affiliate are active in the region and regularly attack security forces.
- **Spanish police clear migrants from Ceuta:** Spanish riot police and military personnel began [clearing](#) migrants from beaches in the North African enclave of Ceuta on Friday, using batons and firing rubber bullets into the air as crowds competed for limited places in temporary accommodation.
- Spain estimates about 10,000 migrants remain in the territory after more than 72,000 people crossed from Morocco during an unprecedented border rush at the end of July.
- Authorities have opened temporary housing in Ceuta's port for about 1,700 adult men, but aid groups say thousands remain homeless and sleeping on beaches and pavements.
- **Russians vote in first parliamentary election since Ukraine invasion:**
 - Russians began [voting](#) Friday in a three-day parliamentary election that will determine the makeup of the 450-seat State Duma, with the ruling United Russia party expected to retain power.
 - President Vladimir Putin has framed the vote as evidence of public backing for the military campaign in Ukraine, saying it would demonstrate that “millions of people stand behind our soldiers.” Most explicitly anti-war candidates were excluded from the ballot, while the liberal Yabloko party was barred from competing nationally after Russia's Supreme Court ruled it had violated electoral rules, a decision the party disputes.
- **Belarus continues military drills near NATO border:** Belarus has [deployed](#) tanks, artillery, and drone units for exercises in the Brest and Grodno regions bordering Poland and Lithuania, close to the Suwalki Gap—the roughly 40-mile corridor connecting the Baltic states to the rest of NATO.
- For several days, Belarusian forces are practicing counter-sabotage operations, dispersed command posts, artillery fire and drone warfare. Minsk says the exercises are defensive and rejects suggestions that they are preparations for an attack.

- The drills come amid heightened tension along NATO's eastern flank. Poland has recently scrambled aircraft during Russian strikes near its border, while an Italian NATO fighter shot down a suspected Russian explosive-laden drone that entered Lithuanian airspace from Belarus on September 14.

- **Chinese coast guard ship collides with Philippines government vessel near Palawan:**

The Philippines Coast Guard [accused](#) a Chinese coast guard vessel of deliberately ramming a Philippines government ship in the South China Sea on Friday during a mission to deliver fuel to Filipino fishermen.

- China disputed the account, saying the vessel ignored warnings, changed course and accelerated into the Chinese ship's path.

- The incident is the latest in a series of confrontations between Beijing and Manila in disputed waters, including recent water-cannon incidents near Scarborough Shoal. The Philippines rejects China's sweeping sovereignty claims in the South China Sea, while Beijing continues to assert jurisdiction over most of the waterway.

- **Philippines school shooting leaves three dead in third deadly attack since June:**

At least three people, including a 16-year-old suspected gunman, were killed in a [shooting](#) at a school in Banga, South Cotabato, in the southern Philippines. Eight students aged 14 to 17 were injured, four of them critically, according to local officials.

- The attack is the Philippines' third deadly school shooting since June. In August, a student in Zamboanga live streamed himself killing another student before taking his own life, while a June shooting at a public high school in Tacloban left three students dead and 20 injured.

- **Washington insiders are positioning themselves to take over business inside Cuba:**

Trump- and Rubio-linked investors, lobbyists, and political allies are [jockeying for access](#) to Cuban assets as foreign companies are forced out amid Washington's maximum pressure campaign. Reporting from Ed Augustin and Lee Schlenker points to potential deals involving mining, hotels, shipping, and humanitarian aid, while foreign companies pushed out by U.S. sanctions leave openings for U.S.-linked investors and businesses.

- Washington continues to intensify sanctions aimed at forcing political change in Cuba, with Rubio [announcing](#) a new wave of sanctions on Thursday targeting state-run enterprises, military enterprises and officials. The latest sanctions come as a new report reveals thousands of shipping containers—filled with food, medicine and humanitarian

aid—destined for Cuba are **stranded** throughout the Caribbean as shipping companies aim to avoid U.S. sanctions.