

News in brief

◆ **Bangladeshi student** leaders yesterday said they would carry on a planned nationwide civil disobedience campaign until Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned following last month's deadly police crackdown on protesters. Rallies against civil service job quotas sparked days of mayhem in July that killed more than 200 people in some of the worst unrest of Hasina's 15-year tenure. Troop deployments briefly restored order but crowds returned to the streets in huge numbers this week ahead of an all-out non-cooperation movement aimed at paralysing the government planned to begin on Sunday. Students Against Discrimination, the group responsible for organising the initial protests, rebuffed an offer of talks with Hasina earlier in the day before announcing their campaign would continue until the premier and her government step down.



Bangladesh students step up protests to press PM's resignation

◆ **Instagram users in Turkey** found access to the social media network blocked for a second day yesterday, following censorship accusations against the US company from a high-ranking Turkish official. The BTK communications authority announced on its website on Friday that the Meta-owned platform had been frozen, without giving any reason. But Transport and Infrastructure Minister Abdulkadir Uraloglu said on Friday Instagram had ignored government demands for it to remove certain posts. "Our country has values and sensitivities. Despite our warnings, they did not take care of criminal content. We blocked access. When they abide by our laws, we'll lift the ban."

◆ **A flash flood from the mountains** of southwestern Saudi Arabia swept away part of a bridge in Jizan province, killing one person yesterday, state media reported. State television news channel Al-Ekhabriya aired images of two vehicles caught up in the floodwaters, one of them crushed by a collapsed bridge support. It said several people were also injured in the bridge collapse at an important crossroads inland from the Red Sea port city of Jizan. The National Centre for Meteorology warned Saturday that more heavy rainfall was still to come in Jizan province, with thunderstorms forecast in the mountains. Jizan province has starkly different climates. The narrow coastal plain along the Red Sea experiences some of the highest temperatures in Saudi Arabia, but the mountains inland, which rise to 3,000 metres (10,000 feet), are much cooler, with significant rainfall even in summer.

Saudi flash flood kills one



SPOTLIGHT

Surging Harris, Trump spar over debate dates

Washington, United States

Kamala Harris's campaign branded Donald Trump "scared" Saturday after he proposed to change the presidential debate schedule ahead of a rally in Georgia where he will try to halt the vice president's surging momentum in her bid to become America's first woman president.



Harris and Trump

In an overnight post on his Truth Social app, Trump said he was willing to debate Harris on the conservative Fox News network on September 4, while declining to participate in a previously scheduled debate on ABC.

Trump pitched the idea before going to a rally in Atlanta, where he will gather supporters in the same arena where Harris addressed an excited crowd of some 10,000 just this Tuesday.

Trump said he had "agreed" to the debate plan with Fox. And he said it would take place in Pennsylvania -- a crucial swing state in the US presidential electoral system -- in front of a live audience.

The Harris campaign dismissed this as "games."

"Donald Trump is running scared and trying to back out of the debate he already agreed to and running straight to Fox News to bail him out," Harris's campaign communications director Michael Tyler said in a statement. "He needs to... show up to the debate he already committed to on Sept

10."

The proposal to confront Harris on a network that has long supported him was the latest Trump effort to recapture the initiative in a campaign that had been entirely focused on a rematch against 81-year-old Joe Biden, until he dramatically dropped his reelection bid on July 21.

Since then, Harris, 59, has reenergized the Democratic base almost overnight.

She has raked in donations, reassembled the team behind Barack Obama's two historic election victories, and neutralized the solid lead that 78-year-old Trump had built against Biden in opinion polls.

On Friday, she secured the official Democratic nomination, backed by near unanimous party support.

Harris is due imminently to announce her vice presidential pick, with the popular governor of key state Pennsylvania, Josh Shapiro, a front-runner. On Tuesday, she is set to launch a countrywide tour with her yet-to-be-named running mate.

Senegal summons Ukrainian ambassador over 'propaganda' video

AFP | Dakar, Senegal

Senegal yesterday summoned the Ukrainian ambassador for publishing a video in support of recent deadly attacks against the Malian army and its Russian allies, the foreign ministry said in a statement.

At the end of July, the Malian army and the Russian mercenary group Wagner suffered one of their biggest setbacks in years in northern Mali, picking up heavy losses at the hands of rebels and jihadists.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs "was surprised to learn of the publication on the Facebook page of the Ukrainian embassy in Dakar of a propaganda video by the Ukrainian army accompanied by a comment by the Ukrainian ambassador himself", the statement said.

"Consistent in its position of constructive neutrality in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, Senegal cannot tolerate any attempt to transfer to its territory the media propaganda currently being used in this conflict," he said.

Senegal "rejects terrorism in all its forms and cannot accept, on its territory and in any way whatsoever, comments and gestures that excuse terrorism, especially when the latter is aimed at destabilising a sister country such as Mali", the ministry added.

Putin vows support to North Korea after devastating floods



AFP | Moscow, Russia

Russian President Vladimir Putin has offered condolences to North Korean counterpart Kim Jong Un over devastating floods that caused untold casualties and damaged thousands of homes, the Kremlin said yesterday.

North Korea said this week it had seen a record downpour on July 27 which killed an unspecified number of people, flooded dwellings and submerged swathes of farmland in the north near China.

"I ask you to convey words of sympathy and support to all those who lost their loved ones as a result of the storm," Putin said in a telegram to Kim.

"You can always count on our help and support."

North Korea and Russia have been allies since the North's founding after World War II and have drawn even closer since Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Media in South Korea, which has offered urgent support to the victims, said this week the toll of dead and missing could be as high as 1,500.

Kim lashed out at the reports, dismissing them as a "smear campaign to bring disgrace upon us and tarnish" the North's image.

Natural disasters tend to have a greater impact on the isolated and impoverished country due to its weak infrastructure, while deforestation has left it vulnerable to flooding.

At least two dead after landslides in southwest China



AFP | Beijing, China

Landslides in southwest China yesterday destroyed homes and caused a highway bridge to collapse, killing at least two people and leaving around 17 others missing, authorities said.

State broadcaster CCTV said "local mountain torrents and landslides" swept away part of Ridi village in Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan province.

The disasters killed two people and left 12 missing, CCTV reported, adding that "the disaster situation is undergoing further verification".

In a separate statement, Garze's local government said "a sudden mountain torrent and landslide" caused a highway tunnel bridge to collapse along the highway between Kangding and Luding.

As of 11:00 am, officials had confirmed that at least three vehicles had plunged off the road, carrying six people of whom "one person has been rescued and five are missing", the government said in a social media post.

It added that "at present, multiple rescue forces have arrived at the scene to carry out their work". It was not immediately clear whether the two incidents were related.

UK tells nationals to leave Lebanon to avoid conflict

AFP | London, United Kingdom

The UK government yesterday urged its citizens in Lebanon to leave the country immediately, amid fears of all-out war between Israel and Hezbollah and a broader regional conflict.

In a statement, the foreign ministry said British nationals should depart the Middle Eastern country "now while commercial options remain available".

"Tensions are high, and the situation could deteriorate rapidly," said Foreign Minister David Lammy.

"While we are working round the clock to strengthen our consular presence in Lebanon, my message to British nationals there is clear -- leave now."

The Foreign Office said it was "strengthening" its support for Britons in the country by deploying "border force, consular officials and military personnel to the region".

The officials will offer "additional support" to embassy staff while the military personnel will provide embassies with "operational support to help British nationals", the ministry said.

"This is alongside Landing ship RFA Cardigan Bay and HMS Duncan already being in the eastern Mediterranean to support allies with humanitarian requirements, with the Royal Air Force also putting transport helicopters on standby," the statement added.

"With the potential for exit routes out of Lebanon -- including roads -- being affected, limited, or closed, due to events escalating with little warning, teams will continue to urge British nationals to leave while commercial options remain available."

Sweden amid fears of escalation

AFP | Stockholm

Sweden's government is warning of escalation in the conflict, after US officials said they had "initially" focused on de-escalating the situation.

"The force structured its and travel foreign military temporary bassy," Foreign Minister Ulf Billstrom told parliament.

The decision was "initially" focused on de-escalating the situation but may be on the security of the region.

"The military development is according to the ministry, as many nationalities are affected."

Air Force in Beirut

AFP | Paris

Flights to and from Beirut are being suspended until at least Saturday, a parent company said.

The two flights were suspended on Monday, a day after France warned of retaliation from Lebanon in the aftermath of the Beirut explosion.

Death toll hits 37 attacks Mogadishu

AFP | Mogadishu, Somalia

An Al-Shabaab suicide bomber and gunmen attacked a busy beach in the Somali capital Mogadishu killing 37 people and wounding scores more, officials said yesterday, in one of the deadliest strikes in the East African country in months.

The Al-Qaeda-linked jihadists have been waging an insurgency against the internationally backed federal government for more than 17 years and have previously targeted the Lido beach area, popular with business people and government members.

Survivors of Friday's assault described how following the blast gunmen stormed onto the beach intending to "kill everyone they could", with graphic video shared online immediately after showing bloodied bodies on the sand.

"The overall number of the dead people we confirmed is 37," Somali Health Minister Ali Haji Adam said in a press statement late Saturday. Eleven people are



Relatives carry

in intensive care. 64 people received wounds, while light injuries after receiving medical aid. The assault was claimed by Al-Shabaab in a post on a page that began late on Saturday. The suicide bomber and gunmen were killed. Officer Mohamed AFP that he had "shot citizens". He said s