

News in brief

Three dead after plane crashes in Australia bushfire fight



Three brave souls working to help their fellow Australians have lost their lives in Queensland," Prime Minister Anthony Albanese posted on X.

◆ Three people were killed after a light aircraft crashed in remote northern Australia yesterday while helping in the battle against bushfires, emergency services said. The plane went down near the outback town of McKinlay, more than 1,600 kilometres (1,000 miles) northwest of Queensland's state capital Brisbane. It was being used for fire mapping, authorities said, as more than a dozen fires continue to burn across the state. "Terribly sad that

Striking Bangladesh garment workers clashed with police yesterday near the capital as factories reopened in defiance of a protest campaign demanding a near-tripling of wages.

Bangladesh garment workers clash with police as factories reopen



recaptured and returned to prison the army and his lawyer said yesterday after an apparent jailbreak led by a heavily-armed commando. "Captain Moussa Dadis Camara has been found safe and sound and taken back to prison," an army spokesperson said, without specifying the circumstances of the capture.

Guinean ex-dictator Camara recaptured after jailbreak: Army



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CURIOSER & CURIOSER

'Friends' star Matthew Perry laid to rest in Los Angeles: media

AFP | Los Angeles

American actor Matthew Perry of the hit sitcom "Friends" was laid to rest at a Los Angeles cemetery on Friday during a private funeral attended by family and co-stars, US media reported.



Matthew Perry

The 54-year-old, known for his role as Chandler Bing in "Friends," which aired from 1994-2004, was found dead on October 28.

Schwimmer, Matt LeBlanc and Lisa Kudrow.

"The service was held at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Los Angeles near Warner Bros. Studios," People reported, citing an unidentified source. It said the funeral service lasted around two hours.

"We are all so utterly devastated by the loss of Matthew. We were more than just cast mates. We are a family," his five co-stars said in a statement shortly after his death.

Forest Lawn Memorial Park, a cemetery in the Hollywood Hills popular with celebrities, did not respond to AFP's request for confirmation.

Perry's mother, father and stepfather also attended, according to the media reports.

Several other US media outlets, including celebrity news website TMZ, also reported that Perry was laid to rest at a low-key funeral attended by castmates Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, David

The cause of Perry's death is not yet known. An initial post-mortem examination was inconclusive and the results of toxicology tests have not yet been released.

TMZ cited sources saying that no illicit drugs were found at his home, although several medications were discovered including antidepressants and anxiety medication.



People stand in line to pay tribute to actor Matthew Perry outside the apartment building which was used as the exterior shot in the TV show "Friends" in New York

Hamas health ministry says 15 killed at Gaza UN school in Israeli strike

AFP | Gaza

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said at least 15 people were killed yesterday when a UN school sheltering thousands of displaced Palestinians was hit by an Israeli strike. "The massacre at the Al-Fakhura school committed by the occupation (Israel) this morning left 15 martyrs and 70 wounded," ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qudra told a press conference.



Palestinian search through the rubble of a collapsed building looking for victims and survivors following a strike by the Israeli military on Khan Yunis

The United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees said its school is being used as a "shelter

for displaced families". "At least one strike hit the school yard where there were tents for displaced families. Another strike hit inside the school where women were baking bread," UNRWA said.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military about hitting the school in Jabalia refugee camp, and AFP was unable to independently confirm the toll.

On Thursday, UNRWA said four of its schools in the Gaza Strip housing people displaced by the war had been damaged by bombings.

Blinken to visit Turkey after Israel, Jordan: statement

AFP | Amman

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will visit Turkey for two days from Sunday as part of a Middle East tour amid the Hamas-Israel war, the State Department said.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (R) walks next to UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini in Amman

Blinken was meeting with Arab counterparts in the Jordanian capital Amman yesterday after visiting Israel the day before.

protecting civilian lives in Israel and the Gaza Strip", the US State Department said in a statement yesterday.

But he left Israel empty-handed on Friday after urging its leaders to do more to protect civilians in the Gaza Strip during Israel's war to destroy Hamas.

He would also discuss "our shared commitment to facilitating the increased, sustained delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza" as well as ensuring Palestinians are not forcibly displaced outside of Gaza".

In Turkey, Blinken would "underscore the importance of

He would also discuss ways to "stem violence, calm rhetoric, reduce regional tensions" as well as working towards a "durable and sustainable peace in the Middle East, to include the establishment of a Palestinian state".

UN rights chief slams hatred surge sparked by Gaza war

AFP | Geneva

The UN human rights chief yesterday strongly denounced the "sharp rise in hatred globally" since the war between Hamas and Israel began on October 7.

Volker Turk said he was "disgusted" by the surge in cases of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and other hate-speech, both online and offline.

"The impact of this crisis... has sent shockwaves across every region, dehumanising both Palestinians and

Jews," Turk said.

"We have witnessed a sharp spike in hate speech, violence and discrimination, deepening social fractures and polarisation... I have heard from both Jews and Muslims that they don't feel safe, and it saddens me," he added.



Volker Turk

At least 157 dead in Nepal

A 5.6-magnitude earthquake devastates remote areas, causing loss of

The quake hit isolated western districts, jolting households awake and flattening mud houses

AFP | Jajarkot

At least 157 people were killed in an overnight earthquake that struck a remote pocket of Nepal, officials said yesterday, as security forces rushed to assist with rescue efforts.



Damaged houses lie in ruins, in the aftermath of an earthquake at Pipaldanda village of Jajarkot district

The force of the 5.6-magnitude tremor jolted households awake and flattened mud houses in communities across isolated western districts of the Himalayan republic late Friday.

"There was a very big noise when the houses came down. It felt like a big explosion," Shiva Prasad Sharma, 65, told AFP from outside the destroyed remnants of his home in Jajarkot, the district hit worst by the quake.

Nothing left. There are no houses left to stay in".

Locals frantically dug through rubble in the dark to pull survivors from the wreckage of collapsed homes and buildings, as others crouched outside for safety.

The quake was felt as far away as India's capital New Delhi, nearly 500 kilometres (310 miles) from the epicentre.

"The toll from the quake has reached 157 -- 105 in Jajarkot and 52 in Rukum," national police spokesman Kuber Kathayat told AFP.

Another 199 were injured in the quake, he added.

Home ministry spokesman Narayan Prasad Bhattarai said the toll was unlikely to significantly increase.

"We are now in touch with all

YOU KNOW WHAT

Nepal lies on a major geological faultline where the Indian tectonic plate pushes up into the Eurasian plate, forming the Himalayas, and earthquakes are a regular occurrence

areas," he told AFP. "It is possible some bodies might still be found under the rubble."

Security forces were deployed on foot and in helicopters to assist with search and rescue operations.

"The remoteness of the districts makes it difficult for information to get through," Karnali Province police spokesman Gopal Chandra Bhattarai told AFP.