

News in brief

◆ **South Africa's ruling ANC** yesterday expelled its former leader ex-president Jacob Zuma for leading a rival party into elections following disciplinary proceedings. The African National Congress, which lost its absolute parliamentary majority for the first time in May largely due to Zuma's defection, said the veteran politician's conduct was "irreconcilable" with its constitution. "Former President Jacob Zuma has actively impugned the integrity of the ANC and campaigned to dislodge the ANC from power while claiming that he had not yet severed his membership," ANC Secretary General Fikile Mbalula told a press conference. He was thus "expelled" from the party, Mbalula said.



South Africa's ex-leader Zuma expelled from ruling ANC

◆ **Nicolas Maduro** was declared the winner of Venezuela's presidential election Sunday but the opposition and key regional neighbours immediately rejected the official results. The opposition coalition itself claimed victory, after an election campaign tainted by accusations of political intimidation and fears of fraud, and following predictions by pollsters that Maduro would lose but was unlikely to concede after more than a decade in power. He won re-election with 51.2 percent of votes, while opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia received 44.2 percent, according to the electoral council (CNE), which in its majority is loyal to the president. Maduro, 61, addressed celebrating supporters at the presidential palace minutes after the announcement.



Maduro declared Venezuela election winner, opposition reject result

◆ **Iran said** yesterday it has resumed diplomatic ties with The Gambia, according to Tehran's foreign ministry, almost 14 years after they were severed by Banjul. "Following the meeting of the high-ranking officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of The Gambia... both sides decided to announce the resumption of diplomatic relations on July 29, 2024 in order to secure the interests of the two countries," the ministry said in a statement. The statement came after Iran's acting foreign minister Ali Bagheri met his Gambian counterpart Mamadou Tangara. The Gambia's top diplomat is in Tehran to attend the inauguration ceremony of the Iranian president, Masoud Pezeshkian, which is scheduled for Tuesday.

Iran, The Gambia resume diplomatic ties



CURIOSER & CURIOSER

Seoul spy agency says N. Korean leader's daughter is 'likely successor'



Most of Kim Ju-ae's outings with her father Kim Jong-un

AFP | Seoul, South Korea

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is grooming his teenage daughter as his successor to lead the nuclear-armed state, according to South Korean MPs briefed by Seoul's spy agency yesterday. The daughter, Kim Ju Ae, whose age has not been confirmed, has been seen with her father at a variety of events, fuelling speculation that Kim Jong Un has chosen her as heir apparent to lead a fourth generation of hereditary rule by his family.

MP Lee Seong-kweun said the National Intelligence Service (NIS) has judged that she has been chosen as heir.

"Pyongyang is teaching Kim Ju Ae to be heir apparent, indicating she's the most likely successor," Lee told reporters after the agency briefing.

The NIS also told parliamentarians that Kim Jong Un is now "heavily overweight" at "around 140kg", putting him at "high risk of heart-related

illness". Kim, who is widely known to be a cigarette smoker, was said to have shown symptoms of high blood pressure and diabetes in his early 30s, Lee said, quoting the NIS.

North Korea also appears to be adjusting Kim Ju Ae's level of exposure to the public, monitoring how North Koreans react to her role as potential successor, the NIS told MPs. More than half of her outings with her father were related to military activity, such as overseeing drills, the agency told lawmakers.

Kim Ju Ae was referred to as a "great person of guidance" — "hyangdo" in Korean — by state media in March, a term typically reserved for top leaders and their successors.

"Considering the word 'hyangdo' was used, which is only reserved for a leader or successor, the NIS is assessing the succession plan is in shape to some extent," Park Sun-won, another MP, told reporters.

Olympic commentator removed after sexist remark

AFP | Paris, France

Television broadcaster Eurosport yesterday removed a commentator from its Paris Olympics coverage after he made a sexist remark during the swimming competition.

Bob Ballard made the comment about Australia's swimmers after they won the women's 4x100m freestyle relay gold on Saturday.

In a clip which went viral on social media, Ballard said: "Well, the women just finishing up. You know what women are like... hanging around, doing their make-up."

Ballard's co-commentator Lizzie Simmonds called the remark "outrageous".

"During a segment of Eurosport's coverage last night, commentator Bob Ballard made an inappropriate comment," Eurosport said in a statement.

"To that end, he has been removed from our commentary roster with immediate effect."

There was no immediate reaction from Ballard.

North Korea mobilises military helicopters for flood rescue

AFP | Seoul, South Korea

North Korea deployed military helicopters to bring thousands of people stranded in a flood-hit zone to safety, state media reported yesterday.

The official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported leader Kim Jong Un last week "personally guided" a military rescue -- including 10 helicopters and navy lifeboats -- shaking the hands of the pilots "one by one".

Kim reprimanded officials for their failure to prepare and respond to the recent torrential rains, despite previous orders to enhance the country's measures against natural disasters, it said.

Last week, North Korea conducted a crisis response meeting to discuss strategies to mitigate the impact of natural disasters on agriculture.

North Korea has been enduring record-breaking downpours, and one day in July Kaesong City experienced an unprecedented 463 mm (18.2 inches) of rain.



Residents evacuated by helicopter after record-breaking heavy rains in the city of Sinuiju, North Pyongan province

Lebanon on alert mulls response

AFP | Beirut, Lebanon

Airlines suspended flights to Lebanon yesterday as diplomatic efforts were underway to contain soaring tensions between Hezbollah and Israel after deadly rocket fire in the annexed Golan Heights.

Mourners gathered in the Golan Heights town of Majdal Shams for the funeral of 11-year-old Guevara Ibrahim, the last of 12 victims -- all aged 10 to 16 -- of the rocket that hit a football pitch in the Druze Arab community on Saturday.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib said a flurry of diplomatic activity has sought to contain the anticipated Israeli response, after Defence Minister Yoav Gallant threatened to "hit



Passengers wait at Rafic Hariri International Airport after flights were delayed or cancelled in the enemy hard".

"Israel will escalate in a limited way and Hezbollah will respond in a limited way... These are the assurances we've received," Bou

Habib said in an interview late Sunday with local broadcaster Al-Jadeed.

The United States, France and others were trying to contain the escalation, he

added, while Prime Minister Kati had also said are ongoing international, European sides to protect

UK not yet ready for new EU border system: Govt

AFP | London, United Kingdom

The UK government said yesterday that it was not ready for new European Union border checks as it announced new measures aimed at avoiding major disruption at ports.

The introduction of an automated entry and exit system (EES), expected in coming months, has raised fears of delays for people travelling to Europe on trains and ferries.

French border police carry out checks for these journeys on British soil before boarding.

Seema Malhotra, a Home Office minister, told parliament that the government was "not content with the level of



preparations" put in place by the previous Conservative government, which lost a general election on July 4.

"The system will increase processing times," she warned, adding that "disruption" was likely when the scheme starts.

Malhotra announced new steps, including creating additional capacity for French border officers in Dover, the main cross-Channel port.

More than 100 injured

AFP | Moscow, Russia

At least 100 people were injured yesterday when a passenger train carrying more than 800 passengers collided with a truck at a railway crossing in southern Russia, officials said.

Video published on social media showed parts of what appeared to be the truck scattered on a grassy embankment beside a railway track, where several train carriages lay on their side.

The train was carrying around 800 passengers between the cities of Kazan and Adler when it collided with the truck at an "unguarded crossing", the governor of the southern Volgograd region, Andrei Bocharov, said.

"Emergency rescue work is being carried out at the site of the

Flame-free Olympic ring of fire be

AFP | Paris, France

The Olympic cauldron tethered to a balloon in an iconic Paris park has become one of the hottest tickets at the 2024 Games with thousands flocking every day to see the seven metre (23 feet) wide ring of environmentally friendly fire.

The cauldron flies into the Parisian sky at sunset each day under a 30-metre balloon in the Jardin des Tuileries park.

The flame made up of clouds of mist lit by LED rays has become a much-talked about symbol of the Games since it was lit by French sporting icons Teddy Riner and Marie-Jose Perec at Friday's opening ceremony.

Visitors now pack the park, with all available 10,000 daily slots to see the flame taken until the Games close on August 11.



An aerial view of a balloon attached to the cauldron (unseen) in the Tuileries garden during the opening ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Paris

Organisers have promised to add more slots. "We're victims of our own success," they said online.

'Join the party'

Virginie Decosta took her 11-year-old daughter and 6-year-