

News in brief

Turkey says over 100 suspected IS members arrested



Turkey arrested over 100 suspected members of the Islamic State (IS) group this week, authorities said yesterday, the latest mass detention targeting the terror organisation. The country has been hit by several major attacks claimed by IS, including a 2017 nightclub shooting that killed dozens of people. The fresh raids took place across the country, including in the capital Ankara and Turkey's largest city Istanbul. Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya

posted on social media platform X. The arrest of 119 people this week follows other mass detentions, including 99 announced in early August.

The king of New Zealand's Indigenous Maori people died yesterday while recovering from heart surgery at age 69, with aides saying he had "passed to the great beyond". King Tuheitia passed away peacefully surrounded by family, a spokesperson said, just days after celebrating the 18th anniversary of his coronation. He had been in hospital recovering from heart surgery. "The death of Kiingi Tuheitia is a moment of great sadness," the spokesperson added in a statement. "A chief who has passed to the great beyond. Rest in love."

New Zealand's Maori king dies, aged 69



Car hits migrant caravan in Mexico, killing three



A car plowed into a caravan of US-bound migrants traveling along a highway in southern Mexico on Thursday, killing three people including a girl, authorities said. Seventeen more people were injured in the incident in Oaxaca state, the National Migration Institute said in a statement. A man and a girl from Nicaragua and a woman from Ecuador were killed, it said. Local media reported the driver had lost control of the vehicle.

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

Japan scraps idea to woo women out of city with cash



People wearing yukata taking pictures at Sensoji temple in Tokyo's Asakusa district

AFP | Tokyo

A widely ridiculed Japanese government idea to woo Tokyo women into marrying men in rural areas by offering cash payouts and train tickets to matchmaking events has been scrapped, officials said yesterday.

Bureaucrats had envisioned payments of up to 600,000 yen (\$4,140) for women who got married and settled outside of Tokyo as part of efforts to reduce a yawning countryside gender gap, local media reported.

Hanako Jimi, minister of state for regional revitalisation, said yesterday she had instructed officials to "review" the plan, and insisted that reports about the size of payments were "not true".

Media leaks about the scheme this week drew scorn on social media, where critics saw it as typical in a country where men dominate politics and other areas, more than in any other major industrialised economy.

"Did they think independ-

ent, motivated and educated women in the city would think, 'What? If I marry a local man and move to a countryside, I'll get 600,000 yen! I'll do it?' ... Are they serious?" said one user on X.

Another said: "Do they still not get it? This is something people who see women as valuable only if they give birth would come up with."

As they age, many rural areas in the world's fourth-biggest economy are facing a depopulation crisis, with some small towns having hardly any -- or even zero -- children.

One cause is that more young women than young men leave the villages and small towns they grew up in and move to big cities, especially Tokyo, for better opportunities in higher education and work.

More than 40 percent of Japanese municipalities are at "risk of disappearing" due to the expected drop in the number of women in their 20s and 30s, a study by a private-sector expert panel suggested in April.

Venezuela hit by nationwide power outage



People walk in front of closed shops in Caracas

AFP | Caracas

A blackout left most of Venezuela without power yesterday in what authorities blamed on sabotage of the national electrical grid -- the latest crisis to hit the oil-rich country after a disputed presidential election.

Venezuela experiences frequent blackouts, which President Nicolas Maduro's government routinely attributes to unproven conspiracies to overthrow him.

"We are reporting that at approximately 4:40 am (0840 GMT) today, yesterday, August 30, an electrical sabotage took place in Venezuela ... which has affected almost the entire national territory," Communications Minister Freddy Nanez told the state-run VTV channel.

"All 24 states are reporting total or partial loss of electricity supply," he said.

The worst countrywide outage to strike Venezuela, in March 2019, lasted several days.

Israel air strike kills 19 on third day of war

Death toll rises to 19 as large-scale Israeli military operation

UN aid official questions "basic humanity" amid Gaza crisis

Harris pledges continued US weapons support for Israel

WHO announces "humanitarian pauses" for Gaza vaccination drive

AFP | Jenin

Israel said it killed three Hamas fighters in an air strike in the occupied West Bank yesterday, taking the death toll from a large-scale military operation now in its third day to at least 19.

A top UN aid official meanwhile questioned "what has become of our basic humanity", as the war raged on in Gaza where humanitarian operations struggled to respond.

In the United States, Vice President Kamala Harris pledged she



A Palestinian woman stands in the doorway of her house along a street from which Israeli bulldozers dug out the asphalt, in the Nur Shams refugee camp

will not change Washington's policy of supplying weapons to Israel if elected to the top job in November. But she stressed it was time to "end this war" in Gaza.

Israel has described its raids on towns and refugee camps across the northern West Bank as "counter-terrorism" operations.

They have killed at least 19 Palestinians since Wednesday, the military and the Palestinian health ministry said.

Palestinian armed groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad have said at least 13 of those killed were their fighters.

The military said it killed three Hamas fighters in an air strike near the northern city of Jenin yesterday.

Witnesses told AFP the strike hit a car in the town of Zababdeh, southeast of the city.

Israeli troops pulled back from other West Bank towns late

Shootings, roadblocks shake Mexican cartel stronghold

AFP | Mexico City

Gunfire, roadblocks and arson on Thursday shook a Mexican city home to one of the country's most powerful drug cartels, authorities and local media said.

Vehicles were set on fire in Culiacan, capital of the northwestern state of Sinaloa -- the bastion of jailed drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman and his sons.

Gunmen attacked a military patrol on the outskirts of the



Burned trucks blocking a highway during heavy gunfights on the outskirts of Culiacan, Sinaloa state

city, the Sinaloa state security secretariat reported on social media.

Roadblocks were later reported in another district where Ovidio Guzman, one of

El Chapo's sons, was arrested in January 2023 before being extradited to the United States.

The unrest, as well as a string of recent murders in Sinaloa, follow the dramatic arrest on US soil of a Sinaloa Cartel boss in circumstances worthy of a crime thriller.

Cartel co-founder Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada claimed in a statement released through his lawyer that he had been kidnapped in Mexico and delivered into US custody against his will.

Typhoon Shanshan churns up Japan, up to six dead

AFP | Tokyo

Typhoon Shanshan dumped record rains yesterday as it slowly churned up through Japan, triggering transport havoc and widespread warnings of landslides with up to six people killed.

The typhoon, one of the fiercest to hit Japan in decades, has weakened and was forecast to ease to tropical cyclone strength by Monday, though gusts were still reaching 126 kilometres (78 miles) per hour early yesterday.

Even before making landfall on the island of Kyushu, a landslide caused by the heavy rains preceding it killed three members of the same family late Tuesday in Aichi prefecture, around 1,000 kilometres (600 miles) away.

Government spokesman Yoshimasa Hayashi confirmed four deaths but said that in one



A worker in Japan removes debris blown away by strong winds caused by Typhoon Shanshan

case, "the relation to the typhoon was being studied". Two more were feared dead and two others were missing, Hayashi said.

Eight people were seriously hurt and 70 others had light injuries, he said, with many hurt by broken glass after the typhoon smashed windows and ripped tiles off roofs when

it slammed into Kyushu on Thursday with gusts up to 252 kph.

Almost 200 buildings were damaged.

Typhoons in the region have been forming closer to coastlines, intensifying more rapidly and lasting longer over land due to climate change, according to a study released in July.

Pacific bloc rebuffs call to cut ties with Taiwan



Prime Minister of Tonga (C, front row) Hu'akavameiliku poses for a group picture with Pacific Island Forum (PIF) Leaders

AFP | Nuku'alofa

Pacific leaders yesterday rejected a Beijing-backed call to break ties with Taiwan, saying a regional bloc would continue a decades-old policy of engagement.

Members of the Pacific Islands Forum gathering in Tonga for an annual summit batted aside a push by one of China's allies to stop treating Taiwan as a development partner.

In a final communique the bloc leaders "reaffirmed" a 1992 agreement that allowed talks with Taipei.

Beijing has aggressively sought to exclude Taiwan -- a self-governing island of more than 23 million people -- from international fora and rejects its claims to autonomy.

Solomon Islands, China's main partner in the South Pacific, had lobbied for Taiwan to be stripped of partner status with the Pacific Islands Forum.

The move had angered some of Taiwan's allies.

The Pacific Islands Forum is split between countries that have diplomatic relations with Beijing and others like the Marshall Islands, Palau and Tuvalu which are allies of Taipei.