

News in brief

Putin admits Russian role in 2024 crash of Azerbaijani jet



Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday admitted for the first time his country played a role in the 2024 crash of an Azerbaijani passenger plane, describing it as a “tragedy”. At least 38 people were killed in the crash. In a meeting with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Putin said Russia had deployed missiles to destroy Ukrainian drones on the morning of the incident, and that they exploded “a few meters away” from the aircraft. “Russia will do everything necessary in such tragic cases to provide compensation, and the actions of all officials will be legally assessed,” he said.

The world just had its third-hottest September on record, the Copernicus Climate Change Service said, as global average temperatures remained stuck near historic highs for yet another month.

September third-hottest globally on record: climate monitor

September did not break the record for the month set in 2023 and was only marginally cooler than the same period in 2024, said the EU’s global warming monitor. “The global temperature context remains much the same, with persistently high land and sea surface temperatures reflecting the continuing influence of greenhouse gas accumulation in the atmosphere,” said Dr Samantha Burgess, strategic lead for climate at Copernicus.



Quake rattles north Philippines city



A moderately strong earthquake struck yesterday near a northern Philippine mountain city home to hundreds of thousands of people, forcing people out of buildings and shutting down schools, officials said. Employees rushed out of office buildings in the city of 366,000 following the shallow quake which occurred at 10.30 am, 10 days after a powerful quake killed more than 70 people in the central Philippines, residents said by telephone. “We’re going to check for damage,” building administrator Ralph Cabuag said as more than 300 employees and patients filed out of the three-storey Baguio city health office.

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

North Korea expected to stage military parade as party turns 80



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (top C) delivering a speech at the Party Founding Museum in Pyongyang

AFP | Seoul

North Korea is set to host top officials from China and Russia to mark 80 years under the ruling Workers’ Party, a celebration that is expected to feature a massive military parade showcasing its latest advanced weaponry.

Planning for the spectacle, which could begin as early as yesterday, has been shrouded in secrecy, with South Korea’s military saying the North may stage the parade at night.

It comes as North Korea’s leader Kim Jong Un has been emboldened by the war in Ukraine, securing critical support from Russia after sending thousands of North Korean troops to fight alongside Moscow’s forces.

Last month, Kim appeared alongside Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian leader Vladimir Putin at an elaborate military parade in Beijing.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang will lead the Chinese delega-

tion to this week’s 80th anniversary celebrations, while the deputy head of Russia’s Security Council, Dmitry Medvedev -- a key Putin ally -- will also be in Pyongyang.

The grand event will be a “public spectacle that materialises the strategic consolidation of the China-North Korea-Russia axis,” Seong-Hyon Lee, a visiting scholar at the Harvard University Asia Center, said.

“More strategically, Kim is demonstrating his worth as a partner. By displaying advanced weaponry and a powerful military, he is telling Beijing and Moscow, ‘I am not a client state; I am a valuable and capable ally,’” Lee said.

Analysts expect the parade to showcase a new solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) that could put the US mainland within Pyongyang’s reach, as well as new drones and hypersonic weapons aimed at threatening US forces.

# Macron seeks new PM to end France crisis

French president has 48 hours to name a successor after Lecornu’s shock resignation

Lecornu quits after weeks of gridlock

New premier will be Macron’s eighth in office

Austerity budget sparks ongoing government standoff

AFP | Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron was yesterday racing to find a new prime minister within a two-day deadline after the resignation of outgoing premier Sebastien Lecornu tipped the country deeper into political crisis.

The presidency said late Wednesday that Macron would name a new prime minister within the next 48 hours, indicating the appointment would come by Friday evening at the latest.

A declaration seemed unlikely yesterday, with foreign ministers in Paris for talks on plans to help Palestinians after the Gaza war, then Macron due to attend a ceremony in the evening honouring a late justice minister who ended capital punishment.

An announcement of a new prime minister looked more likely on Friday, and could even include a cabinet lineup, a source



France’s outgoing Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Noel Barrot (R) greets France’s President Emmanuel Macron at the Quai d’Orsay, France’s Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, in Paris

close to the president said.

Lecornu told French television in an interview on Wednesday evening that he expected a new premier to be named -- rather than early legislative elections or Macron’s resignation -- in order to resolve the crisis.

Unless Lecornu is reappointed, the new premier will be the eighth of Macron’s presidency.

‘Roll up its sleeves’

Lecornu resigned early Monday after less than a month in

office but Macron gave him up to Wednesday evening to find a way out of months of deadlock over an austerity budget.

Lecornu’s two immediate predecessors were ousted by the legislative chamber in a standoff over the spending plan.

The president “will name a prime minister within 48 hours”, the presidency said, adding a “path was possible” to agree a budget by the end of the year.

The escalation of the crisis has

turned into the worst political headache for Macron since he came to office in 2017, with close allies deserting a head of state who now appears increasingly isolated.

Former premier Edouard Philippe said that Macron himself should step down and call snap presidential polls.

But Lecornu insisted the president should serve out his mandate until 2027, saying it was “not the time to change the president”.

# Hungary’s Laszlo Krasznahorkai wins Nobel literature prize

Honored for compelling and visionary dystopian works

AFP | Stockholm

The Nobel Prize in Literature was yesterday awarded to Laszlo Krasznahorkai, considered by many as Hungary’s most important living author whose works explore themes of postmodern dystopia and melancholy.

The Swedish Academy honoured him “for his compelling and visionary oeuvre that, in the midst of apocalyptic terror, reaffirms the power of art.”

“I’m very happy, I’m calm and very nervous altogether,” the author told Swedish broadcaster Sveriges Radio.

“It is my first day as a Nobel prize winner,” he said.

The Academy highlighted Krasznahorkai’s first novel published in 1985, “Satanstango”, which brought him to promi-



Books of Hungarian writer Laszlo Krasznahorkai are on display at the Swedish Academy in Stockholm

nence in Hungary and remains his best-known work.

The Academy called it “a literary sensation”.

Krasznahorkai is “a great epic writer in the Central European tradition that extends through Kafka to Thomas Bernhard, and is characterised by absurdism and grotesque excess,” the Academy said.

“But there are more strings to

his bow, and he also looks to the East in adopting a more contemplative, finely calibrated tone.”

“The result is a string of works inspired by the deep-seated impressions left by his journeys to China and Japan,” it said.

Krasznahorkai was among those mentioned as a possible winner in the run-up to the prize.

The permanent secretary of the Academy, Mats Malm, said

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Krasznahorkai described his distinctive, demanding prose as “reality examined to the point of madness,” a reflection of his relentless search for meaning amid chaos and artistic desolation

he had managed to contact the newest laureate to inform him.

“I just reached Laszlo Krasznahorkai on the telephone on a visit in Frankfurt, where he was,” he said.

“We have started to discuss things, about arrangements in December (for the prize ceremony in Stockholm), but not come so far yet.”