

News in brief

◆ **Iran “cannot completely cut cooperation”** with the UN nuclear watchdog but the return of its inspectors is up to the country's security chiefs, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said yesterday. The remarks come nearly two months after Iran suspended cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency following its 12-day war with Israel in June. Iran has cited the IAEA's failure to condemn Israeli and US strikes on its nuclear facilities as the reason for its decision, which saw the watchdog's inspectors leave the country following the passing of new legislation by parliament. “We cannot completely cut cooperation with the agency,” Araghchi said, noting that new fuel rods need to be installed at Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant in the coming weeks which will require the presence of IAEA inspectors.



Iran says ‘cannot completely’ break with UN nuclear watchdog

◆ **More than 20 people** were killed yesterday in a torrential spell of monsoon rain in Pakistan, where downpours have swept away entire villages over the last week, leaving more than 400 dead. Eleven people died in the touristic northern region of Gilgit-Baltistan and 10 others in Karachi, the financial capital in the south, due to urban flooding that caused house collapses and electrocution, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said. Schools remained closed in the city of more than 20 million, as the meteorological department predicted more rain till Saturday. Amir Hyder Laghari, chief meteorologist of the Sindh province, blamed “weak infrastructure” for the flooding in big cities. Karachi's crumbling pipes and sewer system struggled to cope with the downpours.

Torrential Pakistan monsoon rains kill more than 20

◆ **The United States** and other key players including the United Arab Emirates jointly called yesterday for Sudan's warring sides to agree to pauses in fighting to allow in aid, voicing alarm at worsening hunger. The group in a statement said it was “appalled by the continuous deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Sudan, including the growing number of people in situations of severe malnutrition and famine, and by the wide range of access impediments that are delaying or blocking the response in key areas.” The group said that the situation was especially urgent in the North Darfur and Kordofan regions. The countries called for the two sides to “allow for humanitarian pauses to enable the movement of life-saving supplies into such areas, and ease barriers to civilian movement out of danger.” The group “urgently reiterates that international humanitarian law must be fully respected.”

US, UAE, others urge fighting pauses to stop Sudan famine



SPOTLIGHT

Record number of mosquito-borne disease outbreaks in Europe: health agency

AFP | Stockholm, Sweden

Europe has registered a record number of outbreaks of mosquito-borne illnesses such as chikungunya and West Nile virus this year, the EU health agency said Wednesday, saying climate change was contributing to a “new normal”. Europe is experiencing longer and more intense transmission seasons for mosquito-borne diseases, said the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

“This shift is driven by climatic and environmental factors such as rising temperatures, longer summer seasons, milder winters and changes in rainfall patterns -- conditions that combine to create a favourable environment for mosquitoes to thrive and transmit viruses,” it said in a statement. Europe was entering a new phase where “longer, more widespread and more intense transmission of mosquito-borne diseases is becoming the new

normal”, said ECDC director Pamela Rendi-Wagner.

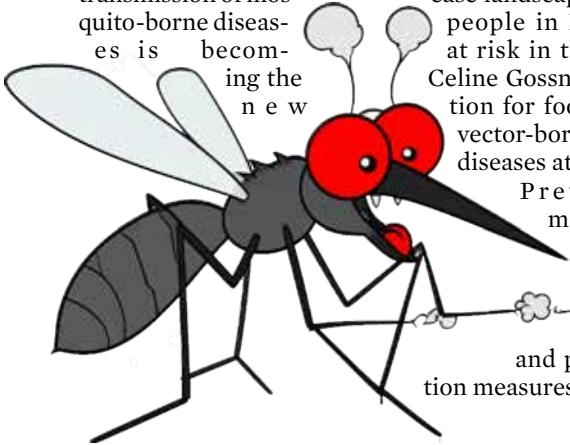
The mosquito that can spread chikungunya virus, *Aedes albopictus*, is now established in 16 European countries and 369 regions, up from just 114 regions a decade ago, the ECDC said.

Europe has seen 27 chikungunya outbreaks so far in 2025, a new record for the continent.

For the first time, a locally acquired case was reported in France's Alsace region, “an exceptional occurrence at this latitude, highlighting the continued northward expansion of the transmission risk”, the agency said. As of August 13, eight European countries had reported 335 locally acquired human cases of West Nile virus infection and 19 deaths, with Italy being the country most affected by far, with 274 infections.

“As the mosquito-borne disease landscape evolves, more people in Europe will be at risk in the future,” said Celine Gossner, Head of Section for food-, water-, and vector-borne and zoonotic diseases at ECDC.

Prevention was more important than ever, both through coordinated public health action and personal protection measures, she said.



Israel approves plan to **conquer** Gaza City

Combat would involve “a gradual precise and targeted operation”



Palestinians rush for cover as smoke billows after an Israeli strike on a building in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip

● **Authorised the call-up of around 60,000 reservists**

● **Israel yesterday approved a major settlement project**

● **Strikes and fire killed at least 25 people across the territory yesterday**

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Israel's defence minister approved a plan yesterday for the conquest of Gaza City and authorised the call-up of around 60,000 reservists, piling pressure on Hamas as mediators push for a ceasefire.

Defence Minister Israel Katz's move, confirmed to AFP by a spokesperson, came as mediators awaited an official Israeli

response on their latest proposal. While mediator Qatar had expressed guarded optimism over the latest proposal, a senior Israeli official said the government stood firm on its call for the release of all hostages in any agreement.

The framework that Hamas had approved proposes an initial 60-day truce, a staggered hostage release, the freeing of some Palestinian prisoners and provisions allowing for the entry of aid into Gaza.

On the ground in Gaza City on Wednesday, Mustafa Qazzaat, head of the emergency committee in the Gaza municipality, described the situation as “catastrophic”.

He told AFP that “large numbers” of people were fleeing their neighbourhoods, with the majority of those displaced “on the roads and streets without shelter.”

Israel's security cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Ben-

jamin Netanyahu approved the plan to conquer Gaza City in early August, sparking fears it will worsen the already catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

According to Israeli media reports, Netanyahu has not yet called a security cabinet meeting to discuss any response to the latest truce proposal.

‘Prolonged operation’

An Israeli military official told journalists on Wednesday that the new phase of combat would involve “a gradual precise and targeted operation in and around Gaza City,” including some areas where forces had not previously operated.

The official said the military had already begun operating in the neighbourhoods of Zeitoun and Jabalia as part of the initial stages.

Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli strikes and fire killed at least 25 people across the territory on Wednesday.

When contacted by AFP, the Israeli military asked for coordinates and specific timeframes to comment on the reports, but said it would look into reports of eight people killed by Israeli fire near an aid site in the centre of Gaza.

Media restrictions in Gaza and difficulties accessing swathes of the Palestinian territory mean AFP is unable to independently verify the tolls and details provided by the civil defence agency or the Israeli military.

In the West Bank, Israel on Wednesday approved a major settlement project in an area that the international community has warned threatens the viability of a future Palestinian state.

Israel has long had ambitions to build on the roughly 12 square kilometres (five square miles) known as E1 that lie just east of Jerusalem, but the plan had been stalled for years.



A general view shows destroyed buildings in Gaza City