

Russia adds Telegram founder Durov to ‘terrorist’ blacklist



Pavel Durov
AFP | Moscow

Russia yesterday added Telegram founder Pavel Durov to a blacklist of “terrorists and extremists”, a day after saying it was seeking his arrest over accusations he let his platform be used by Ukrainian intelligence.

The serial tech founder, who has lived outside Russia for years and holds French and United Arab Emirates passports, has frequently clashed with the Russian authorities as Moscow has tightened its grip on the internet.

His Telegram messenger is one of the country’s main communications platforms. Officials have repeatedly tried to block access or thwart its success in a bid to pressure Durov to hand over user data, or push Russians to use an unencrypted state-backed alternative.

Turkish crews battle fires near tourist areas, many declared under control

AFP | Istanbul

Firefighters continued battling forest fires yesterday in Turkey’s popular tourist regions of Antalya and the Dardanelles, authorities reported.

At least 115 active fires were billowing across the country. However, 110 were completely under control, Agriculture Minister Ibrahim Yumakli said yesterday.

The minister, speaking live yesterday from the wildfire coordination centre in Ankara, said 69 of the fires being fought on Wednesday ignited “outside forested areas”.

Meanwhile, the forestry directorate earlier said it was carrying out “intensive operations with our air and ground forces against the ongoing forest fires”, which broke out on Wednesday due to strong winds.

The directorate specifically mentioned the Antalya to Alanya and Mugla to Fethiye routes, where seaside resorts line up along the “Turquoise Coast” on the Mediterranean shore.

Hundreds of migrants enter Spain’s Ceuta territory from Morocco



Migrants storm a barbed-wire fence as they attempt to cross the land border with Spain’s African enclave of Ceuta near Fnideq



Migrants try to cross into the Spanish enclave of Ceuta from Morocco



Hundreds of people swim from Morocco to Ceuta, while a crowd of people waits on the other side of the border

AFP | Ceuta

Hundreds of migrants entered the Spanish north African exclave of Ceuta yesterday, many of them having swum by sea around the frontier fence.

Migration from Morocco into Spain’s two north African territories, Ceuta and Melilla, has long been a politically sensitive issue between the two

countries, as thousands cross the border at times.

Reporters saw a stream of adults and children, most of them wet, entering the town, plus discarded flotation rings and clothes on the shore near where the frontier barrier meets the sea.

The president of Ceuta, Juan Vivas, said Wednesday that 1,500 migrants had come to Ceuta by sea in the past few days.

Japan quake toll hits 34 as survivors struggle in heat



A house is seen collapsed onto a car in Yatsushiro, Kumamoto prefecture

● Seven bodies recovered from mall rubble

● Thousands left without power and water

AFP | Kumamoto

Japanese emergency workers searched tirelessly for survivors at a wrecked shopping mall yesterday, as the death toll from a major earthquake hit 34 and tens of thousands were left without power in punishing heat.

The Kumamoto disaster management office issued the new tally for Tuesday’s quake, with seven bodies now extracted from the mass of rubble, steel and wires of the Aeon shopping mall after a suspected gas blast.

Eight people were also confirmed dead at the Nippon Paper Industries factory in Yatsushiro city, where part of a red-and-white smokestack collapsed, according to the office.

Five others were in a critical condition after the 7.1-magnitude tremor, while almost 9,500 locals were in evacuation centres in the



Around 50 minutes after the quake, a suspected gas blast gutted the Aeon shopping mall, trapping an unknown number of employees still inside

region of southwestern Japan on the island of Kyushu.

The quake caused widespread damage, flattening homes, damaging bridges, triggering fires and leaving tens of thousands of residents without power and water in temperatures forecast to hit 38C this weekend.

Some 13,520 households remained without electricity yesterday.

Hundreds of elderly people -- Japan has the world’s second-oldest population -- slumbered on thin mats on the hard lobby floor at one community centre in Uki city as they sought

relief from the searing sun.

“Thank God for these shelters,” said one woman, who declined to give her name, as people slept between chairs and tables or gathered around a television. At home or in the car “it’s too hot and there are too many mosquitoes,” she said.

“In this heat, if you don’t have electricity and air conditioning, it’s very tough,” father-of-four supermarket employee Hiroyuki Matsushima, 53, said.

‘So strong’

With no power and running water, Retiree Kenji Ota, 72, has been sleeping inside his car at night.

“This quake was so strong. It was horrible... I can only sleep for two hours or so at night,” he said.

The town of Hikawa was one of the areas worst hit, where many older structures crumpled in the quake and where residents still had no water or power yesterday.

“The biggest problem is that there is no toilet... I had to go to a nearby school,” said Kinuko Uemura, 85, who said she and her husband were lucky to survive the collapse of their traditional house.

France firefighters hopeful, as Spain ends national emergency

AFP | Ltge-Cap-Ferret

France firefighters yesterday were hopeful a massive forest fire was no longer spreading, as Spain lifted a state of emergency over wildfires near Madrid.

Europe has been gripped by successive heatwaves and a major drought this year, which scientists have attributed to human-caused climate change.

The neighbouring countries have battled some of the worst forest fires in living memory over the past week, burning vast areas and forcing tens of thousands of people from their homes.

In France, temperatures cooled near the wine capital of Bordeaux, raising hopes that



A volunteer fills a water bucket to help battling the fire in a forest in Lanton, west of Bordeaux

an end was near for the fire in a seaside pine forest that has displaced 220,000 people and

destroyed around 240 homes.

The regional firefighting service said they were “reasonably

optimistic”, after the fire that broke out a week ago had not progressed beyond 42,000 hectares -- an area larger than the US city of Detroit -- since the weekend.

“We’ve just reached a new threshold, a kind of tipping point,” firefighting chief Marc Vermeulen said around midday, saying hotspots had dropped from six to three since the morning.

Local authorities said they were allowing people to return home in nine villages of the coastal region that has seen France’s worst wildfire since 1949.

In the area of Lanton, volunteer Maxence Cereja however remained cautious as he put out smouldering embers from the

previous night’s blaze.

“Yesterday morning it was as calm as it is now, and then it all flared up again in the afternoon,” the owner of a tiling company yesterday

Earlier in the day, a clap of thunder had cracked over the town of Lege-Cap-Ferret, and a few raindrops started to fall.

“There’s thunder, that’s good,” said a firefighter at the command post set up in the town’s sports hall, though not much rain then fell on the area.

In Spain, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez yesterday lifted a state of emergency over wildfires threatening areas near Madrid, after the prefect’s office said they had stopped expanding with “almost no flames left”.