

2 dead in Vietnam floods

AFP, Hanoi

Two people died after being swept away in floodwaters in central Vietnam, state media reported yesterday.

Almost 500 houses were inundated with water in recent days, according to Vietnam's disaster management authority.

The coastal city of Da Nang has been hit with heavy rain, as have areas from Ha Tinh to Quang Nam provinces since Tuesday.

A 61-year-old man and a 13-year-old boy drowned in the floods, according to state media website VnExpress.

Around 5,000 people were evacuated from homes in Da Nang on Friday night and last morning, it said.

In Hue city on Friday, roads flooded by the Perfume River, with water reaching nearly chest-high levels in some areas.

Last weekend three people died in flash floods and landslides in northern Vietnam.



A Palestinian man uses a fire extinguisher to douse a fire following an Israeli strike, in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Israeli missile killed Reuters journalist

Says Lebanon

AFP, Beirut

Lebanon said yesterday that Israel was behind cross-border fire that killed a Reuters journalist and wounded six others near the border the previous day.

Israel's military said it was looking into the circumstances of the fatal strike Friday which also injured journalists from AFP, Reuters, and Al Jazeera.

"We are very sorry for the journalist's death," military spokesman Richard Hecht told a briefing in reference to the Reuters video journalist killed, Issam Abdallah.

On the question of who launched the strike, Hecht said that "we are looking into it".

The Lebanese army said in a statement that "the Israeli enemy fired a rocket shell that hit a civilian car belonging to a media team, leading to the death of Issam Abdallah".

Lebanon's foreign ministry also blamed Israel and labelled the strike a "deliberate killing" and a "crime against freedom of speech and journalism".

The group of journalists from different media, wearing press vests and helmets, was near the village of Alma al-Shaab, close to the border with Israel, when they came under "direct" fire, according to two eyewitnesses.

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

'Children suffer the most'

Says Unicef calling for immediate ceasefire

STAR REPORT

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef) has warned about the killing of children in Gaza amid fighting between Israel and Hamas.

"Hundreds and hundreds of children have been killed and injured," spokesperson James Elder said at a press briefing Friday in Geneva, according to a Unicef summary.

"Every hour in Gaza the number of children killed rises. The killing of children must stop," he said.

"The images and stories are clear: children with horrendous burns, mortar wounds, and lost limbs," Elder continued.

"And hospitals are utterly overwhelmed to treat them. Yet the numbers keep rising."

Israel ordered the evacuation of around one million people in Gaza ahead of an expected ground operation in the territory, which has faced Israeli airstrikes and blackout.

"The IDF calls for the evacuation of all civilians of Gaza City from their homes southwards for their own safety and protection and move to the area south of the Wadi Gaza," the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) wrote in a post on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter.

The UN warned that the movement of so many people with a 24-hour deadline could be disastrous.

Since fighting began after Hamas attacked Saturday, approximately 2,800 people have died on both sides. About 150 people were taken into Gaza by militants as hostages. Israel has said it will not allow supplies into the territory until the hostages are freed.

"The humanitarian situation has reached lethal lows, and yet all reports point to further attacks. Compassion – and international law – must prevail.

"Unicef is calling for an immediate cease fire as 1.1 million people – nearly half of them children – have been warned to move out of the way ahead of a what is expected to be a ground assault on one of the most densely populated places on the planet, but with nowhere safe for civilians to go.

"Children and families in Gaza have practically run out of food, water, electricity, medicine and safe access to hospitals, following days of air strikes and cuts to all supply routes.

"Gaza's sole power plant ran out of fuel Wednesday afternoon, shutting down electricity, water and wastewater treatment. Most residents can no longer get drinking water from service providers or household water through pipelines,

"At least six water wells, three water pumping stations, one water reservoir, and one desalination plant serving more than 1 million people have been damaged by airstrikes."

Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip since Hamas's attack on southern Israel one week ago have killed at least 2,215 people, including 724 children, the Palestinian territory's Hamas-controlled health ministry said yesterday.

Some 458 women were among those killed, the ministry said. It added that 8,714 people have also been wounded, after an earlier statement said at least 324 people were killed in the past 24 hours alone, reports AFP.

"Israeli children being held hostage in Gaza must be safely and immediately reunited with their families and loved ones," Elder also said.

"Humanitarians must be able to safely access children and their families with lifesaving services and supplies – wherever they may be," he added.

"In every war, the ones who suffer the most are children. This is tragically true today."



TEACHER SLAIN

France mobilises 7,000 troops
Louvre evacuated

AFP, Arras

France was on high alert yesterday, after an attacker stabbed a teacher to death in what the president called an act of "Islamist terror," with troops deployed and the Louvre museum evacuating visitors.

Friday's attack took place in the northeastern town of Arras, home to large Jewish and Muslim populations.

A man in his twenties killed French teacher Dominique Bernard and severely wounded three others at the school he used to attend.

Yesterday, amid fears that the conflict between Israel and Hamas could lead to violence in foreign capitals, France announced it would deploy up to 7,000 soldiers under the highest warning level, while the famous Louvre museum in Paris evacuated visitors and closed following a "security" threat.

Police arrested the suspected perpetrator of Friday's attack, Mohammed Moguchkov, who had cried the Arabic phrase "Allahu akbar!" (God is greatest).

He was among 10 people being held in custody, a police source told AFP, including several members of his family.

Russia destroyed 300,000 tonnes of grain since July

Says Ukraine

REUTERS, Kyiv

Russia has destroyed almost 300,000 metric tonnes of grain since July in attacks on Ukraine's port facilities and on ships, the Ukrainian government said on Friday, underscoring the war's threat to global food security.

In summer, Moscow quit a UN-brokered deal that had allowed exports of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea safely. Since then, Russian forces have hit six civilian ships and 150 port and grain facilities during 17 attacks, destroying crops headed for export, Deputy Prime Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov said in a statement.

"This is Russia's attempt to deepen the food crisis in the countries which depend on Ukrainian products," Kubrakov said.

The damage on Ukrainian ports reduced the country's grain export potential by 40 percent, he said. Russia has attacked port facilities on both the Black Sea and Danube River.

Ukraine is one of the world's largest wheat and corn exporters.

The Russian Defence Ministry could not be immediately reached for comment.

Kubrakov said 21 grain-loaded vessels have already used a new "humanitarian" grain corridor in the Black Sea that Kyiv established in August.

He said that under the previous UN Black Sea Grain Initiative, Ukraine had exported 33 million tonnes of grain, with 60% of that shipped to African and Asian countries.

Magnitude 5.3 quake rattles Taiwan

REUTERS, Taipei

A magnitude 5.3 earthquake struck off Taiwan's east coast yesterday, the island's weather bureau said, briefly shaking buildings in the capital Taipei but with no immediate reports of damage.

The epicentre of the earthquake was in the sea off Hualien county with a depth of 7.2 km (4.5 miles), the weather bureau said.

Taiwan lies near the junction of two tectonic plates and is prone to earthquakes.

2020 Nobel laureate poet Louise Gluck dies

AFP, Washington



American poet Louise Gluck, winner of the Nobel prize for her distinctively austere writing that touched on themes of mythology and the universal human experience, has died, a Yale University spokeswoman said on Friday. She was 80.

New York native most recently taught at Yale as a poetry professor.

She died of cancer. The New York Times reported, citing friend and former Yale colleague Richard Deming, on Friday at her home in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Gluck was the 2020 Nobel laureate in literature, the 16th woman to win the award. Her idols included other winners of the same prize, such as William Butler Yeats (1923) and TS Eliot (1948). Like theirs, the austerity of her poetry was a source of strength: "The unsaid, for me, exerts great power," she wrote in a collection of essays on poetry.

N Korea recently sent arms to Russia

Says US

AFP, Washington

North Korea has delivered more than 1,000 containers of military equipment and munitions to Russia in recent weeks for use in Ukraine, the White House said Friday.

The statement comes a month after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un traveled to Russia's far east and met President Vladimir Putin, sparking concern among Kyiv's allies over the possibility of a potential arms deal.

"We condemn the DPRK for providing Russia with this military equipment, which will be used to attack Ukrainian cities, kill Ukrainian civilians, and further Russia's illegitimate war," White House national security spokesman John Kirby told reporters, using North Korea's official name.

"We will continue to monitor for any additional DPRK arms shipments to Russia."

In exchange for its support, Kirby said, "Pyongyang is seeking military assistance from Russia, including fighter aircraft, surface-to-air missiles, armored vehicles, ballistic missile production equipment or other materials and other advanced technologies."

"This expanding military partnership between the DPRK and Russia including any technology transfers from Russia to the DPRK undermines regional stability and the global non-proliferation regime," he added.

According to a graphic provided by the White House, between September 1 and October 1, a load of containers was shipped by sea from Najin, North Korea, to Dunay, Russia. They were then delivered by rail to an ammunition depot near Tikhoretsk in southwestern Russia.



This handout out picture courtesy of NASA taken on Friday shows a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket with the Psyche spacecraft onboard launching from Launch Complex 39A, at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

PHOTO: AFP

NEW ZEALAND POLLS

Conservative Luxon wins

REUTERS, Wellington

New Zealand's centre-right National Party led by Christopher Luxon will form a new government with its preferred coalition party ACT, as Prime Minister Chris Hipkins conceded his Labour Party could not form a government after yesterday's general election.

The National Party, now in opposition, had 39 percent of the votes with 92 percent counted, while the ACT party had 9 percent. That would give the two parties enough seats to form a government.

"On the numbers tonight National will be in the position to lead the next government," Luxon, a former executive who once ran Air New Zealand and entered politics just three years ago, told supporters in Auckland. "We will make this an even better country."