MEXICO CITY: A “gutsy” move by a rising Mexican drug cartel to abduct a son of imprisoned drug lord Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman is raising alarms of a possible wave of bloodshed as it challenges his Sinaloa Cartel.

The grab appeared to be the latest blow aimed at under-mining the jailed drug boss, coming shortly after reports that gunmen invaded the home of his mother in northern Sinaloa state.

Jalisco state Attorney General Eduardo Almaguer confirmed yesterday that 29-year-old Jesus Alfredo Guzman Salazar was among a half-dozen men abducted from a restaurant in the Pacific resort of Puerto Vallarta this week. He said the kidnappers were from the rival Jalisco New Generation cartel.

The Jalisco gang’s power and reach have grown rapidly in recent years, often in direct competition with Guzman’s cartel, which has long been considered the strongest criminal organization in Mexico.

“It could indicate an escalation,” Samuel Logan, managing partner at the business and security consulting firm Southern Pulse, said of the kidnapping.

“That’s a pretty gutsy move,” Almaguer said seven armed men interrupted a celebration by 16 people at the upscale La Leche restaurant in Puerto Vallarta’s hotel zone.

They separated the nine women to one side and took away the seven men, one of whom apparently escaped. Authorities said they had not heard of anyone demanding a ransom.

“El Chapo” purportedly ran affairs from prison until his second escape in 2015, but since being recaptured has been kept under stricter security measures and is currently in prison in Juarez.

Other affronts against the legendary drug capo have been reported in recent months. In June, local media said an armed gang broke into the home of Guzman’s mother.

More than 82,000 flee fires

LOS ANGELES: A rapidly spreading fire raging east of Los Angeles forced the evacuation of more than 82,000 people yesterday as the governor of California declared a state of emergency.

Around 34,500 buildings were threatened by the blaze. Governor Jerry Brown declared the state of emergency for San Bernardino County, located just 100km east of Los Angeles, where the blaze, which has been named the Blue Cut fire, was growing.

According to US news outlets, 82,640 people fell under an evacuation warning. California is in its fifth year of a record drought and undergoing an extreme heatwave.

Two firefighters were injured by the blaze, which some 700 fire personnel are battling.

Fire season is in full swing in California, where another fire has been burning north of San Francisco since Saturday.

The Clayton Fire, as it is called, is being fought by around 1700 fire personnel, with more than 175 buildings destroyed.

Floods swamp US city

Flooded areas of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, are seen from the air. As many as 30,000 people have been rescued following unprecedented floods in the southern US state of Louisiana, including a 78-year-old woman who spent a night stranded in a tree.

Residents woke last week to find their homes and businesses still surrounded by muddy water.

Boat sent packing to Sri Lanka

COLOMBO: Australia has returned home six Sri Lankans which it said were on-board a “people smuggling boat” after intercepting it at sea, Immigration Minister Peter Dutton said yesterday.

Under “Operation Sovereign Borders” asylum-seekers trying to reach Australia by boat are either sent back to where they departed from or transferred to remote Pacific island camps.

Dutton gave no indication of where the boat was detected, whether those on board applied for asylum or were assessed for refugee status, and how they were returned.

More than 25 boats have been returned since the introduction of Operation Sovereign Borders in September 2013, a policy the government says has stopped deaths at sea after a spate of drownings.

Dutton stressed that Australia would not change its policy on boat people, which sees them returned or sent to Nauru or Papua New Guinea’s Manus Island and denied resettlement in Australia even if found to be refugees.

From the humans behind Despicable Me comes The Secret Life of Pets, a comedy about the lives our pets lead after we leave for work or school each day.

To celebrate its release, the NT News is searching for the Territory’s best pets.

There are seven categories for entry:

- Cutest pet
- Naughtiest pet
- Best pet in costume
- Pet at the beach
- Make your own pet meme
- Pet impersonating humans
- Most peculiar pet

All entries go into the draw to win tickets to the NT News’ The Secret Life of Pets preview screening on August 27th, and other cool prizes.

To enter, visit ntnews.com.au/competitions and submit a photo of your pet into one of the categories.