



Flood affected residents are seen on boats on a flooded road in Houston, Texas, US.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# Storm Harvey strikes again

Makes landfall in Louisiana; floodwaters climb in Texas after record rainfall

AFP, Houston

After pouring record rains on Texas, Tropical Storm Harvey made a second landfall yesterday to strike Louisiana, a state that still bears deep scars from 2005's Hurricane Katrina.

The second hit comes five days after the monster storm slammed onshore as a Category Four hurricane, pummeling the US Gulf coast with torrential rains that turned neighborhoods into lakes in America's fourth largest city, Houston.

Harvey made its second landfall just west of the town of Cameron, the National Hurricane Center said, with "flooding rains" drenching parts of southeastern Texas and neighboring southwestern Louisiana. Forecasters expect Harvey will gradually weaken to a tropical depression by yesterday night, meaning maximum sustained winds should slow.

In Texas emergency crews were still struggling to reach hundreds of stranded people in a massive round-the-clock rescue operation -- but the National Weather Service tweeted that weather conditions there were to at last improve.

Houstonians woke up yesterday from a nighttime curfew declared by Mayor Sylvester Turner aimed at aiding search efforts and thwarting potential looting in the flood-ravaged city.

US media reports indicated the death toll could have risen to 30, and authorities feared confirming more once the worst had past and search teams could again travel roads.

The National Weather Service tweeted Harvey appears to have broken a US record for most rain from a single tropical cyclone, with nearly 52 inches recorded in the town of Cedar Bayou.

Harvey was previously known to have left at least three people dead, with six more fatalities potentially tied to the storm.

# A mere 'curtain raiser'

North Korea leader vows more missile launches over Japan, says Guam next target; UNSC unanimously condemns test

AFP, Seoul

North Korea leader Kim Jong-Un has promised more missile flights over Japan, insisting his nuclear-armed nation's provocative launch was a mere "curtain-raiser", in the face of UN condemnation and US warnings of severe repercussions.

The Hwasong-12 intermediate-range missile that Pyongyang unleashed on Tuesday represented a major escalation of tensions over its weapons programmes.

In recent weeks it has threatened to send a salvo of missiles towards the US territory of Guam, while President Donald Trump has warned of raining "fire and fury" on the North.

After the latest launch Trump said that "all options" were on the table, reviving his implied threat of pre-emptive US military action just days after congratulating himself that Kim appeared to be "starting to respect us".

The UN Security Council -- which has already imposed seven sets of sanctions on Pyongyang -- said in a unanimous statement the North's "outrageous" actions "are not just a threat to the region, but to all UN member states".

Both the North's key ally China and Russia, which also has ties to it, backed the US-drafted declaration, but it will not immediately lead to new or tightened sanctions.

The Rodong Sinmun newspaper, mouthpiece of the North's ruling party, yesterday carried more than 20 pictures of the launch near Pyongyang. One showed Kim smiling broadly at a desk with a map of the Northwest Pacific, surrounded by aides.

Another showed him gazing upwards as the missile rose into the air.

South Korea's military said Tuesday that it had travelled around 2,700 kilometres and reached a maximum altitude of 550 kilometres.

The official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) cited Kim as saying that "more ballistic rocket launching drills with the Pacific as a target in the future" were necessary.

Tuesday's launch was a "meaningful prelude to containing Guam, advanced base of invasion", he said, and a "curtain-raiser" for the North's "resolute countermeasures" against ongoing US-South Korean military exercises which the North regards as a rehearsal for invasion.

Yesterday's statement was the first time the North has acknowledged sending a missile over Japan's main islands. Two of its rockets previously did so, in 1998 and 2009, but on both occasions it claimed they were space launch vehicles.



# End Gaza blockade

Says UN chief after visiting the Palestinian enclave which is facing 'most dire humanitarian crises'

AFP, Jabalia

UN chief Antonio Guterres called for the blockade of Gaza to be lifted yesterday as he visited the Palestinian enclave enduring "one of the most dramatic humanitarian crises" he had seen.

The secretary general's comments came as he wrapped up his first visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories since taking office.

Repeatedly throughout the visit he has called for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, long the focus of international diplomacy but currently under threat.

Yesterday in Gaza, Guterres said he had been struck by humanitarian conditions in the overcrowded and impoverished enclave, where an electricity crisis has worsened and clean water is lacking.

"I am deeply moved to be in Gaza today, unfortunately to witness one of the most dramatic humanitarian crises that I've seen in many years working as a humanitarian in the United Nations," Guterres said.

He later said it was "important to open the closures," in a reference to Israel's

decade-long blockade of Gaza and its border with Egypt that has remained largely closed in recent years.

Guterres made the comments at a school run by the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, in the northern Gaza Strip.

At least 70 per cent of Gazans are dependent upon international aid. UNRWA plays a major role in the strip, with the same percentage of the population classified as refugees.

Palestinian militants in Gaza and Israel have fought three wars since 2008.

Israel says the blockade is necessary to keep Islamist movement Hamas, which runs the enclave, from obtaining weapons or materials that could be used to make them.

The blockade also serves to isolate Hamas. UN officials say the enclave is fast becoming unlivable due to deteriorating humanitarian conditions.

Hamas welcomed Guterres's trip, calling on him to make "all efforts to lift the siege on the strip and end the suffering for two million Palestinians."



# Trump attacks freedom of the press

Says UN rights boss

REUTERS, Geneva

US President Donald Trump's criticism of journalists amounts to an attack on the freedom of the press and could provoke violence against reporters, the United Nations' human rights chief said yesterday.

Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini said Trump had also made worrying remarks about women, Mexicans and Muslims and went on to question the president's approach to immigration and decision to pardon former Arizona lawman Joe Arpaio.

"It's really quite amazing when you think that freedom of the press, not only sort of a cornerstone of the US Constitution but very much something that the United States defended over the years is now itself under attack from the President," Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini said.

"It's sort of a stunning turnaround. And ultimately the sequence is a dangerous one," he told a news conference in Geneva.

# Caught on camera

Woman loses baby as Indian docs spat during operation

NDTV ONLINE

As a woman lay on the operation table for an emergency C-section in Jodhpur's Umaid Hospital, two doctors argued loudly, calling each other names and even threatening each other. They kept wrangling, the sedated woman between them, as one staff member surreptitiously recorded them on a mobile phone.

When one of the doctors - the obstetrician - finally delivered the baby at a hospital in Rajasthan, it didn't survive long.

The argument broke out when Dr Nainwal, the obstetrician, questioned whether the patient had eaten before the surgery. The anaesthetist, Dr Tak, reportedly tried to have a junior doctor carry out tests, which Dr Nainwal didn't agree with.

"You stay within your aukat (limits)," Dr Nainwal, in green scrubs and surgery gear, is seen shouting at the anaesthetist in the video clip. It quickly degenerates into shouting and name-calling. A nurse and another doctor are seen trying to stop them and remind them that a surgery was on.

Dr Nainwal and Dr Tak have both been suspended. The Rajasthan High Court has asked for a report by yesterday afternoon on the incident at the hospital, the city's biggest.



Floral tributes and photographs are seen outside one of the entrances of Kensington Palace to mark the coming 20th anniversary of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, in London, yesterday. On August 31, 1997, Britain's Diana, Princess of Wales, died in a high-speed car crash in Paris.

PHOTO: AFP

# INDIA-CHINA TIES

## Huge potential for co-op

Says Beijing ahead of Modi's BRICS visit, hopes New Delhi will 'learn lessons' from Doklam standoff

AGENCIES

China yesterday sought to cast its strained ties with India in a positive light ahead of a likely meeting next week between President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi following their most serious military confrontation in decades.

The countries agreed this week to end a more than two-month-old stand-off on their disputed Himalayan border, just in time for the start on Sunday of a summit of the BRICS grouping of nations, which also includes Brazil, Russia and South Africa.

It was normal for the two neighbours to have differences, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told a news briefing.

"What's important is that we put these problems in the appropriate place, and appropriately handle and control them in the spirit of mutual respect and based on the consensus of both countries' leaders," he

said.

"There is huge potential for cooperation between China and India," Wang added, without giving details.

Xi and Modi are expected to hold talks on the summit sidelines in the southeastern city of Xiamen, officials in New Delhi said.

That has raised hopes they will try and repair a relationship that has deteriorated as the two countries find their interests diverge - and often clash - while competing for influence across Asia, reported Reuters.

Wang Yi hoped India will "learn lessons" following the end of a months-long military stand-off in a strategically important disputed area in the Himalayas, reported AFP.

# 64 dead in Syria regime, IS clashes

AFP, Beirut

Fierce fighting between Syrian government forces and the Islamic State group has killed 64 combatants in Raqa province over a 24-hour period, a monitoring group said yesterday.

The clashes come with the army pressing an advance through Raqa, in northern Syria, towards neighbouring Deir Ezzor, the only remaining province of the war-ravaged country still in the hands of IS jihadists.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitor, said the fighting had claimed the lives of 38 jihadists and 26 pro-regime combatants since Tuesday morning.

# VENEZUELA CRISIS

## Opposition leaders to face treason trial

AFP, Caracas

Venezuela's all-powerful new constituent assembly said Tuesday it will hold treason trials for opposition leaders it said are promoting economic sanctions imposed by the United States.

The assembly approved a decree in which it announced a "historic" trial against "those who are involved in promoting these immoral actions against the interests of the Venezuelan people."

Although the document did not identify which opposition figures the assembly might put on trial, members participating in the meeting accused the opposition leadership, in particular legislative speaker Julio Borges and his deputy, Freddy Guevara.

"We know that Freddy Guevara is a delinquent and has to pay, that Julio Borges is another delinquent who has to pay; they have no homeland," said assemblywoman Iris Varela, eliciting applause from colleagues.

Earlier, President Nicolas Maduro has indicated that Borges was primarily to blame for the new measures, and called recently for the legislative speaker to be tried for treason.

# NEWSIN brief

## Two landslides kill 30 in China

AFP, Beijing

Two landslides in rural areas of China have killed 30 people with at least another 12 missing, according to state media reports yesterday. The death toll from a large landslide that struck a town in southwestern Guizhou province on Monday rose to 23 while a second landslide on Wednesday killed seven people in the northwest of the country.

## Trump Jr to testify in Russia probe

AFP, Washington

Donald Trump Jr, the US president's eldest son, will take questions from a congressional committee investigating possible collusion between the Republican's 2016 campaign team and Russia, officials said Tuesday. The Senate Judiciary Committee announced that the 39-year-old Trump Jr agreed to testify before investigators behind closed doors. No date was immediately given.

## Fox News pulled off the air in UK

CNN ONLINE

Rupert Murdoch and his sons are pulling Fox News off the air in Britain. The network's parent company, 21st Century Fox, has announced that the controversial news channel will no longer be broadcast in the UK after failing to attract an audience. 21st Century Fox (FOX) said the network's final broadcast in the UK would be Tuesday at 4:00pm local time.

## Jordan, Iraq reopen only border crossing

AFP, Amman

Jordan and Iraq yesterday reopened their only border crossing, saying security had been restored three years after the Islamic State group seized control of frontier areas. The border crossing is part of a crucial route linking the Iraqi and Jordanian capitals, and its reopening comes after Iraqi forces managed to retake most of the territory seized by IS in 2014.

## Merkel faces 1,000 'treason' complaints!

AFP, Berlin

More than 1,000 criminal complaints for high treason have been filed against German Chancellor Angela Merkel since the height of the refugee crisis in 2015, local media reported yesterday. Merkel's decision to let in more than one million asylum seekers in 2015 and 2016 sent support for her conservative Christian Democratic Union party into a nosedive but her support has recovered as new arrivals have dwindled.