

'Putin is fake'

Says Navalny widow, demands husband's body

REUTERS

Yulia Navalnaya, the widow of the late Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, yesterday demanded that Russian authorities release his body for burial and accused a "demonic" Russian President Vladimir Putin of "torturing" his corpse.

In a six-minute video posted on YouTube, Navalnaya accused Putin of holding her husband's body "hostage", and questioned Putin's often-professed Christian faith.

Yesterday, Navalny aides said that authorities had threatened to bury him in the remote prison colony where he died unless his family agreed to their conditions.

In the video, an emotional Yulia Navalnaya claimed that Putin personally was responsible for the whereabouts of Navalny's body, and that he was "torturing" Navalny in death as he had in life.

"We already knew that Putin's faith was fake. But now we see it more clearly than ever before," said Navalnaya, dressed in black.

"No true Christian could ever do what Putin is now doing with Alexei's body."

Since returning to the Russian presidency in 2012, Vladimir Putin has positioned himself as a defender of traditional, conservative values against what he portrays as corrosive Western liberalism.

Navalnaya said her husband had been a devout Christian, who attended church and had fasted for Lent even while in prison. She said his political activism had been inspired by Christian values.



People enjoy light installations at a park on Lantern Festival, which marks the end of the Lunar New Year celebrations, in Beijing, China yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Gaza's hungry get desperate

AFP, Palestinian Territories

At the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza, Abu Gibril was so desperate for food to feed his family that he slaughtered two of his horses.

"We had no other choice but to slaughter the horses to feed the children. Hunger is killing us," he told AFP.

Jabalia was the biggest camp in the Palestinian territories before the war, which began on October 7. Gibril, 60, fled there from nearby Beit Hanun when the conflict erupted. Home for him and his family is now a tent near what was a UN-run school.

Contaminated water, power cuts and overcrowding were

already a problem in the densely populated camp, which was set up in 1948 and covers just 1.4 square kilometres (half a square mile).

Poverty, from high unemployment, was also an issue among its more than 100,000 people.

Now food is running out, with aid agencies unable to get in to the area because of the bombing — and the frenzied looting of the few trucks that try to get through.

The World Food Programme this week said its teams reported "unprecedented levels of desperation" while the United Nations warned that 2.2 million people were on the brink of famine.

On Friday, the health ministry

in Hamas run Gaza said a two-month-old baby died of malnutrition in hospital in Gaza City, seven kilometres (just over four miles) away from Jabalia.

Overall, at least 29,606 people have been killed in Gaza in the war, the ministry said Saturday.

In the camp, bedraggled children wait expectantly, holding plastic containers and battered cooking pots for what little food is available.

With supplies dwindling, costs are rising. A kilo of rice, for example, has shot up from seven shekels (\$1.90) to 55 shekels, complains one man.

"We the grown-ups can still make it but these children who are four and five years old, what

did they do wrong to sleep hungry and wake up hungry?" he said angrily.

The UN children's agency Unicef has warned that the alarming lack of food, surging malnutrition and disease could lead to an "explosion" in child deaths in Gaza.

One in six children aged under two in Gaza was acutely malnourished, it estimated on February 19.

Residents have taken to eating scavenged scraps of rotten corn, animal fodder unfit for human consumption and even leaves to try to stave off the growing hunger pangs.

"There is no food, no wheat, no drinking water," said one woman.

US moon lander tipped sideways on lunar surface

REUTERS

The moon lander dubbed Odysseus is "alive and well" but resting on its side a day after its white-knuckle touchdown as the first private spacecraft ever to reach the lunar surface, and the first from the US since 1972, the company behind the vehicle said on Friday. Houston-based Intuitive Machines LUNRO also revealed that human error led to a failure of the spacecraft's laser-based range finders, how engineers detected the glitch by chance hours before landing time, and how they improvised an emergency fix that saved the mission from a probable crash. Although the Odysseus made it to the surface intact on Thursday, analysis of data by flight engineers showed the six-legged craft apparently tripped over its own feet as it neared the end of its final descent, company officials said at a briefing the next day. The spacecraft is believed to have caught one of its landing feet on the uneven lunar surface and tipped over, coming to rest sideways, propped up on a rock at one end, said CEO Stephen Altemus, whose company built and flew the lander. Still, all indications are that Odysseus "is stable near or at our intended landing site," close to a crater called Malapert A in the region of the moon's south pole, Altemus told reporters. "We do have communications with the lander," and mission control operators are sending commands to the vehicle, Altemus said.

China launches satellite with powerful rocket

REUTERS, Beijing

China on Friday launched the 11th satellite under a classified Chinese military programme with the country's most powerful rocket. Chinese state media reported the successful launch of the satellite from the southern island of Hainan with a Long March 5 rocket. No details on the satellite were given except that it will be mainly used for "multi-band and high speed communication technology experiments". The powerful Long March 5 rocket is normally used to launch very large payloads. A Long March 5 rocket was last used in December to launch a large optical remote sensing satellite into orbit. The last satellite launched under the classified military programme was in early November.



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