

13 THE WORLD



USA BILL DE BLASIO ENDS WHITE HOUSE BID

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio dropped out of the 2020 presidential campaign on Friday, ending a campaign he waged in the shadow of better-known progressive candidates. De Blasio's exit leaves 19 Democrats vying to be the party's nominee.

TOP OF THE WORLD



MARK ZUCKERBERG
CEO of Facebook

USA Facebook's Zuckerberg meets Trump

Washington: Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg met US President Donald Trump on Thursday during a fence-mending visit to Washington where the chief executive faced aggressive questioning from lawmakers about the social network's failures to protect consumer privacy. Trump posted a photo with Zuckerberg on Twitter and called their session a "nice meeting". Facebook said the two "had a good, constructive meeting". Neither side disclosed specifics of their discussion.

Saudis show attack site damage as Iran pledges tough defence

Top Aramco official says confident of going back to full oil production by end of this month

STEPHEN KALIN & RANIA EL GAMAL
KHURAI, SEPTEMBER 20

SAUDI ARABIA on Friday took media to inspect oil facilities hit by attacks that Washington and Riyadh blame on Iran, showing melted pipes and burnt equipment, as Tehran vowed wide retaliation if heightened tensions boil over into hostilities.

The kingdom sees the Sept. 14 strikes on its Khurais and Abqaiq facilities — the worst attack on Gulf oil infrastructure since Iraq's Saddam Hussein torched Kuwaiti oilfields in 1991 — as a test of global will to preserve international order.

Iran denies involvement in the attack, which initially halved oil output from Saudi Arabia, the world's largest petroleum exporter. Responsibility was claimed by Yemen's Houthi movement, an Iran-aligned group fighting a Saudi-led alliance in Yemen's four-year-old conflict.

At Khurais, which the Saudi de-



At the damaged site of Saudi Aramco oil facility in Khurais, Saudi Arabia, Friday. Reuters

fence ministry says was hit by four missiles, Reuters reporters were shown repair work under way, with cranes erected around two burnt-out stabilisation columns, which form part of oil-gas separation units, and melted pipes.

"We are confident we are going back to the full production we were at before the attack (on

Khurais) by the end of September," Fahad Abdulkarim, Aramco's general manager for the southern area oil operation, told reporters.

Workers wearing red high visibility jackets and white helmets moved through the site, a large compound the size of several football stadiums contain-

US announces sanctions on Iran's central bank

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, SEPTEMBER 20

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump on Friday announced new sanctions on Iran's central bank, calling the measures the "highest" sanctions ever imposed on a foreign country by the United States.

"We have just sanctioned the Iranian national bank," Trump told reporters in the

Oval Office, later clarifying that he was referring to the Iranian central bank.

"These are the highest sanctions ever imposed on a country," he said.

Trump earlier this week announced what he said would be substantial new sanctions against Iran, in response to what US officials say was likely Iranian involvement in an attack on Saudi oil facilities.

ing interconnected structures of piping and towers.

The attacks intensified a years-long struggle between Saudi Arabia and Iran, who are locked in a sometimes violent contest for influence in several flashpoints around the Middle East.

Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel al-Jubeir

said on Thursday the attacks were an "extension of the Iranian regime's hostile and outlawed behaviour".

Iran has warned US President Donald Trump against being dragged into a war in the Middle East and said it would meet any offensive action with a crushing response. REUTERS



The Pakistan Prime Minister had previously met the US President in Washington in July. Reuters file

Imran Khan likely to meet Trump Monday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, SEPTEMBER 20

PAKISTAN PRIME Minister Imran Khan is likely to meet US President Donald Trump in New York on September 23 on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, according to a media report.

Pakistani daily Dawn, quoting diplomatic sources, said this could be the first of the two meetings Prime Minister Khan is expected to have with President Trump during the UNGA session.

The Khan-Trump meeting will take place a day after Trump, along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, addresses more than 50,000 Indian-Americans at the "Howdy Modi!" mega event in Houston.

Khan is expected to be in New York on Sunday evening, when Trump will be addressing the joint rally with Modi.

Both Khan and Modi are scheduled to address the UN General Assembly on September 27. Khan has vowed to raise the Kashmir issue at the UNGA session.

In Islamabad, the Foreign Office on Friday said Pakistan has taken several measures to keep a sustained focus on the situation in Kashmir.

Tension between India and Pakistan escalated after New Delhi revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status. Pakistan has downgraded diplomatic ties with New Delhi and



PAKISTANI ACTIVIST, ACCUSED OF TREASON, ESCAPES TO US

New York: Gulalai Ismail, a prominent Pakistani women's rights activist, who has been accused of treason for her alleged anti-state activities, escaped to the US where she has applied for political asylum, the New York Times reported.

The 32-year-old activist left Pakistan last month and is currently residing with her sister in Brooklyn, the report said.

Ismail, who remained fugitive since late May this year, has not disclosed how she managed to leave the country. "I didn't fly out of any airport. I can't tell you any more. My exit story will put many lives at risk," the report quoted her as saying during an interview.

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS TAKE TO STREETS AROUND THE WORLD AHEAD OF UN SUMMIT

Young protesters demand climate action



Protests, urging action against climate change, took place across the world on Friday, including in (clockwise from the top) Berlin, Stockholm, Nairobi and Paris. Reuters

Germany unveils 100 billion Euro plan to fight climate change

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BERLIN, SEPTEMBER 20

CHANCELLOR ANGELA Merkel's government reached a deal Friday on a broad climate plan for Germany that commits at least 100 billion Euros by 2030 to environmental protection, as tens of thousands of protesters rallied demanding action.

After marathon overnight talks dragging more than 18 hours, the coalition sealed a deal which covers a slew of measures from tackling emissions in the energy and industrial sectors, to incentives for zero-emission electric vehicles or public transport.

Under the plan, flight prices will go up while train tickets will get cheaper. Some 86 billion Euros will be ploughed into railway infrastructure, and funding will be provided to test innovative ways to incite more people to use public transport such as 365-Euro annual tickets.

"By 2030, a total of... a three-digit billion Euro figure will be made available for climate protection and the energy transition," according to the summary of the sweeping plan.

The government said the investment would not affect its plans to keep the budget balanced, but that it would help to "support the economy".

After two blistering summers and thousands of youths joining school strikes week after week, climate has shot to the top of the political agenda in the EU's biggest economy.

Germany is set to miss climate targets for next year but has committed itself to meeting the 2030 goal of a 55 per cent cut in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels.

REUTERS
SYDNEY, BRUSSELS, BERLIN, STOCKHOLM, SEPTEMBER 20

HUNDREDS OF thousands of students and workers left their schools, colleges and offices on Friday and marched along city streets around the globe to demand that world leaders take urgent action to avert an environmental catastrophe.

The global climate strike, inspired by 16-year-old Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, kicked off in the Pacific islands and followed the rising sun across Australia, Japan, Southeast Asia and then on to Europe, Africa, the

EXPLAINED 'Fridays for Future' inspires global stir

THE PROTESTS, which were mainly led by schoolchildren and their adult supporters, have drawn inspiration from the 'Fridays for Future' movement started by Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg. In the past year, the 16-year-old has organised protests and met world leaders, urging adults to act against climate change that scientists say is already causing extreme weather events which will worsen in the future, making parts of the Earth uninhabitable.

Middle East and the Americas. It will culminate in New York when Thunberg will spearhead a

rally at the United Nations headquarters, where heads of government are due to gather for a cli-

mate summit next week.

"This is about my future, not only my future, but the future of my entire generation and all the generations to come after ours," said Tristan Vancleef, 16, among around 15,000 demonstrators who marched through the center of Brussels.

Banners at the Brussels march included "Cool kids save the hot planet", "I won't go to school until you make it cool" and "The warm earth destroys our cold beer."

Protesters in about 150 countries are calling on governments to take immediate action to limit the harmful effects of manmade climate change.

VISITORS ARRIVE AT SMALL TOWN CALLED RACHEL IN RESPONSE TO VIRAL SOCIAL MEDIA INVITE TO 'STORM' US BASE

Scores of alien enthusiasts descend on Nevada desert near Area 51

LISA RICHWINE
RACHEL, SEPTEMBER 20

SCORES OF UFO enthusiasts converged on rural Nevada on Thursday for a pilgrimage of sorts to the US installation known as Area 51, long rumoured to house government secrets about alien life, as law enforcement officials beefed up security around the military base.

Visitors descended early in the day on the tiny desert town of Rachel, a short distance from the military site, in response to a recent, viral social-media invitation to "storm" Area 51 on Friday, raising concerns by local authorities of unruly crowds overwhelming the community.

Situated about 240 km north of Las Vegas, the remote hamlet of just 50 year-round residents lacks a grocery store or even a gasoline station.

Thursday's visitors established a small encampment outside Rachel's only business — the extraterrestrial-themed Little A'Le'Inn motel and restaurant — parking themselves in cars, tents and RVs. Some tourists hung inflatable aliens from their campers.

One couple, Nicholas Bohan and Cayla McVey, both sporting UFO tattoos, traveled to Rachel from the Los Angeles suburb of Fullerton with enough food to last for a week of car-camping.

"It's evolved into a peaceful gathering, a sharing of life stories," McVey told Reuters, sizing



Near the Little A'Le'Inn during an event inspired by the "Storm Area 51" Internet hoax in Rachel, Nevada, Thursday. AP

up the crowd. "I think you are going to get a group of people that are prepared, respectful and they know what they're getting themselves into."

Music was scheduled to begin Thursday night and continue for two more days. It remained unclear if there would be a mass trek to the grounds of Area 51 on Friday.

The military site was shrouded in secrecy for decades, stoking conspiracy theories that it housed the remnants of a flying saucer and the bodies of its alien crew from the crash of an unidentified flying object in Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947. The US government did not confirm the base existed until 2013, when it released CIA archives saying the site was used to test top-secret spy planes.

Rachel and its surroundings have nevertheles celebrated their place in UFO lore as a tourist draw. A 158-km road running through the area is dubbed the Extraterrestrial Highway, a purported hotbed of UFO sightings.

In June, California college

student Matty Roberts posted a facetious Facebook invitation exhorting the public at large to run into Area 51 on foot to "see them aliens".

When more than 1 million people expressed interest, the US Air Force admonished curiosity seekers not to breach the gates at the military base, which it said is still used to test combat aircraft and train personnel.

Roberts then teamed up with Connie West, co-owner of the Little A'Le'Inn, to plan a music festival in Rachel dubbed Alienstock.

In early September, however, Roberts disassociated himself from the Rachel event, saying it was poorly organised and he feared it could devolve into a public safety crisis. Instead, he

helped stage an alternative Alienstock set to take place Thursday night in Las Vegas.

West said the event in Rachel would go on as planned.

About 64 km to the east, the small town of Hiko planned an event called "Storm Area 51 Basecamp" at a gift shop dubbed the Alien Research Center. Organisers promised musicians, artists and "prominent ufologists," and by Thursday had sold 3,200 tickets, according to Linda Looney, the shop's manager.

"This whole thing has been a shock to this little community," she said, adding that organisers had hired 15 security guards and a private ambulance and ordered 80 portable toilets. "It's going to be really cool. I'm excited." REUTERS

expelled the Indian High Commissioner.

Without mentioning Kashmir, Trump on Wednesday said a "lot of progress has been made in reducing tension" between India and Pakistan.

Two killed, 7 injured in Washington shootings

REUTERS
SEPTEMBER 20

TWO SHOOTINGS in Washington, D.C. left two people dead and seven injured late on Thursday, reports by police and several media outlets said, as authorities on Friday hunted for a pair of suspects from one of the attacks likely armed with an assault rifle.

In the first attack, one man was killed and five people wounded, two of them critically, in a drive-by shooting. The victims had been standing in an apartment building courtyard in the Columbia Heights neighborhood when they were shot, Metropolitan Police commander Stuart Emerman said.

Two suspects were seen in a Nissan sedan and used an "AK style rifle," police said in statement. "Detectives are interviewing witnesses and looking for camera footage," Emerman said.

About half an hour after the first incident, three people were shot in the northeastern part of



At the site of a shooting in a Washington D.C. AP

the city, leaving one dead, according to NBC's Washington affiliate. There was no initial indication the two shootings were linked, NBC reported, citing police.

DC Police on Twitter confirmed the second shooting in the 1400 block of Rhode Island Avenue just south of the Brookland neighborhood but gave no other details.

ABC affiliate WJLA-TV showed ambulances carrying victims from the scene of the first shooting.

A spate of recent mass shootings in Texas, Ohio and other states have renewed debate over US gun laws and spurred calls for action.