

TOPOF THE WORLD



The partially collapsed Hard Rock Hotel in New Orleans. AP

USA
Hotel collapses in New Orleans: 2 dead, 1 missing

New Orleans: A large section of a Hard Rock Hotel under construction beside New Orleans' historic French Quarter collapsed Saturday amid blinding dust and flying debris, killing two people and injuring more than 20. Rescue workers searched the largely unstable building for one person still unaccounted for. Nearby buildings were evacuated. A 270-foot construction crane — one of two still looming over the multi-story building — also was dangerously unstable, fire officials said. The hunt for the missing was suspended at nightfall over safety concerns.

BRITAIN
UK: Diplomat's wife has no immunity in case over fatal crash

London: British media are reporting that the wife of an American official who left the UK after being involved in a fatal road accident no longer has diplomatic immunity. BBC and Sky News said Sunday that UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab had told the family of Harry Dunn that "immunity is no longer pertinent" because the suspect has left the UK. The Foreign Office declined to comment. Dunn, 19, was killed in August when his motorcycle collided with a car outside in southern England. The alleged car driver, Anne Sacolas, who is married to a US official, subsequently left Britain.

MYANMAR
Rakhine rebels abduct dozens after storming bus, says Army

Yangon: Suspected ethnic Rakhine rebels disguised as a sports team stormed a bus in rural Myanmar and took 31 hostages — mostly off-duty firefighters and construction workers — authorities said Sunday. The state-backed Global New Light of Myanmar said the bus — travelling to the Rakhine state capital of Sittwe — was flagged down by a man dressed in civilian attire before 18 rebels in sportswear emerged from the forest and ordered the passengers off at gunpoint.

IS families escape en masse from camp in Kurdish-held Syrian town

US says will withdraw 1,000 troops from Syria as Turkey intends to go deeper

AP, REUTERS
AKCAKALE, WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 13

HUNDREDS OF Islamic State supporters escaped from a holding camp in northern Syria on Sunday amid heavy clashes between invading Turkish-led forces and Kurdish fighters. The United States said it was withdrawing some 1,000 troops from the north after learning that Turkey planned to extend its military incursion further south than originally planned.

Another consideration in the decision, US Defence Secretary Mark Esper indicated, was that Washington's Kurdish-led ally, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), were looking to make a deal with Russia to counter the Turkish onslaught.

Outlining Turkey's goals, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the incursion would stretch from Kobani in the west to Hasaka in the east, going some 30 km into Syrian territory, "in line with the safe zone map which we declared previously".

The developments reflected the rapidly growing chaos in Syria in the week since Trump ordered American forces in the region to step aside, leaving the US-allied Kurds wide open to attack from Turkey.

"We have American forces likely caught between two opposing advancing armies, and it's a very untenable situation," Esper said on CBS in announcing US troops would leave the north. He



Smoke billows after Turkish shelling on the Syrian town of Ras al Ain on Sunday. Reuters

did not say how many would withdraw but that they represent most of the 1,000 troops in Syria.

A US military official said that the situation was "deteriorating rapidly." The official, who was not authorised to disclose operational details and spoke on condition of anonymity, said American troops were unable to move around on the ground without a "high risk" of confrontation with Turkish-backed forces.

The danger to American forces was illustrated on Friday, when a small number of US troops came under Turkish artillery fire at an observation post in the north. No Americans were hurt. Esper said it was unclear whether that was an accident.

Trump, in a tweet, said: "Very smart not to be involved in the intense fighting along the Turkish Border, for a change. Those that mistakenly got us into the Middle



East Wars are still pushing to fight. They have no idea what a bad decision they have made."

On Sunday, heavy fighting reached a displaced-persons camp in Ein Eissa, some 35 kilometers (20 miles) south of the border; that is home to some 12,000 people, including around 1,000 wives and widows of Islamic State fighters and their children, held in a special

ON PULLING TROOPS, TRUMP SAYS HE IS AN 'ISLAND OF ONE'

Washington: US President Donald Trump said Saturday that he is an "island of one" for removing US forces from northeastern Syria. But he remained steadfast and defended a move that drew widespread bipartisan criticism and risked the lives of Syrian Kurdish allies who helped the United States bring down the Islamic State group in Syria.

Trump said the US cannot fight "endless wars." "We have to bring our great heroes, our great soldiers, we have to bring them home. It's time. It's time," Trump said in a lengthy and wide-ranging address to the Values Voter Summit, an annual gathering of social conservative activists. **AP**

detention camp.

The Kurdish-led administration in northern Syria said in a statement that 950 IS supporters escaped after attacking guards and storming the gates. It was not immediately possible to confirm that figure.

Esper said he was aware of the reports of escapes and of atrocities committed against the Kurds in the fighting.



Protesters damage a Bank of China building (left) and railway tracks in Hong Kong on Sunday. AP

Chaotic clashes in Hong Kong as protesters target metro, shops

JESSIE PANG
HONG KONG, OCTOBER 13

HONG KONG pro-democracy activists and riot police clashed in chaotic scenes around the city on Sunday with police in full riot gear chasing protesters through crowds of horrified lunchtime shoppers.

Several rallies in shopping malls started peacefully around midday with a few hundred people at each chanting slogans such as "Free Hong Kong", but by late afternoon hardcore black-clad activists trashed shops and metro stations and erected road blocks around the city.

Police made numerous arrests and deployed teargas to disperse protesters, saying they used "minimum force".

EXPLAINED
'Blossom everywhere': Hong Kong protesters devise new strategy

THE MONTHS-LONG protests in Hong Kong have seen demonstrators come up with various techniques to capture attention and evade police action. Their latest strategy is flashmob protests. Organisers called for protesters to "blossom everywhere", and they heeded the call, popping up in small groups in different areas around the city. The rationale behind the move was to make it more difficult for police to make arrests and to widen the reach of their protests at a time when the number of people turning up for rallies has gone down in comparison to previous weeks.

Television footage showed shoppers screaming and some injured when police charged inside a mall.

In one mall a group of riot police, shields out front and pepper spray canisters in, hand were forced to retreat backwards by chanting shoppers until they were outside of the mall.

In another incident, a group of 50 shoppers inside a mall faced off against riot police outside, chanting "Hong Kong police mafia". The shoppers cheered when police drove off.

"Hong Kong used to be a prosperous city and now she has become a police state. Hong Kong is my home. We should protect her. We should resist," said a 70-year-old who only gave his last name, Hui. He was part of a group of older residents in Kowloon, cheering the protesters, urging them to block the road and warning them when police were returning. **REUTERS**

MEANWHILE

74 MIGRANTS RESCUED OFF LIBYAN COAST

Humanitarian groups on Sunday said they have rescued 74 migrants on a rubber boat in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya while Tunisian authorities reported blocking a smuggling boat carrying 110 migrants from setting off for Italy.

Trump backs Giuliani, but some advisers wish he would cut ties

President's lawyer facing probe: report

DARLENE SUPERVILLE, JONATHAN LEMIRE & ZEKE MILLER
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 13

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump on Saturday stood behind personal attorney Rudy Giuliani, one of his highest-profile and most vocal defenders, amid reports that federal prosecutors in the city Giuliani led as mayor are eyeing him for possible lobbying violations.

Behind the scenes, however, many of Trump's closest aides and advisers, inside and outside the White House, quietly wish the president would cut ties with Giuliani, whose leadership of New York after the Sept 11, 2001, terrorist attacks earned him worldwide admiration and the moniker of "America's mayor."

Giuliani was a force in Trump's defence during the lengthy Russia investigation by the special counsel. Yet the effort to undermine special counsel Robert Mueller led Giuliani to Ukraine, which now entangles the former mayor in legal jeopardy and is central to the danger threatening the presidency he labored to protect.

The *New York Times* reported Friday, citing a pair of anonymous sources familiar with the matter, that the investigation is linked to Giuliani's efforts to undermine Marie Yovanovitch, formerly the US ambassador to Ukraine. The US attorney's office in Manhattan has declined to comment on the *Times* report.

On Saturday, Trump came to Giuliani's defence. "So now they are after the legendary 'crime buster' and greatest Mayor in the



Trump called the reported federal probe against Giuliani a 'witch hunt'. Reuters

HUNTER BIDEN TO QUIT CHINESE FIRM'S BOARD

New York: Facing intense scrutiny from Donald Trump and his Republican allies, Hunter Biden announced that he would step down from the board of directors of a Chinese-backed private equity firm as part of a pledge not to work on behalf of any foreign-owned companies should his father win the presidency. The work of Biden in Ukraine and China have emerged as one of Trump's chief lines of attack against Joe Biden, Hunter's father and Democratic presidential candidate. **AP**

history of NYC, Rudy Giuliani," Trump tweeted while on the way to his northern Virginia golf club. "He may seem a little rough around the edges sometimes, but he is also a great guy and wonderful lawyer." **AP**

Typhoon leaves 33 dead in Japan as rescuers intensify efforts

YURI KAGEYAMA
TOKYO, OCTOBER 13

HELICOPTERS, BOATS and thousands of troops were deployed across Japan to rescue people stranded in flooded homes Sunday, as the death toll from a ferocious typhoon climbed to as high as 33. One woman fell to her death as she was being placed inside a rescue helicopter.

Typhoon Hagibis made landfall south of Tokyo on Saturday evening and battered central and northern Japan with torrents of rain and powerful gusts of wind. The typhoon was downgraded to a tropical storm on Sunday.

Public broadcaster NHK said 14 rivers across the nation had flooded, some spilling out in more than one spot.

The Tokyo Fire Department said a woman in her 70s was accidentally dropped 131 feet to the ground while being transported into a rescue helicopter in Iwaki city in Fukushima prefecture, a northern area devastated by the typhoon.

Department officials held a news conference to apologise, bowing deeply and long, according to Japanese custom, and acknowledged the woman had not been strapped in properly.

The government's Fire and Disaster Management Agency, which tends to be conservative in its counts, said late Sunday that 1,283 homes were flooded and 517 were damaged. **AP**

EXTINCTION REBELLION PROTESTS

400 scientists endorse mass civil disobedience to force climate action

REUTERS
LONDON, OCTOBER 13

ALMOST 400 scientists have endorsed a civil disobedience campaign aimed at forcing governments to take rapid action to tackle climate change, warning that failure could inflict "incalculable human suffering".

In a joint declaration, climate scientists, physicists, biologists, engineers and others from at least 20 countries broke with the caution traditionally associated with academia to side with peaceful

protesters courting arrest from Amsterdam to Melbourne.

Wearing white laboratory coats to symbolise their research credentials, a group of about 20 of the signatories gathered on Saturday to read out the text outside London's century-old Science Museum in the city's up-market Kensington district.

"We believe that the continued governmental inaction over the climate and ecological crisis now justifies peaceful and non-violent protest and direct action, even if this goes beyond the bounds of the current law," said

Emily Grossman, a science broadcaster with a PhD in molecular biology. She read the declaration on behalf of the group.

"We therefore support those who are rising up peacefully against governments around the world that are failing to act proportionately to the scale of the crisis," she said.

The declaration was coordinated by a group of scientists who support Extinction Rebellion, a civil disobedience campaign that formed in Britain a year ago and has since sparked offshoots in dozens of countries.



Scientists take part in an Extinction Rebellion protest outside London's Science Museum on Saturday. Reuters