



MEANWHILE  
CHINA TESTS MARS LANDER

China successfully tested its Mars lander (pictured) on Thursday. The demonstration of hovering, obstacle avoidance and deceleration capabilities was conducted at a site outside Beijing simulating conditions on the Red Planet, where the pull of gravity is about one-third that of Earth. China plans to launch a lander and rover to Mars next year to explore parts of the planet in detail.

TOP OF THE WORLD



DONALD TUSK  
European Council President

EUROPE  
UK will become 'second rate' after Brexit: EU's Tusk

Brussels: Britain will lose influence in international affairs and become a "second-rate player" after it leaves the European Union, European Council President Donald Tusk said on Wednesday. Backers of Britain's 2016 vote to exit the EU, the world's largest trading bloc, say that the country will achieve a new global status unshackled from EU rules and closer to the United States. Tusk said only a united Europe could confront an assertive China and play an effective global role. "I have heard repeatedly from Brexiters that they wanted to leave the European Union to make the United Kingdom global again, believing that only alone, it can truly be great..." Tusk said in a speech.

Hong Kong students ready bows and arrows for battle with police

Violence, disruption for 4th straight day; colleges cancel classes as police, protesters clash in campuses

MIKE IVES & KATHERINE LI  
HONG KONG, NOVEMBER 14

PROTESTERS ARMED on Thursday with firebombs and bows and arrows reinforced the fortifications they had built on Hong Kong university campuses in anticipation of clashes with the police, as demonstrations disrupted Hong Kong's morning commute for a fourth straight weekday.

At the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the site of battle scenes earlier in the week that evoked citadels under siege, young protesters built brick walls outside the campus entrances. On the fringes of other school campuses, students built elaborate roadblocks that some in the movement call "Stonehenges."

The protests started in June over an extradition bill that has since been withdrawn, and have morphed into broader demands for democracy and police accountability. In recent days, the locus of tension between protesters and the police has moved



Protesters during a standoff with riot police at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Reuters

from the streets to university campuses.

The police kicked off the workday on Thursday by spraying teargas at an entrance of Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Around the same time, the university sent an email to the staff urging them to leave the campus "in view of the escalating danger and a high risk

of bodily injury."

Tensions were also running high on other campuses. At least two other universities — CUHK and Hong Kong Baptist University — have already cancelled on-campus lectures for the remainder of the fall semester.

At CUHK on Thursday, protesters were seen building brick walls

EXPLAINED  
As clashes move to campuses, students lose their sanctuary

THE PRO-DEMOCRACY protests in Hong Kong have, from the beginning, seen a large presence of university students. Protest strategies and ideas were discussed and formulated in campuses, which also served as peaceful sanctuaries when clashes between police and protesters raged in the streets. However, this has now changed with police entering universities and clashing with students. With campuses increasingly becoming sites of violence, many students from mainland China and foreign countries have already left Hong Kong and classes have been suspended. This is likely the result of authorities deciding to stop the student protest leaders even before they hit the streets.

around the campus entrances. "All day all night," read a slogan someone spray-painted on one of the walls, "We are gonna fight."

Across town at the University of Hong Kong, protesters used bricks and bamboo poles to erect elaborate roadblocks.

In a Facebook post on Wednesday night, the university's president urged members of the

campus not to "create any situation which will lead to police entering the campus to search, to investigate or to make arrests."

The disruptions this week are notable because they have strained the city's infrastructure for four straight workdays, forcing commuters to choose whether to go outside and risk being caught up in clashes and teargas. NYT

SRI LANKA GOES TO POLLS TOMORROW

Basil Rajapaksa: We stand for everyone, not just the majority



ARUN JANARDHANAN  
NOVEMBER 14

WHILE THE 2015 presidential election that saw Mahinda Rajapaksa lose power was mired in controversy for India's alleged role in helping Maithripala Sirisena win, Basil Rajapaksa — the youngest of the three politically active Rajapaksa brothers — has said that no international actor will interfere in the Sri Lankan election this time.

On Thursday, in an interview with *The Indian Express* at his office in Colombo, Basil was going through a red-coloured map on his table that showed the 160 electoral constituencies in the country. "Gotabaya Rajapaksa managed to visit 150 of them," he said, pointing out the 10 empty pockets that Gotabaya, his elder brother and the presidential candidate of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) party, had missed.

Known as the chief strategist of Mahinda Rajapaksa's political victories and elections, Basil sits at his control room, a huge mansion in Colombo city with more than 100 staff who execute his strategies. "This is the main office, there are six other offices opened ahead of elections," he said.

For him, Mahinda Rajapaksa, his elder brother, is the "political leader". By the time Gotabaya Rajapaksa's candidacy was announced, Basil had little time to finalise his strategy. "Limited time was the major challenge. If it was Mahinda, he is familiar to everyone. But we wanted Gotabaya to visit every nook and corner of the country as he was being introduced into active politics for the first time, even though he is known to everyone in Sri Lanka as a (former) defence secretary and administrator," he said.

Basil laughed when asked about the challenges in handling both India and China if his party is elected to power. "Actually, we understand both countries, but they lack understanding about us. India and China are equally important for us, and India is more closer to us," he said. Although several civil rights



Basil Rajapaksa at his office in Colombo. Arun Janardhanan

and minority groups have expressed strong reservations against the Rajapaksa family for their seemingly majoritarian stance. Basil said the party stood for everyone, not just for the majority. "Building the strong values of multiculturalism is our aim. We do not even want to use the word 'minority', but they are our brothers," he said.

Asked whether allegations of massive rights abuses during the previous Mahinda regime could still hurt them, he conceded that there may be grievances. "We can't ignore their grievances. They wanted a change in 2015 as they were not satisfied. But now they have realised that what they wanted was real change, development and a better life. They will bring us back to power as they know that Gotabaya will do it."

Did the wounds left by the war heal? Basil said wounds are to be healed. "Successful reconciliation measures taken by the Mahinda government were discontinued after Sirisena came to power. After our victory, we will take the reconciliation process to the next level, besides bringing development and jobs for Tamils in the north," he said.

Asked about the unity of the three brothers, which is unlike some Asian family dynasties that have been mired in disputes, Basil cited the example of an old tricycle. "Have you seen the old tricycle? One huge wheel in the front and two smaller ones behind it. That's how we are. Mahinda is the huge wheel while both me and Gotabaya are smaller ones behind it. We follow that principle, keeping in mind the words of Buddha that one person cannot be good at everything," he said.

FULL REPORT ON  
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USA

Four injured in California school shooting

Los Angeles: At least four people were injured in a shooting at a high school north of Los Angeles Thursday, triggering a police hunt for the suspect who was later taken into custody. Police and ambulances swarmed the area around Saugus High School in Santa Clarita, 65 kilometres north of Los Angeles, after the early morning shooting sent panicked children running from the area. The suspect was described as a male Asian. Local media reports said he was 15 years old. Hospital officials said three of the four injured were in critical condition.

FRANCE

Tempers flare over rebuilding of Notre-Dame spire

Paris: The French general charged with overseeing the rebuilding of Paris' fire-mangled Notre-Dame publicly told the cathedral's chief architect to "shut his mouth" in a sign of tension over the monument's future look. General Jean-Louis Georgelin and chief architect Philippe Villeneuve are at odds over whether to replace the cathedral's spire with an exact replica, or add a modern twist. President Emmanuel Macron, who appointed Georgelin to head the project, said he is in favour of adding a "contemporary" touch. But Villeneuve insists it must be redone exactly as it was before.



Trails of smoke from rockets seen from Gaza Thursday. Reuters

Tenuous truce holds in Gaza after heavy fighting

REUTERS  
GAZA, NOVEMBER 14

PALESTINIAN MILITANT group Islamic Jihad and Israel declared a halt to hostilities across the Gaza Strip border on Thursday but a lasting ceasefire appeared tenuous as they differed on terms.

Islamic Jihad said an Egyptian-mediated truce went into effect at 0330 GMT, about 48 hours after Israel triggered the exchange of fire by killing the Iranian-backed faction's top Gaza commander in an air strike, deeming him an imminent threat. A few hours' calm ensued.

Then witnesses in Gaza saw five rockets being launched, and sirens sounded in Israeli border towns. There was no word of casualties. Israel's military said two rockets were shot down by its Iron Dome air defence system.

Gaza medical officials have put the total death toll from the two days of fighting at 34 Palestinians, almost half of them civilians and including eight children and three women.

Hundreds of rocket launches by militants had paralysed much of southern Israel and reached as far north as Tel Aviv, sending thousands of people to shelters. Dozens of Israelis were hurt.

Kuwait govt resigns after grilling on infrastructure

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
KUWAIT CITY, NOVEMBER 14

KUWAIT'S CABINET submitted its resignation on Thursday, days after the country's minister of public works announced she would step down after being grilled by parliament.

Some elected lawmakers had accused Jenan Ramadan, who is also minister of state for housing, of failing to fix infrastructure and roads that were damaged in massive floods in 2018.

Ten lawmakers had filed a no-confidence motion against

her, according to local media. Ramadan had claimed, however, that the problems plaguing her ministry are long-running and argued she should not be held responsible for issues that precede her time as minister.

There was also reportedly an effort underway among lawmakers to request to grill the country's powerful Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Shiekh Khaled Al Jarrah Al Sabah.

The government in Kuwait has resigned in the past, particularly when faced with no-confidence votes and requests to grill members of the ruling Al Sabah family.

Flood, fire and plague: Climate change in focus as world battles disasters

ROBERT BIRSEL  
SINGAPORE, NOVEMBER 14

EXTREME FLOODS in Venice, fires in Australia and even an outbreak of plague in China have been attributed to climate change this week, while researchers have warned that global warming could saddle future generations with life-long illness.

Venice declared a state of emergency on Wednesday after "apocalyptic" floods swept through the lagoon city, flooding its historic basilica and inundating squares and centuries-old buildings.

"This is the result of climate change," city mayor Luigi Brugnaro said on Twitter.

City thoroughfares were turned into raging torrents, stone balustrades were shattered, boats tossed ashore and gondolas smashed against their moorings as the lagoon tide peaked at 187 cm (6ft 2ins).

It was the highest since the record 194 cm set in 1966, but rising water levels are becoming a regular threat to the tourist jewel.

On the other side of the world, parts of Australia have been ravaged by wild bushfires this week, with four people killed and communities forced to flee the flames.

Since 2016, parts of northern and inland New South Wales, along with southern Queensland, have been in drought that the Bureau of Meteorology says is being driven, in part, by warmer sea-surface temperatures affecting rainfall patterns.

Globally, concern about effective action has surged since US President Donald Trump abandoned the international

All In One Week

'Apocalyptic' floods in Venice, persistent bushfires in Australia and a rare plague reported in China — all of this happened within this week. Authorities have blamed these disasters on climate change.



VENICE FLOODS

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PLAGUE IN BEIJING

In China, health officials have reported a rare outbreak of pneumonic plague after two cases were

confirmed this week in Beijing. The two were infected in the province of Inner Mongolia, where rodent populations have expanded dramatically after persistent droughts, worsened by climate change, state media said.



FIRES IN AUSTRALIA

Parts of Australia have been ravaged by bushfires this week, with four people killed and communities forced to flee the flames. The warming air temperatures over the past century have increased the ferocity of droughts and fires.

Paris Accord on climate change and took steps to dismantle environmental protections.

Scientists say climate change has made such storms more intense, fuelling even worse conditions when they make landfall than in the past. But they also are discovering other ways in which rising temperatures contribute to making people ill.

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in the province of Inner Mongolia, where rodent populations have expanded dramatically after persistent droughts, worsened by climate change, state media said.

An area the size of the Netherlands was hit by a "rat plague" last summer.

The wider implications for health are sobering. The *Lancet* medical journal published a study this week saying climate change was already harming people's health by increasing the number of extreme weather events and exacerbating air pollution. REUTERS

JAPAN'S NARUHITO SET FOR RITUAL THAT HAS PROMPTED LAWSUITS OVER ITS SYMBOLISM AND COST

Japan emperor begins last accession rite: Spending the night with a goddess

ELAINE LIES  
TOKYO, NOVEMBER 14

JAPANESE EMPEROR Naruhito, dressed in pure white robes, was ushered into a dark wooden hall by torchlight on Thursday night to start his last major accession rite after becoming emperor this spring: spending the night with a goddess.

The "Daijiosai" rite centres on Amaterasu Omikami, the sun goddess from whom conservatives believe the emperor is descended. It is the most overtly religious of the series of rituals

marking Naruhito's taking over after his father Akihito's abdication.

The rite, which lasts until early Friday morning, has prompted lawsuits from critics ranging from Communists to Christians, who say it smacks of the militaristic past and violates the constitutional separation of church and state since the government pays the 2.7 billion yen (\$25 million) cost.

Legend has it that the emperor has conjugal relations with the goddess, a view put forth in pre-World War Two textbooks, an era when the emperor was considered divine. Naruhito's grandfather Hirohito, in whose name

Japan fought the war, was stripped of his divinity after Japan lost.

Today, scholars and the government say the rite involves sharing a meal of dishes from across Japan to seal the emperor's new status.

"This ritual is basically a feast involving the sun goddess and the emperor," said John Breen, professor at the International Research centre for Japanese Studies, Kyoto, who notes that most coronations have mystical elements.

"The emperor is transformed by partaking of this feast."

Preparations began months ago, with the construction of a



Naruhito on his way to attend 'Daijiosai', the most overtly religious ceremony of the emperor's accession rituals, at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on Thursday. Reuters

special shrine compound within the palace grounds and, later, the harvest of rice from two fields chosen by heating a turtle shell and reading the pattern of cracks.

As an unseasonably warm night fell over Tokyo courtiers in traditional robes began to gather and dignitaries, including Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, gathered at an outdoor pavilion.

Soon after, in scenes broadcast live by most television stations, the emperor, shielded by a ceremonial umbrella and preceded by courtiers holding torches, was ushered through dark wooden corridors. He was

followed by Empress Masako, in 12-layered white robes.

After disappearing behind white curtains into a dimly-lit room, kneeling by the side of piled straw mats draped in white, the emperor — accompanied only by two shrine maidens — began arranging offerings on 32 plates made of oak leaves for the sun goddess before bowing and praying for the peace of Japan.

He and the goddess were set to symbolically share rice, millet and rice wine before the roughly two-and-a-half hour ritual ends. It will then be repeated in a different shrine building, with every-

thing finishing by 3 am on Friday. Critics note that while a Daijiosai existed more than 1,000 years ago, the current ritual largely took its form in the late 1800s, as Japan sought to unite the nation around the emperor.

Koichi Shin, 60 and head of a group suing to ban the ritual, said the rite's nationalistic underpinnings are one reason for their opposition. Another is using public funds to stage it — a complaint echoed by the emperor's younger brother, Crown Prince Akishino, who said the imperial family's private funds should be used, mandating a smaller rite. REUTERS