

World News Roundup



A woman cries outside a mortuary as she waits to receive the body of a relative who died in Sunday's fire in New Delhi, India on Dec 9. Authorities say an electrical short circuit appears to have caused a devastating fire that killed dozens of people in a crowded

market area in central New Delhi. Fire-fighters fought the blaze from 100 yards away because it broke out in one of the area's many alleyways, tangled in electrical wire and too narrow for vehicles to access. (AP)

Asia

Japan Empress turns 56: Japanese Empress Masako, still recovering from stress-induced mental health issues, said Monday she was happy to have completed her duties as part of Emperor Naruhito's enthronement rituals and pledged to keep up the work and help her husband more for the happiness of the people.

In a palace statement marking her 56th birthday, Masako thanked people who have warmly welcomed the couple after Naruhito succeeded to the throne on May 1, following his father's abdication. "Many smiley faces I've seen in many places are precious memories for me and they will be my big moral support as I move forward," the statement said.

A Harvard-educated former diplomat, Masako had been largely absent from public appearances for years. She developed adjustment disorder, a condition marked by depression and other stress-induced symptoms, after giving birth to the couple's only child, Princess

Aiko, and facing pressure to have a son to continue Japan's male-only imperial succession.



Masako

people against raising their expectations too high, saying that could interfere with her recovery. (AP)

Petrol bombs at HK march: Hong Kong protesters lit a fire outside court buildings, threw petrol bombs and spray-

painting graffiti on government buildings, following a "generally peaceful" march at the weekend, police said on Monday.

Protesters called for strikes across the city on Monday, but most railway and transport links ran smoothly during the morning rush hour and there were no reports of widespread disruptions. (RTRS)

N. Korea resumes insults of Trump: Satellite imagery indicated on Monday that North Korea had tested a rocket engine, and a senior Pyongyang official called Donald Trump a "heedless and erratic old man", resuming insults of the US president that had been set aside during a thaw.

The statement carried in state media KCNA by Kim Yong Chol, a ruling party vice chairman who was instrumental in arranging a failed second summit in February, was the strongest salvo yet in a war of words that has rekindled in recent days. (RTRS)

New Zealand

Up to 20 injured

Sudden volcano eruption kills five, several missing

WHAKATANE, New Zealand, Dec 9, (RTRS): At least five people were killed, up to 20 injured and several reported missing after a volcano that is a tourist attraction suddenly erupted off the coast of New Zealand's North Island on Monday.

Police said more casualties were feared with rescue services unable to reach White Island as it remained too dangerous after the eruption of the volcano there at about 2:11 p.m. (0111 GMT) spewed a plume of ash thousands of feet into the air.

About 50 people, New Zealanders as well as foreign tourists, were feared to have been nearby and several were seen near the rim of the crater minutes before the eruption.

Many day tours visit the island regularly, and one from the Ovation of the Seas cruise liner was there at the time.

Tour operators took some people off the island before it was declared unsafe. Twenty-three people were rescued, police said, adding that others were still on the island.

"We are unsure of the numbers and unsure of their well-being," deputy police commissioner John Tims told a news conference, adding that rescuers now could not access the island.

"The physical environment is unsafe for us to return," he said. "It is a no-fly zone at the moment."

St. John Ambulance said up to 20 people were believed to have been injured in the eruption, adding that a mobile triage unit was on its way. The organisation said it had sent seven helicopters with medics onboard.

Several people with burn injuries were brought by helicopter to Whakatane, the nearest town on the mainland.

Michael Schade, an engineering manager from San Francisco, was one of the tourists who made it off the island just before the eruption.

In a video Schade posted on Twitter as he sped away from the island by boat, a huge plume of white ash soars into the sky as a group of frightened tourists huddles close to the shore.

"This is so hard to believe," Schade said. "Our whole tour group were literally standing at the edge of the main crater not 30 minutes before."

A crater rim camera owned and operated by New Zealand science agency GeoNet shows groups of people walking toward and away from the rim inside the crater, from which white vapour constantly billows, in the hour leading up to the eruption.

At 2:00 pm the crater rim camera catches a group of people - tiny specks in relation to the vast volcano - right at the edge of the rim. At 2:10 pm - just a minute before the eruption - the group is headed away from the rim, following a well-worn track across the crater.

White Island is about 50 km (30 miles) from the east coast of North Island and huge plumes were visible from the mainland. Volcanologists said the ash plume shot 12,000 feet (3,658 m) into the air.

Disaster

"White Island has been a disaster waiting to happen for many years," said Ray Cas, a professor emeritus at Monash University, in comments published by the Australian Science Media Centre.

"Having visited it twice, I have always felt that it was too dangerous to allow the daily tour groups that visit the uninhabited island volcano by boat and helicopter.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern landed in Whakatane late on Monday and met rescue teams.

"We know that there were a number of tourists on or around the island at the time, both New Zealanders and visitors from overseas," she told a news conference earlier.

"I know there will be a huge amount of concern and anxiety for those who had loved ones on or around the island at the time. I can assure them that police are doing everything they can."

On Twitter, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Australians had been affected by the eruption and the government was trying to learn more. Twenty-four Australians were on White Island when the volcano erupted, Australian media said.

Kevin O'Sullivan, chief executive of the New Zealand Cruise Association, said: "We believe there is a tour party from Ovation of the Seas involved in the White Island eruption. We have no further details at the moment."

Ovation of the Seas is a 16-deck cruise ship owned by Royal Caribbean Cruises. It can take nearly 5,000 passengers and has a crew of about 1,500. It is docked at Tauranga, on the North Island, on a cruise that began in Sydney on Dec 3.

"We can confirm that a number of our guests were touring the island today," a company representative said in an emailed statement. "We do not have any additional details to share at this time."

There seemed to be no danger for people in coastal areas farther away, authorities said.

The eruption was unexpected, but not unusual, an expert said.

"Sudden, unheralded eruptions from volcanoes such as White Island can be expected at any time," said Shane Cronin, a volcanologist at the University of Auckland.

Sheraton Kuwait Hotels Celebrate the Global Customer Appreciation Week 2019



complete the ongoing work for the next three years. In addition to the renovation work, he added "the project to upgrade the level of services that would provide a clear picture for the Kuwait hotel industry to see"

Mr. Mazen Al Mhana, the Assistant Executive Manager of Sheraton Kuwait Hotel, welcomed the guests and expressed his gratitude to all those who participated in the GCAW HALO Event 2019 and extended his great appreciation to companies and organizations for their continued support and loyalty, adding that our goal is to strengthen our relations with our customers and improve the level of services.

Guests were also treated to a live sand

painting show to recall the 50-year mark of the hotel, followed by a special dinner attended by a team of skilled chefs with rich dishes from Sheraton Kuwait's diverse restaurants.

This week gives us the opportunity to thank our guests by dedicating the entire week to this goal. Marriott International, as the world's favorite hotel chain, has created a wonderful world of travel through the Marriott Bonvoy's latest loyalty program. With 30 brands, members can enjoy exclusive benefits in more than 7,000 hotels and resorts across the world with exceptional range of brands in 131 countries around the world, pursuant to Marriott International's vision to provide you with the best services that



Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotel and Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait, celebrated the Global Customer Appreciation Week with a HALO event held at the Diamond Grand Ballroom with an attendance of more than 350 Marriott International clients from government institutions and corporations in Kuwait in recognition of their continued loyalty and support.

During the event, guests were received by the Executive Management and the Sales Team. A welcome speech was rendered by Mr. Mounir Amer, the General Manager of Four Points Hotel, explaining the details of the renovation plan of the Sheraton Hotel is undergoing in coordination with the mother company and Marriott International Company to

help customers meet all the needs and requirements of you and your guests here at Kuwait, we are also happy to help you book groups or meetings at any Marriott International hotels worldwide.

On the sidelines of the Global Customer Appreciation Week, Mr. Fahad Abushaar, General Manager of Sheraton Kuwait Hotels, said that this time of year is an opportunity for us to thank our guests and customers personally, and to bring something back to the communities in which we live and work. Leading in the exceptional hospitality industry for entrepreneurs and guests of Kuwait and today we continue the process of development and innovation to provide more luxury experiences for our guests.

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