

At least 11 dead in Haiti earthquake: govt spokesman

PORT-AU-PRINCE, OCT 7 -- At least 11 dead in Haiti earthquake: Govt spokesman. A 5.9-magnitude earthquake struck just off the northwest coast of Haiti on Saturday, killing at least 11 people and causing damage to buildings in the Caribbean nation, authorities said.

The epicenter of the quake was located about 19 kilometers (12 miles) northwest of the city of Port-de-Paix, the US Geological Survey reported.

Government spokesman Eddy Jackson Alexis told AFP that 11 people were so far reported dead, seven of them in Port-de-Paix, the capital of Haiti's Nord-Ouest department. Four others were killed in the town of Gros-Morne, about 50 kilometers to the southeast.

The quake, which was felt across the country, struck at 8:10 pm (00:10 GMT Sunday) at a shallow depth of 11.7 kilometers. Haiti's civil protection agency said two minor aftershocks were registered, adding that no tsunami warning was issued in connection with the quake activity.

The tremor rattled the capital Port-de-Prince, sparking emotion among residents still reeling from the massive 2010 earthquake that left at least 200,000 people dead and 300,000 more wounded. "I urge the population to remain calm," President Jovenel Moise said on Twitter, adding that local and regional authorities are assisting those in need and that some damage had been reported.

Prime Minister Jean-Henry Ceant's heading an inter-ministerial disaster response task force, he said on Twitter. "The injured are being treated at area hospitals," the civil protection agency said late Saturday, noting that some of the injuries were sustained when people panicked after the quake.

The agency confirmed that some homes were destroyed or damaged, without offering specific figures. Images of damaged homes and partially destroyed buildings were circulating on social media, but AFP was not immediately able to confirm their authenticity.

The Nord-Ouest department is the poorest part of impoverished Haiti, with many isolated areas due to the dire state of the roads. The devastating 7.0-magnitude quake in January 2010 left more than 1.5 people homeless. Tens of thousands remain in makeshift camps. The damage caused was worth an estimated 120 percent of GDP in Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere.

Longer-term reconstruction has been hampered by lingering political chaos in the nation of nearly 11 million people, and by a deadly cholera epidemic introduced by infected Nepalese UN peacekeepers sent in after the quake. (AFP)

China backs Financial Times Hong Kong editor's visa denial

HONG KONG, OCT 7 -- China has expressed its decision to refuse to renew the work visa of a Financial Times editor in Hong Kong, in a case that has drawn concern over the shrinking space for free speech in the Chinese territory.

The central government "firmly supports" the local government's rejection of Asia editor Victor Min's visa renewal application, according to a statement from the foreign ministry's office in Hong Kong issued late Saturday. "No foreign country has any right to in-

terfere," the office said, in a response to expressions of concern from the British foreign ministry and the US Consulate in the territory.

Mallet is vice president of Hong Kong's Foreign Correspondents' Club, which drew criticism from the authorities for hosting talk by the leader of a now-banned pro-Hong Kong independence party.

Hong Kong was promised semi-autonomy for 50 years as part of its 1997 handover from British rule, allowing it to retain its limited democracy and rights to assembly

and free speech that are deemed central to its life, and must be fully respected," the statement said. The US Consulate said the rejection was "deeply troubling," especially since it affected problems faced by international journalists in mainland China whose visas can be held up or refused because of political considerations. The London-based Financial Times said in a statement that it was a genuine reason why Mallet's application was rejected. "This is the first time we have encountered this situation in Hong Kong," it said. (AP)

The party led by Buhari, who is seen as an anti-corruption crusader in graft-tainted Nigeria, swept to power in 2015 with the first opposition victory at the ballot box in the country's history. All eyes are now on the dozen candidates vying to be nominated to challenge him from the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the former ruling party. Officials said at least 4,000 delegates from the 36 states and the capital Abuja were expected to vote at the PDP primaries in the oil hub of Port Harcourt, in the heartland of the Niger delta, in an event due to extend to Sunday. Voting started late at around 9:15 pm local time (20:15 GMT) after voter accreditation. Barring any surprise, the candidate will come from the Muslim-majority north, following an unwritten rule in Nigeria that the presidency should alternate every two terms between a candidate from the north and south.

The frontrunners include former vice president Atiku Abubakar, who has made four previous attempts at the top job, Senate president Bukola Saraki, governor of northern Sokoto state Aminu Tambuwal and Rabiu Kwankwaso, a former governor in northern Kano state. The Eurasia Consultancy group said in a statement Saturday the outcome of the PDP primary would determine whether Buhari "loses his incumbency advantage". It said the PDP nomination would be a tight race between Abubakar and Tambuwal.

However, it added that the Sokoto governor "offers the best chance of appealing to the critical northwestern and northeastern voting bloc, and that he will be Buhari's strongest challenger". Chairman of convention planning committee Heenry Okowa, who is governor of the southern Delta state, said all 12 contenders were still in the running. "We are expecting a very good convention, we are working very hard to deliver a process that is credible, free, fair and acceptable," he said.

Port Harcourt streets were festooned with conference banners, while police said thousands of officers were being deployed to the event. "Our warning to political thugs and other hoodlums is that they should stay away from the venue and even the entire state," state police spokesman Nnamdi Ononi told AFP. Buhari indicated in April that he planned to run for a second term.

The retired general, who headed a military regime in the 1980s, has faced growing pressure to step down because of failing health after spending several months in London last year treating an undisclosed ailment. Dubbed "Baba Go Slow" because he took six months to appoint cabinet ministers, he has also faced attacks for his handling of the economy, which plunged into recession in 2016. He has also come under criticism on security issues, including the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast, long-running farmer-herder clashes in the centre and militancy and kidnapping in the south. "The fact that nobody came forward to challenge the president is an indication that the party members are satisfied with his performance and they want to see more of him in office," presidential spokesman Garba Shehu told AFP. Nigeria's law allows for a president to serve a maximum of two four-year terms. (AFP)

China knife attack: Three dead, 15 injured

BEIJING, OCT 7 -- Three are dead in China after a man fleeing the scene of a stabbing drove into a crowd and attacked onlookers, police said Sunday. The 42-year-old man surmised Wang got into a dispute with a companion after a knife fight in the eastern province of Zhejiang. Angry over the confrontation, Wang purchased a fruit knife, stabbed his friend's mother and fled the scene, according to a statement on the official social media account of Ningbo city's public security bureau. The drunken Wang proceeded to steal a car at knife point and hit a cyclist, at which point the car burst into flames and Wang abandoned

it, police said. Wang fled on foot, stabbed two pedestrians, stole a driving instructor's car, and drove it into a crowd of nine people, at which point he jumped out and stabbed another five. The incident is under investigation, the police said. The 42-year-old man was identified as Wang, a man ploughed a truck into a crowd in the southern province of Hunan and then went on a rampage attacking onlookers with knives and a shove. Eleven died and 44 were injured. The previous month a 54-year-old man killed his girlfriend and her family then drove a car into a crowd, killing six and injuring 12. (AFP)

US, China to hold key talks on Monday to reduce military tensions

BEIJING, OCT 7 -- China and the United States are set to hold high-level talks here on Monday to reduce the spiralling trade and military tensions between the world's two largest economies.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is scheduled to visit China in the eastern province of the South China Sea, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have counter claims.

Pompeo's visit was expected to provide an opportunity to both sides to lower the tensions between them. Besides slapping additional tariffs on Chinese exports, US has also imposed sanctions on Chinese military units for securing Russian weapon systems like S-400 missiles and Su-35 fighters. Also, ahead of the visit both the countries had heated exchanges. US Vice President

Mike Pence Thursday accused China of interfering in US internal affairs and elections policies.

Pence said China wants to "a different American President" and is using more "proactive and coercive" freedom of navigation. China has been almost all of the South China Sea, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have counter claims.

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Significantly ahead of Pompeo's visit, Chinese Ambassador to Washington Chi Tiankai said China wants to end the trade war with the US, but that the US position keeps changing. "So we don't know exactly what the US would want as priorities," he said. "The US is ready to make some compromise, but it needs the goodwill from both sides," Cui said in an interview on Wednesday with America's National Public Radio, official Chinese media reported on Friday. "We want to solve it through negotiation and consultation between the two sides. But in order for the negotiation, the consultation to succeed, we do need goodwill and good faith from both sides," Cui said. "We offered to reduce the trade deficit of the US States, for instance."

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US should not view ties with Pak through 'Indian lens': Qureshi

ISLAMABAD, OCT 7 -- The US should not view its ties with Pakistan from the Indian lens or Afghan perspective, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said.

The relations between Pakistan and the US nosedived this January after President Donald Trump accused Islamabad of giving noies to Washington but "lies and deceit" and providing "safe haven" to terrorists.

Qureshi said Pakistan's ties with the US could not be undermined easily, the News reported. "The relations with US are improving gradually. I have made it clear to the US authorities that Pakistan wants bilateral relations with Washington based on mutual respect and reciprocity," he said on Saturday. He also said it



would be wrong to expect that all differences between the US and Pakistan could be resolved in one day, the report said.

Qureshi said regional situations evolve and require gradual change, but Pakistan's contribution for peace and stability in the region should be acknowledged.

"It will not be appropriate to view our (US-Pak) relations going as far back as seven decades from the Afghan perspective or the Indian lens," he told reporters in Multan after returning from his 10-day visit to the US. The foreign minister said he had tried to make his American counterparts realise this. Qureshi, who had met US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Adviser John Bolton in Washington, said the Foreign Office will continue its efforts to represent Pakistan's interests on international fora.

Responding to a question about Pakistan's relations with neighbours, the Foreign Minister said Pakistan wants good relations with India and restoration of talks is the best option to resolve all issues including poverty, education and construction of dams. (PTI)

Pompeo ends 4th N Korea trip

SEOUL, OCT 7 -- US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has wrapped up his fourth visit to North Korea after meeting Kim Jong Un to seek elusive progress on efforts to persuade him to give up his nuclear weapons.

Pompeo tweeted on his arrival in Seoul that he had met with Kim and that his "continue to make progress on agreements made at Singapore Summit." He said, "Thanks for hosting me and my team."

Pompeo had flown to Pyongyang from Tokyo after talks there with Japan's prime minister during which he pledged that the Trump administration would coordinate and unify its strategy for denuclearisation with allies. Japan has been wary of the initiative but South Korea has embraced it. (AP)

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a number of commentators thought he might, Jeremy took the Tories head on for their cynical hypocrisy, citing their support for Viktor Orban's anti-semitic, Islamophobic, far-right government. Boris Johnson's dog-whistle racism and the "hostile environment" that was intentionally created to target the Windrush generation and other migrants. He went on to reiterate Labour's commitment to opposing racism in all its forms.

This achieves greater significance with the growth of the far right, both internationally and in Britain, and the Labour movement. Similarly, there was no holding back in the attacks on the failure of austerity, privatisation, and outsourcing, with clear alternatives proposed in the

Nigeria prez to run for second term with party endorsement

ABUJA, OCT 7 -- Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari will run for a second term in polls scheduled for February 2019 after his party announced his candidacy as the opposition votes to select his election challenger.

As the sole contender for the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) party, Buhari's confirmation Saturday by some 7,000 delegates gathered in the capital Abuja was a mere formality. Next year's presidential race appears to have tightened in recent months with the APC hit by a wave of defections over the leadership style of the 75-year-old former military ruler.

The party led by Buhari, who is seen as an anti-corruption crusader in graft-tainted Nigeria, swept to power in 2015 with the first opposition victory at the ballot box in the country's history. All eyes are now on the dozen candidates vying to be nominated to challenge him from the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the former ruling party. Officials said at least 4,000 delegates from the 36 states and the capital Abuja were expected to vote at the PDP primaries in the oil hub of Port Harcourt, in the heartland of the Niger delta, in an event due to extend to Sunday. Voting started late at around 9:15 pm local time (20:15 GMT) after voter accreditation. Barring any surprise, the candidate will come from the Muslim-majority north, following an unwritten rule in Nigeria that the presidency should alternate every two terms between a candidate from the north and south.

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Corbyn's address indicates Labour ready to rule

*New social and economic agenda brings cheers

BEN CHAKO

Jeremy Corbyn's conference speech was a call to arms for the labour movement, a clear challenge to all those who oppose Tory austerity to unite and bring an end to it for once and for all.

Unity and diversity were key themes throughout the speech, as Corbyn drew attention to the great variety that makes up the labour movement and the way in which that is reflected in Labour's new, increased membership.

Similarly, there was a call for a much greater culture of tolerance and the freedom to disagree and debate, then come together around democratic decisions. Anyone who has a genuine interest in standing up for working people and getting the Tories out of power cannot fail to respond positively.

And yet, in spite of his plea for party members to listen a bit more and shout a bit less, his message was certainly not lacking in the fire that has characterised his previous conference speeches. The abuse of our so-called "free" press by the media monopolies rightly came in for round condemnation, with Jeremy pulling no punches about where their loyalties lie and why they oppose the growth of a politics which empowers the working class and threatens the profits of the tax-shy billionaires. With the business media using every opportunity to smear the left in general, and Jeremy personally, whether as unpatriotic, anti-semitic or any other nonsense, we should call out their vested interests at any and all opportunities. Rather than the attacks of anti-semitism, which has been cynically whipped up by the media, as

form of nationalisation and the rebuilding of public services. This is a welcome reminder of some of the key policies on which Jeremy stood as leader and which have proved so popular with the electorate.

The concept of public ownership, so long excluded from national political dialogue, with New Labour and the Tories equally committed to privatisation and outsourcing, has truly made a welcome comeback.

However, as this paper has argued on many occasions, public ownership is in itself not enough. The previous model of publicly owned companies that operate like private enterprises within a market system, constrained by rules to prevent them from interfering with the profitability of the private sector, will do nothing to change the position of working people.

Public ownership in name must be combined with the reality of public control, with workers and service-users having a genuine say in the way in which publicly owned companies are run for public benefit. And in the long run, this must be the first step in a change to the way our economic system is run, to put the needs of people before profit and ensure that the interests of the many, not the few, are the guiding principle in our economy.

That is why the clear statement by Jeremy Corbyn, as leader of the opposition, that we need to democratise public services, give workers the right to representation at board level and, ultimately, to change our economic system to run in the interests of the majority, is so crucial.

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