

Explosion at nuclear plant: No radiation risk



Flamanville nuclear plant at northwestern France.

Caen

An explosion at a nuclear power plant on France's northwest coast on yesterday caused minor injuries, but the authorities said there was no risk of radiation.

The blast took place in the engine room at the Flamanville plant, which lies 25 kilometres west of the port of Cherbourg and just across from the Channel Islands.

"It is a technical incident. It is not a nuclear accident," said senior local official Jacques Witkowski.

He said a ventilator had exploded outside the nuclear zone at the plant, which has been in operation since the 1980s and is operated by state-controlled energy giant EDF.

"It's all over. The emergency teams are leaving," Witkowski said.

Five people suffered smoke inhalation but there were no serious injuries, Witkowski said.

One of the two pressurised water reactors at the plant was shut down after the explosion and the incident was declared over at 1100 GMT, the authorities said.

The two 1,300 megawatt reactors have been in service since 1985 and 1986, and the site currently employs 810 people, alongside an additional 350 subcontractors.

A new third-generation reactor known as EPR is being built at Flamanville, which

will be the world's largest when it goes into operation in late 2018.

Construction of the new reactor at the site in Normandy began in 2007 and was initially due for completion in 2012 but has been delayed several times, and its initial budget has more than tripled, to 10.5 billion euros (\$11.2 billion).

EDF said its safety record at nuclear sites improved last year, with 2.3 accidents for every one million hours worked, compared with 2.6 in 2015.

That translates into five accidents that required reactor shutdowns in 2016, after eight the previous year. - (AFP)

Police probe endangered animal banquet in China

Beijing

Chinese authorities are investigating a banquet where government officials may have feasted on endangered pangolins, considered the most trafficked mammal on earth.

The animal's brown scales are made of nothing more than keratin, the same substance as fingernails but are highly prized in Vietnam and China where they are misleadingly touted as having medicinal properties.

Police are investigating whether the "scaly anteater" was indeed consumed at a banquet in the southern province of Guangxi, the Xinhua state news agency reported late Tuesday.

A post from 2015, which



Pangolin

recently resurfaced on the Chinese social media site Weibo, claimed that Guangxi officials invited investors to eat the animal, which is listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Several photos showed

an abundant feast, along with the user's observation: "It was my first time eating [pangolin]...I've already fallen deeply for the wild taste!"

In China, the pangolin is under state protection. Eating it is punishable by up to 10 years in prison. - (AFP)

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Yes No Can't Say



We can't agree a debt reduction for Greece, it's ruled out by the European Union's Treaty of Lisbon

Wolfgang Schaeuble
German Finance Minister

Rest in sight

Pope reveals anti-stress secrets - and it's not prozac



Pope Francis has shrugged off recent in-fighting in the Vatican and other stresses of his job by joking: "I am not on tranquilisers".

Teen confessed to Brussels airport cyberattack

Belgian investigators have traced a cyberattack targeting Brussels airport hours after last year's suicide bombings to a teenager in the United States who had no terror links, prosecutors said yesterday.

At least five infected with HIV at Chinese hospital

At least five patients at a traditional Chinese medicine hospital in China were accidentally infected with HIV, officials said yesterday, as authorities moved to censor online discussion over the incident.

6 bodies found after boat capsizes off Malaysia

The bodies of 6 passengers believed to be from a boat which capsized in seas off Malaysia have been found.

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Our cars are missing, says Ghana's presidency

Accra

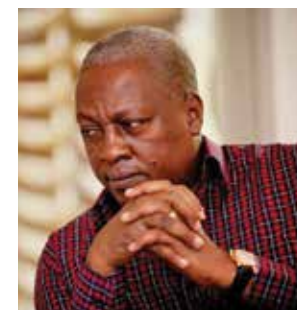
Ghana's new government has set up a special task force to track down more than 200 missing vehicles that should have been handed back when President Nana Akufo-Addo took office.

Presidency spokesman Eugene Arhin said that an audit of vehicles indicated that many appeared not to have been returned.

"The president of the republic currently has virtually only one vehicle at his disposal," said Arhin.

"This is the vehicle which was purchased in 2007 during the Ghana at 50 celebrations."

The vehicles were assigned to former government officials under the previous administration of president John Dramani Mahama,



Akufo-Addo

whom Akufo-Addo beat in elections.

Presidency chief of staff Akosua Frema Osei-Opere said that the retention of state assets was illegal.

"Persons with state properties unlawfully in their possession should endeavour to contact the task force and make arrangements to surrender the same with immediate effect," he added.

Live cockroach pulled from woman's nose

New Delhi

An Indian woman has endured a horrifying 12 hours after a cockroach crawled up her nose and into her skull.

The 42-year-old was admitted to the hospital after she felt "strange" sensations around her nose and eyes. Her nasal endoscopy showed the cockroach between the woman's eyes on her skull.

"I saw some tiny legs moving inside," said M.N. Shankar, an ear, nose and throat specialist at Stanley Medical College Hospital. "I realised I was actually looking at the bottom of a cockroach."

Using an instrument akin to a vacuum cleaner, Shankar managed to extract the cockroach from her skull intact still alive and kicking.

Paris to erect security wall around Eiffel Tower



Paris

A glass wall 2.5 metres (eight feet) high will be erected around the Eiffel Tower in Paris this autumn, part of a multi-million euro plan to prevent attacks on the iconic monument, the city said yesterday.

The wall will replace the metal fences thrown up around the 324-metre (1,063-foot) Iron Lady during the Euro football tournament last year.

"The terror threat remains

high in Paris and the most vulnerable sites, led by the Eiffel Tower, must be the object of special security measures," said deputy mayor Jean-Francois Martins.

The wall will prevent individuals or vehicles storming the site visited by six million people each year, he added.

Some councillors quoted by Le Parisien newspaper said they feared the wall would turn the tower into a 'fortress'.