

# Fire-hit Jokhang temple streets reopen

The streets and square outside Jokhang Temple in the regional capital Lhasa constitute one of the most important pilgrimage circuits for Tibetans

## Beijing

**S**treet **around** Lhasa's fire-hit Jokhang temple, one of the most sacred sites for Tibetan Buddhism, were reopened to pilgrims yesterday after a blaze broke out the night before, Chinese state media said, but the extent of damage remained unclear.

The official *Xinhua* news agency said the fire had erupted Saturday evening in part of the more than 1,300-year-old Jokhang temple, but was soon put out.

Images posted on social media of the blaze showed the eaved roof of a section of the building lit with roaring yellow flames and emitting a haze of smoke.

"The fire was quickly extinguished, there were no casualties and order is normal in the area," said the

state-run Tibet Daily, adding that Tibet's top Communist party official Wu Yingjie had rushed to the scene.

Jokhang temple is a UNESCO World Heritage Site which lies at the heart of old Lhasa.

The Barkhor -- a bustling, shop-lined area surrounding Jokhang whose streets and square constitute one of the most important pilgrimage circuits for Tibetans -- was temporarily closed after the fire but has been reopened, the state *Xinhua* news agency said yesterday.

Prominent Tibetan writer Tsering Woeser told *AFP* she was "very worried" about the state of the monastery.

"Tibetans consider Lhasa to be a sacred place, but Jokhang is a sacred place within that sacred place -- the most sacred in all of Tibet,"

she said. "Some people say it's only because of Jokhang that the holy city of Lhasa exists at all."

"No matter where they are in the world, Tibetans all wish to come to Lhasa to pray at Jokhang; it's the wish of a lifetime. Many who make pilgrimage to Lhasa prostrating do so just to visit the temple," she added.

The area has been the site of past protests against Beijing's presence in Tibet.

On Twitter, which is blocked in China, Tibetans abroad noted that photos and posts about the blaze were quickly being censored.

Robert Barnett, a London-based Tibetologist, tweeted that sources in Lhasa "claim police have threatened anyone distributing pictures or unofficial news about the fire." (*AFP*)

# Artwork under Picasso painting revealed

## Washington

**A**n international team of scientists has used multiple modes of light to uncover details hidden beneath the visible surface of Spanish painter Pablo Picasso's masterpiece "La Misereuse accroupie" or "The Crouching Woman."

Researchers released their findings on Saturday's press conference at the ongoing four-day annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science held in Austin, Texas, *Xinhua* reported.

The 1902 oil painting, owned by Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) in Canada, depicts a crouching and cloaked woman,



Picasso's *La Misereuse accroupie* (L) and the hidden landscape painting behind it (R)

painted in white, blues, grays and greens.

Researchers used non-invasive portable imaging techniques, including infrared

reflectance hyperspectral imaging and then an X-ray fluorescence imaging instrument to detail those buried images. (*IANS*)

## #PollToday



Do you think US needs tougher gun laws as gun attacks are increasing?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Cant Say



"If it was the GOAL of Russia to create discord, disruption and chaos within the U.S. then, with all of the Committee Hearings, Investigations and Party hatred, they have succeeded beyond their wildest dreams,"

Donald Trump  
US President

## Rest in sight

Helicopter crash in quake zone kills 14



Thirteen people were killed in southern Mexico when a minister's helicopter crash-landed on its way to the epicentre of a powerful earthquake that rattled the region.

Nigeria frees 475 terror suspects

Nigeria has freed another 475 Boko Haram suspects following a series of mass trials in which most cases were dropped for lack of evidence.

Afghan army defuses 234 IEDs

Around 234 different types of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and landmines have been detected and defused over the last 24 hours.

5 killed in Russia church attack

A man in Russia's southern province of Dagestan shot into a crowd of people leaving a church on Sunday, killing five and injuring at least five others

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## 18 killed in massive explosion at Indian wedding: official



Rescuers at the scene of the hotel explosion

### Ajmer, India

**R**escuers discovered nine more bodies yesterday beneath the ruins of a Indian hotel, bringing the known death toll from an explosion which tore through a wedding party to 18, an official said.

A gas cylinder exploded late Friday at the hotel in the city of Beawar, in the western state of Rajasthan, reducing the venue to ruins and sparking a huge fire.

By Saturday evening

officials said nine bodies had been found.

But the figure rose sharply yesterday as rescue teams, aided by the army, found nine more victims including women and children under rubble.

"So far 18 bodies have been recovered," said Gaurav Goyal, a senior administrative official in Ajmer, the district where the blast occurred, about 200 kilometres from the state capital Jaipur. (*AFP*)

## Firearms debate rages as Florida rally coincides with gun show



Gun enthusiasts attend the South Florida Gun Show

### Miami

**S**tudent survivors of a mass shooting that killed 17 people at a Florida high school called for gun restrictions on Saturday during an angry and sombre rally, but attendees at a nearby gun show said firearms could not be blamed for the massacre.

Wednesday's shooting in the Fort Lauderdale suburb of Parkland fuelled the long-running U.S. debate between supporters of tougher controls on firearms and advocates for gun rights, which are protected by the U.S. Constitution's Second Amendment.

Both sides of the dispute were on display on Saturday.

Many at a rally in Fort Lauderdale that was organized to demand tougher gun laws rejected comments by U.S. President Donald Trump and others that

mental illness was the main factor behind the slaughter at Margory Stoneman Douglas High School.

"We need to pay attention to the fact that this isn't just a mental health issue," Emma Gonzalez, an 18-year-old student at the school, told hundreds of demonstrators gathered on the steps of a federal building. The shooter "wouldn't have harmed that many students with a knife!" she yelled, shedding tears as the crowd cheered her on.

Gonzalez criticized Trump for overturning a measure implemented by former President Barack Obama that required extra scrutiny of some gun buyers with a history of mental illness. She also condemned the National Rifle Association, which opposes laws that it says violate gun owners' rights. (*Reuters*)