

Saudi Aramco hits out at lack of resolve over attacks

London

The head of Saudi Aramco hit out yesterday at the lack of global resolve to stop attacks on more oil installations, one month after strikes on two of its facilities.

The September 14 attacks on Aramco plants in Abqaiq and Khurais -- which initially halved the kingdom's crude output and sent global energy markets into a tailspin -- intensified geopolitical tensions in the crude-rich Middle East.

"An absence of international resolve to take concrete action may embolden the attackers and indeed put the world's energy security at greater risk," said Aramco CEO Amin Nasser, speaking at the Oil & Money industry conference in London.

The strikes on Abqaiq -- the world's largest oil processing facility -- and the Khurais oil field in eastern Saudi Arabia roiled oil markets and revived fears of a conflict in the tinderbox Gulf region.

Washington has concluded that the strikes were launched from Iranian soil and that cruise missiles were used.

Tehran denies its involvement.

The attacks were claimed by Yemen's Huthi rebels. Saudi leads a military coalition against the Iran-backed Huthis, which have carried out dozens of cross-border drone and missile attacks on Saudi targets, including oil facilities.

World oil prices briefly soared following strikes

Humans will not 'migrate' to other planets: Mayor

Using custom-made instruments Mayor and Queloz in October 1995 discovered a planet outside Earth's solar system

AFP | Madrid

Humans will never migrate to a planet outside of Earth's solar system because it would take far too long to get there, Swiss Nobel laureate Michel Mayor said yesterday.

Mayor and his colleague Didier Queloz were on Tuesday awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics for their research refining techniques to detect so-called exoplanets.

"If we are talking about exoplanets, things should be clear: we will not migrate there," Mayor said near Madrid on the sidelines of a conference when asked about the possibility of humans moving to other planets.

"These planets are much, much too far away. Even in the very optimistic case of a livable planet that is not too far, say a few dozen light years, which is not a lot, it's in the neighbourhood, the time to go there is considerable," he added.

"We are talking about hundreds of millions of days using the means we have available today. We must take care of our planet, it is very beautiful and still absolutely liveable."

The 77-year-old said he felt the need to "kill all the state-



"We will not migrate" to other planets, warns Nobel laureate Michel Mayor

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NOBEL LAUREATE MICHEL MAYOR

southern France, Mayor and Queloz in October 1995 discovered what had previously only existed in the realm of science fiction -- a planet outside Earth's solar system.

Mayor was a professor at Geneva University and Queloz was his doctorate student, when they made the discovery which started a revolution in astronomy. Since then over 4,000 exoplanets have been found in our home galaxy.

"It was a very old question which was debated by philosophers: are there other worlds in the Universe?" Mayor said.

"We look for planets which are the closest (to us), which could resemble Earth. Together with my colleague we started this search for planets, we showed it was possible to study them."

Mayor said it was up to the "next generation" to answer the question of whether there is life on other planets.

"We don't know! The only way to do it is to develop techniques that would allow us to detect life at a distance," he said.

ments that say 'OK, we will go to a liveable planet if one day life is not possible on earth'."

"It's completely crazy," he added.

Using custom-made instruments at their observatory in

China warns Apple against support of HK protesters

Beijing

China's state media accused Apple yesterday of supporting pro-democracy protesters, warning the US tech giant would suffer consequences for its "unwise and reckless" decision, in an echo of campaigns against other Western firms.

An opinion piece in the People's Daily, the mouthpiece of the ruling Communist Party, highlighted a transport app available on Apple's store that it alleged helped protesters identify police in Hong Kong. "Apple's approval for the app obviously helps rioters," the article said.

"Does this mean Apple intended to be an accomplice to the rioters?"

The article then cautioned that: "The map app is just the tip of the iceberg".

It alleged that a song advocating "Hong Kong independence" had appeared on the "Apple Music Store" in the southern Chinese city, then issued an ominous warning.

"Nobody wants to drag Apple into the lingering unrest in Hong Kong. But people have



Tim Cook Apple CEO

reason to assume that Apple is mixing business with politics, and even illegal acts," it said.

"Apple has to think about the consequences of its unwise and reckless decision," the article said.

"It definitely wasn't an accident that Apple allowed HKmap.live online," wrote one commentator on Weibo.

"(Apple) should know exactly what it's doing... It seems that there is too little domestic pressure against Apple."

Apple, which has a huge presence in China, did not immediately reply to an emailed request for comment.

Canadian father sues Japan firm for paternity leave harassment



Japan is struggling with one of the world's lowest birth rates

Tokyo

A Canadian father who alleges he was bullied and fired by his Japanese employer after he tried to claim paternity leave appeared in a Tokyo court Wednesday to pursue his lawsuit against the firm.

It is the second paternity leave harassment case to be heard in Japan in recent weeks, casting a rare spotlight on the issue in a country struggling with one of the world's lowest birth rates.

Glen Wood, 49, a resident of Japan for three decades, was working at brokerage house Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities when his son was born prematurely in October 2015.

Wood says he applied for

paternity leave before his son was born in Nepal, where his partner was working, seeking to exercise a right guaranteed by Japanese law.

But, he says, the firm dragged its feet, and he even submitted a DNA test to prove his relation to his son.

"I knew it was a sort of old fashioned thinking type of company but I was still very surprised, even when it was an emergency and my son was in the ICU (intensive care unit), that they wouldn't let me take paternity leave," he said before the hearing Wednesday.

"I think it was viewed really as an act of treason for a man to take paternity leave," he added.

It was not until Christmas Day 2015 that he received approval to take leave and see his son.

Belgium outrage over woman punched in burger ad

Brussels

Belgium's advertising regulator said Wednesday it has clocked up hundreds of complaints over a viral hamburger ad showing a comic-book version of a man punching a woman for handing him the wrong sandwich.

Consumers and politicians called the online ad "sickening" and "irresponsible", saying it went directly against public campaigns denouncing domestic violence.

The ad, published on Facebook, aimed to publicise a Belgian hamburger brand, Bicky Burger.



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Its cartoon style borrowed from 1950s and 1960s American pop-art made famous by artist Roy Lichtenstein and by a panel from a 1965 comic showing Batman slapping his sidekick Robin that has been reworked into a long-running internet meme.

The Bicky Burger ad depicts a man in a suit swinging his fist to violently hit a woman carrying a fast-food container as he exclaims: "Seriously, a fake Bicky?"

The head of Belgium's regulatory Advertising Council, Sandrine Sepul, said the agency had received 300 complaints from the public in 24 hours.

She said that a Dutch food

company, Izico, commissioned the advertisement and her agency had transmitted the complaints to its counterpart in the Netherlands.

Izico was ordered to explain itself, she said, adding that possible punishment could be decided "in a few weeks".

Belgian media ran indignant reports on the controversy, which led to the ad being pulled from Facebook.

Le Soir newspaper asked how such an advertising campaign could be created in 2019 when, in Belgium, "every 10 days a man kills his wife or his ex. And every day a number of women are humiliated, raped, beaten."

Squirrels' stash of winter walnuts causes car chaos

Reuters

Squirreling away supplies for winter took on a whole new meaning for a couple in the United States, after they discovered a hoodful of walnuts and grass in their car.

Holly Persic was driving to a library in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, when she noticed the car seemed strange.

"My wife called me from Northland Library and said that her car smelt like it was burning, and was making a weird sound," Chris Persic said in a Facebook



Walnuts and grass hidden by squirrels are seen under the hood of a car, in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, U.S.

“There's definitely an angry squirrel wife right now wondering where all the nuts went”

CHRIS

post that has since gone viral. Holly opened the hood to find

an engine full of walnuts neatly packed in grass, presumably stored there by squirrels over the weekend, when the vehicle had been parked in the open.

Chris spent almost an hour cleaning out "over 200 (not an exaggeration) walnuts and grass from under the hood", he continued in the post.

The couple seemed to take the incident in their stride.

"There's definitely an angry squirrel wife right now wondering where all the nuts went", Chris said.

Sri Lankan leader's party to support Rajapaksa in polls

AP | Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's president will stay neutral in the upcoming presidential election but his party will back a breakaway party candidate, front-runner Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Sri Lanka Freedom Party General Secretary Dayasiri Jayasekara said President Maithripala Sirisena had temporarily stepped aside to ensure his neutrality.