

Russians killed in missile test blast were working on 'new weapons'

Moscow, Russia

Russia's nuclear agency chief yesterday confirmed that five scientists killed last week were developing "new weapons" and vowed to continue testing "until the end", despite the explosion.

The accident took place at an Arctic military facility on the coast of the White Sea on Thursday, but Russian authorities only admitted its nuclear nature on Saturday.

The blast provoked a spike in radiation levels.

US experts have said it could be linked to the testing of the

"Burevestnik" cruise missile, touted by President Vladimir Putin earlier this year.

National nuclear agency Rosatom on Monday honoured the memory of its five dead staff.

"The best (thing) for their memory will be our further work on the new weapons," the head of Rosatom Alexei Likhachev was quoted as saying by agencies.

"We are fulfilling the task of the motherland, its security will be reliably ensured," he added.

Russia held a memorial service for the scientists in the



During the Cold War, Sarov was a top-secret city known as Arzamas-16. The centre produced the Soviet Union's first nuclear weapons. It is still a closed city accessible only with special passes.

closed city of Sarov in the Nizhny Novgorod region, 500 kilometres (300 miles) east of Moscow.

Rosatom has said the accident occurred while a missile was being tested on an offshore platform in the far northern Arkhangelsk region.

Fuel exploded and the blast blew staff into the sea, it said.

The nearby city of Severodvinsk recorded elevated radiation levels following the accident and panicked residents rushed to buy iodine to counteract radiation.

Singapore to ban sale of elephant ivory from 2021

Singapore, Singapore

Singapore said yesterday it will impose a blanket ban on the domestic sale of elephant ivory and products from 2021 as the government tightens its campaign against illegal wildlife trade.

The announcement on World Elephant Day followed two years of consultations with non-government groups, ivory retailers and the public.

Over 5,000 protesters at Hong Kong airport: police

Hong Kong, China

More than 5,000 protesters gathered at Hong Kong airport yesterday, police said, as authorities cancelled all the day's remaining flights in and out of the busy international transport hub.

"The information I got before we came in was that in the airport passenger terminal building there are over 5,000 protesters," said Kong Wing-cheung, senior superintendent of the police public relations branch, at a press conference.

Norway mosque terror attack suspect in court

Oslo, Norway

A Norwegian man suspected of killing his stepsister and opening fire at a mosque near Oslo at the weekend appeared at a court detention hearing beaten and bruised but smiling on Monday, accused of murder and a terrorist act.

The man, identified as 21-year-old Philip Manshaus, appeared in the Oslo court with two black eyes and scrapes and bruises on his face, neck and hands, probably obtained when he was overpowered at the mosque.

Police say he has "extreme right views" and "xenophobic positions". The Norway incident comes amid a rise in white supremacy attacks around the world.

Manshaus is formally suspected of murder in the death of his 17-year-old stepsister, and of a "terrorist act" at the Al-Noor mosque on Saturday, allegations he has rejected.

In Norway, being formally named as a suspect is a step prior to indictment.

Manshaus entered the court room smiling to cameras, wearing dark clothes and his hair



Terror suspect Philip Manshaus attends a hearing at an Oslo courthouse in Norway

cut short.

Police asked the court to detain the suspect in custody in isolation for four weeks. The judge was expected to announce a decision later Monday.

Manshaus meanwhile asked to be released, his lawyer Unni Fries said after the hearing.

"He rejects the allegations and exercises his right to not

explain himself," she said.

'Pretty vague' past tip

Manshaus is accused of entering the mosque in the affluent Oslo suburb of Baerum armed with at least two weapons and opening fire before being overpowered by a 65-year-old man who suffered minor injuries. Three worshippers were present in the mosque.

Hours after the attack, the body of a young woman was found in a home in Baerum and police on Sunday confirmed it was Manshaus's 17-year-old stepsister.

According to local media, she was of Chinese origin and had been adopted by the companion of Manshaus's father.

On Monday, Norway's domestic intelligence service PST said it had received a tip "about a year ago" about Manshaus, but that they chose not to act on it.

"The tip was pretty vague and was not indicative of any imminent terrorism plot," PST chief Hans Sverre Sjovold told reporters.

PST, which said it receives a large number of similar tips, has not raised the threat alert level in Norway from the current low level.

Chinese Muslims celebrate annual Corban festival

Xinhua | Urumqi

Millions of Muslims celebrate the annual Eid al-Adha, known in China as Corban Festival, one of Islam's most important holidays on Sunday.

On Sunday morning, people gathered for Shaman dance on the square in front of the Id Kah Mosque in Kashgar, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, after morning prayers. The cheerful music and sounds of rhythmic drums attracted many tourists to join in the celebration.

It's the peak season for the local tourism industry in the summer. The Grand Bazaar in the regional capital Urumqi is packed with visitors who came to select local specialties as souvenirs, while children are attracted by the traditional music instrument called dutar on the street.



Tourists and local residents dance to music during Corban Festival celebrations in Kashgar, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The Corban Festival, also known as Eid al-Adha or the feast of the sacrifice, falls on Sunday.

Mohammadtuersun Wuji runs a decades-old snack bar in the Grand Bazaar. The daily turn-

over of his shop has exceeded 10,000 yuan (about 1,416 U.S. dollars) recently.

"I used to think that to earn 10,000 yuan was a long way off, but now it happens every single day. I heard that the daily average number of tourists in the Grand Bazaar has reached 100,000. I need to prepare more ingredients, or the supply won't meet the growing demand," he said.

Many villages in southern Xinjiang also held performances, including traditional folk songs and dances as well as tightrope walking, also known as Dawazi in Xinjiang, for the local residents.

"Thanks to the great performers, I can enjoy the wonderful show at home," said Aymraguri, a local villager.

Railway authorities in the region increased the number of trains to meet public demand during the festival. A total of

French police shoot dead homeless man after knife threat

Nice, France

office in the nearby city of Nice said.

The police tried in vain to get him to drop his knife.

When they failed, they tried to immobilise him with a stun gun but the man lunged at an officer with his knife, according to the prosecutor's office.

The incident took place in a public park on Sunday evening.

Bystanders called the emergency services when they saw the man, who was in his fifties, trying to kill himself.

He had already made cuts in the veins of both arms as well as his throat and the back of his ankles when the police arrived on the scene, the prosecutor's

Police in Nice are investigating the incident as is the national police oversight body, the IPGN.

Biden calls for assault weapons ban, buyback programme

Washington, United States



Former vice president Joe Biden, the frontrunner for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, called yesterday for reinstating a ban on assault weapons and including a buyback programme to get them off the streets.

In a column in *The New York Times*, Biden also called for stricter background checks for gun buyers and greater use of "smart-gun technology" that allows a weapon only to be fired by its authorized owner.

"We have a huge problem with guns," Biden said in the article published about a week after mass shootings in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, left 31 people dead.

Biden said that if he wins the 2020 presidential election, he

would seek to reimpose a 1994 ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines.

The 1994 law that banned assault weapons expired in 2004. Biden said that besides

stricter background checks for gun buyers he would accelerate the development and deployment of smart-gun technology... so that guns are keyed to the individual biometrics of authorized owners."

US to deny citizenship to immigrants who use public benefits

Washington, United States

migrants who work for low wages and depend in part on public services to get by.

It also appeared to close the door for impoverished and low-skilled migrants outside the country hoping to legally obtain a foothold in the United States.

White House said migrants will be blocked from entering the country if they are likely to need public assistance.

Chinese Muslims celebrate annual Corban festival

157 trains will be added so that transportation will be easier for people of various ethnicities.

During Corban Festival, people slay livestock to share with their family or visit relatives and friends to send best wishes.

In northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, home to over 2.5 million Muslims, Ma Chongli, 66, an ethnic Hui, works as a custodian in a mosque in Yinchuan, the regional capital. He got up at around 4:30 a.m. on Sunday to prepare for the mosque's prayer ritual.

Muslims shook hands and wished each other well during the ritual. After the prayers, some rushed to home to prepare the feast, while others visited markets around the mosque, buying deserts and fruit.

Ma also prepared a cow at home. Beef will be a must-have dish and gift when he spends the next three days with his family and friends.

"Every festival, we will set up two tables for dinner. Sometimes, about 15 people will come to have dinner with us and each will be served with a bowl of stewed beef. We will eat and chat at nights. It's such a great fun," he said.

The festival is also celebrated by Muslims in other northwest provinces such as Gansu, Qinghai and Shaanxi.

China has more than 20 million Muslims living in various regions.

"As people's living standards have been greatly improved in the country, we have enough to eat and more choices during the festival, making the holiday even more colorful and interesting," Ma said.