

Eight killed in China kindergarten blast

Forensic experts work at the site of the explosion

Beijing

An explosion rocked a kindergarten in eastern China yesterday, killing at least eight people and injuring dozens, authorities said, as state media published images showing bloodied and unconscious victims.

The explosion happened at the school's gates, police in the city of Xuzhou said in a statement.

Images circulating online showed that the force of the blast tore people's clothes off and one woman was seen clutching her crying child.

Public Security Minister Guo Shengkun ordered a "prompt" investigation into the cause and "demanded enhanced checks of possible risks at densely populated

venues," Xinhua said. His deputy was dispatched to the area to conduct the probe.

However the Global Times and China Youth Daily newspapers cited witnesses as saying that a gas cylinder at a food stall had exploded.

At least eight people were killed and 65 injured, including eight seriously, according to Xinhua citing local officials. Two died at the site of the explosion and six while being treated.

Xinhua said children were leaving school when the blast occurred, but the Fengxian county government said class was ongoing and teachers and students were not among the casualties.

Pictures of the scene showed more than a dozen

people outside a building, many lying on the concrete and some appearing to be unconscious, including a small child.

A video posted by the People's Daily showed emergency workers arriving at the scene with gurneys. Another showed people lying in a hospital.

Online media reports cited a business owner near the kindergarten as saying that around 5:00 pm (0900 GMT) he heard a "bang", and found that there had been an explosion at the kindergarten entrance only 100 metres (330 feet) away.

Some people on Weibo website said the use of gas canisters by food stalls posed a danger. (AFP)

#PollToday



Experts say external cladding contributed to the spread of fire in London, which is also similar to other incidents that occurred around the world recently. Do you think a law should be brought to ban external cladding?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Cant Say



I have grandchildren. They live normal lives. The thing is, I don't want them to grow up like hereditary princes, I want them to grow up to be normal people."

-Vladimir Putin
Russian President

Rest in sight

Fishing boat hooks tail of crashed Myanmar military plane



A fishing boat found the tail of a Myanmar military plane that crashed last week with 122 people on board.

Shabaab restaurant assault leaves 18 dead in Mogadishu

A suicide car bombing and armed assault by six Shabaab militants on two neighbouring restaurants in Somalia's capital Mogadishu ended with at least 18 dead.

Australian journalist shot in war-torn Philippine city

An Australian TV journalist was shot in the neck as he reported from a southern Philippine city where Islamist militants are battling government troops.

British soldier dies at UK training ground

A British soldier has been killed and three other servicemen injured in an incident at a UK training ground.

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Kazakh man dies in fire following rocket launch

Astana

AKazakh man died and another was hospitalised after they were caught in a fire on the steppes triggered by falling debris from a Russian space launch, emergency services said yesterday.

The blaze, reaching 15 kilometers (9.5 miles) across, was unleashed by parts of a rocket that fell to earth on Wednesday after launch from the nearby Baikonur cosmodrome, emergency situations committee spokesman Ruslan

Imankulov said.

The rocket had been used to successfully launch a supply ship destined for the International Space Station (ISS), emergency services in Kazakhstan said yesterday.

Russia's space agency Roscosmos confirmed the death in a statement on Thursday, attributing it to "difficult meteorological conditions in the fallout region," which is experiencing extremely high temperatures.

Putin talks grandchildren, offers Comey asylum



Russian President Vladimir Putin during a TV show

Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin lifted a little of the secrecy around his grandchildren and mockingly offered ex-FBI chief James Comey asylum during his annual televised phone-in yesterday.

But the Kremlin strongman ignored more biting questions from viewers about jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny and his plans to stand for a fourth term, which appeared on-screen in an apparent glitch.

In comments aimed at a domestic audience, Putin insisted the latest US sanctions over alleged election meddling are efforts to "contain Russia".

The US Senate voted overwhelmingly to

approve further sanctions against Russia on Wednesday.

"The United States is not our enemy," Putin said, but he complained of Russia facing sanctions "throughout all of our history" from global partners who fear a "serious competitor".

Putin also jokingly suggested he could offer political asylum to fired FBI director James Comey -- who had been overseeing the bureau's Russia investigation -- comparing him to fugitive NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden, who has asylum in Russia.

Putin spoke after Comey said he had arranged for notes on his one-on-one meetings with Donald Trump to be leaked to a reporter.

Pakistani charged with taking lion on car ride

Karachi

APakistani man who took his pet lioness for a ride in the back of a pickup truck was charged with public harassment yesterday after footage from startled bystanders went viral.

In the video posted on social media, the big cat can be seen reclining in the bed of the truck, a paw lolling over the ledge and seemingly unfazed by the heavy traffic inching through a chaotic street in the city of Karachi.

Pedestrians jostling through the cars stumble into clawing ranging but the lion -- which is wearing a collar and a leash held by a man in the vehicle -- just yawns.

Police said Saqlain Javed, a local pet dealer in his thirties, was arrested after a concerned



Representational image

citizen made a complaint.

Javed, however, said he was taking the animal to the vet and had all the required permits and documentation.

"We have freed the accused on bail but registered a case of negligent conduct with an animal," Muqadas Haider, a senior police officer said.

Trump blasts probe over 'phony' Russia story

Washington

Donald Trump derided claims of collusion between Moscow and his associates as "phony" yesterday after reports the head of a probe into Russia's alleged election meddling is investigating him for obstructing justice.

"They made up a phony collusion with the Russians

story, found zero proof, so now they go for obstruction of justice on the phony story. Nice," the president wrote on Twitter.

Senior US intelligence officials have agreed to be interviewed by investigators working for Robert Mueller, a respected former FBI chief, according to reports in some American newspapers.