

world

Number of missing in California fire hits 600

Paradise, United States

The number of people listed as missing in one of California's deadliest wildfires has skyrocketed past 600, authorities said Thursday, as the remains of seven additional victims were found by rescuers.

Butte County Sheriff Kory Honea said the number of missing had more than doubled during the day to 631 as investigators went back and checked emergency calls made when the fire broke out a week ago.

"I want you to understand that the chaos we were dealing with was extraordinary" when the fire started, he told journalists, in explaining the staggering new number.

The seven additional victims brings to 63 the number of people who have died in the so-called Camp Fire in northern California.

At least three other people have died in southern California in another blaze dubbed the Woolsey Fire.

President Donald Trump is set to visit California on Saturday to meet with victims of the wildfires believed to be the worst in the state's history.

11 killed as cyclone whips Indian coast

Gaja is the second major storm to hit India's east coast in recent weeks

- Gaja packed winds of up to 120 kilometres

- Compensation of one million rupees announced

AFP | Chennai, India

At least 11 people were reported dead yesterday as a powerful cyclone battered India's eastern coast, authorities said.

Thousands of trees were felled by winds that destroyed homes and vehicles as hundreds of thousands fled to shelter homes.

Cyclone Gaja packed winds of up to 120 kilometres (75 miles) per hour as it barrelled into Tamil Nadu state after hitting the coast near Nagapattinam early Friday bringing heavy rains, India's weather office said.



Indian residents clear away fallen trees near the train station in Nagapattinam in India's southern Tamil Nadu state after a cyclone struck the region

The ruling party in the prosperous state said on Twitter that 11 people were killed in the powerful storm that has flooded several low-lying areas along the coastline on the Bay of Bengal.

The All India Anna Dravida

Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) party provided no further details about the victims.

The government has announced compensation of one million rupees (\$14,000) to victims' families as hundreds of

emergency workers were trying to restore roads and electricity.

The storm was predicted to move westwards and gradually weaken before heading into the Arabian Sea, the India Meteorological Department said.

Torrential rain caused water-logging and threatened landslides. There were widespread power outages in the region.

Authorities closed schools and colleges and thousands of emergency workers were on standby along with two naval ships with divers, helicopters and inflatable boats.

Authorities had warned fishermen since Sunday not to risk going out to sea.

Gaja is the second major storm to hit India's east coast in recent weeks. Cyclone Tilti battered Odisha state in October, killing at least two people.

Last year, Cyclone Ockhi left nearly 250 people dead in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Assange charged in US: WikiLeaks

Washington, United States

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has been charged in the United States, the organization said, in a development that could have implications for Robert Mueller's probe into alleged Russian meddling in the US presidential election.

Prosecutors inadvertently disclosed the existence of a sealed indictment in a court filing in an unrelated case, WikiLeaks said Thursday.

The exact nature of the charges against Assange was not immediately known.

North Korea tests new 'ultramodern tactical weapon'

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (L) and his wife Ri Sol Ju (R) waving to Cuba's President Miguel Diaz-Canel and his wife Lis Cuesta Peraza

Seoul, South Korea

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has overseen the testing of a "newly developed ultramodern tactical weapon", Pyongyang's state media reported yesterday, a move seen by analysts as more of a political message than a serious provocation.

It marked the first official report of a weapons test by North Korea since it began a delicate diplomatic process with Washington over its nuclear and missile programme.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency, quoting an unidentified government source, said the weapon could be a long-range cannon that the North has been developing for many years.

It said the test was successful but did not specify the type of device involved.

Russia set for first ISS launch since accident

Moscow, Russia

A Russian Soyuz rocket with a cargo vessel is to blast off in the first launch to the International Space Station (ISS) since a manned accident last month.

"The mission control centre has completed the work set out for the launch of the Progress MS-10 cargo vessel. The takeoff of the Soyuz-FG rocket is set for 1814 GMT," Russian space agency Roscosmos said. The launch from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan is seen as a rehearsal for the next manned voyage, planned for December 3. That flight is to carry Russian cosmonaut Oleg Kononenko, Canadian astronaut David Saint-Jacques, and NASA's Anne McClain to the ISS.

Suspected gas cylinder blast kills 42 on Zimbabwe bus

Harare, Zimbabwe

At least 42 passengers were killed, Zimbabwe police said yesterday, after a suspected gas cylinder exploded on a bus, with pictures showing the burnt-out wreckage of the vehicle.

The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation published photographs showing the destroyed vehicle on a highway between the South African border and the second city Bulawayo.

"At the moment we know that more than 42 people died," police spokeswoman Charity Charamba said after the accident late on Thursday, with state media reporting that a cooking gas cylinder belonging to a passenger was believed to have exploded igniting a fire.

"Our police officers are at the



Dozens dead after a gas cylinder explodes on board a Zimbabwe bus.

scene," Charamba added.

The state-owned Herald newspaper said on its Twitter feed that "it is suspected a gas tank belonging to one of the

passengers caused the inferno in the bus.

"Dozens have been confirmed dead and several others injured through burns."

Ethiopians last in line for toilets

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Ethiopians are less likely than anyone else on Earth to have access to a decent toilet, a new study said yesterday.

Charity WaterAid found Ethiopia leads the world in toilet scarcity with 93 percent of Africa's second-most populous country lacking a safe lavatory. Instead people must defecate in the open or unsafe latrines, aiding the spread of diseases such as diarrhoea. The report, released ahead of the UN's annual World Toilet Day, found that 2.3 billion people worldwide lack a loo at home, including 620 million schoolchildren.

"This is not only threatens their health and education and safety, but it also threatens their future," said WaterAid's campaign director Savio Carvalho.

Brake failure blamed for high-speed runaway mining train

AFP | Sydney, Australia

Brake failure was yesterday blamed for a runaway train laden with iron ore that sped through the Australian outback for almost an hour and had to be derailed remotely by mining giant BHP. The train moved off on its own after the driver got out to make an inspection, travelling at speeds of up to 110 kilometres (68 miles) per hour towards the

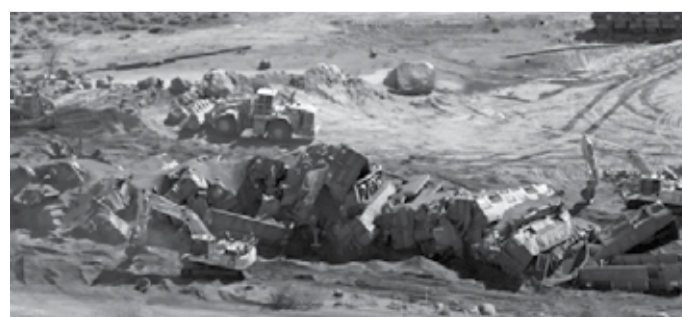
town of Port Hedland in Western Australia's Pilbara in early November.

Following a preliminary internal investigation, BHP said the train initially stopped due to a disconnected cable controlling the braking system, but then started moving as the emergency brake was not engaged.

At the same time, the braking system that halted the 268-wag-



Australia is one of the world's major sources of iron ore.



Twisted remains of the train (Courtesy of The West Australian)

on train "automatically released after one hour while the driver was still outside", Western Australia Iron Ore asset president Edgar Basto said in a statement.

BHP, which owns the four-locomotive train, derailed the train before it reached Port Hedland, causing the carriages to crash off the rails, damaging around 1.5 kilometres (a mile) of track but hurting no one.