

News in brief

37 die in violent start to Uganda's election season



◆ At least thirty-seven people died in violent clashes between Ugandan security forces and supporters of opposition presidential candidate Bobi Wine this week, marking a particularly violent start to the country's election season. "Two days of protests were sparked by Wine's arrest ahead of a political rally in the run-up to January 14's election, in which he is seen as the main challenger to President Yoweri Museveni, who is seeking to extend his 36-year rule."

◆ Authorities in Central America recovered more bodies from landslides triggered by hurricane Iota, which battered the impoverished region this week, the second deadly storm to roar through this month.

Storm death toll rises in Central America



The number of reported deaths rose to more than 40 across Central America and Colombia, and the toll is expected to rise as rescue workers reach isolated communities. Most of the deaths occurred in Nicaragua and Honduras.

Former leader Corbyn suspended as Labour MP for three months



◆ British former Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn will be suspended as a Labour member of Parliament for three months as the party faces calls to launch a new investigation, the Telegraph reported. Corbyn was informed that the duration of the suspension could be reviewed depending on his actions, suggesting it could be shortened or extended depending on whether he issued an apology, the report added, citing sources. Corbyn was suspended from the party in October in

light of his comments after a report said the party was responsible for unlawful harassment and discrimination in its handling of allegations of anti-Semitism.

◆ The US government put convicted rapist and murderer Orlando Hall to death by lethal injection, the eighth execution under the Trump administration since capital punishment was reinstated at the federal level over the summer. Hall, 49, was pronounced dead at 11:47 p.m. EST after officials at the US Bureau of Prisons administered him a fatal dose of the barbiturate pentobarbital at the bureau's execution chamber in Terre Haute, Indiana.

◆ Azerbaijan said its troops had entered a district bordering Nagorno-Karabakh handed back by Armenian separatists after almost 30 years as part of a Russian-brokered peace deal to end weeks of brutal fighting in the region.

Azerbaijan troops enter first district handed over by Armenia



Troops moved into the district of Aghdam, one of three due to be handed back, the Azerbaijan defence ministry said, a day after columns of Armenian soldiers and tanks rolled out of the territory.

Modi holds security review meet after security forces thwarted Jaish attack

◆ Four suspected Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorists were killed and two policemen injured in a gunbattle in Nagrota after a truck carrying newly infiltrated militants was intercepted



India's PM Narendra Modi signs the visitor's book in Jaisalmer (file photo)

PTI | New Delhi
India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a review meeting with top security brass in the wake of the killing of four Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists in Jammu, and asserted that security forces have thwarted their efforts to wreak "major havoc and destruction."

Government sources said that the terrorists were planning "something big" on the anniversary of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack.

In his tweets following the meeting, Modi said, "Neutralising of 4 terrorists belonging to Jaish-e-Mohammed and the presence of large cache of weapons and explosives with them indicate that their efforts to wreak major havoc and destruction have once again been thwarted."

Hailing the security forces, he

said they have once again displayed utmost bravery and professionalism.

"Thanks to their alertness, they have defeated a nefarious plot to target grassroots level democratic exercises," the prime minister added.

In the review meeting, Home Minister Amit Shah, NSA Ajit Doval, foreign secretary and top intel-

BETTER YOU KNOW

Intelligence inputs said that Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorists killed in an encounter on the outskirts of Jammu, were planning a big terror operation on the anniversary of the 26/11 Mumbai attack

ligence officials were present as Modi took stock of the situation. Inspector General of Police (IGP), Jammu, Mukesh Singh, had said after the encounter that the terrorists had come to execute a "big plan" which has now been foiled.

Vatican vows to get to the bottom of racy Papal Instagram 'like'

AFP | London

The Vatican has launched an investigation into how Pope Francis's Instagram account "liked" a raunchy photograph of a Brazilian bikini model with her bottom on display.

Natalia Garibotto, 27, posed in a white cropped top, suspenders and the smallest of tartan skirts for a naughty school girl picture that was given the thumbs up by the official Franciscus account last week.

"I'm going to heaven," the blonde model tweeted after an eagle-eyed fan snapped a screenshot of the "like".

It was removed a day later by the Vatican's social media team.

On brink of collapse, famed Puerto Rico space telescope to close down

Reuters | London

The US National Science Foundation announced it will close down the massive space telescope at Puerto Rico's Arecibo Observatory, ending 57 years of astronomical discoveries after suffering two destructive mishaps in recent months.

Operations at the observatory, one of the largest in the world,



A general view of the Arecibo Observatory space telescope

were halted in August when one of its supportive cables slipped loose from its socket, falling and gashing a 100-foot-long (30-meter) hole in its 1,000-foot wide reflector dish.

Another cable then broke earlier this month, tearing a new hole in the dish and damaging nearby cables as engineers scrambled

to devise a plan to preserve the crippled structure.

"NSF has concluded that this recent damage to the 305-meter telescope cannot be addressed without risking the lives and safety of work crews and staff," Sean Jones, assistant director of the Mathematical and Physical Sciences Directorate at NSF, said.

1000 foot (305 m) is the width of the reflector dish on the telescope making it world's largest single-aperture telescope

COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths	Global tally
1 USA	12,154,652	259,211	57,694,104
2 India	9,047,936	132,732	
3 Brazil	5,987,219	168,218	Deaths
4 France	2,109,170	47,127	1,372,815
5 Russia	2,039,926	35,311	Recovered:
6 Spain	1,589,219	42,619	39,985,832
7 UK	1,473,508	54,286	New cases
8 Argentina	1,349,434	36,532	+458,466
9 Italy	1,345,767	48,569	New deaths
10 Colombia	1,225,490	34,761	+7,874
11 Mexico	1,019,543	100,104	
12 Peru	943,917	35,446	
13 Germany	895,304	13,990	
14 Iran	828,377	43,896	

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	111,955		6,508		101,564	3,883
Saudi Arabia	354,813	+286	5,745	+16	342,404	6,664
UAE	156,523	+1,269	547	+3	147,309	8,667
Kuwait	139,308	+486	861	+2	131,049	7,398
Oman	121,360		1,365		112,406	7,589
Qatar	136,888	+239	235		133,914	2,739

'Emotional distress': S. Korea court orders compensation for Ronaldo no-show

AFP | Seoul

A South Korean promoter was ordered to compensate fans after Juventus superstar Cristiano Ronaldo failed to play an exhibition match as promised.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner stayed on the bench throughout a 3-3 draw with a K-League all-stars team in July last year, despite the pleas and anger of a sell-out 65,000 crowd at the Seoul World Cup Stadium.

Match promoter The Fasta had run adverts promising the Portuguese striker would play.

The Seoul Central District Court ordered The Fasta to refund half the ticket price and an additional 50,000 won (\$45) in compensation to each of 162 plaintiffs who had sued the promoter.

Tickets -- priced from 30,000 won to 400,000 won -- had sold out in less than three minutes,



Cristiano Ronaldo is seen on the bench during the match (file photo)

such was the clamour to see the 35-year-old.

"The defendant has contractual obligations of Ronaldo playing in the game barring any unforeseen circumstances," the court said.

The fans who had come expecting Ronaldo to play suffered "emotional distress", it added.

No order was made against

Ronaldo or Juventus.

The verdict followed a court in a different district ordering The Fasta to compensate two fans who had accused it of false advertising.

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The K-League accused Juventus of "deception" and demanded an apology, while one fan flew to Sweden to confront his hero.