



Israel pounds Gaza after first rocket fire in weeks

## Clashes erupt as Indian's temple accepts women

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FLORIDA: A destroyed house sits in debris and rubble in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael in Mexico Beach, Florida. The hurricane hit on October 10 along the Florida Panhandle as a category 4 storm causing massive damage and claimed the lives of more than a dozen people. —AFP

# Over a thousand missing after hurricane

## Michael flattens communities across the Florida Panhandle

PANAMA CITY BEACH: More than a thousand people were still missing yesterday a week after Hurricane Michael flattened communities across the Florida Panhandle, killing at least 27. Teams made up of hundreds of volunteers with the Houston-based CrowdSource Rescue organization were searching for more than 1,135 people in Florida who lost contact with friends and family, Matthew Marchetti, co-founder of Houston-based CrowdSource Rescue.

Most of those missing are from Panama City and many are elderly, disabled, impoverished, or live alone, Marchetti said. Florida officials have not given a number for how many people are considered to be missing. Those who are missing may be with relatives and friends, and not necessarily presumed dead. Debris, downed trees and power lines have hampered access to stranded people, but CrowdSource said a number of its missing person reports resulted from widespread phone

and power outages.

The death toll includes 17 in Florida, one in Georgia, three in North Carolina and six in Virginia, according to a Reuters tally of official reports. Officials said medical examiners were determining whether another four deaths in Florida were due to the storm. Michael slammed into the northwest coastal strip of Florida last Wednesday with top sustained winds of 155 miles per hour (250 km/h), unleashing a surge of seawater that demolished homes.

About 35,000 Floridians have called Federal Emergency Management Agency seeking help since and the agency has already approved

\$1 million in assistance for people in those 12 counties, spokesman Ruben Brown in Tallahassee said. FEMA has distributed about 4.5 million meals, more than 5 million liters of water and 9 million infant-and-toddler kits, he said. In Mexico Beach, which took a direct hit, the number of people missing dropped to three on Tuesday, said Rex Putnal, a city councilor. A day earlier, it was more than 30. The town of 1,200 residents had reported two fatalities as of Monday.

Nearly 163,000 homes and businesses remained without power in the US Southeast, with residents of battered coastal towns forced to cook on fires and barbecue

grills. At least 80 percent of customers in three mainly rural Panhandle counties were without electricity on Tuesday. Officials said it could be weeks before power returns to some. Countless others in the region's back-country have struggled for days without running water or sanitation, awaiting help from authorities. Some have been camping in tents with the belongings they were able to salvage.

The state government is distributing ice, water and about 3 million ready-to-eat meals, Governor Rick Scott's office said. Marchetti said the search has been hindered by spotty cell phone coverage in the devastated area, though authorities are making progress in restoring communications. Many residents have also expressed frustration at the slow pace of recovery of wireless networks. Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai on Tuesday called for wireless carriers to waive bills for customers affected by the storm. — Reuters



At least 27 killed

## Saudi journalist disappearance

ANKARA: Here is a timeline of events in the disappearance of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, a US resident who has not been seen since he entered the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul on October 2.

### Goes inside

At 1:14 pm on October 2, Khashoggi is recorded entering the Saudi consulate in Istanbul by a surveillance camera. The image is published by the Washington Post. He was at the consulate to receive an official document for his upcoming marriage. His fiancée, Hatice Cengiz, waits outside.

### Alarm raised

On October 3 the Washington Post, for whom Khashoggi writes opinion pieces, raises the alarm, saying he has not been seen since he entered the consulate. His fiancée camps out near barricades in front of the consulate hoping for news. Turkish presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin tells a news conference: "According to information we have this individual... is still at the consulate as of now". The US State Department says it is investigating.

### Saudi denial

On October 4, after an initial period of silence, Riyadh says Khashoggi disappeared "after he left the consulate building". The Saudi ambassador is summoned to the Turkish foreign ministry. On October 5 Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman tells Bloomberg that Khashoggi is not inside the consulate and



ISTANBUL: Turkish forensic and investigation officers arrive at Saudi Arabia's Consul General Mohammad Al-Otaibi's residence yesterday in Istanbul. —AFP

"we are ready to welcome the Turkish government to go and search our premises," which is Saudi sovereign territory.

### Murdered in consulate?

On October 6 a government source says Turkish police believe Khashoggi was murdered inside the consulate. "Based on their initial findings, the police believe that the journalist was killed by a team especially sent to Istanbul and who left the same day," the source says. Riyadh calls the claim "baseless". On October 7 Turkey seeks permission to search the consulate.

### Pressure on Riyadh

On October 8 Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan asks Riyadh to "prove" that Khashoggi left its consulate. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo calls for a "thorough" and "transparent" probe by Washington's ally Saudi Arabia.

### Search granted

On October 9 Saudi Arabia agrees to let Turkish authorities search the consulate. Local media report on the possibility that Khashoggi was kidnapped and taken to Saudi Arabia. English-language state broadcaster TRT World says Turkish officials believe the Saudis may have taken the consulate's CCTV footage with them when they returned to the kingdom.

### Kidnapping?

CCTV footage released by Turkish TV shows a van entering the consulate on October 2, before going to the nearby consul's residence. The Washington Post, citing US intelligence intercepts, says the Saudi crown prince ordered an operation to trap Khashoggi. The US State Department says it had not been tipped off about such an operation. US President Donald Trump calls for explanations from Saudi Arabia, saying he has talked "at the highest levels" to partners in Riyadh. —AFP

## US strike in Somalia killed 60 militants

WASHINGTON: The United States conducted its largest air strike in nearly two years against militants in Somalia, killing about 60 Al-Shabaab fighters, the US military said Tuesday. "This precision air strike was the largest air strike against Al-Shabaab since November 21, 2017," when air-dropped US munitions targeted one of the group's training camps, killing about 100 extremists, US Africa Command said in a statement.

The strike took place Friday in the Harardhere area along the central coast of the Horn of Africa country, where US forces train Somali troops and also partner with the United Nations-backed African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Air assaults and missile strikes have increased in recent months against Shabaab, an Al-Qaeda affiliate fighting to overthrow the internationally backed Somali government in Mogadishu.

The surge in activity came after President Donald Trump last year loosened constraints on the US military in

Somalia, allowing commanders to take action against suspected militants when they judge it is needed, without seeking specific White House approval. "Air strikes reduce Al-Shabaab's ability to plot future attacks, disrupt its leadership networks, and degrade its freedom of maneuver within the region," Africa Command said in a statement. "The group uses portions of southern and central Somalia to plot and direct terror attacks, steal humanitarian aid, extort the local populace to fund its operations and shelter radical terrorists."

Friday's air strike came a day before suicide bombers killed at least 16 people at a restaurant and coffee shop in the southwestern city of Baidoa. It also came ahead of the first anniversary Sunday of a truck bombing that left more than 500 dead in Mogadishu, the worst ever attack in Somalia blamed on Al-Shabaab. Last month, Africa Command said American and allied forces had come under attack in Somalia, triggering an air strike in self-defense that killed 18 Shabaab extremists in the country's south.

In June, an American commando was killed during an attack in southern Somalia that also wounded four US military members and a Somali soldier, officials said at the time. More than 500 American personnel are partnered with Somali forces and AMISOM, which aims to counter the threat from Al-Shabaab jihadists. —AFP