



China bans exams for six-year-olds

## Nigeria's troubled exit path for repentant jihadists

Page 6

Page 7



BOURG: Montegut fire chief Toby Henry walks back to his fire truck in the rain as firefighters cut through trees on the road in Bourg, Louisiana as Hurricane Ida passes Sunday. —AFP

# Hurricane Ida pummels Louisiana

## Powerful storm knocks out power in New Orleans, at least one dead

**NEW ORLEANS, US:** Powerful Hurricane Ida battered the southern US state of Louisiana, leaving at least one dead and knocking out power for more than a million people, including the whole of New Orleans. Ida slammed into the Louisiana coast as a Category 4 storm on Sunday, 16 years to the day after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, but had weakened to a tropical storm early Monday.

The storm knocked out power for all of New Orleans, with more than a million customers across Louisiana without power, according to outage tracker PowerOutage.US.

"We have now lost power, citywide! This is the time to continue to remain in your safe places. It isn't a time to venture out!!" New Orleans mayor LaToya Cantrell said on Twitter. Electricity provider Entergy said it was providing back-up power to New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board, which operates the pumping stations used to control flooding.

The National Weather Service issued warnings of storm surges and flash floods for several areas, including the town of Jean Lafitte, just south of New Orleans, where mayor Tim Kerner said the rapidly rising waters had overtopped the 7.5-foot-high (2.3-meter) levees. "Total devastation, catastrophic, our town levees have been overtopped," Kerner told ABC-affiliate WGNO.

"We have anywhere between 75 to 200 people stranded in Barataria," after a barge took out the swing bridge to the island. "The winds are still too strong, we can't put boats in the water to get to

them," he told WGNO. "This is a very dangerous situation. I've never seen so much water in my life," he said. Cynthia Lee Sheng, president of Jefferson Parish covering part of the Greater New Orleans area, said people were sheltering in their attics. "We really believe the calls coming in here to our emergency operations center, is that people are in attics in Lower Lafitte," she told WGNO.

She said the power was out but rescue teams, including the Louisiana National Guard, were ready to help once they can safely get to the area. Several residents of LaPlace, just upstream from New Orleans, posted appeals for help on social media, saying they were trapped by rising flood waters.

President Joe Biden, who described Ida as "a life-threatening storm," declared a major disaster for Louisiana, which gives it access to federal aid. One person was killed by a falling tree in Prairieville, 60 miles northwest of New Orleans, the Ascension Parish Sheriff's Office said.

Throughout Sunday showers and strong winds swept New Orleans' deserted streets, buffeting boarded-up windows at businesses and homes surrounded

by sandbags. Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards said Ida could be the most powerful storm to hit the state since 1850. "There is no doubt that the coming days and weeks are going to be extremely difficult," he said at a briefing Sunday.

### Not sure if I'm prepared

Most residents had heeded warnings of catastrophic damage and authorities' instructions to flee.

In one neighborhood in eastern New Orleans, a few residents were completing preparations just hours before landfall. "I'm not sure if I'm prepared," said Charles Fields, who was bringing his garden furniture indoors, "but we just have to ride it."

"We'll see how it holds up," added the 60-year-old, who in 2005 saw Hurricane Katrina flood his house with 11 feet (3.3 meters) of water.

### 'Very serious test'

Governor Edwards warned on Sunday that Ida would be "a very serious test for our levee systems," an extensive network of pumps, gates and earthen and concrete berms that was expanded after Katrina.

He told CNN that hundreds of thousands of residents were believed to have evacuated. The storm "presents some very challenging difficulties for us, with the hospitals being so full of COVID patients," he said. With a low rate of vaccination, Louisiana is among the states hit hardest by the pandemic, severely stressing hospitals.

Hospitalizations, at 2,700 on Saturday, are near their pandemic high. The memory of Katrina, which made landfall on August 29, 2005, is still fresh in Louisiana, where it caused some 1,800 deaths and billions of dollars in damage. Rainfall of 10 to 18 inches (25 to 46 centimeters) is expected in parts of southern Louisiana through Monday, with up to 24 inches in some areas.

As of 4 am Monday, the storm was packing maximum sustained winds of 60 miles per hour (97 kph) and was expected to continue weakening as it moves over land, with a predicted track taking it north over the central United States before veering eastward, reaching the mid-Atlantic region by Wednesday. The White House said Sunday that federal agencies had deployed more than 2,000 emergency workers to the region-including 13 urban search-and-rescue teams-along with food and water supplies and electric generators.

Scientists have warned of a rise in cyclone activity as the ocean surface warms due to climate change, posing an increasing threat to the world's coastal communities. —AFP

## In New Orleans, Ida brings trauma of Katrina flooding back

**NEW ORLEANS:** Chester Lastie clearly recalls Hurricane Katrina, which devastated his neighborhood in eastern New Orleans, 16 years ago to the day. The memories are made all the more vivid by the gusts of wind from Hurricane Ida currently battering his white house.

"We were sitting in the yard about 11:00 when the levees broke" on August 29, 2005, he tells AFP. He quickly

jumped in his truck and headed for the Claiborne Avenue Bridge, high up, where he watched the elements unleash themselves on the Lower Ninth Ward, a working-class neighborhood with a mostly Black population. He and a friend later went out in a boat. "We saw a lot of people stuck in houses, on the roof, stuck in trees. We saved them," he continues.

Most of the drowning deaths in Louisiana due to Katrina took place in neighborhoods in the east of New Orleans, including the Lower Ninth Ward, according to a report by authorities released three years after the disaster. Images of roads and houses flooded with brown water from the Mississippi River, which borders the area, were seen around the world, turning the Lower Ninth Ward into one of the main symbols of Katrina's destruction.

Lastie hopes that the damage won't be as bad with Ida. "I don't think the Lord would do that twice," says the 56-year-old, who took more than a year to completely rebuild his house and his other properties after the 2005 hurricane. His wife Patricia Walker, 53, sporting sparkly sandals and a mouth full of gold teeth, is also a Katrina survivor. "I went to my attic and waited for the sunlight, and then people rescued me," she recalls.

The chef waited two years before returning to the Lower Ninth Ward, where she grew up. But many never came back at all, as shown by the multiple plots of weedy, overgrown grass lining the neighborhood's main street, giving it a desolate air. Before Katrina, "this neighborhood was full of kids in the streets," says Lastie despairingly. "There is nothing anymore, only empty lots."

## Milan tower block goes up in flames

**MILAN:** Fire ripped through a 20-storey residential building in Milan, northern Italy, on Sunday, leaving rescue workers scrambling to make sure no one had been caught in the spectacular flames and thick smoke. The blaze started on the upper floors of the tower on the southern outskirts of the capital of the Lombardy region.

"The flames then spread to the lower levels," causing thick smoke, the fire services said on a Twitter account. Residents of the building which houses around 70 families were being contacted but no one had so far been identified as missing, they added.

"The firemen are going from apartment to apartment, knocking down doors to make sure no one remains inside," Milan mayor Giuseppe Sala told the Corriere della Sera newspaper.

"But we are optimistic because people had time to get out," he added. The daily said about 20 residents suffered slight smoke inhalation. Dozens of ambulances and fire engines were at the scene. —AFP



MILAN: Policemen walk by a 20-storey residential building which caught fire the day before yesterday in Milan. —AFP

## Fear, acceptance mix in cradle of Tunisian revolution

**TUNIS:** Many people in Sidi Bouzid, the cradle of Tunisia's 2011 revolution that launched the Arab Spring, see President Kais Saied's power grab as a necessary evil. But there are also fears that last month's dismissal of parliament, sacking of the prime minister and Saied's assumption of sweeping powers may bring Tunisia one step closer to another dictatorship.

It was in this large town of central Tunisia on December 17, 2010 that Mohamed Bouazizi, a fruit and vegetable salesman angered by police harassment, set himself ablaze. His suicide sparked an unprecedented uprising that left some 300 people dead

and toppled long-time dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. But more than a decade later, hopes for a better future have given way to anger and disappointment over the North African country's politicians' failure to improve living standards.

The chants of "Dignity!" and "Work!" that filled the air during the revolution have again sounded at recent demonstrations. Ahmed Ouni is 36, unemployed and not at all happy with his lot.

"These last 11 years have been worse than 23 years under Ben Ali! Parliament and the government smothered us in poverty, so good riddance to them!" he said. "Because the Tunisians chose Saied, he has their endorsement to lead the country and do what has to be done. We have confidence in him," Ouni told AFP.

Sidi Bouzid's infrastructure has improved and more businesses have opened, but some people still feel marginalized and look to Saied to make their lives better. —AFP

HOLDING COMPANY

# WE'RE HIRING

Open Day Interviews Inviting

<b>Chefs</b>	<b>Commi's</b>
<b>Waiters</b>	<b>Tray line packers</b> <small>(food packers)</small>

to join our Esteemed Organization

## Salary up to KD 500

Open days from: 1st till 7th Sep. 2021 from 9 am to 6 pm

---

Address:  
19th floor, Al-Hamra, Sharq, Kuwait City

Contact:  
**50644392 - 55065721 - 94901483**