

Friday Times International

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Wagner Group: Putin's mysterious private army

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Bomb suspect, 2 Hamas officers killed in a raid

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NEW YORK: A man begs for money in the snow along 42nd Street in Times Square in New York yesterday. —AFP

Snow storm slams US Northeast

Fourth snow storm in three weeks

NEW YORK: A fourth snow storm in three weeks slammed the US Northeast on Wednesday, canceling flights, closing schools and shutting federal offices on the second day of spring. Winter Storm Toby dumped seven inches (18 centimeters) of snow on New York, the US financial capital, by 8pm (0000 GMT Thursday), significantly less than originally forecast with the storm to taper off overnight.

It remained unclear if the storm, which had been expected to pummel parts of New York with more than a foot of snow, would exceed the springtime blizzard that brought 10 inches in April 1915. The National Weather Service warned against wind gusts of 40 miles per hour (64 kilometers per hour), with power outages and downed trees possible in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Predictions of heavy snow saw New York's state governor, up for re-election, declare a state of emergency in and around the city.

But more than 4,400 flights within, into or out of the United States were cancelled, including a majority at Newark and LaGuardia, two of New York's three area airports, and half at John F. Kennedy International and Philadelphia. Forty percent of flights were canceled at Washington's Reagan National Airport, the FlightAware website added. In New York, Mayor Bill de Blasio urged employers to let staff go home early with the snow expected to quickly accumulate after 4:00 pm and reach "blizzard-like conditions."

Boston schools close

"The evening rush hour is going to be very, very difficult," he told a news conference. "If you don't need to be out this evening, don't go out." "Flights are limited right now. I am certain that's going to get worse as the day goes by. I would suspect very few flights will be happening later in the day," he added.

In Washington, forecasts of three to eight inches of the white stuff shut schools and federal government offices in the world's most powerful political capital. Congress stayed open with lawmakers scrambling to agree on a federal spending bill to stave off a government shutdown. The Federal Reserve also continued "as planned" a meeting before raising the key lending rate for the first time this year, citing a stronger outlook for economic growth, and hinted at a slightly more aggressive pace for hikes in 2019.

In New Jersey, the governor also declared a state of emergency and schools closed in Philadelphia. New Jersey Transit, the commuter rail service, discontinued buses. While Broadway shows went ahead as scheduled, pop sensation Justin Timberlake announced his planned concert at Madison Square Garden on Wednesday was canceled. In Boston, where winters are more severe than farther south, officials ordered public schools to stay closed yesterday.—AFP



PHILADELPHIA: Pedestrians walk through snow and high winds in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. —AFP