

**News in brief**

**Japan mourns 2011 disaster as nuclear support grows**



Japanese offered tearful prayers yesterday on the anniversary of the deadly tsunami that triggered the Fukushima disaster, but public support for nuclear power is growing as memories of the 2011 meltdown fade. The 9.0-magnitude quake -- the fourth strongest in Earth's recorded history -- devastated northeastern Japan 12 years ago. The undersea quake unleashed a tsunami that left around 18,500 people dead or missing and overwhelmed cooling systems at the Fukushima Daiichi plant, leading to the worst nuclear catastrophe since Chernobyl. All of Japan's nuclear reactors were taken offline after the disaster and the majority remain out of action today.

**Moroccan authorities have seized more than three tonnes of cannabis resin in two speed boats off the northeastern coast bordering the Spanish enclave of Melilla, state media reported yesterday.**

The operation resulted in the seizing of two go-fast boats... with 85 bales of chira (cannabis resin) weighing a total of more than three tonnes," a military source was quoted as saying by the official MAP news agency. The cargo was seized on Friday off the town of Nador after the boats did not respond to naval orders, sparking a chase, it added.

**Over three tonnes of cannabis seized off Morocco coast**



**Ecuador to release sterile mosquitoes in Galapagos**



Galapagos Islands to curb dengue, Zika and chikungunya transmission, authorities said. The first such effort with sterile mosquitoes there, it should help lower local residents' and tourists' rates of infection from those diseases, the National Institute for Health Research (Inspi) said. The plan should "improve health conditions of the population, avoiding the transmission of diseases to tourists... and reducing the use of chemical products used in fumigation," an Inspi statement said. The Galapagos, a World Heritage Site whose fragile ecosystem is home to unique flora and fauna species, were made famous by British geologist and naturalist Charles Darwin's observations on evolution there.

**Ecuador will release 100,000 sterile Aedes aegypti mosquitoes on its**

**CURIOSER & CURIOSER**

**World's first 3D printed rocket set for inaugural flight**



The Terran 1 rocket on the launch pad at Launch Complex 16 in Cape Canaveral, Florida

AFP | Washington

The world's first 3D printed rocket was scheduled to blast off from Florida late yesterday on the maiden flight of an innovative spacecraft billed as being less costly to produce and fly.

Liftoff of the rocket, Terran 1, had been scheduled for Wednesday at Cape Canaveral but was postponed at the last minute because of propellant temperature issues.

The new launch window for the rocket built by California aerospace startup Relativity Space to put satellites into orbit was from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm (1800 GMT to 2100 GMT) yesterday.

Terran 1 is set to reach low Earth orbit eight minutes after blastoff on a voyage intended to gather data and demonstrate that it can withstand the rigors of liftoff and space flight.

If the rocket manages to attain low Earth orbit, it will be the first privately-funded vehicle using methane fuel to

**YOU KNOW WHAT**

**It is the largest ever 3D printed object according to the Long Beach-based company whose goal is to produce a rocket that is 95 percent 3D printed**

do so on its first try, according to Relativity.

Terran 1 is not carrying a payload for its first flight but the rocket will eventually be capable of putting up to 2,755 pounds (1,250 kilograms) into low Earth orbit.

The rocket is 110-feet (33.5 meters) tall with a diameter of 7.5 feet (2.2 meters) and 85 percent of its mass is 3D printed with metal alloys, including the engines.

**'Pineapple express' storm wallops California**

AFP | Los Angeles

Dozens of evacuation orders were in place as a powerful atmospheric river, known as a "Pineapple express," surged into an already-sodden California, sparking warnings of widespread flash flooding.

Up to nine inches (23 centimetres) of rain were expected in some parts of the state, with several feet of heavy, wet snow falling over mountains where a huge snowpack has built up over months of near-record storms.

Forecasters said the Pineapple Express -- so called because it is bringing warm, subtropical moisture from Hawaii -- could cause some of that monster snowpack to melt, overwhelming river systems.

"Rainfall totals of 4-9 inches, atop areas with saturated soil and deep snowpack will cause widespread and severe flooding impacts," the National Weather Service (NWS) warned.

"Higher elevations in northern California and the Sierras will receive a heavy, wet snow leading to difficult travel."

US President Joe Biden on Friday approved an emergency declaration for the state, clearing the way for federal assistance to help local agencies.

The move came after a request from California Governor Gavin Newsom, who said he was mobilizing resources to help anyone in need.

"California is deploying every tool we have to protect communities from the relentless and deadly storms battering our



Snow capped mountains stand on the skyline behind a view of the Hollywood sign in Los Angeles

**YOU KNOW WHAT**

**Pineapple Express -- so called because it is bringing warm, subtropical moisture from Hawaii -- could cause some of that monster snowpack to melt, overwhelming river systems**

**California is deploying every tool we have to protect communities from the relentless and deadly storms battering our state**

CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM

More than 20 people died as back-to-back storms washed out communities, bringing down trees and causing landslides -- and emergency services now are worried the fresh storms could cause more problems.

San Mateo County Sheriff said two people whose car was crushed by a falling tree in Redwood City were expected to be okay.

"Stay home tonight if you can, folks," the sheriff's office tweeted, alongside a photo of the mangled car.

**Russia denounces Georgia protests as coup attempt**

AFP | Tbilisi

Moscow accused foreign countries of fomenting mass protests in Georgia, likening them to an attempted coup designed to sow tension on Russia's borders.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that several days of demonstrations in the Georgian capital Tbilisi reminded him of a Ukrainian uprising that ousted a Kremlin-friendly government in 2014.

Hundreds of Georgians rallied for a fourth day outside parliament, keeping up their calls for a pro-European future, as lawmakers dropped the controversial "foreign agent"



Georgian anti-government protesters rally outside the parliament

legislation that triggered violent clashes between police and protesters this week.

The demonstrations point to turmoil over the future of Georgia, which aims to join the EU and NATO, much to the frustration of Moscow.

**There is no doubt that the law on the registration of non-governmental organisations was used as an excuse to start, generally speaking, an attempt to change the government by force**

RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SERGEI LAVROV

Russia invaded Georgia in 2008 and recognised two separatist territories in the north of the country as independent, stationing military bases there after the war.

**Indonesia's Merapi volcano erupts, covers villages in ash**

AFP | Yogyakarta

Indonesia's Mount Merapi, one of the world's most active volcanoes, erupted yesterday, spewing out smoke and ash that blanketed villages near the crater.

There were no immediate reports of casualties, the country's disaster mitigation agency said.

Images broadcast on local outlet Kompas TV showed ash-covered houses and roads at a village near the volcano, located on Java Island, near Indonesia's cultural capital Yogyakarta.

The Merapi Volcano Observatory estimated the ash cloud reached 9,600 feet (3,000 me-



Thick smoke rises during an eruption from Mount Merapi

tres) above the summit.

Authorities established a restricted zone of seven kilometres from the crater after the eruption, which was recorded at 12:12 pm (0512 GMT).

"To anticipate potential danger from Mount Merapi eruption, the public is advised to stop any activities in the potential danger area," agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said in a statement yesterday.

**Blast**

**Bomb attack kills gua**

**The explosion happened in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of the Balkh province, during an award event for journalists**

AFP | Kabul

A bomb blast in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif yesterday killed a security guard and wounded a group of journalists, as well as several children, police and a witness said.

The blast came two days after a suicide bomber killed the Taliban governor of northern Balkh province in an attack claimed by the Islamic State group.

The attack on Mohammad

**Rescuers airlift from remote A**



An aerial view of the flooded northern Queensland town

AFP | Sydney

Rescuers flew residents out of a remote Australian town by helicopter yesterday as record-high floods rose rapidly and authorities issued a "final alert" to evacuate.

Police said helicopters and other aircraft had already flown out 53 vulnerable people over the past few days from the small community of Burketown in northeastern Australia.

Murky water lapped at the sides of buildings in the town, which lies 1,600 kilometres (1,000 miles) northwest of the Queensland capital Brisbane and is usually home to about 200 people.

The swollen Albert River had transformed wide areas of land around the town into lakes, with only the tops of trees visible, aerial images provided by emergency services showed.

Police said about half of the town's houses had been flooded.

Only about 100 people remained in the Queensland town by yesterday morning and helicopters were ferrying more people to safety, state police said.

"At the moment the water movements are unpredictable and are rising at a rapid pace," the local Burke Shire Council said in a "final alert" to residents.

"We strongly encourage residents to evacuate," it said, telling them to pack a bag and warning