

WORLD

Evacuations as wildfire threatens LA

Fire crews racing to contain blaze before strong winds hit region again

LOS ANGELES — More than 1,000 firefighters battled a wind-driven blaze on Monday that broke out near the renowned Getty Center museum in Los Angeles, prompting widespread evacuations as the flames destroyed several homes and forced the shutdown of schools and roads.

It was the latest outbreak in a wildfire season that has caused mass evacuations and power outages across California.

The so-called Getty Fire ignited overnight near a major freeway and quickly spread south and west toward neighborhoods, scorching nearly 240 hectares and sending people fleeing in the dark.

By Monday afternoon, fire crews had slowed the pace of the blaze and were racing to contain it before strong winds are expected to hit the region again from Tuesday evening through Thursday.

Authorities said some 1,100 firefighters were battling an inferno that threatened 10,000 structures, many of them multimillion dollar homes.

“This is a fire that quickly spread,” Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said at a news conference with fire officials, urging residents in the mandatory evacuation zone, which encompasses more than 10,000 homes and businesses, to get out quickly.

“Get out when we say get out,” the mayor said, telling homeowners they should not try to fight the fire with garden hoses, the Los Angeles Times reported. “The only thing you cannot replace is you and your family.”

Among those forced to flee was Los Angeles Lakers star LeBron James, who tweeted that he and his family had evacuated his home in



Firefighter Collin Bashara, outside his fire truck, takes a rest in Los Angeles on Monday. RINGO H.W. CHIU / AP

the upscale neighborhood of Brentwood during the night.

“Man these LA fires aren’t joke,” he said. “Had to emergency evacuate my house and I’ve been driving around with my family trying to get rooms. No luck so far!”

He later tweeted that he had found a place to stay.

Arnold Schwarzenegger also said on Monday that he had to flee.

“We evacuated safely at 3:30 this morning,” the actor and former California governor tweeted. “If you are in an evacuation zone, don’t screw around. Get out.”

Monday night’s red carpet premiere in Los Angeles of *Terminator: Dark Fate*, starring Schwarzenegger, was canceled because of the fire.

“We will be donating food intended for the after-party to the American Red Cross, which is serving those affected by the fires,” Paramount said in a statement.

The Getty Center, which is home

to a priceless art collection, said none of the pieces was under threat from the flames, notably because the building is designed to be fire resistant.

“Many have asked about the art — it is protected by state-of-the-art technology,” the museum said in a tweet.

The Getty Fire broke out as California has been dealing with a number of wildfires that have ignited throughout the state in the last week, forcing massive evacuations and power cuts.

‘We are devastated’

California Governor Gavin Newsom declared a statewide emergency on Sunday as a wind-driven fire in the Sonoma wine region north of San Francisco spread out of control, forcing tens of thousands to flee.

The Kincade Fire, which erupted on Oct 23 and is the largest so far this year, had spread to more than 26,700 hectares — or more than 260 square

kilometers — by Monday afternoon and was only 15 percent contained.

Firefighters have also been battling a number of additional fires fed by strong winds, low humidity and high temperatures.

Residents who fled the Kincade Fire recalled hasty departures as they waited it out in the safety of a community center in Petaluma, California.

“The police came with loudspeakers. We weren’t expecting it,” said Kathy Amundson, who fled with her wheelchair-bound 90-year-old mother Joy.

“We smelled smoke, we couldn’t see it,” she said. “Looks like our home is safe but the fear is wind blowing embers and then it starts new fires.”

Others were not so lucky. The fire has destroyed dozens of homes and vineyards, including the renowned 150-year-old Soda Rock Winery.

AGENCIES—CHINA DAILY

Briefly

THE PHILIPPINES

Quake kills at least two, injures dozens

An earthquake of magnitude 6.6 sent people scrambling on Tuesday as it shook buildings and disrupted power supply in the central area of the Philippines’ southern island of Mindanao, killing at least two and injuring dozens, authorities said. The quake, which struck at 9:04 am, opened cracks in buildings and showered debris on a 66-year-old man and a 15-year-old student, killing them, police and disaster officials said. “The earthquake was very strong,” Abi Agduma, a shopkeeper on the island, told broadcaster DZMM radio. “We ran outside our home. I looked at our store and our house, and they looked like they were dancing.” Power cables swayed in Davao city, the hometown of President Rodrigo Duterte, where people rushed to open spaces. The quake also triggered power cuts in nearby General Santos city, media said.

INDONESIA

Families pray for Lion Air victims

One year on from the Lion Air plane crash that killed 189, relatives and friends of victims held prayer vigils and cast flower petals into the Java Sea at the site where the budget carrier’s Boeing 737 Max jet went down beneath the waves. The almost new Boeing aircraft had been flying from Jakarta to the town of Pangkal Pinang, on the Bangka-Belitung islands off Sumatra, when it crashed just minutes after takeoff. Tuesday’s commemoration came days after Indonesian investigators issued their final report into the disaster, setting out Boeing’s failure to identify risks in the design of cockpit software and recommending better training for Lion Air’s pilots. In a statement placed in Indonesian newspapers on Tuesday, Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg said: “We are deeply sorry and grieve for the loss of life.”

INDIA

New vaccine for killer TB expected

Scientists said on Tuesday that they are closing in on a new game-changing vaccine for tuberculosis, the world’s deadliest infectious disease that claimed nearly 1.5 million lives last year. The chronic lung disease is curable. The existing Bacille Calmette-Guerin, or BCG vaccine — licensed for humans in 1921 — is only proven to be effective for children under five for limited forms of tuberculosis. It does not protect against pulmonary TB, the most common form of the disease among adults and teens. The announcement came as thousands of researchers, TB survivors and activists gathered in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad for a global conference on lung health. India accounts for a quarter of the world’s TB cases and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set an ambitious target of ending the epidemic by 2025.

REUTERS—AP—AFP

Sports events serve up success for Zhuhai’s tourism industry

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The Hengqin Life WTA Elite Trophy Zhuhai, which concluded on Sunday, not only showcased the next wave of female tennis stars, but also demonstrated host city Zhuhai’s potential to become a global seaside recreation and tourism destination.

Held at the Hengqin International Tennis Center, the six-day event welcomed 11 players ranked ninth through 19th in the world rankings, plus one wildcard. German tennis legend Steffi Graf was the ambassador for the event.

Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus claimed the winner’s trophy. Jointly organized by the Chinese Tennis Association and Zhuhai municipal government, the event offered a prize pool of \$2.42 million and 700 ranking points for the singles champion.

According to Jorge Salkeld, senior vice-president at Octagon Tennis and a former WTA board member, the event with television coverage in more than 50 countries and regions, is a window for people from around the world to look into Zhuhai and learn more about the city’s developments.

“My family watched it in the United States. They say, ‘hey, we saw the Zhuhai matches,’” Salkeld said. “That’s one of the reasons that Zhuhai has decided to invest in the facilities and tennis tournament, because they know that these events are showcasing not only tennis but the facilities of Zhuhai.

“I think it’s a really big plus in this vision to connect Hong Kong, Macao and Zhuhai,” Salkeld added, referring to the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, which opened to traffic in October 2018 and turns Zhuhai into the only city on the Chinese mainland with bridge links to both Hong Kong and Macao.

The 55-kilometer mega project connects the three Chinese cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and cuts the onerous hours-long journey from Hong Kong to Zhuhai to just a 45-minute bus ride.

Jose Miguel Garcia, tournament director of the Hengqin Life WTA Elite Trophy Zhuhai, who has over-



Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus claims victory at the Hengqin Life WTA Elite Trophy Zhuhai on Sunday. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

“Sporting events are expected to give impetus to the city’s endeavor to become an international seaside recreation and tourism destination by 2025.”

Wu Xiangming, deputy director of the Zhuhai culture, radio, TV, tourism and sports administration

seen the event in Zhuhai since 2017, echoed Salkeld’s opinion.

He said that Zhuhai has excellent facilities for the tennis event, adding, “Every year the players who are qualified for the tournament express that they feel very comfortable when they are in Zhuhai.

“The promotion of the cities through events, especially sports, has proved to be a success over the last two decades,” he said. “The WTA Elite Trophy has helped increase the awareness of Zhuhai in the world.”

Garcia said Zhuhai is on the right path to building interest in tennis, and is investing in the development of the sport at both professional and amateur levels.

Hosting sports events is part of the city’s strategy to grow into an international seaside recreation and tour-

ism destination in the foreseeable future to support the Bay Area as “a quality living circle for living, working and traveling.”

Sporting events on the one hand help to build up local people’s interest in sports and hence the vitality of the city, on the other, they offer must-see programs for tourists, especially sports fans, explained Wu Xiangming, deputy director of the Zhuhai culture, radio, TV, tourism and sports administration, during a recent news conference.

“Sporting events are expected to give impetus to the city’s endeavor to become an international seaside recreation and tourism destination by 2025,” he said.

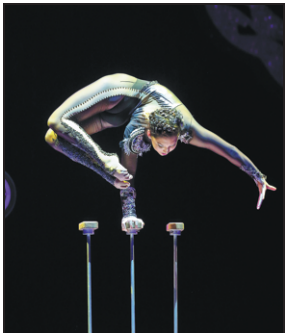
Apart from tennis events, the city hosted a Bay Area sailing championship in September and will organize

an urban bike challenge in November. For the same purpose, Zhuhai has organized and will continue to hold cultural events, the official said.

The city has held a citizens’ art festival, the third Zhuhai International Mozart Competition for Young Musicians and the Zhuhai Beach Musical Festival among this year’s events, and will host the sixth China International Circus Festival in November.

The biennial Airshow China, one of the world’s top air shows, is set to next be held in November 2020, and is expected to be an even bigger draw card.

A tourism development plan the city issued in 2017 detailed four major categories — sightseeing and touring, convention and exhibition, recreation and holiday, as well as special fes-



An acrobat contorts her body at the China International Circus Festival in Zhuhai.

tivals and events — to achieve its goal.

Zhuhai’s Hengqin New Area received the green light to become an international recreation and tourism island from the National Development and Reform Commission.

The recreation and tourism sector is expected to become a pillar industry of Hengqin with the added value of the tertiary industry accounting for at least 75 percent of its total GDP in 2020, while an international island traveling destination is expected to take shape there by 2020, according to the international recreation and tourism island construction plan for Hengqin, issued by the National Development and Reform Commission in April.

The city this year has also hammered out a couple of regulations for keeping the tourism industry and the development of tourism resources, particularly ocean resources, right on track.

According to Zhuhai’s latest development plan for tourism released in August, the city is expecting 50 million visits to its scenic spots annually in 2020 and 75 million by 2025.



Online Scan to learn more about Zhuhai