

AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES TRIGGERS PANIC AND TRAFFIC CHAOS

Roads across the NSW south coast, where visitors and tourists have been told to leave, have seen huge queues of traffic as motorists tried to access petrol on Thursday morning.

Many are simply trying to get out while some locals are preparing to hunker down for the **bushfire** threat as weather conditions are set to deteriorate.

“There was panic in everybody’s eyes,” Sydney woman Natalia Esdaile-Watts, who was holidaying in Ulladulla with her husband, four children and their dog, told Yahoo News Australia.

As people tried to get out on Thursday, “it was a really sombre mood,” she said. “Everybody was freaking out.” She and the family wanted to leave the night before, however were unable to as the roads were closed. “We slept in our clothes overnight ready to go any minute and my husband woke us up at 4am when the roads opened,” she said.

A lack of fuel supplies and major power outages have hindered the ability for road users to buy petrol from stations dotted along the coast.

Ms Esdaile-Watts and her family were lucky to have enough petrol to make it out.

Before power came back on, they were relying on a rare bag of ice to keep their food cool. “People were freaking out about all the food that was going,” she said. “My husband went to the supermarket and said there was no eggs, no bread, no food. The line to Woolworths was three blocks long.”

NSW authorities have labelled the area from Batemans Bay down to the Victorian border as a no tourist zone with holidaymakers and visitors told to get out if they can.

Ms Esdaile-Watts and her husband volunteer with State Emergency Services and said it was heartbreaking driving through the burnt-out landscape wishing they could do more to help those stuck in the town they were leaving behind.

“I said to my husband it really pains me just driving out... It was with a really heavy heart.”

Some people had taken to Facebook asking for a lift out of town, she said.

“It was like Armageddon, like the end of the world.”

Recounting the experience to family once back home in Sydney left her in tears and overcome with emotion, she told Yahoo News Australia.

Natalia Esdaile-Watts took these photos on the five-and-a-half hour drive back to Sydney. It would normally take less than three hours. As a volunteer with SES, Natalia has recently travelled to fire affected areas to help out.

DRIVERS TOLD TO REMAIN PATIENT

Marg Prendergast, who heads transport co-ordination at Transport for NSW, said drivers would just need to remain patient as roads remained clogged.

“We'll get you out. The traffic is moving even though the queues are long and slow,” she told ABC.

For those in the upper south coast region, if you can get to the Princes Highway to head northbound, you are encouraged to do that, she urged.

“We are saying there are really long queues but, you know, you've got to be patient because we need people to leave if they possibly can,” Ms Prendergast said.

THOUSANDS OF ANIMALS KILLED IN SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FIRES

The scale of the destruction left by the Cudlee Creek fires in the Adelaide Hills has come into greater focus as the tally for the number of livestock killed in the blaze was released this afternoon. **The number of animals killed in the blaze was in the thousands.**

This includes 2635 sheep, 139 cattle, 15 chicken and a multitude of wild life, such as the largely defenceless koalas.

Yes, Australia has always had bushfires: but 2019 is not like anything we've seen before.

Since the start of July, at least 15 people have died and almost 1300 homes have been destroyed by bushfires in NSW. More than 3.6 million hectares - three times the size of Sydney's metro area - have been burnt.

13th JANUARY, 81 YEARS AGO WAS KNOWN AS 'BLACK FRIDAY'

.On this day, **eighty-one years ago** (13th January 1939) with temperatures above 110°F (45°C) across Victoria and the state in drought, bushfires consumed 3,700 buildings across the state, 71 lives were lost and 5 towns **completely destroyed**- never to be rebuilt.

The **Royal Commission** into “Black Friday” concluded;

“There had been no fires to equal these in destructiveness or intensity in the history of settlement in this State, **except perhaps the fires of 1851**, which, too, came at summer **culmination of a long drought**”.

“At midday, in many places, **it was dark as night**. Men carrying hurricane lamps, worked to make safe their families and belongings Travellers on the

highways **were trapped by fires or blazing fallen trees, and perished.** Throughout the land there was **daytime darkness**.’

“The speed of the fires was appalling. They leaped from mountain peak to mountain peak, or far out into the lower country, **lighting the forests 6 or 7 miles in advance of the main fires.** Blown by a wind of **great force,** they roared as they travelled. Balls of crackling fire sped at a great pace in advance of the fires, consuming with a roaring, explosive noise, all that they touched.”

“On that day **it appeared that the whole State was alight.**”

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FORMER ISIS GURU BECOMES A CHRISTIAN AFTER RECEIVING A LETTER FROM JESUS IN A DREAM

A former "Prince of ISIS" that extremists swear allegiance to and are willing to die for was converted to Christianity after meeting with a Muslim evangelist and receiving a letter dripping with Jesus' blood in a dream.

NEW RUSSIAN WEAPON CAN TRAVEL 27 TIMES THE SPEED OF SOUND

29 DEC. 2019 MOSCOW (AP) — **A new intercontinental weapon that can fly 27 times the speed of sound became operational Friday,** Russia’s defence minister reported to President Vladimir Putin, **bolstering the country’s nuclear strike capability.**

Putin has described the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle as a **technological breakthrough comparable to the 1957 Soviet launch of the first satellite.**

The new Russian weapon and a similar system **being developed by China** have troubled the United States, which has pondered defence strategies.

The Avangard is launched **atop an intercontinental ballistic missile,** but unlike a regular missile warhead that follows a predictable path after **separation it can make sharp maneuvers in the atmosphere en route to target,** making it much harder to intercept.

Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu informed Putin that the first missile unit equipped with the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle **entered combat duty.** *“I congratulate you on this landmark event for the military and the entire nation,”* Shoigu said later during a conference call with top military leaders.

IN IRAN, IT IS A CRIME TO BE A CHRISTIAN

By **Majid Rafizadeh** • December 29, 2019

Three of the Islamist judges known to preside over the trials of Christians are Mashallah Ahmadzadeh, Mohammed Moghiseh, and Ahmad Zargar.

The international community needs to consider imposing sanctions on them. Converts to Christianity from Islam, according the Iran's Islamic law, can face the death penalty. - Gatestone Institute

IRAN PROXY VOWS RETALIATION

AFTER US STRIKES IN IRAQ KILL OVER A DOZEN MILITANTS

Iran-backed militias in Iraq vowed to respond to US strikes Sunday that killed between 12 and 24 fighters sponsored by Iran, as the US promised to continue battling Iranian influence in the region.

RUSSIA SAYS US STRIKES ON IRAQ AND SYRIA ARE UNACCEPTABLE

Russia's Foreign Ministry said on Monday that US airstrikes on Iraq and Syria were unacceptable and counterproductive, and urged all sides to avoid fuelling tensions in the region.

MORE THAN 235,000 FLEE INTENSE BOMBING IN NORTHWEST SYRIA

Civilians on Friday packed a road leading out of a flashpoint town in northwest Syria, where two weeks of heightened regime and Russian bombardment has displaced 235,000 people.

IRAN WARNS U.S THAT "DAYS OF MIDDLE EAST DOMINANCE ARE OVER."

2 JAN 2020. The commander of Iran's navy has warned that the U.S. **has no business in Middle Eastern waters** after his forces held joint naval drills with Russia and China.

Iran is one of those nations that loves to brag about military capabilities they don't actually possess, to convince themselves of how strong they are when the rest of the world knows it's all a ruse.

At least that's how it's always been since the Iranian Revolution took place in 1979. But just yesterday they concluded war games, **Operation Marine Security Belt**, with **Russia** and **China** who are very powerful nations, and **who now seem to be in a partnership with Iran.**

Iran has gone from being a laughable little nation whose bark is worse than their bite, to **becoming a dark and mysterious wildcard** that now may be functioning as bait to draw the United States into a large-scale international conflict. And there's nothing funny about that.

FROM NEWSWEEK: Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi told reporters in Iran Sunday that the four-day exercise in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Oman—dubbed "*Marine Security Belt*"—was a signal to U.S. forces operating in the region.

"**Today, the era of American free action in the region is over,**" Khanzadi said, according to the Iranian Tasnim news agency. "**They must leave the region gradually,**" he added.

The rear admiral said U.S. forces are not needed to ensure security in the area, where American and Iranian forces have been facing off amid high tensions between Washington and Tehran over the collapsed Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action nuclear deal.

The joint drills coincided with an attack on American forces in Iraq, suspected to have been launched by an Iranian-backed militia. The rocket attack on an Iraqi military base on Friday killed one American civilian defence contractor and wounded four service members.

In response, the U.S. conducted airstrikes on Iranian-backed forces in Iraq and Syria. Khanzadi said Sunday U.S. forces were not needed in the region.

"Regional countries themselves can ensure security together," he said. "The presence of Americans only creates insecurity in the region," he added, according to the state-backed Fars news agency.

The rear admiral suggested that Iran's **"friends"** would be reassured by the exercises, while its adversaries should take the drills **as a warning**.

He also said **he hoped more regional nations would join future Iranian exercises**. "We believe that maritime security definitely **needs collective action**," Khanzadi explained. **Ezekiel 38/9 perhaps???**

CHINA INTENDS TO EXERCISE TOTAL CONTROL OVER RELIGION FROM FEBRUARY 2020

China will roll out new measures to further circumscribe the spiritual activities of its citizens on February 1st in the New Year, as state news reported Monday that the 42 articles of the Administrative Measures for Religious Groups had been approved.

RADICALS IN INDIA DISRUPT INAUGURATION OF JESUS-PRAYER HALL

Three Bharatiya Janata Party-affiliated people led an attack on a new prayer hall dedicated to Jesus in India's West Bengal state Saturday, as a mob of 800 people, mostly non-Christians, surrounded the building's inauguration ceremony.