

TRUMP'S THREAT TO DESTROY IRAN GUNBOATS

Guards chief vows 'decisive response'

AFP, Tehran

Iran's Revolutionary Guards chief yesterday warned the US of a "decisive response" after President Donald Trump said he ordered the US Navy to destroy Iranian boats that harass American ships in the Gulf.

Iran and the United States have appeared to be on the brink of an all-out confrontation twice in the past year. Decades-old acrimony between the two sides worsened in 2018 when Trump unilaterally withdrew from a deal that gave Iran relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear programme.

Tensions escalated further in January when a US air strike killed Qasem Soleimani, the top Iranian general who headed the Guards' foreign arm, the Quds Force.

"We declare to the Americans that we are absolutely determined and serious... and that all action will be met with a decisive response that will be efficient and quick," Major General Hossein Salami said. "We have also ordered our naval units to target (US boats and forces) if they try to endanger the safety of our ships or boats of war."

The latest confrontation between the arch-foes came after the United States accused Iran of harassing its ships in the Gulf last week.

Trump took to Twitter on Wednesday as the Guards said they had launched the Islamic republic's first military satellite. The US president said he had "instructed the United States Navy to shoot down and destroy any and all Iranian gunboats if they harass our ships at sea".

In response, Iran yesterday summoned the Swiss ambassador to Tehran that represents US interests in the Islamic republic, state media said.



Women carry fodder for their cattle through a mustard field on the outskirts of Srinagar. Photo was taken Wednesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC LATEST UPDATES

DEATH TOLL TOPS 184,000

The death toll from the novel coronavirus pandemic rose to 184,268 yesterday, according to a tally from Johns Hopkins University yesterday at 1200GMT. More than 2,645,092 declared cases have been registered in 193 countries and territories. Of these cases, at least 719,339 are now considered recovered. In US, the death toll stood at 47,681 with 849,092 infections. Italy is the next most-affected country with 25,085 deaths. It is followed by Spain with 22,157 fatalities, France with 21,373 deaths and Britain with 18,151 deaths.

'LONG WAY TO GO'

COVID-19 will stalk the planet for a long time to come, the World Health Organization said, warning that most countries were still in the early stages of tackling the pandemic. WHO boss Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said some countries that thought they had the new coronavirus under control were witnessing a resurgence in cases, while there were troubling upward trends in Africa and the Americas.

NO DEATHS IN CHINA

For the eighth straight day, China's National Health Commission reported no new deaths from COVID-19 in its daily figures. It said China confirmed 10 new cases, six of them imported.

'WE ARE ON THIN ICE'

Chancellor Angela Merkel urged Germans to show endurance and discipline to get through the coronavirus pandemic that is "still at the beginning". Merkel is worried that Germans are relaxing their social distancing efforts. "It is precisely because the figures give rise to hope that I feel obliged to say that this interim result is fragile. We are on thin ice, the thinnest ice even," Merkel told the Bundestag lower house of parliament.

US 'GREEN CARD' CURB

US President Donald Trump announced he had signed an order partially suspending immigration to the United States, arguing the drastic measure would protect jobs during the coronavirus crisis. The suspension hits people applying for permanent residency, or green cards. Seasonal workers, such as immigrants vital to US farm labor, are still allowed to enter.

STROKES IN YOUNG ADULTS

The new coronavirus appears to be causing sudden strokes in adults in their 30s and 40s who are not otherwise terribly ill, doctors reported Wednesday. There's growing evidence that Covid-19 infection can cause the blood to clot in unusual ways, and stroke would be an expected consequence of that.

GERMANY, UK START TRIALS

The race to develop an effective vaccine against the coronavirus gathered pace this week, as clinical trials on humans were approved in Germany and launched in the UK. Though there are now around 150 development projects worldwide, the German and British plans are among only five clinical trials on humans which have been approved across the globe.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

South Asia cases top 37,000 Three negatives and a positive

India records more than 1400 cases in 24 hours; death toll hits 686

REUTERS, New Delhi

South Asia's coronavirus infections have crossed 37,000, with more than half in India, official data showed yesterday, complicating the task of governments looking to scale back lockdowns that have destroyed the livelihoods of millions.

Authorities in India sought this week to ease a stringent 40-day lockdown of the population of 1.3 billion by allowing farm and industrial activity in the least-affected rural areas.

But more than 1,400 new cases reported on Wednesday, for one of India's biggest single-day jumps in recent weeks, carried its tally to 21,797 infections. 686 people died.

"We have to remain focused in this fight, the effort is to stop the spread at any cost," said Satyendra Jain, the health minister of Delhi, one of India's top three virus hotspots.

"If we want end the lockdown, we have to bring down the number of



red zones."

In neighbouring Pakistan, which has reported 10,513 cases, including 224 deaths, Prime Minister Imran Khan tested negative for the virus, the information and broadcasting minister said.

Khan was tested after a meeting last week with the head of one of the country's biggest charity organisations, who later proved to have the virus.

"I am happy to report that his test is negative," said Firdous Ashiq Awan, the minister.

But concern is growing over

Pakistan's move, in response to appeals from religious groups, to allow mosque gatherings during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, despite experts' warnings that they could fuel uncontrollable spread of the virus.

The fasting month is expected to begin today.

Until now, South Asia, home to a fifth of the world's population, has suffered fewer infections in the pandemic than rich nations such as Britain, Spain and the United States.

But that could be the result of lower rates of testing that health experts believe may allow the virus to lurk undetected.

Afghanistan has reported 1,176 cases, including 40 deaths. Sri Lanka has reported 330 cases, including seven deaths.

While Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan have reported 34 cases, 45 cases six cases respectively. These three country reported no deaths.

Questions raising over China test accuracy

REUTERS, Wuhan

Trader He Ximing in the Chinese city of Wuhan says he has no idea how or where he caught the coronavirus or why repeated nucleic acid tests showed he didn't have it.

He was not a coronavirus patient, doctors told him, even though he had been having difficulty breathing with what he described as smothering chest congestion from early February.

But his condition worried the authorities enough to get him sent to a quarantine centre. Still, he did not challenge the three negative tests at the time. After all, his wife did not fall sick.

But he could not shake off the nagging suspicion that he had the coronavirus and in late March went to a hospital in Wuhan for more tests, including one for antibodies.

"This time he tested positive. 'I didn't expect it,' the 52-year-old vegetable seller said as he showed Reuters a copy of his test results - positive for antibodies showing exposure to the coronavirus.

Finally, at least, he had an explanation for why he felt so terrible. "I felt like I was dying. You can't imagine how it feels."

His case is not unique. Similar instances in China and elsewhere have compounded concern over the accuracy of coronavirus testing, even as authorities push for testing as key to handling the crisis.

Unreliable testing could undermine strategies not just for stopping the virus but for opening up locked-down economies, as pressure grows on governments around the world to ease restrictions.



Protesters display placards and US flags from their vehicle demanding the "Stay at Home" order to be lifted and the government to re-open the state during an "Open California" rally in downtown Los Angeles, on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Pandemic becoming a rights crisis Says UN chief

REUTERS, New York

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres yesterday said the coronavirus could give some countries an excuse to adopt repressive measures for reasons unrelated to the pandemic as he warned that the outbreak risks becoming a human rights crisis.

Guterres released a UN report highlighting how human rights should guide the response and recovery to the health, social and economic crisis gripping the world. He added that while the virus does not discriminate, its impacts do.

"We see the disproportionate effects on certain communities, the rise of hate speech, the targeting of vulnerable groups, and the risks of heavy-handed security responses undermining the health response," Guterres said.

The UN report said migrants, refugees and internally displaced people are particularly vulnerable. It said more than 131 countries have closed their borders, with only 30 allowing exemptions for asylum-seekers.

"Against the background of rising ethno-nationalism, populism, authoritarianism and a pushback against human rights in some countries, the crisis can provide a pretext to adopt repressive measures for purposes unrelated to the pandemic," he said. "This is unacceptable."

The United Nations did not give any specific examples of such measures.

Guterres called on governments to be transparent, responsive and accountable and stressed that civic space and press freedom were "critical." He said: "The best response is one that responds proportionately to immediate threats while protecting human rights and the rule of law."

West Bank annexation 'an Israeli decision': Pompeo

REUTERS, Washington

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Wednesday it was up to Israel whether to annex parts of the West Bank and said that Washington would offer its views privately to Israel's new government, drawing a warning from Palestinians who vowed not to "stand handcuffed" if Israel formally took their land.

"As for the annexation of the West Bank, the Israelis will ultimately make those decisions," Pompeo told reporters. "That's an Israeli decision. And we will work closely with them to share with them our views of this in (a) private setting."

Pompeo also said he was "happy" Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and centrist rival Benny Gantz signed a deal on Monday to form a national emergency government, saying he did not think a fourth Israeli election was in Israel's interest.

The coalition agreement says that while the new government will strive for peace and regional stability, plans to extend Israeli sovereignty to Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank - land the Palestinians seek for a state - could advance.

The move would mean a de-facto annexation of territory that Israel seized in a 1967 war and that is presently under Israeli military control. It would have to be greenlighted by the United States, after which Netanyahu would be permitted to advance the plans from July 1, the agreement says.

Pompeo's comment drew condemnation from Palestinian President Mahmoud



said on Palestine TV. According to Abbas' office, the televised remarks were recorded shortly before Pompeo made his statement.

The Palestinians and many countries regard settlements as illegal under the Geneva Conventions that bar settling on land captured in war.

A US President Donald Trump's peace proposal unveiled in January was embraced by Israel and rejected by the Palestinians, partly because it awards Israel most of what it has sought during decades of conflict, including nearly all the occupied land on which it has built settlements.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Upazila Health Complex
Ramu, Cox's Bazar

Tender Notice

Memo No. UHC/Ramu/MSR Tender/2019-2020/1831 Date: 22/04/2020

Invitation for Tender (IFT) for procurement of MSR goods for Upazila Health Complex, Ramu, Cox's Bazar in the fiscal year 2019-2020.

01	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.		
02	Agency	Upazila Health Complex, Ramu, Cox's Bazar.		
03	Procuring entity district	Cox's Bazar.		
04	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM).		
05	Tender name	Procurement of MSR in the fiscal year 2019-2020.		
06	Budget and source of funds	Revenue, Development and GOB.		
07	Name of group	Description	Price of tender schedule (only each, non-refundable)	Tender earnest money amounts (refundable)
	A	Medicine	750/- (Taka seven hundred fifty only)	50,000/- (Tk fifty thousand only)
	B	MSR Instruments	750/- (Taka seven hundred fifty only)	50,000/- (Tk fifty thousand only)
	C	Chemical, Re-agent, X-ray film	750/- (Taka seven hundred fifty only)	25,000/- (Tk twenty-five thousand only)
	D	Gauge, Bandage, Cotton	750/- (Taka seven hundred fifty only)	25,000/- (Tk twenty-five thousand only)
	E	Linen goods	750/- (Taka seven hundred fifty only)	25,000/- (Tk twenty-five thousand only)
	F	Furniture	750/- (Taka seven hundred fifty only)	25,000/- (Tk twenty-five thousand only)
Name and addresses of the office				
08	a) Tender schedule selling place	Upazila Health Complex, Ramu, Cox's Bazar.		
	b) Tender schedule receiving place	1. Upazila Health Complex, Ramu, Cox's Bazar.		
	c) Tender schedule opening place	Upazila Health Complex, Ramu, Cox's Bazar.		
09	Tender schedule selling date	Tender booklets will be sold from the date of 25/04/2020 to 11-05-2020 during the office hour. No Tender booklet would be sold after schedule date and time.		
10	Tender dropping and closing date and time	12-05-2020 at 12.00 Noon.		
11	Tender opening date and time	12-05-2020 at 12.30pm.		
12	Description of terms and conditions	Detailed description in Tender booklet.		
13	Description of goods & related services	Detailed description in Tender booklet.		
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
14	Name of procuring entity	Dr. Nobel Kumar Barua.		
15	Designation of procuring entity	UH&FPO.		
16	Address of procuring entity	Upazila Health Complex, Ramu, Cox's Bazar.		
17	Contact details of official tenders	Phone:		

Note: a) Price of tender schedule would be paid by Treasury Challan into the Code No. 1-2711-0000-2366 for The Upazila Health & Family Planning Officer, Ramu, Cox's Bazar by the Sonali Bank, Ramu Branch.
b) If the date of selling, receiving and opening of tender is disturbed under any unavoidable circumstances, the next working day will be applicable for the same respectively.
c) Corrigendum if necessary in future will be a part of this notice. The competent authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Dr. Nobel Kumar Barua
UH&FPO
Upazila Health Complex
Ramu, Cox's Bazar

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