

CRACKDOWN ON UIGHURS

China announces retaliatory sanctions

REUTERS, Beijing

China announced "corresponding sanctions" against the United States yesterday after Washington penalised senior Chinese officials over the treatment of minority Uighur Muslims in the western region of Xinjiang.

China's move comes as relations between the world's two biggest economic powerhouses have slumped over disagreements on issues including the coronavirus pandemic, trade, Huawei and a sweeping national security law imposed on Hong Kong.

The sanctions targeted Senators Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio, US Representative Chris Smith, Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback and the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China.

Rubio and Cruz have both sponsored legislation that would punish China's actions in Xinjiang. Smith has also been a vocal critic of China on issues ranging from Xinjiang to Hong Kong and the coronavirus. All three are members of President Donald Trump's Republican Party.

"The US actions seriously interfere in China's internal affairs, seriously violate the basic norms of international relations and seriously damage Sino-US relations," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told reporters. "China will make further responses based on how the situation develops."

UN experts and activists say at least a million Uighurs and other Muslims are held in detention centres in Xinjiang. China describes them as training centres helping to stamp out terrorism and extremism and give people new skills.

The Congressional-Executive Commission on China monitors human rights and the development of the rule of law and submits an annual report to Trump and Congress.



This aerial view shows the inundated Tianxingzhou island in Wuhan in China's Hubei province yesterday. As many as 33 rivers in China have risen to their highest levels in history during the current wave of floods, a senior water ministry official said. More than 140 people are either dead or missing due to severe floods in several Chinese regions that have affected nearly 38 million people, authorities in Beijing said.

PHOTO: AFP

Zindzi Mandela, daughter of Nelson Mandela, dies

Zindzi Mandela, daughter of former South African president and liberation hero Nelson Mandela, died yesterday, the Mandela family said. Zindzi Mandela, the youngest daughter of anti-apartheid activist Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Nelson Mandela, rose to international prominence when she read out Nelson Mandela's rejection of then-president PW Botha's offer of a conditional release from prison in 1985. The Mandela Legacy Foundation, speaking on behalf of the family, said memorial and funeral arrangements for Zindzi would be announced in the course of the week. It did not say why she had died. 59-year-old Zindzi, who served as South Africa's ambassador to Denmark, died in the early hours on Monday in a Johannesburg hospital.

Malaysia PM Muhyiddin wins parliamentary test of support

Malaysia's prime minister narrowly won a vote to remove the parliament speaker during a rowdy session of the legislature yesterday, a key test of support for the embattled leader. The Southeast Asian nation has been gripped by turmoil since a reformist government collapsed in February and Muhyiddin Yassin became premier, at the head of a coalition backed by a scandal-plagued party. He took power without an election, and there had been speculation he did not have sufficient support from MPs to hang on to power. But in a closely watched vote as parliament resumed following a break due to the coronavirus pandemic, his motion to remove the speaker won the support of 111 MPs against 109 for the opposition. It was the first time that a speaker had been removed in such a fashion in Malaysia.

Hugging a tree in Israel to beat the coronavirus blues



Can't embrace friends and family these days? Hug a tree instead. That is the message Israel's Nature and Parks Authority is spreading on social media to try to help people overcome the sense of detachment that coronavirus social-distancing rules can bring. "In this unpleasant corona period we recommend to people around the world to go out to nature, take a deep breath, hug a tree, express your love and get love," Orit Steinfeld, the authority's marketing director, said in Apollonia National Park. After flattening a coronavirus infection curve in May, Israel has experienced a spike in new cases over the past several weeks. Israel's tree-hugging campaign follows a similar endeavour launched in April by Iceland's forestry service.

SOURCE: AFP

Immunity may not last

Warns study; UN says world hunger worsening amid pandemic

AFP, Paris

Patients who recover from coronavirus infections may lose their immunity to reinfection within months, according to research released yesterday that experts said could have a "significant" influence on how governments manage the pandemic.

In the first study of its kind, a team led by researchers from King's College London examined the levels of antibodies in more than 90 confirmed virus patients and how they changed over time.

Blood tests showed even individuals with only mild COVID-19 symptoms mounted some immune response to the virus. Of the study group, 60 percent showed a "potent" viral response in the first few weeks after infection.

However, after three months only 16.7 percent had maintained high levels of COVID-19-neutralising antibodies, and after 90 days several patients had no detectable antibodies in their bloodstream.

The research suggests immunity cannot be taken for granted and may not last more than a few months, as is true with other viruses such as influenza.

Experts said the findings may change how governments plan for the next phase of the pandemic, including how they fund and organise vaccine research and development.

Meanwhile, according to a United Nations report published yesterday, nearly one in nine people in the world are going hungry.

Economic slowdowns and climate-related shocks are pushing more people into hunger, while nutritious foods remain too expensive for many, contributing not only to undernourishment, but to growing rates of obesity in all.

Nearly 690 million people, or 8.9 percent of people around the globe, are hungry, the UN found. That number rose by 10 million people in just one year to 2019, found the study, which said eradicating hunger by 2030 - a goal set five years ago - will be impossible if trends continue.

Five United Nations agencies co-authored the report: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).



Nepal landslides toll rises to 60

AGENCIES

Four days of continuous heavy rain and landslides have killed 60 people in Nepal. 41 people are missing, authorities said yesterday.

Myagdi district in western Nepal is the worst affected with 27 deaths. Rescue operations are under way. Hundreds have been displaced as landslides buried their homes. Local school buildings and community centres have been turned into shelters for the flood-affected people.

"In the first phase we rescued the injured people and that took us around 30-35 hours to complete. Now, we are continuing our search operation for the missing who are believed to be buried under the debris. Identification of the dead and arrangements for their cremation are being done," Thamsara Pun, village head of Dhaulagiri in Myagdi said.

Landslides and floods are common in the Himalayan country during the monsoon season. Landslides have also blocked roads and mudslides are hampering rescue operations, say local news reports.

Last week, at least 12 people were killed in landslides and 19 others missing, the country's police said on Friday. Three children are among those who died in landslides.

Narayani and other major rivers in Nepal are swollen due to the continuous downpour in the last few days.

Earlier, the meteorological office of Nepal had predicted heavy rain over the weekend across the country.



NYT: Trump considered selling Puerto Rico in 2017

CNN ONLINE

US President Donald Trump considered the idea of selling Puerto Rico in 2017 after the island was devastated by Hurricane Maria, the former acting Homeland Security secretary told The New York Times in an interview.

"The President's initial ideas were more of as a businessman, you know," Elaine Duke, who was serving as DHS' acting secretary when the hurricane hit the island in September 2017, told the Times.

"Can we outsource the electricity? Can we can we sell the island? You know, or divest of that asset?" Trump reportedly said, according to Duke in the newspaper interview. "(She said the idea of selling Puerto Rico was never seriously considered or discussed after Trump raised it.)" the paper reported.

Puerto Rico was ravaged by Hurricane Maria killing nearly 3,000 people.

Trump has taken aim at Puerto Rican officials for their management of the billions in relief funds his administration has appropriated for storm recovery, accusing the island's leaders of spending some of that money for reasons other than hurricane clean-up.



Firefighting boats spray water onto the US Navy amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard as smoke rises from a fire onboard the ship at Naval Base San Diego, as seen from Coronado, California, US, on Sunday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

CRISIS IN RAJASTHAN Congress says has support of 109 MLAs

THE STATESMAN/ANN

Hours after Indian state Rajasthan's Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot declared open rebellion and claimed that the Ashok Gehlot government in the state is in minority, central Congress leader Avinash Pandey yesterday said 109 MLAs have signed a letter of support to the chief minister.

Pandey said the BJP was behind the "conspiracy" to topple the Ashok Gehlot government but it will complete its term. In the 200-member Rajasthan Assembly, the Congress has 107 MLAs and the BJP 72.

It is believed, Pilot is keen on the CM's post, which he lost to Ashok Gehlot after the Congress's 2018 victory in state polls. The BJP, however, says Pilot needs to bring down the government if he wants the top post. Pilot on Sunday claimed that the Gehlot government is in minority as over 30 Congress MLAs have "pledged support" to him.

Impose tax on the wealthy

More than 80 millionaires urge govts around the world

AFP, London

More than 80 millionaires yesterday urged governments around the world to tax the super-wealthy much more to help fund the global recovery from the coronavirus outbreak.

In an open letter, the group, calling themselves "Millionaires for Humanity", said they should be taxed higher, "immediately, substantially, permanently".

Signatories, included Ben and Jerry's ice cream co-founder Jerry Greenfield, the screenwriter Richard Curtis and filmmaker Abigail Disney, US entrepreneur Sidney Topol and New Zealand retailer Stephen Tindall.

"As COVID-19 strikes the world, millionaires like us have a critical role to play in healing our world," the letter read.

"No, we are not the ones caring for the sick in intensive care wards. We are not driving the ambulances that will bring the ill to hospitals. We are not restocking grocery store shelves or delivering food door to door.

"But we do have money, lots of it. Money that is desperately needed now and will continue to be needed in the years ahead, as our world recovers from this crisis."

The letter was published before the forthcoming meeting of G20 finance ministers.

The "Millionaires for Humanity" letter was a collaboration between groups including Oxfam, Tax Justice UK and the Patriotic Millionaires of high-net worth US individuals.

Taliban attack on Afghan intel office kills 10

REUTERS, KABUL

Taliban militants clashed with security forces following a car bomb blast at a government compound in northern Afghanistan yesterday, killing ten people and wounding dozens more, officials said.

The attack took place at a government facility in Samangan province's capital Aybak close to an office of the National Security Directorate, the main intelligence agency.

"It's a complex attack that started with a car bomb," said Mohammad Sediq Azzizi, a spokesman for the provincial government. The attack ended after four gunmen died following clashes with Afghan security forces, he added.

Abdul Latif Ibrahim, Samangan's governor, said ten security members were killed and 54 people, including civilians, were wounded.

In a statement, the Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Directorate General of Health Services
COVID-19 Response Emergency Assistance Project
Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212

No. DGHS/PD/COVID-19 REAP/Consultant/16/2020/33

Date: 12 July 2020

Request for Expressions of Interest (EOI) for Consultancy Services for the Position of Financial Management Consultant (Individual, National), (Package: IC-3)

- The Directorate General of Health Services of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has been allocated public funds from the development budget of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (GOB) and financed by GOB and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of COVID 19 Response Emergency Assistance Project (CREAP) and, intends to apply part of the proceeds of these funds under the ADB's Loan No. 3819-BAN, to eligible payments to the selected consultant under the consultancy services for Financial Management Consultant (Individual, National).
- The COVID-19 Response Emergency Assistance Project (the project) will support the Government of Bangladesh in addressing the immediate and urgent needs for financial, logistical and systemic support to deal with the COVID-19 outbreak. The project is an integral and vital part of the National Preparedness and Response Plan for containment, mitigation and management of COVID-19. The project will support the procurement of equipment and supplies, the upgrading of health and testing facilities, and build system and community capacities for surveillance, prevention and response to COVID-19. The PIU will carry out the emergency procurement of the project. PIU may take support from the Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD) of the MOHFW for procurement of selected goods and the Public Works Department (PWD) of the Ministry of Housing and Public Works for civil works. The loan proceeds will be disbursed in accordance with ADB's Loan Disbursement Handbook (2017, as amended from time to time and detailed arrangements agreed upon between the government and ADB. ADB's disbursement procedures (direct payment, reimbursement, commitment and/or advance fund procedure) will be used for withdrawal of project funds.
- The project will engage One National Financial Management Consultant as per requirement of TOR. The duration of the assignment is continuously for 24 (Twenty-four) person-months. It is expected that the services will commence tentatively from August, 2020. The detailed TOR for this assignment is available on ADB's CSRN or CMS website (csrn.adb.org or cms.adb.org) and DGHS website (<https://www.dghs.gov.bd>). The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) can be obtained by contacting to the office of the Project Director during regular office hours or can be requested to the email pdcreap@ld.dghs.gov.bd.
- DGHS now invites eligible National Individual Consultant to submit Expression of Interest (EOI) for providing the required services. The interested consultant may obtain further information from ADB's CMS and, if necessary, by applying to the address below during regular office hour. The national specialist shall be the citizen of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.
- EOI must be submitted in standard template through ADB's Consultant Management System (CMS) at <http://cms.adb.org> along with detailed CV. Only online submission in ADB's CMS will be evaluated.
- A Consultant will be selected using the Individual Consultant Selection (ICS) method in accordance with the Procurement Regulations for ADB Borrowers, 2017. In addition to ADB's eligibility requirements, the short-listing shall be carried out using the following three major criteria corresponding to the EOI Evaluation Template:
 - General qualification
 - Assignment related experience
 - Regional experience and others.
- The deadline for submission of Expressions of Interest (EOI) is 11:59pm (Manila local time) on 22 July, 2020 through ADB CMS.
- The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOIs received without assigning any reason thereof.

Amirul Hasan 12/7/20

Dr. Md. Aminul Hasan

Director (Hospital), Directorate General of Health Services
and Project Director, COVID-19 Response Emergency Assistance Project
5th Floor, Shyisto Bhaban, TB Gate, Mohakhali
Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh
Telephone: +880255067151, +8801710812120
E-mail: pdcreap@ld.dghs.gov.bd

GD-1124