

Airborne coronavirus infectious: scientists

AFP, Washington

Scientists have known for several months the new coronavirus can become suspended in microdroplets expelled by patients when they speak and breathe, but until now there was no proof that these tiny particles are infectious.

A new study by scientists at the University of Nebraska that was uploaded to a medical preprint site this week has shown for the first time that SARS-CoV-2 taken from microdroplets, defined as under five microns, can replicate in lab conditions.

This boosts the hypothesis that normal speaking and breathing, not just coughing and sneezing, are responsible for spreading COVID-19 -- and that infectious doses of the virus can travel distances far greater than the six feet (two meters) urged by social distancing guidelines.

The results are still considered preliminary and have not yet appeared in a peer-reviewed journal, which would lend more credibility to the methods devised by the scientists.

The scientists took air samples from five rooms of bedridden patients, at a height of about a foot (30 centimeters) over the foot of their beds.

The patients were talking, which produces microdroplets that become suspended in the air for several hours in what is referred to as an "aerosol," and some were coughing.

The team managed to collect microdroplets as small as one micron in diameter.

They then placed these samples into a culture to make them grow, finding that three of the 18 samples tested were able to replicate.

That means, the study says, the virus can spread through the tiny droplets.



Protesters hold placards and raise their fists during a demonstration against the presence of federal law enforcement officers and racial inequality in Portland, Oregon, US, on Tuesday. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden accused the Trump administration on Tuesday of "egregious tactics" in cracking down on protests in Portland, Oregon, saying the response by federal agents was stoking divisions in the country.

PHOTO: REUTERS

No evidence of Russian meddling in Brexit vote

There is no evidence of Russian meddling in the 2016 Brexit referendum and Britain's spies did not take their eyes off the ball on Russia, British Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said yesterday. The British parliament's intelligence and security committee said in a report published on Tuesday that Russia had interfered in the 2014 Scottish independence referendum but it had not seen hard evidence of Russian meddling in the Brexit vote. While the lawmakers noted allegations of meddling in Brexit, and some studies pointed to Russian attempts to influence the campaign, they said the British government and intelligence agencies had not sought out evidence of Russian interference. "There needs to be some evidence that there's an issue there - which there isn't," Shapps told Sky when asked if there should be a further investigation of possible Russian meddling in the European Union referendum.

NY, Chicago to sue if Trump sends in federal agents

The mayors of New York City and Chicago said on Tuesday they would take President Donald Trump to court if he sent unidentified US government agents to police their cities, pushing back on a threat that has sparked widespread controversy over the use of federal force. Lightfoot and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio spoke a day after Trump said he would send law enforcement to several cities including Baltimore, Chicago, New York and Philadelphia to crack down on protests against racism and police brutality ignited by George Floyd's death in Minneapolis police custody on May 25. Federal agents last week were dispatched to counter protests in Portland, Oregon, where protesters have complained of agents making arrests without identifying themselves and using unmarked rental cars. Trump has sought to make a crackdown on a campaign issue, taking the spotlight off his response to the coronavirus pandemic, a weak point for him in the polls.

Thousands granted Kuwaiti visas in exchange for bribes

Thousands of Pakistanis, Syrians, and Iraqis were granted Kuwaiti visas in exchange for bribes, a report said yesterday. About 5,000 Pakistanis entered Kuwait on family and visit visas between 2014 and 2018, despite strict rules on issuing visas to people from five countries -- Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq -- since 2011, Al Qabas reported citing officials. The report also said that authorities found that at least one thousand Iraqis during the time period exploiting loopholes in the country's immigration system. It reported that the citizens of these countries were granted visas for working in "made-up" companies. The fees charged for the visas ranged between 800 and 2,500 dinars, depending on nationality.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

NEWSIN brief

Syria's ruling party wins majority in polls

AFP, Beirut

Syria's ruling Baath party and its allies have won a majority in parliamentary elections held across government-held areas of the war-torn country, results announced yesterday showed. In a widely expected victory in a vote labelled a "farce" by the exiled opposition, President Bashar al-Assad's party and allied candidates took 177 seats out of 250 in Sunday's polls.

US seeking arrest of Venezuela top judge

REUTERS, Washington

The US on Tuesday imposed sanctions on Venezuelan Chief Justice Maikel Moreno and announced a \$5 million reward for information leading to his arrest or conviction for allegedly participating in transnational organized crime.

Maria Ressa pleads not guilty in tax case

AFP, Manila

Embattled Philippine journalist Maria Ressa pleaded not guilty yesterday to tax evasion, as President Rodrigo Duterte's government faced growing calls to drop all charges against the veteran reporter. Ressa, 56, and her news site Rappler, have been the target of a series of criminal charges and probes after publishing stories critical of Duterte's policies -- including his drug war that has killed thousands.

Global cases exceed 15 millions

Trump says pandemic to 'get worse'; Australia sees record infections

AGENCIES

Global coronavirus infections surged past 15 million yesterday, with the pandemic gathering pace even as countries remain divided in their response to the crisis.

The top five countries with the most cases is rounded out by Brazil, India, Russia and South Africa. But, a Reuters tally shows the disease is accelerating the fastest in the Americas, which account for more than half the world's infections and half its deaths.

The death toll in the US has spiked again with Donald Trump conceding the pandemic crisis will get worse, as record infections in Australia underscored second-wave dilemmas globally.

With authorities reporting Tuesday the highest daily nationwide death toll in weeks of nearly 1,000, Trump adopted a newly serious tone.

"It will probably, unfortunately get worse before it gets better," the president told reporters during his first formal pandemic briefing for nearly three months.

Despite an escalating row with China, U Trump expressed a willingness on Tuesday to work with Beijing to bring a successful coronavirus vaccine to the United States.

"We're willing to work with anybody that is going to get us a good result," Trump said, when asked if

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Almost a quarter of Delhi has had coronavirus: study

Trump willing to work with China on vaccine for US

Pompeo says WHO's handling of pandemic led to 'dead Britons'

the administration would collaborate with China on a vaccine for Americans, whether China is first to develop one or not.

Trump has long blamed China for mishandling the deadly coronavirus pandemic, which originated in the Chinese city of Wuhan and charged across the United States, killing more than 140,000 Americans and raising the stakes for a quick and viable vaccine.

Other nations, which had eased crippling lockdowns after the virus had appeared to fade, are struggling to combat second waves.

Australia yesterday reported more than 500 infections in a day, posting a record high nearly four months after cases appeared to have peaked.

In Melbourne, Australia's second-biggest city where most of the new infections have occurred, wearing face masks will be mandatory from today.

Second wave fears were also growing in Japan's capital, with hundreds of new cases reported each day over the past week, promoting authorities to urge people to stay home during an upcoming national holiday. Hong Kong reported 113 new infections yesterday, a new daily record as a sudden surge in cases shows no signs of slowing despite ramped up social distancing rules.

Countries with fragile health systems have yet to enjoy even a brief reprieve from the virus, with Mexico on Tuesday passing 40,000 deaths -- the pandemic's fourth-highest national toll.

Fresh data from a study in India also suggested that the virus was spreading much further than charted, and that official figures were far lower than reality. The study said nearly one quarter of the population in New Delhi, India's capital, had contracted the virus. This would equate to roughly five million infections in New Delhi versus the official data showing 125,000 confirmed cases.

The pandemic has killed more than 617,000 people worldwide since it surfaced in China late last year.



Israeli protest against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government's response to the financial fallout of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) crisis outside Netanyahu's residence in Jerusalem, late on Tuesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Student files first climate change lawsuit against Australia

REUTERS, Sydney

A 23-year-old student has filed a lawsuit against Australia's government alleging it has failed to disclose climate change-related risks to investors in the country's sovereign bonds, in the first such action.

According to the litigation filed yesterday, Kathleen O'Donnell claims investors who buy Australian government bonds should be made aware of the risks due to climate change that might make it difficult for Australia to pay back its debt.

A spokeswoman for Australia's Treasurer told Reuters the government was aware of the lawsuit.

"Legal representatives are considering the matter. As it concerns current court proceedings the government will not make any comment," the spokeswoman said.

The litigation comes amid a global call for a "green" recovery in the wake of the novel coronavirus pandemic and as many large investment managers pledge their

commitment for net zero carbon emissions by 2050 across their entire portfolio.

Climate change has long been a hot button issue in Australia, becoming even more so since last summer when intense wildfires raged for about four months across large parts of the country, killing 33 people and millions of animals.

"Australia is materially exposed and susceptible" to climate change risks, according to the statement filed with the Federal Court of Australia in Victoria state.

O'Donnell is seeking declaration that the government breached its duty of disclosure and an injunction restraining further promotion of e-AGBs until it complies.

Australia has more than A\$600 billion (\$428 billion) of sovereign bonds on issue, enjoying a coveted 'AAA' rating from all three major ratings agencies.

The country contributes only 1.3% of the world's carbon emissions but is the second-largest emitter per capita behind the United States and is a leading exporter of coal.

Ministry/Division		Ministry of Education.
1	Agency	Jahangirnagar University.
2	Procuring entity name	Department of Chemistry, JU.
3	Procuring entity code	N/A.
4	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.
5	Invitation for	Laboratory Chemicals, Equipments/Equipments parts and Glasswares.
6	Date	19.07.2020
KEY INFORMATION		
8	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM).
FUNDING INFORMATION		
9	Budget and source of funds	Revenue fund.
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
10	Tender publication date	23.07.2020.
11	Tender last selling date	09.08.2020.
12	Tender closing date and time	10.08.2020 at 12:00 Noon.
13	Tender opening date and time	10.08.2020 at 12.15pm.
14	Selling tender documents	Office of the Chairman of the Department of Chemistry, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka.
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
15	Price of tender document	Tk 1,000.00 (one thousand).
16	Tender security amount	Tk 19,000 (nineteen thousand).
17	Eligibility of tenderer	(i) Technically sound, financially solvent and experienced local firms/importers. (ii) Should have up-to-date trade licence, VAT and income tax certificate.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
18	Name of official inviting tender	Prof. Dr. Md. Nurul Abeer.
19	Designation of official inviting tender	Chairman.
20	Address of official inviting tender	Dept. of Chemistry, Jahangirnagar University.
21	Contact details of official inviting tender	02-7791045-51, Ext. 1437, 1792, 01818459321
22	Special instruction	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject of any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.
Chairman Department of Chemistry Jahangirnagar University Savar, Dhaka		

Abducted Pak journo freed

REUTERS, Islamabad

A Pakistani journalist, who has been a vocal critic of the powerful military and government, was released late Tuesday hours after the government confirmed he had been abducted, his family said.

"My husband was abducted this morning outside the school (in the capital Islamabad) where I work," Kaneez Sughra, the wife of 51-year-old Matullah Jan, told Reuters. "Thank God, he's back," Sughra said. He was left at the capital's outskirts after around 12 hours' captivity.

She said school security camera footage showed Jan, who had arrived to collect his wife from work, had been bundled into a car after being cornered by five vehicles - three of them unmarked, one with police markings and the other an ambulance. The military's public relations wing did not respond to a request for comment.

The Committee to Protect Journalists demanding Jan's release said he was among the journalists the army accused of sharing anti-state remarks on social media in 2018.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Local Government Engineering Department
Durgapur, Netrakona
www.lged.gov.bd

"উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র"

Memo No. 46.02.7218.000.001.01.2020-235 Date: 22-07-2020

e-Tender Notice: 01/2020-21

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for 05 (five) Package e-Tender/PEDP4/NTK/DUR/2019-2020/W1.00747, e-Tender/PEDP4/NTK/DUR/2019-2020/W2.01622, e-Tender/PEDP4/NTK/DUR/2019-2020/W1.00746, e-Tender/PEDP4/NTK/DUR/2019-2020/W2.01621 & e-Tender/PEDP4/NTK/DUR/2019-2020/W2.01620 for this upazila.

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Name of work	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time	Opening date & time
01	456578	Construction of Additional classroom of Hariaund under PEDP4 Durgapur Netrakona	12-Aug-2020 12:00	12-Aug-2020 14:00	12-Aug-2020 14:00
02	456576	Construction of Additional classroom of Birsiri Pouro under PEDP4 Durgapur Netrakona	12-Aug-2020 12:00	12-Aug-2020 14:00	12-Aug-2020 14:00
03	456574	Construction of Additional classroom of Shosong under PEDP4 Durgapur Netrakona	12-Aug-2020 12:00	12-Aug-2020 14:00	12-Aug-2020 14:00
04	456537	Construction of Additional classroom of Naogaon under PEDP4 Durgapur Netrakona	12-Aug-2020 12:00	12-Aug-2020 14:00	12-Aug-2020 14:00
05	456536	Construction of Additional classroom of Shantipur under PEDP4 Durgapur Netrakona	12-Aug-2020 12:00	12-Aug-2020 14:00	12-Aug-2020 14:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to 12-Aug-2020 12:00. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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