



Bill Gates denies conspiracy theories he created pandemic

Billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates on Thursday pushed back against some of the conspiracy theories spreading online accusing him of creating the coronavirus outbreak. "It's a bad combination of pandemic and social media and people looking for a very simple explanation," the Microsoft founder said during a CNN Town Hall interview. Doctored photos and fabricated news articles crafted by conspiracy theorists -- shared thousands of times on social media platforms and messaging apps, in various languages -- targeting Gates have gained traction online since the start of the pandemic. A video accusing Gates of wanting "to eliminate 15 percent of the population" through vaccination and electronic microchips has racked up millions of views on YouTube. Gates said he is associated with vaccines but not for the reasons the conspiracies claim, but to save lives.

Trump tells Putin he hopes to avoid new arms race

President Donald Trump told his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Thursday that he hopes to avoid an "expensive" US arms race with Russia and China, the White House said. Washington and Moscow are preparing negotiations on a successor to the New START treaty capping their countries' nuclear arsenals. However, China has so far rejected pressure from the Trump administration to join the talks, saying that its arsenal is far smaller than that of the two former Cold War foes. In a call with Putin, Trump "reiterated his hope of avoiding an expensive three-way arms race between China, Russia," a White House spokesman said. According to the Kremlin, the two leaders confirmed the "urgency" of holding bilateral talks on "strategic stability and arms control."

Panic as US jets fly near Iran passenger plane over Syria

Two US jets flew dangerously close to an Iranian passenger plane over war-torn Syria, forcing the pilot to take emergency action and sparking panic on board, Iranian authorities said yesterday. The US military said of Thursday's incident that an "F-15 on a routine air mission... conducted a standard visual inspection of a Mahan Air passenger airliner at a safe distance of approximately 1,000 metres (yards)". Iranian state television aired amateur footage of passengers on board screaming as the Mahan Air jetliner appeared to change course suddenly. Another video apparently shot on a phone appeared to show at least two fighter jets flying beside the plane. Iran's official IRNA news agency said the aircraft later landed safely in the Lebanese capital.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

'Mission of our time'

Pompeo urges 'free world' to triumph over China 'Frankenstein'

AGENCIES

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has called on "free nations" to triumph over the threat of what he said was a "new tyranny" from China, in a provocative speech likely to worsen fraught US-China relations.

"Today China is increasingly authoritarian at home, and more aggressive in its hostility to freedom everywhere else," Pompeo said in a speech on Thursday at the Richard Nixon presidential library in Yorba Linda, California.

"If the free world doesn't change Communist China, Communist China will change us," he said, calling it the "mission of our time."

Speaking at the Nixon Library in President Richard Nixon's birthplace in Yorba Linda, California, Pompeo said the former US leader's worry about what he had done by opening the world to China's Communist Party in the 1970s had been prophetic.

"President Nixon once said he feared he had created a 'Frankenstein' by opening the world to the CCP," Pompeo said. "And here we are."

Nixon, who died in 1994 and was president from 1969-74, opened the way for the establishment of US diplomatic relations with Communist China in 1979 through a series of contacts, including a visit to Beijing in 1972.

In the major speech delivered after Washington's surprise order this week for China to close its Houston consulate, Pompeo



"If the free world doesn't change Communist China, Communist China will change us."

US SECRETARY OF STATE MIKE POMPEO

called for an end to "blind engagement" with China and repeated frequently leveled US charges about its unfair trade practices, human rights abuses and efforts to infiltrate American society.

He said China's military had become "stronger and more menacing" and the approach to Beijing should be "distrust and verify," adapting President Ronald Reagan's "trust but verify" mantra about the Soviet Union in the 1980s.

"The truth is that our policies -- and those of other free nations -- resurrected China's failing economy, only to see Beijing bite the

international hands that were feeding it," Pompeo said.

"The freedom-loving nations of the world must induce China to change ... in more creative and assertive ways, because Beijing's actions threaten our people and our prosperity."

Recalling remarks he made after meeting British leaders in London this week, Pompeo said "maybe it's time for a new grouping of like-minded nations, a new alliance of democracies."

Pompeo said "securing our freedoms from the Chinese Communist Party is the mission of our time," and America was perfectly positioned to lead it.

He also strongly criticized previous US administrations for being too complacent with China and US companies for being too compliant with whatever Beijing demands of them.

While some conservative commentators praised Pompeo's speech on social media and elsewhere, some other analysts were not impressed.

"How do you form a united front against China when the US is bullying its allies, trashing multilateral institutions and pushing an economic decoupling (from China) that no one else supports?" Scott Kennedy of Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies said.

The Chinese foreign ministry yesterday said the speech by Pompeo on China disregarded reality and was filled with ideological bias.

'Unacceptable'

WHO chief slams Pompeo for saying he got the post with China's help

AFP, Geneva



The World Health Organization chief on Thursday rejected as false an allegation by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that he owed his position to a deal with China.

Pompeo told a private meeting of MPs on Tuesday that the WHO had become a "political" body, alleging that its decisions were influenced by a deal struck between chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and China that helped him become its head, according to quotes in the Times and Daily Telegraph. "When push came to shove, when it really mattered most", people died "because of the deal that was made", he said.

Asked about Pompeo's allegations during a virtual press conference, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said they were "untrue and unacceptable and without any foundation for that matter."

He insisted that the "sole focus... of the entire organisation is on saving lives. WHO will not be distracted by these comments and we don't want the entire international community also to be distracted."

He reiterated his warning that one of the "greatest threats in the current crisis is the 'politicisation of the pandemic'". Tedros appealed to all countries to work together in the fight against the virus, which has claimed more than 630,000 lives worldwide since it first emerged in China late last year.

"COVID-19 does not respect borders, ideologies or political parties," he said, warning that "politics and partisanship have made things worse."

"COVID politics should be quarantined."



Pro-democracy students burn a portrait of Thailand's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha in front of the Government House in Bangkok, Thailand, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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Fears for Uighur culture as scholars vanish in crackdown

AFP, Beijing

It has been almost two years since Bugra Arkin's father Aierken was abruptly snatched from his home in China's troubled Xinjiang region by national security agents. Aierken Yibulayin's publishing firm -- one of the biggest in the region -- translated thousands of books into Uighur before he was detained in October 2018. Arkin has not heard from him since.

"My father had a strong impact on the Uighur publishing industry, and that made him a target of the Chinese government," said Arkin, who lives in California.

"This is very unacceptable and our lives were literally destroyed."

He is not the only one. At least 435 Uighur intellectuals have been imprisoned or forcibly disappeared since April 2017, according to the Uyghur Human Rights Project.

The rounding up of Uighur linguists, scholars and publishers is seen by overseas advocacy groups as part of a campaign by the Chinese Communist Party to erase the ethnic group's identity and culture and assimilate it into the dominant, Mandarin-speaking Han population.

Renowned Uighur linguist Alim Hasani was taken by authorities in August 2018 during a Beijing work trip, according to his son Ershat Alim.

Alim believes that his father, a retired division head of the Xinjiang Ethnic

Language Work Committee, was detained for his research, which aimed to standardise Uighur-Han translations.

More than one million Uighurs and other mostly Muslim Turkic-speaking minorities have been held in re-education camps in Xinjiang following a spate of ethnic violence, according to rights groups.

Uighur literary critic and writer Yalqun Rozi was among the first wave of intellectuals to be detained in October 2016. His relatives later discovered that Rozi had been sentenced to 15 years in prison in 2018 for "inciting subversion of state power" -- a vague charge commonly used for political prisoners.

Authorities suggested that Rozi's detention was related to his role in compiling Uighur literature textbooks that had been in use for more than a decade, said his son Kamalturk Yalqun.

Since 2012, bilingual Mandarin-Uighur education has gradually been applied in schools in Xinjiang, with the aim of reaching 2.6 million students. Prior to that, classes were mostly taught in Uighur and other minority languages.

"By abolishing these textbooks and eliminating Uighur language education altogether, the next generation of Uighur youth will have no way to find their link with Uighur culture," said Yalqun. "It is a way for China to eliminate the entire Uighur identity and assimilate them. That makes me sad and angry at the same time."



PHOTO: REUTERS

A man gestures as people wait for the beginning of Friday prayers outside Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque, for the first time in 86 years, in Istanbul, Turkey, yesterday. Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan joined thousands of worshippers at Hagia Sophia yesterday for prayers there since he declared the monument, revered by Christians and Muslims for almost 1,500 years, a mosque once again amid widespread condemnation.

NEWSIN brief

Malaysia strikes deal with Goldman Sachs

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia reached a \$3.9 billion settlement with Goldman Sachs yesterday over the Wall Street titan's role in the 1MDB scandal in exchange for the country ending all criminal proceedings against the bank. Billions of dollars were looted from sovereign wealth fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad in a fraud that allegedly involved former leader Najib Razak and his cronies. Malaysia had charged Goldman and several of its former and current employees over the scandal, claiming the bank made misleading statements to investors.

Fires triple in Brazil wetlands

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

The number of forest fires in the Pantanal, the world's largest tropical wetlands, has nearly tripled in 2020 compared to the same period last year, according to satellite data released Thursday. Brazil's national space agency identified 3,506 fires from January 1 to July 22 in the Pantanal.

Vietnam bans wildlife trade

REUTERS, Hanoi

Vietnam's PM Nguyen Xuan Phuc has issued a directive to ban the Southeast Asian country's wildlife trade with immediate effect in order to reduce the risk of new pandemics, a government statement said. The directive bans imports of live wild animals and wildlife products, eliminates wildlife markets, and enforces prohibitions on illegal hunting and trading of wild animals, including online sales, according to the statement.

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Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Kazipur, Sirajganj
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Memo No. 46.02.8850.000.07.004.20-405 Date: 23-07-2020

Invitation for Tender (Works)
e-Tender Notice No. 01/2020-21

The following e-Tenders (OTM) are invited through the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd).

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Description of work	Last selling date and time	Closing/opening date and time
1	479045	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W14.0640	Construction of Boundary Wall including Gate of Baraitali Balika RPS Charpara Purba Sonamukhi RPS Gandhail Uttar Para Govt Primary School and Hazrahali Govt. Primary School.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
2	479044	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W1.00462	Construction of Additional Classroom Boraitala Purbopara RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
3	479043	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W1.00463	Construction of Additional Classroom Charvanudanga Westpara RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
4	479042	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W1.00464	Construction of Additional Classroom Dakhin Fuljora Girls RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
5	479041	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W1.00465	Construction of Additional Classroom Nishchintapur Mothopara RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
6	479040	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W1.00466	Construction of Additional Classroom 35 Harinathpur Uttarpara RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
7	479039	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W2.00730	Construction of Additional Classroom Ragupur Baromaisha RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
8	479038	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W1.00212	Construction of Additional Classroom Kabihar Borshivanga RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
9	479037	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W1.00211	Construction of Additional Classroom Baraitali RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
10	479036	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W1.00210	Construction of Additional Classroom Per Dorata RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00

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. Registration in the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required to submit e-Tender. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any scheduled bank branch up to 04:00pm of 17-Aug-2020. Tender security amount has to be deposited online through the bank up to 10:30am of 18-Aug-2020. The above-mentioned e-Tenders will be live from 11:00am of 26-July-2020. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk.

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GD-1186