

US hails Afghan ceasefire as hopes for peace talks rise

Top US officials yesterday hailed a three-day ceasefire proposed by the Taliban and agreed by Kabul, raising hopes that the long-delayed peace talks between the two foes could begin next week. The Taliban declared that the truce would start Friday, the first day of the Muslim festival of Eid al-Adha, and continue for the duration of the religious holiday. The Taliban proposed the ceasefire after President Ashraf Ghani said his government was ready for talks next week. "To demonstrate the government's commitment to peace, the Islamic Republic will soon complete the release of 5,000 Taliban prisoners," Ghani told officials, referring to the number of insurgent inmates the government originally pledged to free under the auspices of the US-Taliban deal.

Record 212 environmental activists murdered in 2019

At least 212 environmental campaigners worldwide were murdered in 2019, making last year the deadliest on record for frontline activists battling the destruction of Nature, watchdog group Global Witness reported yesterday. Colombia and the Philippines combined accounted for just over half of the confirmed deaths - 64 and 43, respectively - followed by Brazil, Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala. About 40 percent of victims were indigenous people, and over two-thirds died in Latin America. One in ten were women. Of the 141 murders last year that could be linked to a specific economic sector, more than a third involved campaigners protesting mining operations, some legal but not. Thirty-four killings related to agribusiness were overwhelmingly in Asia, especially the Philippines.

Turkey tightens grip on social media with new law

Turkey's parliament yesterday passed a controversial bill which would give the government greater control of social media, the official Anadolu news agency reported. Under the new law, social media giants such as Facebook and Twitter would have to ensure they have local representatives in Turkey and to comply with Turkish court orders over the removal of certain content or face heavy fines. Critics are concerned over the legislation's impact on freedom of speech. The law would affect social networks with more than a million unique visits every day, and proposes servers with Turkish users' data must be stored in Turkey.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



An image grab from footage obtained from Iranian State TV IRIB shows Iranian speedboats encircle a replica of a US aircraft carrier during a military exercise near the Strait of Hormuz, on Tuesday. Iran's Revolutionary Guards later blasted the dummy US aircraft carrier with missiles.

India uses arrival of new fighter jets to warn China

AFP, New Delhi

The first five Rafale fighter jets bought from France in a multi-billion-dollar deal landed in India yesterday and the defence minister used their arrival to launch a veiled warning to neighbouring China over territorial tensions. A water-cannon guard of honour greeted the five jets when they landed at the Ambala air base in Haryana state. An intense nationwide spotlight on the combat jets has been sharpened by a deadly border standoff with China. India has bought 36 Rafale fighters from France in a deal estimated to be worth \$9.4 billion. All are scheduled to be delivered by the end of 2021. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the combat jets' arrival marked "the beginning of a new era in our military history." "If it is anyone who should be worried about or critical about this new capability of the Indian Air Force, it should be those who want to threaten our territorial integrity," Singh declared. Indian and Chinese forces have been in a six-week-long standoff on their Himalayan border since a hand-to-hand battle in which 20 Indian troops were killed. China also suffered casualties in the showdown but has not given figures. The two sides blame each other for the clash in the Ladakh region and have since moved thousands of troops there while pursuing talks that they say aim to ease the tensions. The purchase of the French jets marked a significant shift in India's traditional preference for Russian defence equipment.

India virus cases hit 1.5m

Study reveals 57pc Mumbai slum residents have had Covid-19

AFP, New Delhi

Coronavirus infections in India passed 1.5 million and deaths neared 35,000 yesterday, but test results in Mumbai slums cast further doubt on official data in the world's second-most populous nation. The health ministry website yesterday reported almost 50,000 new infections and 768 more deaths. India now has the third-highest number of cases in the world behind the United States and Brazil, although the official number of deaths in the South Asian nation is far lower. The South Asian giant, home to some of the world's most crowded cities and where health-care spending per capita is among the world's lowest, passed one million cases only 12 days earlier. But many experts have said India is not testing enough people, and that



many coronavirus-linked deaths are not being recorded as such. A study released Tuesday that tested for coronavirus antibodies reported some 57 percent of people in Mumbai's teeming slums have had the infection -- far more than official data suggests. Blood tests on 6,936 randomly selected people conducted by Mumbai's city authorities found that 57 percent of slum-dwellers and 16 percent of non-slum residents had

virus antibodies. Mumbai, where about 40 percent of its 20 million people lives in slums, has reported just over 110,000 infections and more than 6,000 deaths so far. But deaths in the sprawling slum have not exploded, with local officials saying their aggressive efforts to stem the spread of the virus has been effective. The survey results suggested asymptomatic infections were "likely to be a high proportion of all infections" and also indicated the virus death rate was likely to be "very low", the study said. The Mumbai survey came a week after an antibody study commissioned by the government suggested that almost a quarter of people in the capital New Delhi, home to 20 million people, have had the virus.

WORLD TIGER DAY

Numbers on the rise but threats persist: WWF

AFP, New Delhi

Tiger populations in five countries are making a comeback but the endangered species still faces major threats such as poaching, conservation group WWF and the Indian government said. India, home to 70 percent of the big cat's global population, is among 13 countries that pledged a decade ago to boost feline numbers. "From an historic population low in 2010, tigers are finally making a remarkable comeback in much of South Asia, Russia and China," WWF Tigers Alive Initiative head Stuart Chapman said in a statement to mark World Tiger Day yesterday. Chapman said population increases in Bhutan, China, India, Nepal and Russia were "great news" for other threatened species in their habitat, as well as for millions of people dependent on such ecosystems. But tigers were still under threat from poaching and habitat destruction, while the wild animal populations had fragmented, which increases the risk of inbreeding, the WWF said. "This has reached critical levels in much of Southeast Asia, where a snaring crisis is decimating wildlife, including tigers and their prey," the group said. In a report released earlier this month, the WWF found that there were more than



12 million snares threatening wildlife in the protected areas in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. India released its status report on tigers Tuesday, which detailed the steps taken to conserve the big cats. The census, carried out between 2018-19, was also included in the Guinness World Records earlier this month for being the largest-ever camera-trap wildlife survey. Camera traps were deployed at more than 28,000 locations across 381,400 square kilometres -- about the size of Japan -- of forested habitats in 20 Indian states. The government's survey results, released last year, found that India had 2,967 tigers in the wild, compared to 1,411 when the first nationwide survey was conducted in 2006. It showed the population had grown six percent a year between 2006 and 2018.

STUDY ON MIGRATORY RIVER FISH

Populations down 76pc since 1970

AFP, Paris

Populations of migratory river fish collapsed by 76 percent on average in the last 50 years, according to a report by conservation groups Tuesday, warning the "catastrophic" declines could impact people and ecosystems everywhere. Overfishing and loss of habitat have had a devastating impact on migratory fish, according to the research by groups including the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, WWF, World Fish Migration Foundation and the Zoological Society of London. Almost one in three of all freshwater species are threatened with extinction, the report said, with migratory fish "disproportionately threatened". The study looked at 247 species of fish from around the world and found that their populations had declined on average 3 percent per year between 1970 and 2016. Europe saw the sharpest falls of the regions studied, with a drop of 93 percent, while populations had shrunk an average of 84 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean. "Catastrophic losses in migratory fish populations show we cannot continue destroying our rivers," said Arjan Berkhuysen, managing director of the World Fish Migration Foundation. Migratory fish such as salmon, trout and Amazonian catfish support the livelihoods of millions of people around the world, researchers said. The study found a lower decline of 28 percent in North America, where there has been a movement to remove dams and protect habitats, and argued that this indicated the potential effectiveness of fishery management. The report stressed that it could not provide a full global picture because of a lack of data for Africa, Asia, Oceania and South America.

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Invitation for Tenders
e-Tender Notice (OTM)
Memo No. pwd-ken-03 dt. 28/07/2020

An e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following Construction Work.

Tender ID No.	Name of work/package description	Last selling & opening date
481719	Construction of Cancer Hospital Building (15-storied Building with 17-storied foundation having 2 (two) basement) at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital including Civil, Sanitary and Internal Electrification Work) FY-2020-2021.	31-Aug-2020 17:00pm 01-Sep-2020 11:00am

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 National 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 banks branches up to above stated time limit. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Saifuz Zaman
Executive Engineer
Mymensingh PWD Division
Mymensingh

GD-1206

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
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www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.0000.931.07.174.19-692 Date: 28/07/2020

e-Tender Notice No. 01/2020-2021

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following goods:

Sl. No.	e-Tender ID	Package No.	Name of procurement	Online (e-GP) tender notice publication date	Online (e-GP) tender document last selling date & time	Online (e-GP) tender closing date & time
01.	480844	GP-03/RCIP/PMU	Procurement of Laser Profliometer (Double beam with dedicated vehicle) under Rural Connectivity Improvement Project RCIP	30-07-2020	02-09-2020 4.00	03-09-2020 3.00pm

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 National 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 banks branches up to 02-09-2020 at 4.00pm. 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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GD-1209

Man shot dead for 'blasphemy' in Pak court

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

A man accused of blasphemy for claiming that he was a prophet has been shot dead in a courtroom in the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshawar, police officials say, the latest violence associated with Pakistan's strict blasphemy laws. Tahir Ahmad Naseem was shot six times during a hearing in his case at a district court yesterday, police official Ijaz Ahmed told Al Jazeera. "The culprit accepts responsibility for killing him, and says that he killed him for having committed blasphemy," said police official Ahmed. "The suspect has been arrested from the scene." Naseem had been in police custody since 2018 when he was accused of having committed blasphemy by claiming to be a prophet - a violation of Pakistan's strict blasphemy laws that can carry the death penalty for certain offences.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
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Memo No. 50.01.0000.401.44.060.20-485 Dated: 28.07.2020

Corrigendum Notice

Sub: Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) for the positions of (i) Senior Procurement Specialist, and (ii) Senior Design Engineer as Individual Consultant for the Office of the Chief Engineer, Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA)

Ref. : BBA Memo No. 50.01.0000.401.44.060.20-463; Dated: 16/07/2020.

The following amendment (as shown in Column-3) is hereby made to the Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) published on 16/07/2020 for the above-mentioned work. The interested individuals are advised to submit their application with due consideration to this amendments. This corrigendum is a part and parcel of the EOI document. All other terms and conditions of EOI notice and SRFA will remain unchanged. The individuals must submit this corrigendum along with their application duly sealed and signed.

Sl No.	Reference	To be replaced/Deleted	Replace with
i)	EOI Notice	Application/Expression of Interest shall be submitted by 04 August, 2020	Application/Expression of Interest shall be submitted by 10 August, 2020, 12:00pm
ii)	Section 2 ToR, Item 4 of SRFA of Senior Procurement Specialist, EOI Notice	Preferably 15 years of professional experience of which 10 years in procurement, preferably in civil works/goods/services.	Preferably 12 (Twelve) years of professional experience of which 8 (Eight) years in procurement, preferably in civil works/goods/services.
ii)	Section 2 ToR, Item 4 of SRFA of Senior Design Engineer, EOI Notice	Preferably 15 years of professional experience of which 10 years in Design and Construction Supervision of Civil/River Training works. Experience with quality parameters of Civil/River Training works.	Preferably 12 (Twelve) years of professional experience of which 8 (Eight) years in Design and Construction Supervision of Civil/River Training works. Experience with quality parameters of Civil/River Training works.

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GD-1208