



'You will not be safe' under Biden

Pence warns voters

AFP, Baltimore

US vice president Mike Pence took center stage at the Republican convention Wednesday to warn voters they 'won't be safe in Joe Biden's America' -- casting Donald Trump as their protector against the "radical" left.

Pence was the keynote speaker in a parade of Trump acolytes who sought to uplift the president as an economic virtuoso and champion of conservative and pro-life values, law enforcement and civil rights.

They also spoke of dark forces intent on ending the American dream, and said losing to their Democratic rivals is not an option.

"Law and order is on the ballot," Pence stressed on the third night of a convention amid mounting racial tensions in the United States.

With that backdrop, Pence made the patriotic case for Trump getting a second term instead of allowing the nation to be "fundamentally transformed" by a Biden administration he warned would take an uncharted path towards socialism and mob rule.

"The hard truth is, you won't be safe in Joe Biden's America," said the 61-year-old Pence.

Trump's Democratic rival holds a lead nationally, but a CNBC-Change Research poll released Wednesday showed the race tightening across six swing states including Florida, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Biden's running mate Kamala Harris, will be attacking Trump on his coronavirus record at a speech Thursday in Washington, the same day Trump gives his main acceptance speech at the White House to close out the Republican convention.

Cases rising among youth in Europe

AGENCIES

Europe is entering a "tricky moment" with the new school year, and while classrooms have not played a major role in spreading coronavirus, there is growing evidence of youth infecting others at social gatherings, the World Health Organization said yesterday.

Throughout the summer, countries on the continent have recorded higher numbers of Covid-19 infections among young people, Hans Kluge, WHO regional director for Europe, told a news briefing.

"It may be that the younger people are not necessarily going to die from it, but it's a tornado with a long tail. It's a multi-organ disease, so the virus is really attacking the lungs, but also the heart and other organs," Kluge said.

"Younger people, particularly with the

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

India records highest daily case tally of 75,760

Under Trump pressure, US stops test of asymptomatic people

Masks compulsory in all Paris as cases mount

Women may mount robust immune response: study



People hold American flags in front of the Washington monument to commemorate covid-19 victims in Washington, DC, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

winter coming, will be in closer contact with the elder population," he said.

Older people and at-risk groups must protect themselves with a flu vaccination as winter approaches, a season when more hospitalisations and deaths may be expected, he added.

Kluge, asked about concerns that schools could become a driver of infection, said that WHO's 53 European member states would discuss the issue in meetings on August 31 and in mid-September.

Meanwhile, Germany and France drew up tougher rules yesterday in line with a growing number of countries

batting a resurgence in infections with Paris making masks obligatory in all public places in a bid to curb a rise of new cases in the city.

Britain, South Korea and Rwanda are also tightening their restrictions as fears rise of a return to the draconian anti-virus curbs put in place earlier in the year.

India reported a record daily jump of 75,760 infections yesterday, taking its total caseload to 3.31 million as cases surged across the country, data from the federal health ministry showed.

India is the worst affected country in Asia and third behind the United States and Brazil in terms of total cases. It has

posted the highest single-day caseloads in the world since August 7, according to a Reuters tally.

The pandemic has killed more than 826,000 people worldwide since surfacing in China late last year and more than 24 million infections have been recorded.

After previously encouraging people without Covid-19 symptoms to get tested if they have been exposed to someone diagnosed with the virus, US health authorities have abruptly reversed their position without a clear explanation.

The changes in guidance were quietly made to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website on Monday amid US media reports of political interference from the White House.

A new study looking at male and female immune responses to the new coronavirus may shed new light on why men are more likely to become seriously ill with Covid-19, researchers said Wednesday.

Researchers found that women mounted a more robust immune response involving T lymphocytes, which are a type of white blood cell that can recognize viruses and eliminate them, reports AFP. This was the case even among older women, the study found.

According to the authors, this could imply that men and women need different treatments.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hurricane Laura batters southern US states

Hurricane Laura slammed into the southern US state of Louisiana yesterday and the monster category 4 storm prompted warnings of "unsurvivable" ocean surges and evacuation orders for hundreds of thousands of Gulf Coast residents. The National Hurricane Center (NHC) said "extremely dangerous" Laura would bring winds of 150 miles per hour (240 kilometers per hour) and "destructive waves will cause catastrophic damage" to Louisiana and Texas. Satellite images revealed the immense size of the hurricane as it made landfall at around 1:00am (0600 GMT), while television pictures showed heavy rain lashing the coastal city of Lake Charles, and powerful winds uprooting trees. Earlier the NHC warned Louisiana could pummel the Louisiana and Texas coasts with an "unsurvivable storm surge" of up to 20 feet (six meters), and that tornadoes could form at the southern edges of the weather system.

Mladic blasts genocide court as 'child of Nato'



Former Bosnian Serb military chief Ratko Mladic said Wednesday he had been "pushed into war" and dismissed a UN court as a "child of western powers" in a dramatic end to his appeal against his conviction for genocide. Mladic -- dubbed the "Butcher of Bosnia" -- is appealing his 2017 life sentence for genocide for overseeing the 1995 Srebrenica massacre of some 8,000 Muslim men and boys, and for war crimes and crimes against humanity in general during the 1992-95 Bosnian war. The former general was found guilty of orchestrating a campaign of "ethnic cleansing" to drive Muslims and Bosnians out of key areas to create a Greater Serbia as Yugoslavia tore itself apart after the fall of communism. Angered when the judge cut him off after his allotted 10 minutes instead of giving him half an hour as he had requested, Mladic muttered: "This indictment has gone down the drain." Judges will give their decision at a later date.

Trump wants Biden to take 'drug test'

US president Donald Trump said Wednesday he will call for a "drug test" for himself and Joe Biden before the first presidential debate, but did not offer any evidence for his suspicions about his Democratic opponent. Trump said in an interview with the Washington Examiner that he was intrigued by Biden's improved performance during the Democratic primary. "We're going to call for a drug test," Trump said, expressing surprise at the former vice president's bearing during the last debate against Vermont senator Bernie Sanders in March. Biden was "close to incompetent, if not incompetent, and against Bernie, he was normal," Trump continued. "I say, 'How does that happen?'" Trump made similar remarks in the fall of 2016, at the peak of the presidential race, positing that then-opponent Hillary Clinton had taken drugs. "I think we should take a drug test prior to the debate," he said during a rally in New Hampshire.

SOURCE: REUTERS, AFP

Coronavirus hits isolated Indian tribe

AFP, Port Blair

Ten members of India's dwindling Great Andamanese tribe have tested positive for the coronavirus, officials said yesterday, fuelling concerns about the safety of the group and other indigenous people in the remote archipelago.

Out of the 10, six have recovered and have been put in home quarantine, while the rest are undergoing treatment in a local hospital, officials told AFP.

Just over 50 Great Andamanese people survive today and live on the tiny Strait Island where the Indian government looks after their food and shelter.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, a chain of islands in the Indian Ocean with a population of some 400,000, has reported 2,268 coronavirus cases so far with 37 deaths.

Indian authorities sent a team of health officials to Strait Island on Sunday after six members of the tribe tested positive in the archipelago's capital Port Blair recently.

Some of the tribe's members travel to Port Blair where they have government jobs.

Sanjiv Mittal, a senior government officer for tribal welfare, told AFP authorities were doing their best to keep all the members safe and healthy.

Anthropologists and activists for isolated tribal communities say more than 5,000 Great Andamanese lived in the islands when British settlers arrived in the 19th century.

However, hundreds were killed in conflicts as they defended their territories from British invasion, and thousands more were wiped out in epidemics of measles, influenza and syphilis, according to Survivor International.

In recent days, concerns have grown for the safety of the Great Andamanese and other tribes, including the remote Jarawa and the Sentinelese people.

INDIA-CHINA BORDER TENSIONS Situation 'most serious' since 1962 war: India FM

Says troops deployment from both sides there 'unprecedented'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India has termed the border situation with China in Ladakh the "most serious" since the 1962 Sino-India conflict and said the number of forces currently deployed by both sides at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is "unprecedented".

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, however, pointed out that all border standoffs in the past were resolved through diplomacy.

His comments were given in an interview to Rediff.com ahead of the release of his new book "The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World".

"Indian and Chinese armies are locked in a tense standoff in eastern Ladakh for over three-and-half-months despite multiple rounds of diplomatic and military talks. The tension escalated after 20 Indian soldiers were killed in the Galwan Valley clash in which Chinese military also suffered casualties. This is surely the most serious situation after 1962.

"In fact, after 45 years, we have had military casualties on this border. The quantum of forces currently deployed by both sides at the LAC is also unprecedented," Jaishankar said.

The Indian External Affairs Minister also referred to previous episodes of border tensions with China

including in Doklam (at the trijunction of India-China-Bhutan border), Depsang and Chumar (both in Ladakh) and said India will do what it takes to secure its borders.

"As you know, we are talking to the Chinese both through military channels and diplomatic ones. In fact, they work in tandem," the

"But when it comes to finding a solution, this must be predicated on honouring all agreements and understandings. And not attempting to alter the status quo unilaterally," Jaishankar said.

India has been insisting that the border standoff with China must be resolved in accordance with the existing agreements and protocols for border management between the two countries.

Amidst the fiasco with China, India is all set to clear acquisition of two PHALCON airborne warning and control systems (AWACS) from Israel next week, Indian media reports yesterday said.

The PHALCON radar is going to cost about \$1 billion with another \$1 billion going towards the purchase of the platform, in this case Russian A-50 aircraft. The radar and the platform will be integrated in Israel, The Hindustan Times reported, said adding it would take about two to three years for the delivery of the complete system.



Members of the public celebrate outside the High Court after the conclusion of the sentencing hearing for Australian white supremacist Brenton Tarrant in Christchurch, yesterday. Story on page 16.

PHOTO: AFP

AFGHAN FLOODS

Death toll rises to 122

REUTERS, Kabul

Families and rescue workers in Afghanistan yesterday searched for survivors of flash floods that killed more than 122 people and destroyed more than 1,500 houses north of the capital, Kabul, officials said.

At least 250 people were injured when torrential rain earlier in the week triggered flash floods that ravaged large-parts of Parwan province, officials said.

"The situation is very grim, the scale of loss is intense," said Tamim Azimi, a spokesman for the ministry said. "Many people are still missing."

Survivors said many children were among the dead. The death toll was expected to rise.

Iran allows UN access to alleged nuclear sites

AFP, Tehran

Iran has agreed to allow the UN watchdog the access it has requested to two alleged nuclear sites, as the head of the agency ended his first visit to Tehran.

The announcement came only hours after Iran's arch foe the United States suffered a humiliating defeat when the United Nations blocked its controversial bid to reimpose international sanctions on the Islamic republic.

The US move had threatened to torpedo a historic 2015 accord under which Iran had agreed to curb its nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief.

The deal known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has been hanging by a thread since US President Donald Trump's unilateral decision to withdraw from it in 2018.

Iran has retaliated by gradually reducing its commitments to the JCPOA ever since.

But it agreed on Wednesday to grant the International Atomic Energy Agency the

access it has sought to two sites that were suspected of having hosted undeclared activity in the early 2000s.

The announcement came at the end of IAEA director general Rafael Grossi's first visit to Iran since the Argentine took the post last year.

On return to Vienna, where the IAEA is based, Grossi told reporters that inspectors would visit the sites "very, very soon". He said he could not reveal the exact dates.

In their statement, the two sides said the agreement followed "intensive bilateral consultations" and that the IAEA had no further access requests.

The IAEA's board of governors had passed a resolution in late June put forward by Britain, France and Germany, urging Tehran to provide inspectors access to the two disputed sites.

According to the spokesman for Iran's nuclear body, one of the two is located in central Iran between Isfahan and Yazd provinces, and the other is close to Tehran.

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