



Kashmiri demonstrators are chased away by Indian police during a protest after a gun battle between suspected militants and Indian security forces in Srinagar yesterday. Hundreds of angry residents clashed with government forces in the main city of Indian-administered Kashmir after a firefight left three suspected rebels and a young woman dead, police and witnesses said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

‘STANDSTILL’ SITUATION ALONG LAC

# Disengagement onus on India, says China

TNN, New Delhi

Despite the recent five-point India-China consensus for defusing the border situation, China on Wednesday put the ball for disengagement in India's court and said it was imperative for the latter to correct its "mistake", disengage on the ground and take concrete steps to ease tensions.

A week after the consensus arrived in Moscow in the meeting of Foreign Ministers S Jaishankar and Wang Yi, the two sides are yet to finalise a date for the next meeting of senior commanders.

Meanwhile, there is a "standstill" situation on the ground along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with both armies holding their positions. "The responsibility for the recent Sino-Indian border incidents is not on the Chinese side."

It is the Indian side's violation of the agreement and important consensus between the two sides, the first to illegally cross the line to provocation, the unilateral change of the status quo in the border area, and the threat to the security of the Chinese border troops," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said.

The Chinese statement followed defence minister Rajnath Singh's detailed remarks in Lok Sabha on Tuesday in which he accused China of violating bilateral agreements with its violent conduct on the LAC.



Rajnath Singh yesterday also told the parliament that no force in the world can stop Indian troops from patrolling the country's border in Ladakh region.

In his statement, Singh said China attempted to change the status quo along the LAC with its provocative military manoeuvres late last month and that there is a mismatch between what Beijing says and does.

The minister said India wants a peaceful solution to the boundary issue, but will not shy away from any action required to defend the sovereignty of the country.

Lauding the Indian troops, he said that the forces maintained patience and displayed valour in the face of provocative actions by the PLA.

The minister said that China continues to be in illegal occupation of approximately 38,000 square kilometres of area in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

# One in 7 reported infections is among health workers: WHO

Urges for their safety; data from just 44 countries show 1,097 nurses died

REUTERS, Geneva

One in seven cases of Covid-19 reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) is a health worker and in some countries that figure rises to one in three, the agency said on Thursday.

The WHO called for frontline medical workers to be provided with protective equipment to prevent them from being infected with the novel coronavirus, and potentially spreading it to their patients and families.

"Globally around 14% of Covid cases reported to the WHO are among health workers and in some countries it's as much as 35%," WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

He added data was limited however and it was hard to know if people were infected at work or in their communities.

Tedros was addressing a news briefing marking World Patient Safety Day, as the number of people reported infected with



the coronavirus neared 30 million, with 938,291 deaths, according to a Reuters tally.

"It's not just the risk of infection. Every day, health workers are exposed to stress, burnout, stigma, discrimination and even violence," he added.

Guy Ryder, director-general of the UN's International Labour Organization (ILO), said the WHO figures on infections among health workers were a "shocking testimony".

WHO's emergency chief Mike Ryan said that three things haunt health workers on the

frontlines of infectious disease outbreaks.

"One is to stand there and watch people die because you can't help them. Two is to see a worker fall and be infected, your fellow worker and friend."

"And the third - and the one that really weighs on health workers most of the time in these situations - is the chance they could take that disease home to their families, to their friends, to their children," Ryan said.

On Wednesday, the International Council of Nurses said thousands of nurses had likely died in the pandemic, pointing to numbers from just 44 countries showing 1,097 deaths by mid-August.

In its charter presented yesterday, the WHO emphasised the legal and moral obligations governments have to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of health workers. The charter among other things calls on countries to develop programmes that better protect the health and safety of medical workers, and to combine them with patient safety policies.

# Coronavirus driving discrimination in Asia

REUTERS

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) yesterday warned that the novel coronavirus is driving discrimination towards vulnerable communities in Asia, including migrants and foreigners.

The humanitarian agency surveyed 5,000 people in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Pakistan and found about half blamed a specific group for spreading the coronavirus, with many mentioning Chinese people, immigrants and foreigners.

"It is particularly concerning that both national migrant and foreign workers are blamed for the spread of COVID-19 as they are quite vulnerable already," Dr Viviane Fluck, one of the lead researchers and the agency's Asia Pacific community engagement and accountability coordinator, told Reuters.

She said there should be more focus on combating "rumors that are linked to underlying power dynamics and structural issues of inequality".

More than half of the Indonesians surveyed blamed "foreigners and rule-breakers" while in Myanmar, the groups most often thought to be responsible were people from China and other foreigners.

In Malaysia, two-thirds blamed a "specific group", most frequently mentioning migrants, foreign tourists and "illegal foreigners", the researchers said. Malaysian authorities arrested hundreds of undocumented migrants and refugees in May in a crackdown.

## Hotel room water bottle linked to Navalny poisoning

The nerve agent used to poison Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was detected on an empty water bottle from his hotel room in the Siberian city of Tomsk, suggesting he was poisoned there and not at the airport as first thought, his team said yesterday. Navalny fell violently ill on a flight in Russia last month and was airlifted to Berlin for treatment. Laboratories in Germany, France and Sweden have established he was poisoned by a Novichok nerve agent, a poison developed by the Soviet military, though Russia denies this and says it has seen no evidence.

## US charges seven in Chinese hacking effort

The US Justice Department said on Wednesday it has charged five Chinese residents and two Malaysian businessmen in a wide-ranging hacking effort that encompassed targets from videogames to pro-democracy activists. Federal prosecutors said the Chinese nationals had been charged with hacking more than 100 companies in the United States and abroad, including software development companies, computer manufacturers, telecommunications providers, social media companies, gaming firms, nonprofits, universities, think-tanks as well as foreign governments and politicians and civil society figures in Hong Kong. US officials stopped short of alleging the hackers were working on behalf of Beijing, but in a statement Deputy Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen expressed exasperation with Chinese authorities, saying they were - at the very least - turning a blind eye to cyber-espionage.

## Rahul Gandhi wishes Modi on his 70th birthday



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi wished Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his birthday yesterday. "Wishing PM Narendra Modi ji a happy birthday," tweeted the Congress MP as PM Modi turned 70. PM Modi thanked the former Congress chief with a tweet that said, "Thanks for the wishes Rahul Gandhi Ji." Rahul Gandhi had wished PM Modi last year too. Meanwhile, A host of Indian celebrities including Virat Kohli, Aamir Khan, Karan Johar, Salman Khan, Shilpa Shetty, Kangana Ranaut and Anupam Kher used social media to greet the PM. Kangana Ranaut and Anupam Kher posted videos with birthday messages for Modi on Twitter. Shilpa Shetty, Anil Kapoor, Salman Khan and Chetan Bhagat put pictures with the Prime Minister and wished him.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS, NDTV

# No trade deal unless you respect N Irish peace pact

Biden warns Johnson on Brexit; UK govt reaches deal with Conservative rebels

REUTERS, London

US Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden warned the United Kingdom that it must honour the Northern Irish peace deal as it extracts itself from the European Union or there would be no separate US trade deal.

"We can't allow the Good Friday Agreement that brought peace to Northern Ireland to become a casualty of Brexit," he tweeted.

"Any trade deal between the US and UK must be contingent upon respect for the Agreement and preventing the return of a hard border. Period."

Johnson insists he is defending not threatening the Good Friday pact, but is proposing new legislation that would break parts of the Brexit divorce treaty relating to British-ruled Northern Ireland that seek to avoid a physical customs border.

The prime minister accuses the EU of trying to divide up the United Kingdom. He says the United Kingdom has to have the ability to break parts of the 2020 Brexit treaty if it is to uphold London's commitments under the 1998 pact which ended three decades of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland between pro-British Protestant unionists and Irish Catholic nationalists.

The EU says any breach of the Brexit treaty could sink trade talks, propel the United Kingdom towards a messy exit when it fully departs at the end of the year, and thus complicate the border between Northern Ireland and EU-member Ireland.

On Wednesday, British government reached a deal to avert a rebellion in his own party, giving parliament a say over the use of post-Brexit powers within its proposed Internal Market Bill that break international law.



Pro-democracy protesters perform in front of the Royal Thai Army headquarters as they protest against government and military in Bangkok, Thailand, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# Erdogan lashes out at 'incapable' Macron

AFP, Ankara

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday said France was being led by an "incapable" president as he stepped up his personal feud with Emmanuel Macron.

Erdogan and Macron have traded insults for months after finding themselves on opposite sides of conflicts ranging from Libya and parts of the Middle East to Turkey's maritime dispute with Greece.

Macron enraged Ankara last week by suggesting that Turkey "deserved something else" to the way Erdogan's government was approaching foreign affairs.

The European Union will next week discuss sanctioning Turkey for sending its energy exploration vessels and warships into eastern Mediterranean waters claimed by Cyprus and Greece.

Erdogan told a virtual meeting of his ruling AK Party that Macron's logic blaming Turkey for regional problems did not work.



# Trump or Biden?

Peruvian shamans try to predict winner of US election

REUTERS, Lima

With incense smoke, flowers and photos of President Donald Trump and Democratic rival Joe Biden, Peruvian shamans performed an ancestral ritual on Wednesday for the US elections, but there was little agreement about who would win the Nov. 3 ballot.

Chanting and blowing a traditional Andean shell instrument, the shamans, dressed in multicolored garb, invoked the "Pachamama", or mother earth, for the US vote to take place in peace, without attacks or any witchcraft between the rivals.

Shaman teacher Ana María Simeón, during the ritual held in a low-lit room of an old building in downtown Lima, said she was in favor of Biden.

"We have seen that they are attacking him with witchcraft, with a black doll, with a voodoo doll they are shadowing to remove him," said the shaman.

According to a Reuters/Ipsos poll on Wednesday, Biden leads Trump nationally by 9 percentage points.

"Good energies to Mr Donald Trump," said the master shaman Pablo Torres, carrying the snake on one of his shoulders after squirting a strange liquid from his mouth onto the image of Trump. "Why? Because he is deserving. ... We are supporters of the gentleman. He will win; he is a winner."

# No ME peace without solving Palestinian issue

Says Russia, urges global players to 'ramp up coordinated efforts' to solve the problem

AFP, Moscow

Russia yesterday said it would be a "mistake" to think lasting peace in the Middle East could be secured without resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The foreign ministry statement came after Israel normalised relations with long-time foes Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates at the White House on Tuesday.

The deals broke with decades of Arab consensus that there would be no normalisation of relations with Israel until it had made peace with the Palestinians and drew accusations of "betrayal" against the Western-backed Gulf states.

Russia said it noted "progress" in the normalisation of ties between Israel and several Arab countries but said that "the Palestinian problem remains acute."

"It would be a mistake to think that

without finding a solution to it that it will be possible to secure lasting stabilisation in the Middle East."

Moscow urged regional and global players to "ramp up coordinated efforts" to solve the issue. "Russia is ready for such joint work," including in the framework of the diplomatic Quartet of Middle East peace negotiators and in close coordination with the Arab League, the foreign ministry said.

US President Donald Trump has said similar US-brokered deals are close between the Jewish state and several other nations, including Saudi Arabia.

Bahrain and the UAE are the first Arab nations to establish relations with Israel since Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994.

Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas said Tuesday that only an Israeli withdrawal from its occupied territories could bring peace to the Middle East.