

Rocket attack on Kabul kills eight

Pompeo to meet Taliban negotiators

AFP, Kabul

At least eight people were killed yesterday when a barrage of rockets struck densely populated parts of Kabul, the latest big attack in a wave of violence sweeping the Afghan capital.

The salvo slammed into various parts of central and north Kabul -- including in and around the heavily fortified Green Zone that houses embassies and international firms -- just before 9:00 am (0430 GMT).

The Iranian embassy said on Twitter that its main building had been hit by rocket fragments after one landed on the premises. No one in the compound, located just outside the Green Zone, was wounded.

Interior ministry spokesman Tariq Arian blamed the Taliban, saying "terrorists" had fired a total of 23 rockets. "Based on initial information, eight people were martyred, and 31 others were wounded," Arian said, noting the final toll would change.

The Taliban denied responsibility, saying they "do not blindly fire on public places".

Recent major attacks in Kabul, including two horrific assaults on educational institutions that killed nearly 50 people, follow a familiar pattern in the aftermath, with the Taliban denying any involvement while the Afghan government pins the blame on them or their proxies.

Taliban and Afghan government negotiators launched peace talks in Doha in September but progress has been slow and violence has raged across Afghanistan regardless.

Officials told AFP on Friday however that a breakthrough was expected to be announced in the coming days, and the US State Department announced late Friday that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo would meet negotiators from the Taliban and the Afghan government in Doha.



Pro-democracy protesters hold up the three-finger salute during a 'Bad Student' rally in Bangkok, yesterday. High school students led a protest by thousands of people in Bangkok yesterday with calls to bring down the government and reform the monarchy. It was the first major protest since Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha said on Thursday that police would use all laws against protesters, who have become the biggest challenge to Thailand's rulers in years.

PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Erdogan, Saudi king agree to enhance ties

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan discussed ways of enhancing ties with King Salman of Saudi Arabia, in a rare phone call since the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, his office said. The phone call came on the eve of the G20 leaders' summit hosted by Riyadh on Saturday and Sunday. "President Erdogan and King Salman agreed on keeping channels of dialogue open in order for the bilateral relations to be enhanced and for issues to be settled," the Turkish presidency said in a statement. Turkey and Saudi Arabia have long competed for supremacy in the Muslim world but the tensions between the two Sunni-Muslim regional powers have intensified since the 2018 murder of Washington Post contributor Khashoggi at the kingdom's Istanbul consulate.

Man arrested in Berlin on suspicion of cannibalism

German police have arrested a 41-year-old man on suspicion of cannibalism after they found human bones stripped completely of flesh in a Berlin suburb. The suspect was arrested on Wednesday in connection with the September disappearance of a 44-year-old man in the German capital. Police did not name the suspect, but the Bild daily identified him as Stefan R., a high school maths and chemistry teacher. Officers combing the suspect's home found a sack truck and a medical bone saw in his cellar, along with 25 kilograms of sodium hydroxide, "a caustic soda suitable for dissolving human tissue," an investigator told Bild. A large fridge was also found in the cellar but it was empty, Bild said. Traces of blood were also uncovered at the suspect's flat, prosecutor Martin Steltner told AFP.

Twitter to hand @POTUS account to Biden on Jan 20

Twitter will hand control of the presidential @POTUS account to Joe Biden when he is sworn in on inauguration day, even if President Donald Trump has not conceded his election loss, US media reported Friday. The social media giant is "actively preparing to support the transition of White House institutional Twitter accounts on January 20th, 2021," Twitter spokesperson Nick Pacilio told Politico in an email. The handover will see all existing tweets on @POTUS, as well as @FLOTUS, @VP and other official accounts, archived. The accounts will then be reset to zero tweets and transferred to the incoming Biden White House that day. Trump mainly uses his personal account, @realDonaldTrump, whose 88 million followers dwarf @POTUS's 32 million.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Human ageing reversed!

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists claim to have successfully reversed the biological aging process in a group of elderly adults.

In a first of a kind study, researchers from Tel Aviv University and the Shamir Medical Center used a form of oxygen therapy to reverse two key indicators of biological aging: Telomere length and senescent cells accumulation.

As the human body gets older, it experiences the shortening of telomeres -- the protective caps found at the end of chromosomes -- and an increase in old, malfunctioning senescent cells.

A clinical trial involving 35 adults over the age of 64 sought to understand whether a method called Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy could prevent the deterioration of these two hallmarks of the aging process.

The subjects were placed in a pressurised chamber and given pure oxygen for 90 minutes a day, five days a week for three months.

At the end of the trial, the scientists reported that the participants' telomeres had increased in length by an average of 20 per cent, while their senescent cells had been reduced by up to 37 per cent.

This is the equivalent to how their bodies were at a cellular level 25 years earlier, the researchers reported.

It is the latest in a series of radical anti-ageing treatments, which seek to increase life expectancy and even make people look and feel younger. The idea is that ageing is a disease that can be cured just like any other.

During the latest trial in Israel, the participants did not undergo any lifestyle, diet or medication adjustments, which have previously been found to have moderate effects on a person's biological age.

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

'A century of medical progress' at stake: WHO

AFP, Geneva

The World Health Organization has warned that growing antimicrobial resistance is every bit as dangerous as the coronavirus pandemic -- and threatens to reverse a century of medical progress.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called the issue "one of the greatest health threats of our time".

Resistance is when bugs become immune to existing drugs -- antibiotic, antiviral or antifungal treatments -- rendering minor injuries and common infections potentially deadly.

Resistance has grown in recent years due to overuse of such drugs in humans and also in farm animals.

"Antimicrobial resistance may not seem as urgent as a pandemic but it is just as dangerous," Tedros told a virtual press conference.

"It threatens to unwind a century of medical progress and leave us defenceless against infections that today can be treated easily," he said on Friday.

The WHO said antimicrobial resistance was endangering food security, economic development and the planet's ability to fight diseases.

Resistance has led to increased health care costs, hospital admissions, treatment failures, severe illnesses and deaths, the UN health agency said.

The WHO joined forces with the Food and Agriculture Organization and with the World Organisation for Animal Health to launch a new group to advocate for urgent action to combat the threat.

The One Health Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance will bring together heads of government, company chief executives

and civil society leaders.

Discovered in the 1920s, antibiotics have saved tens of millions of lives by seeing off bacterial diseases such as pneumonia, tuberculosis and meningitis. But over the decades, bacteria have learned to fight back, building resistance to the same drugs that once reliably vanquished them -- turning into so-called "superbugs".

The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations said superbugs were already taking a heavy toll.

"About 700,000 people globally die each year due to antimicrobial resistance," the IFPMA said in a statement welcoming the new group.

"Without strong action to ensure appropriate use of existing antibiotics, as well as new and better treatments, that figure could rise to 10 million by 2050."



Relatives and supporters of the 12 Hong Kong people detained in mainland China release balloons from a peak overlooking Yantian district in the neighbouring Chinese mainland city of Shenzhen, at a protest in Hong Kong, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

KASHMIR GUN BATTLE India summons Pak diplomat

REUTERS

India yesterday summoned a senior Pakistani diplomat over what New Delhi said was a foiled attack this week in the frontier territory of Jammu and Kashmir by a Pakistan-based militant group, a charge the neighbouring country denied.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that the killing of four Jaish-e-Mohammed militants in a gun battle with security forces, and the recovery of a large cache of weapons and explosives from them, indicated that they were planning to "wreak major havoc and destruction" in the region ahead of local elections there.

India's Ministry of External Affairs said a protest was lodged with Pakistan's charge d'affaires in New Delhi.

"India reiterated its longstanding demand that Pakistan fulfill its international obligations and bilateral commitments to not allow any territory under its control to be used for terrorism against India in any manner," the ministry said in a statement.

Tension between the nuclear-armed rivals has sharpened since last August, when Modi's government ended the autonomy of its only Muslim-majority region. Kashmir is also claimed by Pakistan.

Earlier this month, Pakistan said it had compiled a dossier with evidence that militancy inside its borders was being sponsored by India to target Chinese investments, and that these operations were being run out of neighbouring Afghanistan. India termed the accusations as "figments of imagination".

India will hold district-level elections this month in Jammu and Kashmir, the first such exercise there since the federal government took away the area's statehood.

Yemen faces world's worst famine in decades: UN chief

AFP, United Nations

War-torn Yemen is in imminent danger of the worst famine the world has seen in decades, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned Friday.

"In the absence of immediate action, millions of lives may be lost," Guterres said of the country that has endured a five year war between Iranian-backed Huthi rebels and government forces.

The government in Yemen is supported by a Saudi-led coalition, assisted by Western powers including the United States.

President Donald Trump's administration has made isolating its arch-foe Tehran a centerpiece of US regional policy.

The warning from Guterres, the latest in a series from the UN on Yemen, comes amid reports that the Trump administration is considering labeling the Huthis a terrorist organization.

That could cripple aid deliveries and make things even worse in Yemen, aid groups say.

In his statement, Guterres made only indirect reference to this possibility.

"I urge all those with influence to act urgently on these issues to stave off

catastrophe, and I also request that everyone avoids taking any action that could make the already dire situation even worse," the secretary-general said.

Guterres' statement said reasons for the heightened threat of famine include a sharp drop in funding for the UN-coordinated relief program, the instability of the Yemeni currency and "impediments" for relief organizations imposed by warring parties.

The Huthi rebels control the Yemeni capital Sanaa and much of the north after a grinding war that has created the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

If the US does label the Huthis a terror group, that would mean many countries would have trouble interacting with the rebels.


The impact on the Huthis, who are already under US sanctions, may be limited but ordinary Yemenis could pay the price, with further damage to aid programs already cut back due to record-low funding during the coronavirus pandemic.

Everything from dealing with Huthi officials, handling taxes, using the banking system, paying health workers, buying food and fuel and arranging internet services could be affected, humanitarian groups say.



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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মুজিব বর্ষে স্বাস্থ্য বাত
এগিয়ে যাবে অনেক ধাপ

Memo No. UHC/Cumilla Sadar South/Cumilla/2020/888
Date: 21/11/2020

MSR Open Tender Notice

Invitation for Procurement of MSR Goods for all Health Institute under Upazila Health Complex, Daudkandi, Cumilla in tender financial year 2020-2021.

01. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare/Health Service Division.			
02. Agency/office name	Upazila Health Complex, Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla.			
03. Procuring entity name	Upazila Health & Family Planning Officer.			
04. Procuring entity upazila	Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla.			
05. Invitation for	Purchase of MSR Medicine (Local), Instrument, Gauge Bandage, Linen & Furniture.			
06. Invitation Ref. No. & date	Memo No. Sha:Adhi/Budget/MSR/2019-2020/1561 Date: 03/09/2020 & all Budget of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Director General of Health Services.			
07. Procurement method	Open Tender Method (OTM).			
08. Budget & source of fund	GOB (DGHS), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.			
09. Tender publication date	22 November, 2020.			
10. Tender last selling date & time	12 December, 2020 (during office hour).			
11. Tender submission date & time	12 December, 2020 (up to 12.00 Noon).			
12. Tender opening date & time	13 December, 2020 (at 12.30pm).			
13. Tender document selling place	Upazila Health Complex, Upazila Parishad Office, Model Thana, Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla.			
14. Place of tender document received	Upazila Health Complex, Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla.			
15. Place of tender opening date & time	Upazila Health Complex, Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla. 13 December, 2020 at 12.30pm.			
16. Place of pre-tender meeting, date & time	Upazila Health Complex, Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla. 12 December, 2020 at 2.30pm.			
17. Qualification of tenderer	MSR trade licence for the financial year 2020-2021, income tax, Vat registration, bank solvency, experience & nationality certificate, specimen signature, passport size picture etc. (as per condition).			
18. Particulars of purchasing goods	MSR like Medicine (Non EDCL), Instrument, Gauge Bandage, Linen, Chemicals Re-agent & Furniture purchase.			
19. Price of tender document:				
Sl. No.	Name of group	Accounting unit	Price of tender document (non-refundable) in Taka	Security amount (refundable) in Taka
a)	Medicine (Local)	Each	750/- (seven hundred fifty)	20,000/- (twenty thousand)
b)	Instrument	Each	500/- (five hundred)	15,000/- (fifteen thousand)
c)	Gauge Bandage	Each	400/- (four hundred)	10,000/- (ten thousand)
d)	Linen	Each	400/- (four hundred)	10,000/- (ten thousand)
e)	Furniture	Each	400/- (four hundred)	5,000/- (five thousand)
20. Name of official inviting tender	Dr. Mohammad Ashrafur Rahman.			
21. Designation of official inviting tender	Upazila Health & Family Planning Officer, Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla.			
22. Address of official inviting tender	Upazila Health Complex, Sadar South, Cumilla.			
23. Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel: 0088-08042-57055 E-mail: comillasadarsouth@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd			
24. Validity of tender	This tender is valid up to 30th June, 2021.			
25. Other terms & conditions regarding this tender notice are available at the office of the undersigned during office hour. The concerned authority reserves the complete rights to accept or reject any part or all the tender notice or the authority reserves absolute rights to adopt any decision in this connection according to the direction of the government.				

Dr. Mohammad Ashrafur Rahman
Upazila Health & Family Planning Officer
Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla

GD-1856