

### Sinopharm's vaccine 86pc effective: UAE

AFP, Dubai

The United Arab Emirates yesterday officially registered the coronavirus vaccine produced by Chinese drug giant Sinopharm, saying it was 86 percent effective according to analysis of third-phase trials.

The vaccine has been undergoing third-phase trials in the Emirates since July, and it was approved for emergency use for healthcare workers in September.

UAE health officials have reviewed Sinopharm's interim analysis of the third-phase trials which shows it is 86 percent effective against coronavirus, the report said.

"The analysis also shows the vaccine to have 99 percent seroconversion rate of neutralising antibody and 100 percent effectiveness in preventing moderate and severe cases of the disease.

"Furthermore, the analysis shows no serious safety concerns."

China has four vaccine products in the final stages of development, three of which -- including Sinopharm -- use an inactivated form of the novel coronavirus to boost immunity.

This means they only need to be refrigerated and can be easily distributed compared to jabs developed by rivals Pfizer and BioNTech or Moderna, which have reported efficacy of 95 percent and 94 percent respectively but need to be transported at minus 70 to 20 degrees Celsius.

## Oxford vaccine better at stopping Covid than slowing spread: report

Pfizer vaccine raises 'no specific safety concerns': FDA

AGENCIES

A vaccine from the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca shows only a limited ability to stop transmission of the coronavirus despite preventing Covid-19 illness in a majority of those who are infected.

As promising vaccine data keeps rolling in, one of the central unanswered questions has been whether inoculations can not only stop people from getting sick but also slow the spread of the virus, a key element for reopening economies.

Oxford and Astra are the first vaccine developers to unveil data on asymptomatic infection rates in people who received their shot. Overall, it reduced such transmissions by 27% in a large study, according to peer-reviewed results published in the Lancet medical journal on Tuesday.

That's well below the vaccine's 70% effectiveness at preventing symptomatic Covid-19 cases overall, though even those results are clouded by questions over its benefits in older recipients aged above 55.

Researchers tested more than 6,000 study participants in the UK for Covid-19 infections on a weekly basis and found 29 asymptomatic infections in the vaccinated group. That compared with 40 cases in the control group, which was roughly the same size.

Vaccine efficacy against asymptomatic transmission was higher, at 59%, in a smaller group that received a half dose, followed by a full second dose, rather than two full shots. The data support Oxford's preliminary finding that the low-dose, full-dose regimen appears to elicit a stronger immune response, preventing 90% of infections. Two full doses were only 4% effective against asymptomatic transmission.

Although vaccines that prevent illness but not transmission could be widely used and help lower the disease's death toll, they

could also lead to complacency within populations, experts say. Those who are immunized with them could still spread the virus to other, more vulnerable people, including those who've yet to receive a shot or can't get one for medical reasons.

Andrew Pollard, the Oxford professor who led the study, called the data "tantalizing" but said it was too early to draw firm conclusions. He said researchers are trying to analyze the amount of virus in the swabs to determine whether vaccination reduced viral loads, which would help limit contagion.

"What would be fantastic would be vaccines that prevent transmission so you reach the point where you not only protect the people who are vaccinated but also those who can't be vaccinated or haven't been vaccinated yet,"

he said in an interview.

Similar questions surround other early Covid vaccines, including one from Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE that's been approved in the UK -- where the first shots were given Tuesday. It's possible that shot didn't work as well at preventing asymptomatic cases as it did at preventing illness, according to a report by staff of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Pfizer-BioNTech and US biotech firm Moderna have reported efficacy of 95 percent and 94 percent respectively and have given data to regulators.

Meanwhile, the FDA issued a briefing document Tuesday saying the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is safe and effective, raising expectations the regulator is poised to grant emergency approval. It added that the vaccine worked uniformly across age groups, genders, and racial groups, as well as people with underlying conditions who are at high risk.



Activist from the All India Democratic Students Organisation (AIDSO) shout slogans during a protest march against the newly passed farm bills, in Kolkata, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## US tops 15m Covid cases

Biden eyes mass inoculation as Trump orders priority vaccine access for citizens; Germany battles soaring virus deaths

AGENCIES

US coronavirus cases crossed the 15 million mark on Tuesday as regulators moved a step closer to approving a Covid-19 vaccine and President-elect Joe Biden laid out his plan to fight the pandemic during his first 100 days in office.

Record cases in at least three states - Arizona, Alabama and Ohio - pushed the cumulative case load to over 15 million, according to a Reuters tally of state and county data. With the virus showing no sign of abating, leading health officials are once again sounding the alarm of further spread when people gather for the year-end holidays.

"We're in for a very challenging

period," top infectious disease expert Dr. Anthony Fauci told a virtual summit on Tuesday.

At a briefing in Wilmington, Delaware, Biden said he needed Congress to fully fund delivering vaccines to all corners of the United States. Getting children back to school will be a national priority in the first 100 days, Biden said.

"In 100 days, we can change the course of the disease and change life in America for the better," said Biden, who takes office on Jan. 20. "Whatever your politics or point of view, mask up for 100 days."

US President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Tuesday, which

his administration says will ensure that "Americans receive priority access" to the new coronavirus vaccines procured by the US government before they are made available to other nations.

A senior administration official confirmed that the vaccine will be given for free to US citizens.

In Europe, Germany was battling a second virus wave much more deadly than the first yesterday with record fatalities.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel is urging regions to take much more drastic action to curb the spread, after state leaders agreed measures that would see comparatively modest social restrictions eased even further for the Christmas holidays.



A worker uses a conveyor belt to transport ice blocks from the frozen Songhua river in Harbin in China's northeastern Heilongjiang province yesterday, as ice is collected for the Second Harbin Ice Harvest Festival.

PHOTO: AFP

### ARBITRARY DETENTION IN XINJIANG

## China uses big data to target Muslims: HRW

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

A big-data program in China's Xinjiang "arbitrarily selects" Muslims for detention, flagging behaviour such as wearing a veil, studying the Quran or going on the Hajj pilgrimage as reasons for arrest, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW).

In a new report yesterday, the rights group said it analysed a leaked list of more than 2,000 detainees in Xinjiang's Aksu prefecture and found that the programme -- known as the Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP) -- also flagged people for their relationships, their communications, their travel histories, or for being related to someone the authorities consider suspicious.

"The Aksu List provides further insights into how China's brutal repression of Xinjiang's Turkic Muslims is being turbocharged by technology," said Maya Wang, senior China researcher at HRW.



"The Chinese government owes answers to the families of those on the list: Why were they detained, and where are they now?"

The United Nations estimates that more than one million Turkic Muslims -- most of them ethnic Uighurs -- have been detained in camps in far-western Xinjiang.

Activists say the purpose of the detention was to "erase the ethnic and religious identities of" Turkic Muslims and ensure their loyalty to the Chinese government.

Beijing denies the accusations, describing the camps as vocational training centres to help stamp out "religious extremism" in the troubled province.

HRW said the Aksu List -- which dates from late 2018 -- shows further evidence of the role big data and technology plays in helping officials select targets for "coerced thought transformation". Earlier this year, campaigners documented how officials in Xinjiang's Karakax used the IJOP to assess whether an individual should remain in detention.

HRW said it obtained the Aksu list from an anonymous source in Xinjiang and verified the list's authenticity by checking it against official records, social media records, and consulting Uighur diaspora communities and two experts who have extensively documented Beijing's crackdown in Xinjiang.

### 'Concerned' about religious freedom in France: US

AFP, Washington

The US envoy on international religious freedom on Tuesday voiced concern about France, warning against "heavy-handed" measures as President Macron targets radical Islam.

"I am concerned, obviously, for what's happening in France," Ambassador Sam Brownback told reporters when asked about Macron's initiative.

"I think there can be constructive engagements that I think can be helpful and not harmful. When you get heavy-handed, the situation can get worse."

Macron has ordered a crackdown on extremism amid shock in France over attacks carried out by radicalised Muslims.

Under the initiative, France -- which is avowedly secular and home to Europe's largest Muslim population -- will shut down mosques if they are found during inspections by authorities to be promoting extremism.

Macron's efforts have triggered protests in several Muslim-majority countries, with the leaders of Turkey and Pakistan alleging that he is attacking Islam.

Defenders of Macron have accused his critics pointing to severe repression of religious faith elsewhere in the world.

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh National Academy for Autism and Neuro-developmental Disabilities-NAAND Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education Bangladesh, Dhaka-1000

### Request for Expression of Interest (Firm)

1.	Ministry/Division	:	Ministry of Education
2.	Agency	:	Directorate of Secondary & Higher Education
3.	Procuring Entity Name	:	Project Director National Academy for Autism and Neuro-developmental Disabilities-NAAND, Directorate of Secondary & Higher Education
4.	Project/Procuring Entity Code	:	224012200
5.	Procuring Entity District	:	Dhaka
6.	Expression of Interest for Selection of	:	Consulting Firm for the Preparation of Architectural & Structural Design and Supervision to Construct Autistic Academy Complex.
7.	EOI Ref No & Date	:	স্মারক নং: মাউশি/আটি.একা.স্ব.প্র./EOI/১০/২০১৮/১৭৫, তারিখ: ০৮/১২/২০২০
<b>Key Information</b>			
8.	Procuring Method	:	Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)
<b>Funding Information</b>			
9.	Budget & Source of Fund	:	GOB
10.	Development Partners (if applicable)	:	Not Applicable
<b>Particular Information</b>			
11.	Project/Programmed Name (If applicable)	:	National Academy for Autism and Neuro-developmental Disabilities-NAAND
12.	EOI Closing Date and Time	:	31/12/2020 and Time 4.00 pm (Local Time)
<b>Information For Applicant</b>			
13.	Brief Description of Assignment	:	Consulting Services for the Preparation of Architectural, structural electro mechanical drawing, documentation and design, plumbing, monitoring, reporting and top supervision for Autistic Academy Complex for special need children (Autistic). Preparation of technical specification cost and quantity estimates with necessary support to Education Engineering Department or any other department in bidding process and post construction monitoring during defects liability period.
14.	Experience, Resources and Delivery Capacity required	:	The EOIs will be reviewed on the basis of the following criteria: a) Having 10 years working experience in Architectural & Structural Design and Supervision of large scale building especially on 15 storied building construction. b) Having overall and technical manpower as well as financial capacity. c) Support Services (Office space, Support Staff, Logistics, Equipment) [Provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (brochures; description of similar assignments; financial resources; availability of appropriate skills among staff; etc.)]
15.	Other Details (if applicable)	:	
16.	Association with Foreign firms is	:	Not Applicable
	Re no	Phasing of Services	Location
		1 <sup>st</sup> Phase	Dhaka
			Indicative Start Date
			Indicative Completion Date
<b>Procuring Entity Details</b>			
17.	Name of Official inviting Expressions of Interest	:	Professor Dr. Mohammed Didarul Alam
18.	Designation of Official Inviting Expression of Interest	:	Project Director ; National Academy for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities-NAAND
19.	Address of Official Inviting Expression of Interest	:	Room No # 113, Shikha Bhaban 16 Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000
20.	Contact Details of Official Inviting Expression of Interest	:	, 02-41050041, 02-9588455 e-mail : naand2015@gmail.com
21.	The procuring entity reserves the right to delete/reject all EOIs		

(Professor Dr. Mohammed Didarul Alam)

Project Director

National Academy for Autism and Neuro-developmental Disabilities-NAAND  
Directorate of Secondary & Higher Education  
Bangladesh, Dhaka-1000