

Taiwan risks China ire with Dalai Lama visit

Taiwan would welcome a visit by exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, its foreign ministry said yesterday, a trip that would infuriate Beijing which views him as a dangerous separatist.

Israel launches spy satellite

Israel yesterday launched a new spy satellite that it said would provide high-quality surveillance for its military intelligence. Israel has been building up its surveillance capabilities to monitor enemies such as Iran, whose nuclear program it sees as a major threat.

UK's Royal Mint celebrates Elton John with new coin



Elton John yesterday became the second artist to be honoured by Britain's Royal Mint with a commemorative coin paying tribute to the decorated British singer-songwriter.

SOURCE: ANN, REUTERS, AFP



Rescue workers search for missing people at a landslide site caused by torrential rain in Tsunagi town, Kumamoto Prefecture, southwestern Japan, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

TERRITORIAL DISPUTE WITH BHUTAN

China doubles down on claims

THE HINDU, TIMES OF INDIA

Days after Bhutan sent China a demarche protesting Chinese claims to the Sakteng wildlife sanctuary in Eastern Bhutan, Beijing has doubled down, including Bhutan's "Eastern sectors" to the boundary dispute between the two countries for the first time.

"The boundary between China and Bhutan has never been delimited. There have been disputes over the eastern, central and western sectors for a long time," said the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in a statement to the media in Beijing.

According to written records, there has been no mention of Eastern Bhutan, or Trashigang Dzongkhag (district), where Sakteng is based, that borders

Arunachal Pradesh, in 24 previous rounds of boundary negotiations held between the two countries between 1984 and 2016. The negotiations have not been held since the Doklam standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in 2017.



This is the first instance when China claimed he area in eastern Bhutan, well inside Bhutan territory. Sakteng sanctuary is in Trashigang province of Bhutan.

Sources in New Delhi see this move as part of the larger Chinese tactics of putting pressure on India's smaller

neighbours, to punish them for any closeness to India.

In 2017, the PLA had intruded into Doklam plateau which is Bhutanese territory, leading Indian forces to show up in strength to prevent China from building a road up to the Jhampheri ridge. The stand-off went on for 72 days before status quo ante was restored.

Bhutan does not have any formal diplomatic relations with Beijing.

"Such claims undermine the boundary talks and wild claims on either side by officials will only exacerbate issues as Bhutan too can lay claims far north," said Tenzing Lamsang, Editor of the Bhutanese newspaper in Thimphu, in a series of tweets last week.

"Ultimately Bhutan and China need to resolve its boundary disputes or such false claims will come up as a pressure tactic," he added.

HONG KONG SECURITY LAW

China rebukes UK for 'interference'

REUTERS, London

China's ambassador to London yesterday accused Britain of gross interference and making irresponsible remarks over Beijing's imposition of new security legislation in Hong Kong that he said could damage future Chinese investment.

Britain has described the security law as a "clear and serious" violation of the 1984 Joint Declaration under which it handed back its colony to China 13 years later and said that London would offer around 3 million residents a path to British citizenship.

"The UK government keeps making irresponsible remarks on Hong Kong affairs," Ambassador Liu Xiaoming told reporters in the strongest rebuke Beijing has issued to London since Britain criticised the security law.

On the British offer to give British National (Overseas) (BNO) passport holders in Hong Kong a path to British citizenship, he said: "This move constitutes gross interference in China's internal affairs and openly tramples on the basic norms governing international relations."

He said China would decide on its response after seeing how Britain proceeded with its passport offer.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has also toughened his language on a provisional decision to allow China's Huawei to be involved in the development of Britain's 5G infrastructure, saying he would protect critical infrastructure from "hostile state vendors".

Accusing Britain of "bouncing to the tune of the other countries," Liu said that, although China wanted friendly relations with Britain, there might be many consequences if Britain treated Beijing as an enemy or with suspicion.

Pink ice worry in Alps

AFP, Passo Gavia

Scientists in Italy are investigating the mysterious appearance of pink glacial ice in the Alps, caused by algae that accelerate the effects of climate change.

There is debate about where the algae come from, but Biagio Di Mauro of Italy's National Research Council said the pink snow observed on parts of the Presena glacier is likely caused by the same plant found in Greenland.

"The alga is not dangerous, it is a natural phenomenon that occurs during the spring and summer periods in the middle latitudes but also at the Poles," said Di Mauro, who had previously studied the algae at the Morteratsch glacier in Switzerland.

The plant, known as Ancylopera nordenskiöldii, is present in Greenland's so-called Dark Zone, where the ice is also melting.

Normally ice reflects more than 80 percent of the sun's radiation back into the atmosphere, but as algae appear, they darken the ice so that it absorbs the heat and melts more quickly.

More algae appear as the ice melts more rapidly, giving them vital water and air and adding red hues to the white ice at the Passo Gavia, altitude 2,618 metres (8,590 feet).

Tourists at the glacier lament the impact of climate change.

"Overheating of the planet is a problem, the last thing we needed was algae," said tourist Marta Durante.

"Unfortunately we are doing irreversible damage. We are already at the point of no return, I think."



BUBONIC PLAGUE

China city on high alert

AGENCIES

Authorities in the Chinese region of Inner Mongolia are on high alert after a suspected case of bubonic plague, the disease that caused the Black Death pandemic.

The case was discovered in the city of Bayannur, located northwest of Beijing, according to state-run Xinhua news agency. A hospital alerted municipal authorities of the patient's case on Saturday.



The warning will stay in place until the end of the year, according to Xinhua.

Plague, caused by bacteria and transmitted through flea bites and infected animals, is one of the deadliest bacterial infections in human history. During the Black Death in the Middle Ages, it killed an estimated 50 million people in Europe.

Bubonic plague, which is one of plague's three forms, causes painful, swollen lymph nodes, as well as fever, chills, and coughing.

Bayannur authorities warned the public to report findings of dead or sick marmots -- a type of large ground squirrel that is eaten in some parts of China and the neighboring country Mongolia, and which have historically caused plague outbreaks in the region.

The marmot is believed to have caused the 1911 pneumonic plague epidemic, which killed about 63,000 people in northeast China. It was hunted for its fur, which soared in popularity among international traders.

The advent of antibiotics has helped to contain plague outbreaks, preventing the type of rapid spread witnesses in Europe in the Middle Ages.

But while modern medicine can treat the plague, it has not eliminated it entirely -- and it has made a recent comeback, leading the World Health Organization (WHO) to categorize it as a re-emerging disease.

Anywhere from 1,000 to 2,000 people get the plague every year, according to the WHO.

Summer hope fades as cases soar

Coronavirus pandemic escalates despite warmer weather raising questions on sun's effect and human behaviour

AFP, London

Drunken celebrations on English pub reopening night and US beach closures prompted a global rethink of coronavirus measures during the summer holiday season.

Hopes of the sun making the new disease go away are fading as the United States racks up record daily infection numbers and quarantines return to parts of Europe.

Cases are also rising fast in India while Iran recorded its highest single death toll and Madagascar was forced to lock down its capital because of a new spike.

The latest batch of bad news is confronting governments with the pains of calibrating a response that is both safe and sufficient to get stalled economies going and mentally exhausted people out of their homes after months of lockdown.

Saturday presented the twin tests of England's pub culture resuming after a three-month hiatus and the US marking its July 4 celebrations under the leadership of President Donald Trump.

The head of the police federation for England and Wales said the sight of thousands of people thronging the streets of London's Soho nightlife district made it clear "that drunk people can't/won't socially distance".



won't socially distance".

Britain's infection numbers are falling and any new spike from the big night out could undermine PM Johnson's optimistic message of the worst being in the past.

His government has already been forced to impose a partial lockdown on the city of Leicester and is watching infection rates trending at uncomfortably high levels in London and other parts of the UK.

The mood in Spain is even grimmer after two separate outbreaks saw 200,000 people put under lockdown in the northeastern Catalonia region on Saturday and another 70,000 in the northwestern Galicia region on Sunday.

Spaniards endured one of the world's toughest lockdowns in which people were confined to their homes unless they could provide the police with a valid excuse for stepping out.

Very similar measures in Italy managed to contain that outbreak to the richer northern regions without a second rebound.

The virus's unpredictable nature means it is popping up without warning in regions that appear to be doing the same things as its relatively untouched neighbours.

Greece was forced Sunday to close its frontier to Serbian nationals after that Balkan country declared a health emergency in the capital Belgrade. And the entire European Union and Britain are refusing entry to Americans because its infection rates are still climbing in some big states.

The US accounts for a quarter of the world's 530,000 official virus deaths and another quarter of its 11.3 million registered cases.

Trump seemed undeterred. He once again blamed China for causing the pandemic and promised that US "scientific brilliance" will find a cure or a vaccine "long before the end of the year".

Yet no immediate medical solution is in sight and more and more states are erring on the side of caution and shutting things down once again.

Advertisement for Bangladesh Sukt Paribahan Corporation, detailing services for bus and truck registration, including contact information and a list of services.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh e-Tender Notice for health engineering works in Sirajganj Division, including tender details and contact information.