

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pakistan hit by nationwide power blackout

Power was gradually being restored to major cities across Pakistan yesterday after it was hit by a massive electricity blackout, officials said. The electricity distribution system in the nation of more than 210 million people is a complex and delicate web, and a problem in one section of the grid can lead to cascading breakdowns countrywide. The latest blackout was caused by "an engineering fault" in southern Pakistan at 11:41 pm local time on Saturday, which tripped the system and caused power plants to shut down, power minister Omar Ayub Khan told a press conference in Islamabad. This was Pakistan's second major power breakdown in less than three years.

SNP demands billions in 'Brexit compensation'

The pro-independence Scottish National Party (SNP) demanded on Sunday that Prime Minister Boris Johnson pay billions of pounds in compensation to Scotland for the mounting costs and disruption of Brexit. Brexit has strained the bonds that tie together the United Kingdom: England and Wales voted to leave but London, Northern Ireland and Scotland voted to stay. The SNP, which wants independence for Scotland and is pushing for a second referendum, said Scottish fishermen faced grave disruption due to Brexit. Johnson's Conservatives "must apologise to Scottish businesses and pay compensation to Scotland for the long-term damage they are doing to our economy - costing us billions in lost trade and growth," said Ian Blackford, the SNP's leader in the British parliament.

Blast kills three in Kabul



An Afghan journalist-turned spokesman for the country's public protection force was killed along with two colleagues yesterday by a bomb targeting their vehicle, officials said. The murder of Zia Wadan, who previously worked for several media networks, appeared to be the latest in a series of targeted killings that have rocked Afghanistan, especially Kabul. Wadan and his colleagues were killed in morning rush-hour traffic in an eastern part of the capital, interior ministry spokesman Tariq Arian told reporters. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but President Ashraf Ghani blamed it on the Taliban.

Iran will expel UN nuclear inspectors: lawmaker

Iran will expel United Nations nuclear watchdog inspectors unless US sanctions are lifted by a Feb 21 deadline set by the hardline-dominated parliament, a lawmaker said on Saturday. Parliament passed a law in November that obliges the government to halt inspections of its nuclear sites by the International Atomic Energy Agency and step up uranium enrichment beyond the limit set under Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal if sanctions are not eased. Iran's Guardian Council watchdog body approved the law on Dec. 2 and the government has said it will implement it. Iran said on Monday it had resumed 20% uranium enrichment at an underground nuclear facility, breaching the nuclear pact with major powers and possibly complicating efforts by US President-elect Joe Biden to rejoin the deal.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Counter-protesters spray pepper spray as they clash with people during a "Patriot March" demonstration in support of President Trump on January 9, 2021 in the Pacific Beach neighborhood of San Diego, California. As most Americans recoiled in horror at scenes of rioting and chaos in the US Capitol on Wednesday, which killed 5 people, some right-wing and anti-government extremists saw the violence as the fulfillment of a patriotic duty or opportunity to advance their agenda. The mob's strike at the symbolic heart of the US government suggests that Trump's baseless claims of election fraud may have unified a broader coalition of extremists who could pose a threat again when Biden takes office on Jan 20 and into his four-year term in office, experts said.

PHOTO: AFP

Pence to attend Biden inauguration: reports

AGENCIES

Mike Pence will attend the upcoming inauguration of Joe Biden, multiple media reports said Saturday, the vice president becoming the latest longtime loyalist to abandon an increasingly isolated President Donald Trump.

Relations between Trump and Pence -- previously one of the mercurial president's staunchest defenders -- have nosedived since Wednesday, when the vice president formally announced Biden's victory in November's election. A mob of far-right demonstrators stormed the US Capitol the same day in a failed bid to stop Congress from certifying Biden's win, in a riot blamed on Trump that left five dead.

Multiple media reports on Saturday cited senior administration officials as saying that Pence -- who was forced to take shelter from the intruders during the riot -- had decided to attend Biden's inauguration on January 20. The president-elect earlier in the week said Pence would be welcome at his formal swearing-in, due to take place in a scaled-down format due to the coronavirus.

In his final tweet before being removed from Twitter on Friday, Trump said he would not attend the inauguration. The outgoing president has been accused of provoking Wednesday's violence, and now faces an unprecedented second impeachment, expected to begin today.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi warned that Democrats would launch the process unless Trump resigned or Pence invoked the 25th Amendment, in which the cabinet removes the president from office.

While Pence has not spoken publicly on the subject, the New York Times reported Thursday he was against invoking the mechanism, never used before in US history. However CNN yesterday reported, citing a source close to the vice president, he hasn't ruled out the idea.

Invoking the 25th Amendment would require Pence and a majority of the Cabinet to vote to remove Trump from office due to his inability to "discharge the powers and duties of his office" -- an unprecedented step.

Trump could dispute their move with a letter to Congress. Pence and the Cabinet would then have four days to dispute him and Congress would then vote -- it requires a two-thirds supermajority, usually 67 senators and 290 House members to permanently remove him.

ONE YEAR SINCE FIRST REPORTED DEATH IN CHINA

Coronavirus source still a puzzle

AFP, Wuhan

It is the world's most pressing scientific puzzle, but experts warn there may never be conclusive answers over the source of the coronavirus, after an investigative effort marked from the start by disarray, Chinese secrecy and international rancour.

January 11 marks the anniversary of China confirming its first death from Covid-19, a 61-year-old man who was a regular at the now-notorious Wuhan wet market.

Nearly two million deaths later, the pandemic is out of control across much of the world, leaving tens of millions ill, a pulverised global economy and recriminations flying between nations.

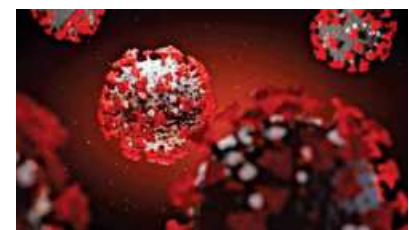
Yet China, which has broadly controlled the pandemic on its soil, is still frustrating independent attempts to trace the virus' origins and the central question of how it jumped from animals to humans.

There is little dispute that the virus which brought the world to its knees sparked its first known outbreak in late 2019 at a wet market in the central Chinese city of Wuhan where wildlife was sold as food, and the pathogen is believed to have originated in an undetermined bat species.

But the trail ends there, clouded by a mishmash of subsequent clues that

suggest its origins may predate Wuhan as well as conspiracy theories -- amplified by US President Donald Trump -- that it leaked from a Wuhan lab.

Establishing the source is vital for extinguishing future outbreaks early, leading virologists say, providing clues that can guide policy decisions on whether to cull animal populations, quarantine affected persons, or limit



wildlife hunting and other human-animal interactions.

China won early kudos for reporting the virus and releasing its gene sequence in a timely manner, compared with its cover-up of the 2002-03 SARS outbreak.

But there has also been secrecy and shifting stories on Covid-19.

Daniel Lucey, a Georgetown University epidemiologist who closely tracks global outbreaks, said the Wuhan market might not even be the issue. He notes that the virus was already spreading rapidly in Wuhan

by December 2019, indicating that it was in circulation much earlier.

That's because it may take months or even years for a virus to develop the necessary mutations to become highly contagious among humans.

Findings that the virus may have existed in Europe and Brazil before Wuhan's outbreak, added to the confusion.

And it has kept foreign experts at arm's length, with a planned mission by World Health Organization virus sleuths now in limbo after China denied them entry. On Saturday, China reversed the decision.

What the scientists will be allowed to see or may expect to find a year on is also in doubt.

Some researchers remain hopeful that the origin may still be found. But others are skeptical.

Diana Bell, a wildlife disease expert at the University of East Anglia who has studied the SARS virus, Ebola and other pathogens, said focusing on a particular origin species is misguided.

She says the overarching threat has already been exposed: a global wildlife trade that fosters a "combustible mix" of trafficked species, a known breeding ground for disease outbreaks.

"We need to stop the wildlife trade for human consumption."



Indonesian rescuers carry a body bag during the search for victims buried by landslides in Samedang, West Java Province, Indonesia, yesterday. At least 11 people were killed and scores more were missing after torrential rains hit the region Saturday evening.

PHOTO: REUTERS

US agencies have 6 months to reveal UFO secrets

CNN ONLINE

When President Donald Trump signed the \$2.3 trillion coronavirus relief and government funding bill into law in December, so began the 180-day countdown for US intelligence agencies to tell Congress what they know about UFOs.

The director of National Intelligence and the secretary of defense have a little less than six months now to provide the congressional intelligence and armed services committees with an unclassified report about "unidentified aerial phenomena."

It's a stipulation that was tucked into the "committee comment" section of the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, which was contained in the massive spending bill.

That report must contain detailed analyses of UFO data and intelligence collected by the Office of Naval Intelligence, the Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force and the FBI, according to the Senate intelligence committee's directive.

The Pentagon released three short videos in April of last year showing "unidentified aerial phenomena" -- clips that the US Navy had previously confirmed were real. It's still unclear what the objects are, and there's no consensus on their origin.

VACCINE FOR DEVELOPING, POOR COUNTRIES UK helps to raise \$1 billion

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The UK has helped to raise \$1 billion for the coronavirus COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) through match-funding other donors, which will help distribute one billion doses of coronavirus vaccines to 92 developing countries, including Bangladesh, this year.

UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) made the announcement yesterday, which coincides with a three-day virtual visit to London by the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, as part of the UK's commemoration of the UN's 75th anniversary.

In September, the UK had announced at the UN General Assembly that it would match every \$4 pledged to the COVAX AMC by other donors with £1 in UK funding, up to £250 million. Since then, other countries including Canada, Japan and Germany have committed funding to the scheme, reaching the landmark target. In total the UK has now contributed £548

million to the AMC.

In a statement yesterday, FCDO said this vital investment will help stop the spread of the disease and prevent future waves, helping to build back better from coronavirus globally.

"The UK is using our aid budget, scientific expertise and diplomatic leverage to strengthen global health," UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said.

He said over the last 75 years, the UK has played a leading role in supporting the UN and is working together to strengthen international collaboration to tackle today's biggest global challenges, from coronavirus to climate change.

Dominic Raab said: "It is fitting that, on the 75th anniversary of the UN, the UK has led with our allies to make one billion doses of coronavirus vaccine available to vulnerable countries.

"We'll only be safe from this virus, when we're all safe -- which is why we're focused on a global solution to a global problem."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
 College Education Development Project (CEDP)
 Shahid Smriti Govt. College, Muktagacha, Mymensingh
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 Phone No. 09028-75216, Mobile: 01711221193

Invitation for Tender

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Education.		
2	Agency	University Grants Commission/National University.		
3	Procuring entity name	Principal, Shahid Smriti Govt. College, Muktagacha, Mymensingh.		
4	Procuring entity code	N/A.		
5	Procuring entity district	Mymensingh.		
6	Invitation for	Renovation and Refurbishment of Conference Room, Departments, Library, Classroom, Principal's Office, Vice Principal's Office, Server Room & Washrooms (Tiles, Sanitary, Angle Almirah, Thais, Grill, Collapsible Gate, Thai, Paintings & Renovation of Bathrooms & Electrical Earthing & Wiring to support sub-station, Generator, IPS, Air Conditioner, PABX, Internet Connecting lines etc.).		
7	Invitation Ref. No.	১৯৯৭/১৯৯৮/১৯৯৯/১৯৯৯/১৯৯৯		
8	Date	11-01-2021		
KEY INFORMATION				
9	Procurement method	Open tendering method (National).		
FUNDING INFORMATION				
10	Budget and source of funds	Development Budget (Government & IDA Credit).		
11	Development partners	International Development Association (IDA), World Bank.		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
12	Project code	224017200		
13	Project name	College Education Development Project (CEDP).		
14	Tender package No.	W-2		
15	Tender package name	Renovation and Refurbishment of Conference Room, Departments, Library, Classroom, Principal's Office, Vice Principal's Office, Server Room & Washrooms (Tiles, Sanitary, Angle Almirah, Thais, Grill, Collapsible Gate, Thai, Paintings & Renovation of Bathrooms & Electrical Earthing & Wiring to support sub-station, Generator, IPS, Air Conditioner, PABX, Internet Connecting lines etc.).		
16	Tender publication date	11-01-2021		
17	Tender last selling date	27/01/2021 Time 04.00pm.		
18	Tender closing date and time	28/01/2021 Time 02.00pm.		
19	Tender opening date and time	28/01/2021 Time 02.30pm.		
20	Name & address of the office	Shahid Smriti Govt. College, Muktagacha, Mymensingh.		
	Selling tender document	Shahid Smriti Govt. College, Muktagacha, Mymensingh.		
	Receiving tender document	Shahid Smriti Govt. College, Muktagacha, Mymensingh.		
	Opening tender document	Shahid Smriti Govt. College, Muktagacha, Mymensingh.		
21	Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional)	Will not be held.		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
22	Eligibility of tenderer	1. The minimum number of years of general experience of the tenderer in the construction works as Prime Contractor or Subcontractor or Management Contractor shall be 03 (three) years. 2. The tenderer shall have satisfactory completion of construction/extension/refurbishment of building work of minimum BDT 35,00,000.00 (thirty-five lac) only under maximum 01 contract in the last 03 years. 3. The required average annual construction turnover shall be greater than BDT 70,00,000.00 (seventy lac) only over the last 03 years. 4. The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the tenderer shall be BDT 36,00,000.00 (thirty-six lac) only.		
23	Brief description of goods or works	Tiles, Sanitary, Angle Almirah, Thais, Grill, Collapsible Gate, Thai, Paintings & Renovation of Bathrooms & Electrical Earthing & Wiring to support sub-station, Generator, IPS, Air Conditioner, PABX, Internet Connecting lines etc.		
24	Brief description of related services	Related service shall be in accordance with Section 4; Particular Conditions of Contract, Section 6; Schedule of Requirements and Section 7; Technical Specification of the tender document.		
25	Tender document price	BDT 1,500.00 (one thousand five hundred).		
	Tender name	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)	Completion time in months
26	Renovation and Refurbishment of Conference Room, Department, Library, Classroom, Principal's Office, Vice Principal's Office, Server Room & Washrooms	Shahid Smriti Govt. College, Muktagacha, Mymensingh	1,20,000.00	2 (two) months
27	Name of official inviting tenderer	Professor Md. Idris Ali, IDG Manager & Principal, Shahid Smriti Govt. College, Muktagacha, Mymensingh.		
28	Designation of official inviting tenderer	Principal, Shahid Smriti Govt. College, Muktagacha, Mymensingh.		
29	Address of official inviting tenderer	Principal, Shahid Smriti Govt. College, Muktagacha, Mymensingh.		
30	Contact details of official inviting tenderer	Tel: 09028 75216	Mob: 01711-221193	E-mail: gsscollege_mukta@yahoo.com , shahidsmritigovtcollegecedp@gmail.com
31	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.			

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