## **NEWS IN BRIEF**

#### **Iran leader Twitter account** posts warning to Trump

The Twitter account of Iran's Supreme Leader yesterday carried the image of a golfer resembling Donald Trump apparently being targeted by a drone, vowing revenge over the killing of a top Iranian general in a US drone attack. The post carried the text of remarks by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in December, in which he said "Revenge is certain", renewing a vow of vengeance ahead of the first anniversary of the killing of top military commander General Qassem Soleimani in the attack in Iraq.

#### TV audience for Biden inauguration tops Trump's

Roughly 40 million people watched live coverage of Joe Biden's inauguration as US president on six TV networks, according to Nielsen data released on Thursday, a 4% increase over the number that tuned in for Donald Trump's swearing-in four years ago. The figure covers the 30-minute span starting at 11:45 a.m. EST on Wednesday, when Biden took the oath of office and delivered his inaugural address. It includes the audience on broadcasters ABC, CBS and NBC and cable channels Fox News, CNN and MSNBC. In 2017, about 38.3 million people watched Republican Trump's inauguration and speech on those

#### networks. Barack Obama's 2009 event drew 51.2 million viewers. At least five mine workers

killed in blast in Karnataka At least five mine workers were killed in southern India when their trucks carrying blasting material exploded, officials said yesterday. Local media said the toll could be higher. The workers were transporting gelatin sticks used commonly as explosive material in stone mining quarries, a senior police official at the site of the accident, in Shivamogga district of Karnataka state, said. News18 said that the death toll could be as high as 11.

### Rapid virus test prices 'halved' for poorer nations

Poorer countries will have access to hundreds of millions more rapid Covid-19 tests following a deal to slash prices in half and boost production, Unitaid said yesterday. mThe international health agency and the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND) closed a deal with an Indian firm to produce up to 120 million tests this year for low- and middle-income countries, to be sold at half the going price of \$5. Unitaid and FIND said similar deals to be announced in the coming weeks would ensure the supply of more than half of the 500 million rapid tests that experts say they will need this year. Less precise but far faster and cheaper than other forms of Covid-19 diagnosis, rapid antigen tests are considered an important weapon in the pandemic battle. This is particularly the case in poorer settings, where there is generally less access to PCR nasal swabs and the sophisticated lab equipment needed to analyse them.

OURCE: AFP, REUTERS, CNN

**ROW OVER MEDIA LAW** 

arbitrator will decide the price.

REUTERS, Sydney

told reporters.

Google threatens to

Alphabet Inc's Google yesterday said it would block its

search engine in Australia if the government proceeds with

a new code that would force it and Facebook Inc to pay

as News Corp that is being closely watched around the

world. Australia is on course to pass laws that would make

tech giants negotiate payments with local publishers and

broadcasters for content included in search results or news

feeds. If they cannot strike a deal, a government-appointed

operational risk if this version of the Code were to become

law, it would give us no real choice but to stop making Google

Search available in Australia," Mel Silva, managing director

Prime Minister Scott Morrison who said the country makes

very welcome. But we don't respond to threats," Morrison

without revisions, offering even a limited search tool would

be too risky. The United States government this week

asked Australia to scrap the proposed laws and suggested

Australia should pursue a voluntary code instead.

Google's comments drew a sharp rebuke from Australian

"People who want to work with that in Australia, you're

Google has called the code overly broad and said that

for Australia and New Zealand, told a senate committee.

its rules for "things you can do in Australia.

"Coupled with the unmanageable financial and

Google's threat escalates a battle with publishers such

media companies for the right to use their content.

block Australians

## **NEW START TREATY WITH RUSSIA**

## Moscow hails Biden's extension proposal

Moscow yesterday welcomed US President Joe Biden's proposal to extend New START with Russia by 5 years, days before the expiration of the last nuclear reduction treaty between the two powers, but vowed to press Moscow hard on a host of concerns.

The announcement on the first full day of Biden's presidency is intended to prevent a nuclear arms race but makes clear he will not attempt a "reset" of relations as attempted in varying forms by every post-Cold War president.

The accord restricts the former Cold War rivals to a maximum of 1,550 deployed warheads each, a cut of about 30 percent from a limit set in 2002, and 800 launchers and bombers -- enough to blow up the world many times over.

The treaty expires on February 5. Talks last year stalled over Trump's insistence that China also become a party to the agreement, even though Beijing said it would not participate.

The United States intends to seek a five-year extension of New START, as the treaty permits," White House press secretary Jen Psaki told reporters. But she said that the new intelligence chief, Avril Haines, would also start an investigation into Russia's suspected poisoning of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny as well as on Russia's alleged election interference and on whether it was behind the massive SolarWinds hack that shook the US government and corporations. Psaki said the United States would also investigate bounties reportedly paid by Russian intelligence to extremists in Afghanistan as rewards for killing US troops.

"We can only welcome the political will to extend this document," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. He said Moscow needed more time to study the US administration's offer.



A colleague of the crew of Sriwijaya Air flight SJ 182, which crashed into the sea, throws flowers and petals from the deck of Indonesia's Naval ship KRI Semarang as they visit the site of the crash to pay their tribute, at the sea off the Jakarta coast, Indonesia, yesterday. The plane crash killed all 62 on board.

# What will survive of US MidEast policy under Biden?

REUTERS

Trump Heights, Trump Square, Trump train terminal: Israel isn't shy about honouring Donald Trump, who is widely admired among Israelis for his staunch support of their country.

In four years, Trump overturned decades of US policy in the Middle East. Joe Biden will want to

undo many of those changes during his presidency, but his freedom for manoeuvre will be limited.

Biden and his team have said they will restore ties with the Palestinians that were cut by Trump, resume aid and reject unilateral actions, such as construction of Israeli settlements on occupied territory.

At his Senate confirmation hearing on Tuesday, Biden's choice for secretary of state, Antony Blinken, said the US embassy in Israel would remain in Jerusalem, which Trump recognised as Israel's capital.

Four Trump-brokered diplomatic deals between Israel and Arab states are also likely to remain they have bipartisan support in Washington.

So too is Trump's acceptance of Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in a 1967 war and annexed in a move not recognised internationally.

Blinken also signalled that countering Iran would be central to Biden's Middle East agenda. By imposing crippling sanctions, Trump was

able to cripple Iranian economy to such extent that, to some critics, it will be impossible for Biden to reverse the actions.

And Blinken said the United States was "a long way" from rejoining the 2015 pact with Iran - restraining Tehran's nuclear programme - which the United States

quit under Trump. Reflecting the uncertainty over new US administration's Iran policy, newspapers in Arab states of the Gulf

gave a cautious welcome to Biden. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan voiced optimism that relations between Rivadh and Washington will be

"excellent" under Biden. His comments comes despite Biden's pledge during his election campaign to treat the kingdom as a "pariah" over its human rights failings and to end US support to a Saudi-led military campaign in war-ravaged Yemen.

Despite Biden is expected to continue the path of his former boss president Barak Obama, his administration's actions in the coming months will set the course of US's Middle East policy.

## **'BEST' CARBON CAPTURE TECH** Musk offers \$100m prize

Tesla Inc chief and billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk on Thursday took to Twitter to promise a \$100 million prize for development of the "best" technology to capture carbon dioxide emissions.

Capturing planet-warming emissions is becoming a critical part of many plans to keep climate change in check, but very little progress has been made on the technology to date, with efforts focused on cutting emissions rather than taking carbon out of the air. The International Energy Agency said late last year that a sharp rise in the deployment of carbon capture technology was needed if countries are to meet net-zero emissions

"Am donating \$100M towards a prize for best carbon capture technology," Musk wrote in a tweet, followed by a second tweet that promised "Details next week."

Musk, who co-founded and sold Internet payments company PayPal Holdings Inc, now leads some of the most futuristic companies in the world.

Besides Tesla, he heads rocket company SpaceX and Neuralink, a startup that is developing ultra-high bandwidth brainmachine interfaces to connect the human brain to computers.



Protesters affiliated with a faction of the ruling Nepal Communist Party take part in a rally against the dissolution of parliament, in Kathmandu, Nepal yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

## 'Onus on India' to restart talks

Says Pakistan

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

Pakistan's foreign minister has thrown down the gauntlet to India to restart direct dialogue between the two countries, saying the "onus lies on [them] to reverse steps in the disputed region of Kashmir before the two countries can come to the table.

Speaking to Al Jazeera, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi accused the Indian government of adopting "aggressive rhetoric" and "acting irresponsibly".

Bilateral relations between the two rivals stalled around September 2016 after India said its military conducted a "surgical strike" on Pakistani territory. Islamabad rejected the

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কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, সিলেট কে.এস.আর টাওয়ার, বোরহান উদ্দিন রোড, মেন্দিবাগ পয়েন্ট, সিলেট Website: www.sylhetcustoms-vat.gov.bd

চুক্তিভিত্তিক ০৬ (ছয়)টি মাইক্রোবাস ভাড়া গ্রহণের দরপত্র পুনঃ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এ দপ্তরের মূল্য সংযোজন কর ও সম্পরক ওক্ক আদায়, চোরাচালান প্রতিরোধ, অডিট ও প্রিভেন্টিভ কার্যক্রম পরিচালনার মাধ্যমে রাজস্ব আহরণ বৃদ্ধির লক্ষ্যে চুক্তিভিত্তিক ০৬ (ছয়)টি মাইক্রোবাস মাসিক ভাড়ার ভিত্তিতে ভাড়া গ্রহণের নিমিত্ত সীলগালাকত খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান

	1144-03	
2	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	অভ্যন্তরীণ সম্পদ বিভাগ।
২	দপ্তর/সংস্থা	কাস্টমস এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, সিলেট।
9	দরপত্র সংগ্রহকারী সংস্থার নাম ও	কাস্টমস এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, সিলেট।
	ঠিকানা	কে.এস.আর. টাওয়ার, মেন্দিবাগ পয়েন্ট, উপশহর, সিলেট।
8	দরপত্রের পত্র নথি নং	০৮.০১.৬০০০.২০৫.০১.০২৮.২০/২৯০ তাংঃ ২১/০১/২০২১।
œ	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ	/০১/২০২১খ্রিঃ।
৬	দরপত্র সংগ্রহকারী দপ্তর/ সংস্থার	<b>১-১১</b> ০২০8-১০২০২8
	কোড	
٩	দরপত্র আহ্বানের কারণ	মূল্য সংযোজন কর ও সম্পূরক শুল্ক আহরণ, চোরাচালান প্রতিরোধ, অডিট ও প্রিভেন্টিভ
		কার্যক্রম পরিচালনার মাধ্যমে রাজস্ব আহরণ বৃদ্ধি।
ъ	দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)।
৯	অর্থের উৎস	অর্থনৈতিক কোড-"৩২১১১০৭-যানবাহন ব্যবহার (চুক্তিভিত্তিক)" উপখাতে প্রাপ্ত বরাদ।
20	ভাড়া পরিশোধ পদ্ধতি	মাসিক ভিত্তিতে উপস্থাপিত বিলের অনুমোদন সাপেক্ষে ট্রেজারী অফিস কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত চেকের
1		মাধ্যমে।
77	সিডিউলের মূল্য	প্রতিটি ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য), যা ট্রেজারী চালানের মাধ্যমে অর্থনৈতিক
1		কোড নং-১-১১৩৩-০০১৮-২৬৮১ তে জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। উল্লেখ্য যে, প্রতিটি লটের
		জন্য পৃথক পৃথক সিডিউল (দরপত্র দলিল) ক্রয় করতে হবে।
১২	সিডিউল বিক্রির স্থান ও সময়	প্রধান হিসাবরক্ষণ কর্মকর্তা (৪র্থ তলা), কাস্টমস এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, সিলেট।
		বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের দিন হতে প্রতিদিন অফিস চলাকালীন সময়।
১৩	সিডিউল বিক্রির শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৮/০২/২০২১খ্রঃ তারিখ বিকাল ০৫:০০ ঘটিকা।
78	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান, তারিখ ও	কাস্টমস এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, সিলেট এর ৪র্থ তলায় রক্ষিত বক্স।
	শেষ সময়	০৯/০২/২০২১খ্রিঃ তারিখ সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটিকা।
26	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	০৯/০২/২০২১খ্রিঃ তারিখ দুপুর ১১:৩০ ঘটিকা।
১৬	দরপত্র মূল্যায়ন পদ্ধতি	দরপত্র সিডিউলে বর্ণিত শর্তাবলী এবং পিপিএ-২০০৬ ও পিপিআর-২০০৮ এর বিধান
		ञन्याग्री।
29	গাড়ির সংখ্যা, ধরণ ও মডেল	০৬ (ছয়)টি মাইক্রোবাস:

কাজ সংশ্লিষ্ট তথ্যাদি/বিবরণঃ মাইক্রোবাসের দরপত্র জামানত মাইক্রোবাস ব্যবহারের সংখ্যা (ফেরতযোগ্য) সদর দপ্তর, সিলেট প্রতিটি লটের জন্য আলাদাভাবে ২ (দুই)টি ২৫,০০০/- টাকা চালকের জালানি ১২,৫০০/- টাকা ১ (এক)টি বিভাগ সিলেট মেরামত বয়ে ও ১ (এক)টি ১২,৫০০/- টাক আবগারী ও ভ্যাট মাইক্রোবাস বিভাগ, হবিগঞ্জ সংশ্ৰিষ্ট ১ (এক)টি ১২,৫০০/- টাকা ব্যয় প্রদানকারী/গাড়ির বিভাগ, মৌলভীবাজার মালিকপক্ষ ১ (এক)টি করবেন। হবে না দরপত্র আহবানকারীর নাম জনাব মোহাম্মদ আহসানুল হক, কমিশনার, কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, সিলেট। টেলিফোনঃ ০৮২১-৭২৭৩৯৭, ই-মেইলঃ sylhetcustoms@yahoo.com পদবী ও ঠিকানা, ফোন নম্বর ও

সিসির নিম্নে নয়)

দরপত্র দাখিল এবং মল্যায়ন কর্তপক্ষ এই কমিশনারেটের অধিক্ষেত্রের যেকোন স্থানে প্রয়োজন মতো গাড়ি ব্যবহার করতে পারবেন এবং এ জন্য আলাদা কোন খরচ প্রদান করা শৰ্তাবলী দরপত্র দাখিলের যোগ্যতা, প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্র ও দরপত্র সংশ্লিষ্ট বিস্তারিত বিবরণ ও শর্তাবলী সিডিউলে উল্লেখ আছে ২১ মন্তব্য কর্তপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন মোহাম্মদ সফিউর রহমান

অতিরিক্ত কমিশনার কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, সিলেট (কমিশনারের পক্ষে)

ন্যূনতম ০৮ (আট) আসন/সিট ও ০৪ (চার) দরজাবিশিষ্ট সিএনজি/ফুয়েলচালিত লো-ফ্লোর

টিপটপ কন্তিশনের ডুয়েল এসি (২০১১ সালের পূর্বে নয় এবং ইঞ্জিন ক্যাপাসিটি ১৮০০

# India's national security 'thoroughly compromised'

Says Sonia on TV anchor's chats on Balakot strikes

The government's silence over the leaked WhatsApp chats of TV anchor Arnab on the Balakot Goswami

"deafening", Congress president Sonia Gandhi said yesterday, alleging that national security had been 'thoroughly compromised".

In her opening remarks at a meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), Sonia Gandhi also took on the government over the farmer protests, alleging "shocking

insensitivity and arrogance" and what she called a charade of consultations between the centre and protesters.

"Very recently there have been very disturbing reports on how national security has been so thoroughly compromised. I think just a few days back, Antony-ji (former Defence Minister AK Antony) had said that leaking of official secrets of military operations is treason. Yet the silence from the Government's side on what has been revealed has been deafening," Sonia

Gandhi said in her virtual address. "Those who give certificates of patriotism and nationalism to others now stand totally

In its investigations into a TV ratings scam, Mumbai Police has submitted to a court WhatsApp transcripts of chats between Republic TV's Arnab Goswami and Partho Dasgupta, the former CEO of ratings agency BARC, which reveal the TV anchor as saying three days before the Balakot strike that "something big

will happen", that it would be "bigger than a normal strike" and "the government is confident of striking in a way that people will be elated.

The conversation is dated February 23, 2019, three days before India sent Air Force fighter jets to Balakot in Pakistan to destroy a Jaish-e-Mohammad terror base in retaliation for the terror attack in Pulwama, in which over 40 soldiers were killed.

The CWC meeting also decided that a new Congress president will be elected in June after five state elections.

জিডি-১৫৫