

SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM

Nicola Sturgeon vows to hold another 'legal' vote

AFP, London

Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon yesterday said she planned to hold a legal referendum on independence from Britain despite Westminster's opposition, as an opinion poll showed a majority would vote yes.

If her Scottish National Party (SNP) wins a strong showing in regional elections in May, Sturgeon said she would seek a fresh referendum even though Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said such a vote should only be held once in a generation.

"I want to have a legal referendum, that is what I am going to seek the authority of the Scottish people for in May and if they give me that authority, that's what I intend to do," she told the BBC's Andrew Marr Show.

Johnson "will flatly refuse the demand," The Sunday Times quoted senior government sources as saying.

Sturgeon cited the fact that "the polls now show that a majority of people in Scotland want independence."

A Sunday Times poll found 50 percent of Scottish voters wanted another referendum in the next five years and 49 percent would vote for independence, while 44 percent would reject it.



A 2014 referendum saw 55 percent vote "no."

The Sunday Times quoted a forecast that the SNP will win a "landslide" in May polls for the Scottish parliament, giving Sturgeon a strong basis to call for the vote.

She spoke at the Scottish National Party (SNP) was due to discuss its "roadmap to a referendum" at a policy forum on Sunday.

The SNP says it will request a Section 30 order from the British government allowing the holding of another referendum. If this is refused it intends to push through its own legislation to prepare for a referendum and "vigorously" oppose a legal challenge from

London.

Scotland could hold a preliminary referendum, calling for negotiations on independence, Alan Trench of University College's constitutional unit told The Sunday Times.

The newspaper poll found 50 percent of Scottish voters wanted another independence referendum in the next five years, despite the fact only 22 percent thought an independent country would be better off economically.

The poll also found 53 percent in Scotland would vote to rejoin the EU.



A person runs past the statue of Winston Churchill at the Parliament Square, as snow falls in London, Britain, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

NZ detects first community virus case in two months

New Zealand health officials yesterday confirmed the first case of Covid-19 in the community for more than two months, sparking urgent contact-tracing efforts north of Auckland. A 56-year-old woman who recently returned from Europe tested positive 10 days after completing a compulsory two weeks in managed isolation, although she had noticed symptoms several days before getting tested. Contact tracing was underway after it was revealed the woman and her husband spent several days travelling around the Northland region while she was potentially infectious, visiting about 30 different locations. It marks the first known case of community transmission in New Zealand since Nov 18.

Top Spanish general resigns over vaccine queue-jumping

over vaccination queue-jumping Spain's top general resigned on Saturday after allegations he had received the Covid-19 vaccine ahead of priority groups, one of a number of public officials who have sparked public anger because of reports they have jumped the vaccination queue. Defence Minister Margarita Robles had asked General Miguel Angel Villaroya, chief of defence staff, for explanations after media reports on Friday that he had received the vaccination. In a statement on his resignation, the defence ministry indicated but did not explicitly state that Villaroya had had the vaccination.

Asian El Chapo' arrested

Dutch police have arrested the alleged leader of a large Asian drug syndicate who is listed as one of the world's most-wanted fugitives and has been compared to Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman. Tse Chi Lop, a Chinese-born Canadian national, was detained on Friday at the request of Australian police, who led an investigation that found his organisation dominates the \$70 billion-a-year Asia-Pacific drug trade, Dutch police spokesman Thomas Aling said on Saturday. Tse is expected to be extradited after appearing before a judge, Aling said, adding that his arrest by national police took place without incident at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport. Tse's crime syndicate allegedly dominates the Asia-Pacific crystal methamphetamine trade, which increased fourfold in the five years to 2019, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Regional law enforcers say the syndicate has imported highly potent meth into more than a dozen countries, including Japan, Australia and New Zealand, as well as trafficking heroin and MDMA.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

China-Taiwan tensions rise days into Biden presidency

Taipei reports large incursion by Chinese air force; US carrier group enters South China Sea amid tensions

REUTERS, Taipei

Chinese air force planes including 12 fighter jets entered Taiwan's air defence identification zone for a second day yesterday, Taiwan said, as tensions rise near the island just days into US President Joe Biden's new administration.

China views democratically ruled Taiwan as its own territory, and has in the past few months increased military activity near the island.

But China's activities over the weekend mark a ratcheting up with fighters and bombers being dispatched rather than reconnaissance aircraft as had generally been the case in recent weeks.

After eight Chinese bomber planes and four fighter jets flew into Taiwan's defence zone on Saturday, between mainland Taiwan and the Taiwan-controlled Pratas Islands in the South China Sea, a further 15 flew into the same air space yesterday, Taiwan said.

Taiwan's Defence Ministry said China sent six J-10 fighters, four J-16s, two SU-30s, a Y-8

reconnaissance aircraft and two Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft.

Taiwan's air force was sent up to respond, it added. China has yet to comment. It has previously said such actions are aimed at defending the country's sovereignty and designed to act as a warning against "collusion" between the United States and Taiwan.

The move is likely to further concern Washington, which on Saturday urged China to stop pressuring Taiwan and reaffirmed its commitment to the island and desire to deepen ties.

Earlier yesterday, the US military said that a US aircraft carrier group led by the USS Theodore Roosevelt had entered the disputed South China Sea to promote "freedom of the seas."

Biden was sworn into office only on Wednesday. His administration says its commitment to Taiwan is "rock-solid". The United States, like most countries, has no formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan, but is bound by law to provide the island with the means to defend itself.



Police uses a water canon during a protest against restrictions put in place to curb the spread of the coronavirus disease, in Amsterdam, Netherlands, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

US meddling in 'domestic affairs'

Says Russia a day after arresting 3,500 pro-Navalny protesters

AFP, Moscow

The Kremlin yesterday accused the United States of interfering in Russia's domestic affairs and downplayed the scale of the weekend's protests, when tens of thousands rallied in support of jailed opposition politician Alexei Navalny.

More than 3,500 demonstrators were detained in protests across the country on Saturday, with several injured in clashes with police in Moscow, following Navalny's call to rally against President Vladimir Putin's 20-year rule.

The West has widely condemned the "harsh tactics" used against demonstrators, with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian yesterday saying the mass arrests of protesters was "an intolerable affront" and a "slide towards authoritarianism".

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell has said the bloc would discuss "next steps" on Monday.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov yesterday accused the US embassy of interfering in Russia's domestic affairs after the mission distributed a "demonstration alert" to US citizens in Russia recommending they avoid

protests.

"Of course, these publications are inappropriate," Peskov told a state TV channel. "And of course indirectly, they are absolutely an interference in our domestic affairs."

A US mission spokeswoman said US embassies and consulates around



the world routinely issue safety messages to US citizens.

"This is a common, routine practice of many countries' diplomatic missions," she told AFP on Sunday.

The US embassy in Moscow on Saturday said that Washington supported "the right of all people to peaceful protest, freedom of expression".

Peskov also accused protest organisers of seeking to "rock the

boat" and said the number of people who had demonstrated paled in comparison to Putin supporters.

"A lot of people vote for Putin," Peskov said, pointing to last year's constitutional plebiscite that allowed 68-year-old Putin to remain in power until 2036.

Navalny, Putin's most prominent critic, was arrested on returning to Moscow last weekend following months of treatment in Germany for a near-fatal poisoning with a Soviet-designed Novichok nerve agent.

He then called for Saturday's unauthorised protests, which took on an unprecedented geographic scale, spanning more than 100 cities.

The OVD Info monitor said police seized at least 3,521 protesters, with 1,398 people detained in Moscow and 526 in Saint Petersburg.

The head of the Kremlin's human rights council, Valery Fadeyev, said most of those detained in Moscow had been released.

He also defended the detentions, saying the protests were illegal and took place during a coronavirus pandemic. "I see no violations whatsoever," he said.

Pirates kill sailor, kidnap 15 off Nigeria

AFP, Ankara

Armed men killed one sailor and abducted 15 from a Turkish cargo ship off the coast of Nigeria, Turkey's Anadolu news agency reported yesterday.

That left three crew members to sail the Liberian-flagged Mozart owned by a Turkish company, the state agency said. The dead man was Azerbaijani. Several crew members were wounded.

The Mozart had been en route from Lagos to Cape Town in South Africa when it was boarded on Saturday. It was now on course for nearby Gabon.

Pirate attacks on ships worldwide jumped 20 percent last year driven by a record spate of kidnappings off West Africa.

A total of 195 incidents of piracy and armed robbery were reported, up from 162 in 2019.

US to unveil more climate policies

AFP, Washington

US President Joe Biden's administration next week will release more policies it believes are needed to tackle climate change and is urging China to toughen one of its targets on greenhouse gas emissions, his top climate advisers said on Saturday.

Gina McCarthy, the White House's national climate adviser, did not say what policies would be released. A memo seen by Reuters on Thursday showed Biden will unveil a second round of executive orders as soon as Jan 27 that include an omnibus order to combat climate change domestically and elevate the issue as a national security priority.

"We've already sent signals on the things that we don't like that we're going to roll back, but this week you're going to see us move forward with what's the vision of the future," McCarthy told a virtual meeting of the US Conference of Mayors.

Biden, a Democrat who took office on Jan. 20, quickly issued executive orders canceling the Keystone XL pipeline that would import tar sands oil from Canada and rejoining the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

John Kerry, Biden's special climate envoy, said a recent pledge by China, the world's top greenhouse gas emitter, was "not good enough." In September, Chinese President Xi Jinping set a goal for his country to become carbon neutral by 2060, 10 years after the 2050 time frame favored by most countries, while also pledging a more ambitious short-term goal on emissions.

As secretary of state under former President Barack Obama in 2015, Kerry helped bring China to the table at the UN climate conference in Paris. Now, the Biden administration has begun to apply diplomatic pressure on countries to work harder on climate, said Kerry.

He talked on Friday with foreign ministers in Europe, who told him they had high expectations for the Biden administration after a lack of action on climate in the Trump years.

11 miners rescued after 14 days in China

AFP, Beijing

Rescuers in east China yesterday pulled 11 miners from hundreds of metres underground where they had been trapped for two weeks, state media reported, as the race to locate the remaining 10 intensified.

The miners were brought to the surface starting from around 11 am yesterday, state broadcaster CCTV reported -- a major breakthrough for a rescue operation that has captivated the nation.

One miner was in "extremely weak physical condition" and rushed to hospital, CCTV said.

The 11 miners were rescued after the air ventilator shaft was cleared, Xinhua reported, citing the operation's command centre.

Specialist teams have been battling difficult conditions since an explosion at the Hushan mine in Shandong province trapped the miners underground amid rising waters on January 10. The explosion occurred in a ventilator shaft, causing a blockage that damaged the cable car.

"Zoonosis and Transboundary Animal Diseases Prevention and Control Research" Project
Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute
Savar, Dhaka-1341

No. 33.05.2672.112.06.001.20-114 Date: 21/01/2021

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender will be invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocurement.gov.bd>) for procurement of following works. Details are given below:

Tender ID No.	Ref. No. & package description	Tender publishing date & time	Tender closing date & time
539570	Ref. No.: 33.05.2672.112.06.001.20-89 Supply of Row materials	21/01/2021 at 10:00am	10/02/2021 at 3:00pm
539572	Ref. No.: 33.05.2672.112.06.001.20-89 Supply of Digital Camera and Computer accessories		
539574	Ref. No.: 33.05.2672.112.06.001.20-89 Laboratory and other Equipment (Next Generation Sequencing)		
539575	Ref. No.: 33.05.2672.112.06.001.20-89 Laboratory and other Equipment		

To get access to the e-Tender document, the required fees is to be deposited through any registered branch of enlisted banks on or before of abovementioned date & time. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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Memo No. BBAGC/2021/CEDP/40 Date: 20/01/2021

e-Tender Notice 01/2020-2021

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following package:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of supply	Last date and time of tender security submission	Tender closing date & time
1.	538874	Procurement of Furniture & Fixtures for ICT Lab, Laboratory & Classroom of Bhawal Badre Alam Govt. College, Gazipur.	08-Feb-2021 12:30pm	08-Feb-2021 1:00pm

This is an online tender, when only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branch up to 7 February, 2021. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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