

## SEDITION CHARGE FOR BACKING FARMERS' PROTESTS

# Students in Delhi protest against activist's arrest

REUTERS, New Delhi

Students chanted slogans outside the Delhi police headquarters yesterday demanding the release of a 22-year-old environmentalist accused of sedition for an online document in support of farmers' protests.

Police say Disha Ravi, a leader of the local arm of climate change campaigner Greta Thunberg's advocacy group, created and shared a "toolkit" or an action plan that was used to foment violence in Delhi last month during the protests.

Her supporters have denied she did anything illegal and said the toolkit was an information pack about the protests, which erupted late last year to demand a rollback of three new agricultural laws, and was not designed to incite violence.

"The way the police took her away is illegal," said Prasenajit Kumar, a leader of the student group which tried to march to the front gates of the police headquarters.

Her arrest in her hometown of Bengaluru on Sunday has stoked outrage and comes at a time when Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government faces allegations it is suppressing dissent.

Police said her detention was part of the investigation into the violence that took place on Jan. 26 when thousands of farmers tore down barricades and reached the historic Red Fort and raised a religious flag there.

Police also have arrest warrants for two of Ravi's two associates, Nikita Jacob and Shantanu Muluk.

Jacob, a Mumbai-based lawyer, has petitioned a court, seeking to block her arrest. The court was due to hear her petition later yesterday. She said in her petition that she was trying to raise awareness about the plight of farmers protesting against deregulation of the produce market. There was no question of inciting violence, she said.

Thousands of farmers remain camped on the outskirts of New Delhi. The government says the new laws open up opportunities to farmers by allowing them to directly sell produce to private buyers such as large retailers.



Demonstrators shout slogans during a protest against the arrest of climate change activist Disha Ravi by Delhi police for allegedly helping to create a guide for anti-government farmers protests shared by environmentalist Greta Thunberg, outside the Delhi Police headquarters, in New Delhi, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## NEWS IN brief

### Barge accident on Congo river kills 60

At least 60 people died when a passenger barge carrying more than 700 people became shipwrecked on the Congo river at night, Democratic Republic of Congo's humanitarian affairs minister said on Monday. Some 300 survivors had been found near the scene of the accident in Mai-Ndombe province in the west of the country, but another 240 remained unaccounted for, Steve Mbikayi wrote on Twitter. "We sympathize with the families of the victims and we demand sanctions against all those responsible for the transport sector," Mbikayi said, without elaborating. No further details were immediately available.

### Belarus mounts raids on journos, activists

Police in Belarus yesterday raided the homes and offices of more than 20 journalists, rights defenders and trade union members, investigators and activists said, as part of a probe into mass protests. Belarus was gripped by months of demonstrations against the rule of strongman President Alexander Lukashenko after he claimed an overwhelming victory in an August election the opposition said was rigged. The authorities snuffed out the protest movement in the ex-Soviet country by detaining thousands of people in a crackdown that left at least four demonstrators dead and several independent journalists facing years behind bars.

### Wilders tweet irks Turkey

Turkish prosecutors yesterday launched an investigation into Dutch far-right leader Geert Wilders over a tweet in which he wrote "terrorist" accompanying an image of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Wilders tweeted an image on Monday of Erdogan, with the right side of his face depicted against a Turkish flag, and the left side — bearded and darker-skinned — against the black-and-white flag of the Islamic State extremist group. He wrote the word "Terrorist" over the image, which was shared and liked thousands of times. The Ankara chief public prosecutor's office said it was opening a probe into the "photograph and written insult about" Erdogan.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

### ACCIDENT IN INDIA

## 37 killed as bus plunges into canal

AFP, New Delhi

At least 37 passengers were killed when a bus plunged into a canal in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh yesterday, police told AFP as recovery efforts continued.

The accident happened when the bus, which was carrying more than 50 passengers, veered off the road and into the water near the village of Satna early morning.

According to media reports, seven people, including the driver, managed to swim to safety.

The state government has ordered an inquiry into the accident. An initial investigation suggested the driver lost control of the bus, reports said.

## WHO okays AstraZeneca's vaccine for emergency use

Israel accused of preventing vaccine transfer to Gaza

AGENCIES

The World Health Organization gave emergency use approval to AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccines on Monday, meaning distribution can start to poorer countries starved of doses to fight the pandemic.

The AstraZeneca-Oxford jab forms the bulk of batches being lined up through Covax, the global programme aimed at procuring and shipping out vaccines equitably around the world, regardless of wealth.

It is only the second Covid-19 jab to have received WHO authorisation, after the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

The two versions given the seal of approval are being produced by the Serum Institute of India (SII), and by SKBio in South Korea.

"Countries with no access to vaccines to date will finally be able to start vaccinating their health workers and populations at risk, contributing to the Covax facility's goal of equitable vaccine distribution," said WHO assistant director general Mariangela Simao. AstraZeneca vaccines from India and South

Korea made up almost all of the initial 337.2 million doses lined up for Covax's first wave of distribution, which is set to get moving in late February. Some 145 participating economies are set to receive enough doses to immunise 3.3 percent of their collective population by mid-2021.

Last week in a separate process, the WHO's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization issued its interim usage recommendations for the AstraZeneca vaccine. Soothing fears about the jab, SAGE concluded it could be used for people aged over 65, and also where coronavirus variants of concern are circulating.

Meanwhile, The Palestinian Authority (PA) accused Israel of holding up the delivery of Covid-19 vaccines into Gaza, where Palestinians have yet to receive any doses.

A Palestinian official told Reuters that the PA tried to send 2,000 doses of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine from the occupied West Bank to Gaza on Monday, but that Israel stopped the shipment saying the shipment wasn't authorised.

### UN condemns deadly Iraq rocket attack

AFP, Arbil

The United Nations yesterday warned that Iraq could spin out of control after a rocket attack on the Kurdish regional capital Arbil killed a foreign contractor for the US military and wounded several other people.

The attack late Monday was the first time in nearly two months that Western military or diplomatic installations have been targeted in Iraq after a series of similar incidents last year that were blamed on pro-Iranian Shia factions.

Besides the foreign civilian contractor, who is not an American national, another nine people were wounded, including eight civilian contractors and one US soldier.

### EBOLA OUTBREAKS IN GUINEA, CONGO

## WHO alerts six African countries

REUTERS, Conakry

The World Health Organization has asked six African countries to be alert for possible Ebola infections, as Guinea yesterday reported new cases and Democratic Republic of Congo said its new infections were a resurgence of a previous outbreak.

Guinea declared an outbreak of the virus on Sunday in the first return of the disease there since the 2013-2016 outbreak, while Congo has confirmed four new cases this month. Guinea has so far recorded up to 10 suspected cases of Ebola and five deaths.

Health authorities have rushed to respond to the cases in Guinea, anxious to prevent a repeat of the last outbreak in West Africa, which killed more than 11,300 people.

Guinea's neighbours include Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Further spread of the disease could cripple the regions' under-funded health systems which are also battling the coronavirus pandemic.

Since the devastating epidemic in West Africa, the development of vaccines and treatments has greatly improved survival rates and containment efforts.

The Ebola virus can cause severe bleeding and organ failure and is spread through contact with body fluids. It has a much higher death rate than COVID-19, but unlike the coronavirus it is not transmitted by asymptomatic carriers.

# টেস্টমি

ইন্সট্যান্ট সফট ড্রিংক পাউডার



ভিটামিন এ, সি এবং ক্যালসিয়ামে ভরপুর  
টেস্ট মি রোগ প্রতিরোধে সাহায্য করে  
আর তাইতো মন বলে...

# "ওয়ে হেলদি এ" ওয়ে মজাবে

