

China's treatment of Uighurs is 'genocide'

Say Canadian MPs; Beijing slams move as a 'malicious provocation'

AFP, Ottawa

Canadian MPs have voted to label Beijing's treatment of Uighurs in Xinjiang as genocide, a move angrily slammed by China yesterday as a "malicious provocation."

Rights groups believe at least one million Uighurs and other mostly Muslim minorities have been incarcerated in camps in the northwestern region, where China is also accused of forcibly sterilizing women and imposing forced labor.

The motion "Uighurs in China have been and are being subject to genocide" passed unanimously in the Canadian House of Commons, and ministers called on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to officially label it as such.

The motion also called for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics to be moved if the "genocide" continues.

The United States has already used the label, with the administration of former president Donald Trump slamming China in January for a "systematic attempt to destroy Uighurs."

Following a G7 meeting, Trudeau said Canada was consulting with its allies on the use of the term "genocide" for the treatment of Uighurs.

Beijing hit back yesterday, saying the motion had "disregarded facts and common sense" and "deliberately smeared China."

After initially denying the existence of the camps in Xinjiang, China later defended them as vocational training centers aimed at reducing the appeal of Islamic extremism.



Protesters hold up the three finger salute as they take part in demonstration against police and government corruption in Bangkok, Thailand yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hong Kong to disqualify disloyal politicians, officials

Hong Kong yesterday announced plans to ramp up the ideological vetting of politicians and officials, with anyone seen to be disloyal to China or a national security threat barred from office. The draft law will be sent next month to the city's legislature, a body now devoid of opposition after a number of figures were disqualified because their political views were deemed a security threat. Officials have detailed a "negative list" of offenses that could see their colleagues removed from office, including acts that endanger national security, advocating for independence or refusing to accept China's sovereignty over Hong Kong. The city's Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Erick Tsang confirmed that criticism of the Chinese Communist Party could also be a disqualifying factor.

Wife of Mexican drug lord 'El Chapo' arrested in US

US authorities arrested the wife of jailed Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman on Monday at an airport outside of Washington on narcotics smuggling charges, the Justice Department said. Emma Coronel Aispuro, 31, faces one charge of conspiracy to traffic cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin and marijuana for importation into the United States, the department said. Guzman was the leader of the Sinaloa Cartel, one of Mexico's most notorious drug trafficking groups. He ran an operation that delivered hundreds of tons of narcotics into the United States and was behind multiple murders of those who crossed him, according to court filings. He was extradited to the United States in 2017 to stand trial, and was convicted and sentenced to life in prison two years later.

Indian climate activist granted bail in sedition case

A New Delhi court yesterday granted bail to 22-year-old climate activist, saying there was "scanty and sketchy evidence" of sedition in her efforts to help farmers protest in a case that has drawn global attention. Disha Ravi was arrested in the southern city of Bengaluru on Feb. 13 and charged with sedition for her alleged role in the creation of an online toolkit that police said contained action plans used to foment violence during the farmers' protest. Judge Dharmender Rana said there was little to hold Ravi, a founder of the local chapter of Swedish climate crusader Greta Thunberg's movement, in custody any longer and criticised the authorities for detaining anyone who differed with government policy.

SOURCE: AFP, NDTV

'Heartbreaking milestone'

Biden leads Americans in moment of silence to mourn 500,000 deaths

AFP, Washington

President Joe Biden ordered flags lowered to half mast Monday after the United States crossed the "heartbreaking" milestone of 500,000 Covid-19 deaths, while Britain eyed lifting lockdowns in the latest sign of global gains against the pandemic.

An emotional Biden asked everyone to remain vigilant and urged maintain the hygiene practices.

Biden, accompanied by his wife Jill and Vice President Kamala Harris and her husband Doug Emhoff, then stood outside the White House to mark a moment's silence in front of 500 candles representing the toll -- the highest reported of any country.

But signs are also emerging that progress is being made both in the United States and around the world, with infections dropping sharply and vaccine deliveries rising steadily.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

UK eyes 'fully reopening' in June after vaccination success

First vaccine dose cuts transmission and hospitalisation: UK studies

In Britain, Prime Minister Boris Johnson outlined a "gradual and cautious" approach to lifting curbs in England that could see life there return almost to normal by the end of June. The first step will be the return of children to schools from March 8.

Meanwhile, data from two separate studies published in the UK on Monday, one in England and another in Scotland, have shown vaccines against Covid-19 are effective in cutting disease transmission and hospitalisations from the first dose.

Analysis from Public Health England has shown the vaccine manufactured by Pfizer-BioNTech reduces the risk of catching infection by more than 70 percent after a first dose. That risk is reduced by 85 percent after a second dose.

Hospitalisation and death from Covid-19 is reduced by over 75 percent in those who have received a dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, according to the analysis.

Meanwhile India, the world's second worst-hit nation in terms of infections, passed a bleak threshold on Monday by registering its 11 millionth case following a renewed rise in transmission. Fresh restrictions on gatherings came into force in the western state of Maharashtra, home to financial capital Mumbai, which has logged almost 52,000 deaths since the start of the pandemic.

Facebook to restore Australia news service

Agrees to pay media companies after changes to media laws

AFP, Sydney

Facebook yesterday said it will lift a contentious ban on Australian news and pay local media companies for content, after a last-gasp deal on pending landmark legislation.

Australia's Treasurer Josh Frydenberg announced a face-saving compromise that will see Google and Facebook plunge tens of millions of dollars into the struggling local news sector.

In return the US digital firms will, for now, avoid being subjected to mandatory payments that could cost them vastly more and create what they see as an alarming global precedent.

Just hours after the compromise was unveiled, Facebook announced its first proposed deal with an Australian media company, Seven West, and was said to be pursuing commercial deals with other local news organisations. The company is expected to use the content to launch a dedicated news product in Australia later this year.

The social media firm sparked global outrage last week by blacking out news for its Australian users in protest at the proposed legislation, and inadvertently blocking a series of non-news Facebook pages linked to everything from cancer charities to emergency response services.



Pakistan's PM Imran Khan (C) walks with his Sri Lankan counterpart Mahinda Rajapakse (center R in white) at Bandaranaike International Airport in Katunayake yesterday after Khan arrived for a two-day official visit to Sri Lanka. India yesterday allowed Imran Khan's airplane to use its airspace to visit Sri Lanka. In 2019, Pakistan had denied opening its airspace for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's flights to the US and Saudi Arabia citing alleged human rights violations in Kashmir.

PHOTO: AFP

POLITICAL CRISIS IN NEPAL

SC reinstates House dissolved by PM

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's Supreme Court yesterday overturned the prime minister's decision to dissolve parliament, terming the move unconstitutional.

In December Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli abruptly dismissed the House of Representatives and accused members of his Nepal Communist Party of being uncooperative. He called for elections in April and May.

More than a dozen writs were filed in the Supreme Court challenging his decision, while a wave of protests and clashes took place in the streets.

"The Supreme Court has ordered to reinstate the dissolved House of Representatives after concluding that the government's decision was unconstitutional and against parliamentary practices," Kishor Poudel, the press expert at the Supreme Court, told AFP. Poudel said the court had ordered a session of parliament within 13 days.

The court's decision was welcomed by the opposition as well as members of the dissident faction of Oli's own party.

The Oli government came to power in 2018 with a two-thirds majority, aiming to end years of instability and short-lived governments.

The dissolution of parliament came after months of clashes with former Maoist rebel leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who helped Oli come to power when their parties merged in 2018.

The split in the party has now left Oli without a majority in parliament, and he is likely to face a no-confidence vote.

2019 EASTER SUNDAY TERROR ATTACK IN SRI LANKA

Ex-president, intel chiefs should face charges: probe

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's ex-president and his intelligence chiefs should be prosecuted for failing to prevent suicide bombings two years ago on Easter Sunday that killed 279 people, according to an investigation released yesterday.

Maithripala Sirisena, who left office last year, was found to have been negligent by an investigation he set up five months after the Islamic militant attacks on three hotels and three churches on April 21, 2019.

It quickly emerged that Indian intelligence had warned Sri Lanka 17 days beforehand about the risk of attacks, following a tip-off from a suspect.

The report by the presidential commission of inquiry said the "balance of probability" was that Sirisena was told by his intelligence chief about the warnings before the attacks.

The commission, which heard from 440 witnesses and handed over its report to parliament on Tuesday, said the attorney

general should "consider instituting criminal proceedings against (former) president Sirisena under any suitable provision in the Penal Code".



Sirisena, now a ruling party legislator, has previously denied any knowledge of the warnings, and made no comment about the report.

The probe also found Sirisena's head of intelligence Nilantha Jayawardena was criminally liable for failing to act on the warnings from Indian intelligence.

Jayawardena had "diluted the weight of the intelligence" from India, the report said. It added that police inspector-general Pujith Jayasundara should also be prosecuted for negligence.

Jayasundara and the top defence ministry official at the time, Hemasiri Fernando, already face charges over their failure to prevent the attacks.

Two days after the attack, the Islamic State group claimed responsibility, but investigators say they have not found a direct link between the local jihadists and IS.



বাংলাদেশ টেলিকমিউনিকেশন কোম্পানি লিমিটেড

প্রকল্প পরিচালকের কার্যালয়

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মহাখালী উপগ্রহ ভূ-কেন্দ্র, কড়াইল, বনানী, ঢাকা-১২১৩

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International Tender Notice

1	Ministry/Division	Posts and Telecommunications Division.
2	Agency	Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited.
3	Procuring entity name & code	Project Director, STNP, Code: 224282800.
4	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.
5	Invitation for	Tender Goods Single Lot.
6	Invitation Ref. No. & date	No. 14.33.0000.310.07.008.19-87, Dt: 23-02-2021
7	Procurement method	International Competitive Tender (ICT).
8	Budget and source of fund	Government of Bangladesh.
9	Development partner	Not applicable.
10	Tender package No. & name	No. 01 (one), Name- "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of IP Based ANS Gateway-2 Exchange in BTCL on Turn-key Basis".
11	Tender publication date	24-02-2021
12	Tender last selling date	07-04-2021 during office hour.
13	Tender submission date and time	08-04-2021 at 11:00am (BST).
14	Tender opening date and time	08-04-2021 at 11:10am (BST).
15	Name and address of the office of selling, receiving & opening of tender document	Office of the Project Director (STNP), Mohakhali Earth Station, Karail, Banani, Dhaka-1213.
16	Place, date & time of pre-bid meeting	Venue: Conference Room (2nd Floor), BTCL, Telejogajog Bhaban, 37/E, Eskaton Garden, Dhaka-1000. Date: 15-03-2021, Time: 10:30am (BST).
17	Eligibility of tenderer	All eligible bidders.
18	Brief description of goods and works	"IP Based ANS Gateway-2 Exchange".
19	Brief description of related services	Installation, Testing and Commissioning related services.
20	Price of tender document (Tk)	BDT 10,000 (ten thousand) only (non-refundable).
21	Tender security & completion time	USD 58,000 (fifty-eight thousand) only or BDT 50,00,000/- (fifty lac) only. Completion time: 180 days.
22	Name, designation & address of the official inviting tender	Quazi Nizam Uddin, Project Director, STNP, Mohakhali Earth Station, Karail, Banani, Dhaka-1213.
23	Contact details of the official inviting tender	Tel: +880-2-9872787 Email: pd.stnp@btcl.gov.bd Website: http://www.btcl.gov.bd
24	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.	
25	NB: This tender is also available at websites: http://www.cptu.gov.bd & http://www.btcl.gov.bd	

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Quazi Nizam Uddin
Project Director

India's endangered lion prides conquer disease to roam free

AFP, Gir National Park

Three years after a deadly virus struck India's endangered Asiatic lions in their last remaining natural habitat, conservationists are hunting for new homes to help booming prides roam free.

The majestic big cats, slightly smaller than their African cousins and with a fold of skin along their bellies, were once found widely across southwest Asia.

Hunting and human encroachment saw the population plunge to just 20 by 1913, and the lions are now found only in a wildlife sanctuary in India's western Gujarat state.

Following years of concerted government efforts, the lion population in Gir National Park has swelled to nearly 700, according to an official census last year.

But just three years ago, the conservation success looked to be in danger when several lions started to die in one part of the 1,400 square kilometre (545 square mile) forest.

The canine distemper virus -- a highly infectious disease -- was detected among dozens of the royal beasts, killing at least 11 of them.

"We picked all the lions from the area and isolated them," Dushyant Vasavada, the park's chief conservator of forests, told AFP.

Authorities imported special vaccines from overseas and each animal was given three doses each, followed by a booster shot.

Cattle and dogs living near the park were also inoculated as suspected carriers of the virus.

"We vaccinated the lions in captivity and successfully controlled the disease and no new outbreak has been observed,"

Vasavada said.

Lions are a source of pride for India, particularly in Gujarat's Saurashtra region, where man and beast coexist.

A cattle-rearing tribe lives among the animals in the sanctuary, and it is not uncommon to see a pride of lions crossing a highway as motorists wait and watch.

The king of the jungle is also a major tourist attraction, along with leopards, panthers and other big cats found in the sanctuary. Around 550,000 people visit the park each year, riding in open-top jeeps as they try to spot the predators prowling among pale yellow deciduous trees.



But the 2018 virus outbreak was a reminder that the steady growth in the animal's population cannot be taken for granted. Wildlife biologist Ravi Chellam said that outbreak underscored the need to move a few prides to other sites nearby.

Efforts to move some lions to other states have been mired in legal wrangles with the state government, which wants to keep the animals in Gujarat. Authorities have instead proposed finding new homes for some lions in other parts of the state.

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সার্বক,
রত্নগর্ভা

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পরম শ্রদ্ধেয়
মরহুমা সায়মা খাতুন এর
৮ম মৃত্যুবার্ষিকী

২৪ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২০ ইং

পরম শ্রদ্ধার সাথে
নাসিমা মাহমুদ • তসলিম শকর • সেলিম শকর
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