

# Covid cases rising again in Europe

Says WHO as 4 nations agree to fast-track vaccines for new variants

AFP, Copenhagen

The number of new coronavirus cases has risen in Europe after six weeks of decline, the World Health Organization said yesterday.

"Last week, new cases of Covid-19 in Europe rose nine percent to just above one million. This brought a promising six-week decline in new cases to an end, with more than half of our region seeing increasing numbers of new infections," said WHO Europe's regional director Hans Kluge.

"We are seeing a resurgence in central and Eastern Europe. New cases are also on the rise in several western European countries where rates were already high," he said. "We need to get back to the basics. We need to enlarge" the vaccine portfolio, he said.

WHO's Europe region comprises 53 nations and vaccination drives have begun in 45.

Meanwhile, Russian Sputnik V shots could soon be doled out across Europe after the EU said it was assessing the vaccine, as Britain and four other nations pushed ahead under a pact to fast-track jabs adapted to fight new strains.

The agreement will avert the need for lengthy clinical studies if authorised vaccines are adapted in future, as long as the manufacturers offer "robust evidence" of their potency and safety, according to the agreement by the ACCESS Consortium.

The consortium comprises Britain's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and counterparts from Australia, Canada, Singapore and Switzerland.

The virus has killed at least 2,561,937 people since it emerged in China in December 2019, according to an AFP tally compiled from official sources yesterday.



People yesterday attend the funeral of Angel a 19-year-old protester also known as Kyal Sin who was shot in the head on Wednesday. Hundreds of mourners gathered in Myanmar on Thursday for the funeral of a 19-year-old protester shot and killed at a demonstration against military rule. She was killed in the city of Mandalay while wearing a shirt bearing the message "Everything will be OK". Angel was one of 38 people killed on that day, according to a United Nations tally.

PHOTO: AFP

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### US House passes police reform act

A sweeping police reform package that bans choke holds and combats racial profiling cleared the US House of Representatives Wednesday, five days before the trial of a white officer charged with murdering African-American George Floyd. The bill is named after Floyd, who died last May 25 at age 46 when then-Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin pressed his knee on the victim's neck for more than eight minutes. The shocking killing was caught on video and sparked mass protests across the nation. The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act cleared the House last year but was blocked in the Republican-led Senate, likely scenario for this time too when it heads to senate.

### Nearly a fifth of all food wasted in 2019: UN



Seventeen percent of the food available to consumers worldwide in 2019 -- almost one billion tonnes -- was thrown away by households, retailers, institutions and the hospitality industry, far more than previously suspected, the UN said yesterday. If all the wasted food were packed into 40-ton container trucks parked end-to-end, they would circle the Earth seven times, he said. Nearly 700 million people, meanwhile, go to bed hungry every night, according to UN estimates. Food waste issues will be addressed at the first-ever UN World Food Systems Summit, set to take place in September or October.

### Rare 15th century Chinese bowl found at US yard sale



How about this for bargain-hunting? A small bowl bought for \$35 in a yard sale in the US turned out to be a rare 15th century Chinese artifact possibly worth \$500,000. The porcelain bowl -- with delicate floral motifs -- was acquired by a buyer, whose identity is being kept secret, in the northeastern state of Connecticut. Experts said it was painted for the court of Emperor Yongle, the third emperor of the Ming dynasty who ruled from 1402 to 1424. There are only six other such bowls known in the world.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

# US ready to confront China

Says Blinken, vows to engage with Beijing from position of strength

AFP, Washington

Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said that the United States was ready to confront China wherever necessary, calling Washington's ties with the Asian power the "biggest geopolitical test" of the century.

In his first major speech, Blinken promised that President Joe Biden's administration will prioritize diplomacy over military action and build cooperation with the world on global challenges such as climate change and Covid-19.

"We will manage the biggest geopolitical test of the 21st century: our relationship with China," Blinken said at the State Department Wednesday.

He vowed to champion the rights of Hong Kong and the ethnic Uighurs, saying that if not, "China will act with even greater impunity."

"China is the only country with the economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to seriously challenge the stable and open international system -- all the rules, values and relationships that make the world work the way we want it to," he said.

"Our relationship with China will



be competitive when it should be, collaborative when it can be and adversarial when it must be. And we will engage China from a position of strength."

Blinken's remarks come amid a hardening of views in Washington since the turbulent presidency of Donald Trump, who alongside his top diplomat Mike Pompeo made a hard line on China a signature campaign issue and castigated Beijing over the pandemic and trading practices.

Blinken has said he does not fundamentally disagree with Trump on China but believes the United States can be more effective -- through working with allies and, in narrow cases, finding common ground. The Interim National Security

Guidance pointed to climate change, global health, arms control and nonproliferation as areas to seek China's cooperation.

The strategy said that China's leaders too often "behave aggressively and coercively" and vowed that the United States would "position ourselves, diplomatically and militarily, to defend our allies."

The Biden administration also pledged to keep up US support for Taiwan, a self-governing democracy that is claimed by Beijing.

Blinken also voiced alarm over an "erosion of democracy" worldwide. But he said Biden had no interest in bringing democracy to the world "through costly military interventions or by attempting to overthrow authoritarian regimes by force."

"We have tried these tactics in the past. However well intentioned, they haven't worked," Blinken said.

He was likely alluding to the 2003 Iraq invasion as well as the 2011 intervention -- which he supported as part of Barack Obama's administration -- in support of an uprising that overthrew Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi, ushering in a decade of chaos.

# Disagreeing with govt not sedition

Observes Indian Supreme Court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Expressing a view which is different from a decision taken by the federal government cannot be said to be seditious, India's Supreme Court has observed.

"The expression of a view which is dissent from a decision taken by the central government itself cannot be said to be seditious. There is nothing in the statement which we find so offensive as to give a cause of action for a Court to initiate proceedings," a top court bench said on Wednesday.

The remarks by the bench came while dismissing a PIL seeking action against National Conference President Farooq Abdullah over his comments on abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution which had given special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Hemant Gupta rejected the PIL and also imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 on the petitioners for making such claims.

The top court was hearing a plea which referred to Abdullah's statement on restoring Article 370 and contended it clearly amounts to a seditious act and therefore he is liable to be punished under section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code.

The petition filed by Rajat Sharma and Neh Srivastava, both belonging to an organisation Vishwa Guru India Vision of Sardar Patel, alleged that the former J&K CM is trying to "hand over" Kashmir to China and thus, he should be prosecuted for sedition.

# TARGETED KILLING IN AFGHANISTAN

## Female doctor, 7 Hazaras killed

AFP, Jalalabad

A female doctor was killed in a bomb blast claimed by the local affiliate of the Islamic State (IS), in the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad in yet another targeted hit, officials said yesterday, just days after three women media workers were gunned down in the area.

Journalists, religious scholars, activists and judges have all been victims of a recent wave of political assassinations across Afghanistan, forcing many into hiding -- with some fleeing the country.

In the latest incident, the doctor was killed after a magnetic bomb was attached to the vehicle she was travelling in, according to a spokesman from the provincial governor's office. A child was also injured by the explosion.

Meanwhile, in the country's restive east, at least seven members of Afghanistan's persecuted Hazara ethnic group were brutally murdered, officials said Thursday.

The group of migrant Hazara labourers had their hands bound behind their backs and were shot to death late Wednesday, according to Nangarhar provincial council member Ajmal Omar.

# Are they showing pornography?

India's SC says favours controls on video streaming services

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's top court yesterday said it favoured a screening mechanism for online video streaming services, dominated in the country by Amazon and Netflix and which currently are aired freely.

The US streaming platforms have faced complaints from lawmakers belonging to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist party and others that some of the shows promote obscenity or offend religious beliefs.

"We are of the view there should be some screening of these types (of content). What they are showing? They are showing pornography also," Supreme Court Justice Ashok Bhushan said.

Traditional film viewing in India, home to the thriving Bollywood industry, has changed as fewer people go to cinema halls and web series have become common, Bhushan said.

The remarks came as the Supreme Court heard a plea from Amazon's head of India content for Prime Video, Aparna Purohit, for protection against arrest in a case involving a controversial political drama "Tandav", a Hindi word for "fury".

Tandav stars top Bollywood actors but has been battling police and court cases which allege the show depicted Hindu gods in a derogatory manner and offended religious beliefs.

The court will continue to hear the case today. Bhushan has asked the government and the



platform to submit details of any regulations that currently govern online video platforms.

Content on these platforms is not subject to vetting. But the government has ordered that the platforms classify content into five categories based on the age groups it would be appropriate for.

Purohit's counsel told the Supreme Court her case was one concerning freedom of expression. Last week, the executive was questioned for nearly four hours by police in Uttar Pradesh in a separate case filed against the show.

Purohit approached the apex court after a state court rejected her request for anticipatory bail, saying the Tandav series hurt religious sentiment and she must cooperate with police.

Amazon this week issued a rare public apology for "Tandav", saying some scenes that were found objectionable had been edited or removed.

# Buckingham Palace 'perpetuating falsehoods'

Says Meghan Markle as split with UK royals widens

AFP, Los Angeles

Meghan Markle says Buckingham Palace is "perpetuating falsehoods" about her and her husband Prince Harry, according to part of an interview she has done with Oprah Winfrey.

The explosive claim is the latest salvo in an increasingly heated public relations battle between the British royal family and the US-based couple.

The clip, released Wednesday, came hours after Buckingham Palace said it was investigating claims Markle had bullied household staff in the months after her fairytale wedding to the prince.

"I don't know how they could expect that after all of this time we would still just be silent if there's an active role that The Firm is playing in perpetuating falsehoods about us," Markle told Winfrey.

"The Firm" is a sometimes-derivative name for the British royal family.

Harry and Meghan announced last year they were stepping back from royal duties, in what became an increasingly



acrimonious split from the family.

Their permanent removal from duties was confirmed earlier this year, with the royal household and the couple jockeying to control the narrative of the separation -- and public sympathies.

The interview with Winfrey is due to air in the US on Sunday, and in Britain on Monday.

Harry, who is Queen Elizabeth II's grandson, married Markle in a glittering wedding at Windsor Castle in May 2018.

Their marriage was seen as breathing new life into the centuries-old British monarchy. But relations soon soured and they moved to the US, relinquishing their honorary titles and patronages.

# 71kg of waste found in stray cow's stomach

INDIA, Faridabad

Indian vets have extracted 71 kilograms (156.5 pounds) of plastic, nails and other garbage from a pregnant cow, but both the animal and her baby died.

The case has highlighted the country's twin problems of pollution and stray cattle. An estimated five million cows roam India's cities, with many gorging on the vast amounts of plastic litter on the streets.

This cow was rescued after a road accident in late February by the People For Animals Trust Faridabad.

A vet soon noticed the pregnant bovine was struggling. In a four-hour operation on February 21, vets found nails, plastic, marbles and other garbage in its stomach, said trust president Ravi Dubay.

They also attempted a premature delivery. "The baby did not have enough space to grow in her mother's belly so she died," Dubay told AFP.

Three days later, the cow also died. "In my 13 years of experience, this is the most garbage we have taken from a cow... we had to use muscle power to get it all out," Dubay said.

Previous surgeries done by the organisation based in the northern Indian state of Haryana have found up to 50 kilograms of waste in cows' stomachs.

There is no official, nationwide data on how many cows die every year from ingesting plastic.

But in 2017, a Times of India report cited veterinary officials and animal welfare groups estimating that around 1,000 cows die annually just in the northern city of Lucknow from eating plastic.

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### e-Tender Notice

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

e-Tender is invited in e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Nilphamari for the procurement of:

Tender ID & Tender No.	Name of works	Tender docume price (in BDT)	Tender security (in BDT)	Last selling & opening (date and time)
e-TID No. 555110, Tender No. e-GP-27/EE/RHD/Nil/2020-2021	Supplying Skilled Unskilled Labour & Mason for Routine Maintenance work of different roads under Road Division Nilphamari during the year 2020-2021	1000	50000	Date: 21-03-2021 Time: Up to 17.00 & Date: 22-03-2021 Time: After 12.00

**Md. Monzurul Karim**  
ID No. 602000  
Executive Engineer, RHD  
Road Division, Nilphamari

GD-443

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০২ মার্চ, ২০২১

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক 'অফিসার (এক্স ক্যাডার- পাবলিকেশন)' পদে নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীদের তালিকা

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক 'অফিসার (এক্স ক্যাডার- পাবলিকেশন)' পদে নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে গত ২৭/১১/২০১৯ তারিখে প্রকাশিত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং- ৫৫/২০১৯ এর আলোকে গৃহীত লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষার ফলাফলের ভিত্তিতে নিম্নোক্ত রোল নম্বরধারী ০৫ (পাঁচ) জন প্রার্থীকে নিয়োগের জন্য নির্বাচিত করা হয়েছেঃ

নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীদের রোল নম্বর (বাম থেকে ডানে মেধাক্রমানুসারে):  
১০১৫৬১, ১০১১৩৫, ১০০১৭৭, ১০৪৩২৬, ১০৪৯৯০

নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীদের চরিত্র ও প্রাক-পরিচয় সম্পর্কিত পুলিশ বিভাগের সন্তোষজনক তদন্ত প্রতিবেদন প্রাপ্তি ও প্রয়োজ্য ক্ষেত্রে অন্যান্য দলিলাদি যাচাই সাপেক্ষে নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত পরবর্তী কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা হবে।

ব্যাকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

ডিসিপি: ৪৮/২০২১-৮৭৩ তারিখ: ০৪/৩/২০২১ জিডি-৪৪৪

কাজী আকতারুল ইসলাম  
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