

NEWS IN BRIEF

Single dose enough for Covid survivors!

A person who has had Covid and receives a single dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines is equally or better protected than someone who never had Covid and got two doses, according to a study published in the New England Journal of Medicine. For people who have had Covid before, "the first vaccine dose actually acts as a booster, making the second dose unnecessary," the study said. In the study, researchers looked at blood samples from 110 people, 67 of whom had not previously been infected and 43 who had. The scientists repeatedly sampled the participants and found that in the days following the first shot, antibody levels in those with previous infection were 10 to 45 times higher than those who weren't previously infected. By the time both groups received their second shots, antibody levels among those previously infected still registered six times higher than those who weren't previously infected.

Time's up for Cuomo!



Embattled New York Governor Andrew Cuomo found himself under increasing risk of impeachment over allegations of sexual harassment Thursday when the Democratic head of the state assembly -- until now a key ally -- greenlighted a formal investigation of the claims. Since the end of February, the 63-year-old Cuomo has been under scrutiny after five women accused him of sexual harassment or inappropriate behavior. Impeachment by the New York state assembly requires a simple majority in the lower house and two-thirds in the upper house. The last time it happened was in 1913.

Twins boom!

More twins -- almost one in 40 children -- are being born than ever before, according to research published yesterday, citing the rapid rise in medically assisted reproduction as a major factor. More than 1.6 million twins are now being born every year, researchers said in a paper published in the scientific journal Human Reproduction. The rise of assisted reproductive technology (ART) in developed countries since the 1970s contributed to the rise in multiple births, they said, as did mothers giving birth at an older age, when twinning rates are higher. Increased use of contraception, women choosing to start families later in life, and lower overall fertility were also responsible. Researchers gathered data from 135 countries from 2010-2015 for the study.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

VACCINE DIPLOMACY IN ASIA TO COUNTER CHINA'S INFLUENCE
Quad to produce 1b doses

AFP, Washington

The United States, India, Japan and Australia yesterday announced a joint drive to ramp up the Covid-19 vaccine supply in Asia, mounting a challenge to China in the first-ever summit of the four like-minded powers.

US President Joe Biden, who has vowed to reinvigorate alliances in the face of growing worries about China, met virtually with the three nations' prime ministers and told them that the so-called Quad format would become a "vital arena" for cooperation.

"We're renewing our commitment to ensure that our region is governed by international law, committed to upholding universal values and free from coercion," said Biden, who like the others made no explicit, but plenty of implicit, mentions of China. "A free and open Indo-Pacific is essential," he said, a message reinforced by the other leaders as concerns mount about China's assertion of power around the region.

The White House in a statement after the summit announced support for a plan by Indian company Biological E Ltd. to "produce at least one billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines by the end of 2022," focusing on the one-dose Johnson & Johnson jab.

The plan would see pharmaceutical hub India manufacturing the single-dose vaccine from US-based Johnson & Johnson, backed by financial

support from Japan, with Australia taking charge of shipments.

US officials said the focus would be Southeast Asia at a time when China, where the deadly virus was first detected in late 2019, works to transform its image into that of a global healer.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has increasingly shed India's historic non-alignment and pursued tighter ties with Washington, said the Quad will be "a force for global good."

China has denounced the Quad as a US plot against it and put particular pressure on India, saying it could have stopped the format from growing under Biden.

The Quad summit kicks off a flurry of alliance-building diplomacy by Biden.

Japan yesterday announced that Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga will become the first foreign leader to have White House talks with Biden. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin are also paying a joint visit next week to both Japan and South Korea on their first foreign travel, with Austin continuing on to India.

After showcasing the alliance, Blinken and US national security adviser Jake Sullivan will meet top Chinese officials in Alaska late next week in what the Biden administration has promised to be a blunt airing of US concerns. Blinken has said he will press on trade and human rights, including Hong Kong and Xinjiang crackdowns.

Millions risk dying of hunger

Warns UN chief as he urges world to avoid 'human-made famine'

AFP, United Nations

Millions of people around the world risk dying of hunger and the Covid-19 pandemic and climate change are increasing the threat, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said.

"Without immediate action, millions of people will reach the brink of extreme hunger and death," Guterres told the Security Council during a meeting on the links between food and security on Thursday.

Guterres said over 30 million people in more than three dozen countries are "just one step away" from a declaration of famine.

"Climate shocks and the Covid-19 pandemic are adding fuel to the flames. I have one simple message: if you don't feed people, you feed conflict," he said.

At the end of 2020, more than 88 million people were suffering from acute hunger due to conflict and instability -- a 20 percent increase in one year, he said, pointing to a worsening trend in 2021. High-risk zones include the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, South Sudan, Yemen and Afghanistan.

In Yemen, more than 16 million people now face crisis levels of hunger or worse, said David Beasley, the head of the World Food Program, who just returned from that country torn by four years of war.

"We are headed straight toward the biggest famine in modern history. It is hell on earth in many places in Yemen right now," he added.

He said around 400,000 children may die in Yemen this year unless there is urgent intervention.

"That is roughly one child every 75 seconds. Are we really going to turn our backs on them and look the other way?" said Beasley.

Guterres said that in order to save 34 million people in the high risk zones, the United Nations and its agencies have appealed for emergency mobilization of \$5.5 billion.



Legal moves aim to end HK chaos: China

AFP, Beijing

China's plans for electoral reform in Hong Kong, coupled with the imposition of a security law, amount to a "combination of punches" to quell unrest in the southern city, a top Beijing official said yesterday.

Since 2019 pro-democracy protests, China has cracked down on the opposition and wiped out street protests with a draconian national security law. On Thursday it moved to ensure only "patriots" run the city, when an annual rubber-stamp parliament voted for sweeping changes to Hong Kong's electoral system -- including powers to veto candidates.

The plan was swiftly pilloried by the US, EU and Britain, the city's former colonial ruler which handed control of the territory to Beijing in 1997 under a special "one country, two systems" arrangement.

Zhang Xiaoming, of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, yesterday said the "chaos" of recent years showed that the city's electoral system has "clear loopholes and shortcomings" and it needed to be fixed.



Tango workers hold placards that read "Tango is culture and work", as they protest in demand for new protocols to be able to work during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, outside the Culture Ministry building, in Buenos Aires, Argentina on Thursday. Since first emerging in China at the end of 2019, the coronavirus has killed more than 2.6 million people and forced unprecedented curbs on movement that eviscerated economies.

PHOTO: REUTERS

\$69.3m for digital collage



AFP, New York

A digital collage by American artist Beeple sold Thursday for a record \$69.3 million at Christie's auctioneers, as virtual art rapidly establishes itself as a new -- and highly profitable -- creative genre.

"Everydays: The First 5,000 Days" became the most expensive ever "non-fungible token" (NFT) -- a collectible digital asset that uses blockchain technology to turn virtual work into a unique item.

Its buyer has not been publicly identified.

The collage is based on a project beginning on May 1, 2007, when Beeple was a bored web designer and started to create a work of art each day, without interruption, to improve his drawing and graphic design. After 5,000 consecutive days, "Everydays" brought together his daily pieces in digital form, beginning with a simple image of his Uncle Jim and ending on a detailed graphic portrait of characters from Donald Trump to Buzz Lightyear to Michael Jackson, depicted as dystopian muses around a child drawing.

'I've aged 30 years'

Long Covid patients battle acute symptoms

AFP, Montreal

Difficulty breathing, concentrating and even walking: five months after being diagnosed with Covid-19, Violaine Cousineau continues to suffer severe symptoms that prevent her from resuming normal life.

"I feel like I've aged 30 years in a few months," the 47-year-old Canadian tells AFP. Sitting in her kitchen and wearing a mask, Cousineau gestures with her hands as she speaks, as if to accentuate her words as her voice has been reduced to a whisper.

"I don't recognize myself, my family doesn't recognize me either. I'm not the person I was," says the Montreal resident, noting that she walks with a cane to avoid falling.

A mother of two girls aged 12 and 15, she is one of hundreds of expected patients of a new clinic in Montreal specializing in long-term health impacts of Covid-19, or "long Covid."

She had no preexisting health problems and even enjoyed "super cardio" hiking on nearby mountains on weekends.

After contracting the illness in October, she spent a trying first week, including being bedridden for three days.

"I could never have thought for a fraction of a second that it would go further than that," she says. "Everyday life has been turned upside down," she says. "It's the ordeal of a lifetime."

A significant number of patients who contract the novel coronavirus mysteriously suffer debilitating symptoms long after others recover. The European branch of the World Health Organization says the seemingly chronic condition must be "of utmost importance" to health authorities around the world.

In Quebec, which has recorded more than 294,000 cases of the coronavirus, "it could be 10 to 30 percent of patients who have complications," says Emilia Liana Falcone, director of the new clinic set up by the Montreal Clinical Research Institute.

Opened in February, the clinic's doctors aim to understand the long-term complications of Covid and their duration in order to then determine the causes and develop treatments.

Falcone says there are patients still showing symptoms one year after getting infected. "Fatigue is definitely very common," says the infectious disease specialist, as is shortness of breath, muscle pain or sleep disorders.



এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস্ কোম্পানী লিমিটেড
৩৯৫-৩৯৭, তেজগাঁও শিল্প এলাকা
ঢাকা- ১২০৮

স্বচ্ছিশু স্থানীয় দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ইউসিএল নিম্নোক্ত আইটেমগুলি প্রকৃত স্থানীয় প্রস্তুতকারী/সরবরাহকারীদের (স্বচ্ছিশু ব্যবসার সাথে জড়িত) নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহ্বান করছেঃ-

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