

NEWS IN BRIEF



Trump tells his supporters to get vaccinated

Former president Donald Trump on Tuesday encouraged his Republican supporters -- one of the main groups resistant to Covid-19 vaccines -- to get their shots. "I would recommend it," Trump said during an interview on Fox News. "I would recommend it to a lot of people that don't want to get it and a lot of those people voted for me, frankly," he said. "It's a great vaccine, it's a safe vaccine and it's something that works." This was Trump's most explicit endorsement for the national mass vaccination campaign since he left office in January. Meanwhile, Trump remained non-committal about seeking to recapture the presidency following his one term in office. "Based on every poll, they want me to run again," he said. "But we're going to take a look and we'll see."

EU agrees first China sanctions in three decades

The European Union yesterday agreed to blacklist Chinese officials for human rights abuses, two diplomats said, the first sanctions against Beijing since an EU arms embargo in 1989 following the Tiananmen Square crackdown. EU ambassadors approved the travel bans and asset freezes on four Chinese individuals and one entity, whose names will not be made public until formal approval by EU foreign ministers on March 22, as part of a new and wider rights sanctions list. The Chinese officials were accused of human rights abuses against China's Uighur Muslim minority, EU diplomats told Reuters. They said the move reflected deep concern about the Uighurs in Europe, the United States and Canada. The EU last sanctioned China, its second-largest trade partner, in June 1989, imposing an arms embargo on Beijing that is still in place.

Rights group slams Lanka's 'de-radicalisation' law

Sri Lanka faced renewed criticism yesterday over a new "de-radicalisation" law which rights groups see as another weapon targeting dissidents and minorities in the fractured nation. New York-based Human Rights Watch said new regulations expanded the "draconian and abusive" Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) -- which a previous government promised to scrap but never did. On Friday, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa announced new rules under the PTA allowing the detention of anyone suspected of causing "acts of violence or religious, racial or communal disharmony". HRW said Colombo should immediately withdraw the rules, which the government said was aimed at the "de-radicalisation" of religious extremists.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

India fears 2nd Covid-19 wave

Modi eyes quick steps as country sees highest cases in 3 months

AGENCIES

India needs to take quick and decisive steps soon to stop an emerging second "peak" of Covid-19 infections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said yesterday as several countries reported spike in cases raising the possibility of new curbs.

"If we don't stop the growing pandemic right here, then a situation of a nationwide outbreak can get created," Modi told a virtual conference of leaders of Indian states.

India's daily coronavirus infections jumped by 28,903, data from the health ministry showed, for the highest increase since Dec. 13 and taking the nationwide tally to 11.44 million.

Deaths swelled by 188, the highest figure in two months, to stand at 159,044.

The federal government has blamed crowding and a general reluctance to wear masks for the spike, ruling out the virus mutations that have been a factor in Western countries.

On Tuesday, 10,149 new deaths and 491,222 new cases were recorded worldwide pushing the global death tally to at least 2,671,720 people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019. Based on latest reports, the countries with the most new deaths were Brazil with record 2,841 new deaths, followed by the



A health worker collects a swab sample from a woman during a rapid antigen testing campaign for the coronavirus disease, at a railway station platform in Mumbai, India, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

United States with 1,242 and Italy 502.

Meanwhile, UK's health minister claimed in a newspaper article published yesterday that the AstraZeneca's Covid vaccine shot is safe and there is no evidence of health risks, after some EU countries halted rollouts over fears of blood clots.

The European Medicines Agency which previously approved the jab, is conducting a review of the vaccine but said in the meantime it remained convinced of its benefits.

Meanwhile, The Philippines yesterday said it will close its border to foreigners and

restrict the number of Filipinos entering the country as authorities battle to contain a spike in coronavirus infections. The order will take effect from March 20.

The temporary measures come after the number of daily cases hit a seven-month high of 5,404 on Monday and experts predict the figure could double by the end of March.

The WHO's expert vaccine advisers yesterday said they could recommend Johnson and Johnson's Covid-19 jab for use in countries where coronavirus variants of concern are circulating.



BIDEN ON 'RUSSIAN MEDDLING' IN US POLLS

Putin will 'pay a price'

REUTERS, Washington

President Joe Biden said Russian President Vladimir Putin will face consequences for directing efforts to swing the 2020 US presidential election to Donald Trump, and that they would come soon.

"He will pay a price," Biden told ABC News in an interview that aired yesterday. Asked what the consequences would come, he said, "You'll see shortly."

His comments come after a US intelligence report on Tuesday bolstered longstanding allegations that Putin was behind Moscow's election interference, an accusation Russia called baseless.

Washington is expected to impose sanctions on Moscow as soon as next week because of the allegations, three sources said on Tuesday on condition of anonymity. Those sanctions could also address the cyber hack blamed on Russia that used US company SolarWinds Corp to penetrate US government networks. Russia has denied any involvement in that hack.

China walks a tightrope in Myanmar

AFP, Bangkok

Chinese factories torched as mainland workers hunker down under martial law -- Beijing is being pulled into the ulcerous chaos in Myanmar, an unravelling country it had carefully stitched into its big plans for Asia.

During a January 2020 visit to Myanmar, Chinese President Xi Jinping elevated the Southeast Asian neighbour to "country of shared destiny" status, Beijing's highest diplomatic stripe.

The aim was to nudge Myanmar decisively towards China -- and away from the United States -- and drive through projects worth billions of dollars under the Belt and Road Initiative, including an oil and gas pipeline and a port to the Indian Ocean.

Fast-forward one year, and the strategically located country has tipped into bloody chaos after a coup took out Aung San Suu Kyi's government.

The massive pro-democracy movement which has since unfurled accuses China of waving through the generals' power grab and trading Myanmar's freedom for its own strategic gain.

As Myanmar security forces kill protesters -- more than 200 so far -- Beijing faces a dilemma: back the men with guns or side with an increasingly anti-China public.



"China doesn't really care who is in government, but it wants a government that will protect Chinese projects and interests," said Richard Horsey, a Myanmar political analyst.

But "this is a military that Beijing doesn't think can bring stability... and the more China tries to build a relationship with that regime, the more the public will be put offside."

That is laden with danger for Chinese interests. At least 32 China-owned textile factories were burned down in several Yangon townships on Sunday, according to Chinese state media, causing around \$37 million in damage.

A foreign ministry spokesman in Beijing demanded the immediate protection of "Chinese institutions and personnel".

Chinese businesses were closed Tuesday

in the flashpoint areas, leaving workers holed up in a "hostile environment" cloaked by martial law, according to a representative of a garment factory in Yangon's Shwepyithar township.

Ominous commentaries have since seeped out of Chinese media with one saying Beijing could be prodded "into taking more drastic action... if the authorities cannot deliver and the chaos continues".

Twitter accounts of Myanmar pro-democracy groups allege -- without offering clear proof -- that the army carried out the factory attacks to justify a crackdown in which dozens of protesters died.

Ripples of anti-China sentiment in Myanmar could become waves across a Southeast Asian region suspicious of China's reach, influence and penchant for debt-trap diplomacy to get BRI projects over the line.

"Any broad-based popular uprising against Chinese interests can be contagious and percolate anti-China grievances through Cambodia, Laos and elsewhere," said Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a professor of political science at Thailand's Chulalongkorn University.

"China had figured out this piece (Myanmar) of its geostrategic puzzle," but now there is "no easy play ahead".

Endangered Australian songbird 'losing its song'

AFP, Sydney

Australia's endangered regent honeyeater bird is losing its song, a sign that it could be nearing extinction, scientists warned in new research released yesterday.

A rapid decline in the rare songbird means its young are struggling to learn mating calls as adults disappear, according to researchers at the Australian National University.

Male regent honeyeaters sang rich, complex tunes in more populated habitats, but resorted to simplified songs elsewhere, the scientists wrote in a study published in the peer-reviewed journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B.

Lead author Ross Crates said the findings were a "major warning sign the regent honeyeater is on the brink of extinction" -- and the loss of song knowledge could also reduce chances of mating.

Scientists found 18 regent honeyeaters, or around 12 percent of the total remaining male population, who could only mimic other species' songs



-- not their own.

"This lack of ability to communicate with their own species is unprecedented in a wild animal," study co-author Dejan Stojanovic said.

The rare bird, with its black and yellow markings, was once found across much of eastern Australia but is now largely confined to eucalyptus forests in the country's southeast.

The study also found regent honeyeaters born in captivity have different songs that could reduce their attractiveness to wild birds. The scientists now hope to teach the captive birds to sing like their wild counterparts, by playing them audio recordings.

US facing biggest surge of migrants in 20 years

Says homeland security

REUTERS, Washington

The United States is facing the biggest surge of migrants at its southwestern border in 20 years, the homeland security secretary said on Tuesday as the Biden administration races to handle an influx of children trying to cross the US-Mexico border alone.

The number of attempted border crossings by people from Central America and Mexico has steadily increased since April 2020, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said.

Poverty, violence and corruption in the Mexico and the Northern Triangle - Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador - have led people to seek a better life in the United States for years, and there have been surges in the past.

US border agents conducted 100,441 apprehensions or expulsions of migrants at the border with Mexico in February, the US Customs and Border Protection said last week, the highest monthly total since a border crisis of 2019.

Single adults make up the majority of people who are being expelled, Mayorkas said. Children traveling alone, some as young as six years old, are not being turned back. Nearly 4,300 unaccompanied children were being held by Border Patrol officials as of Sunday, according to an agency official who requested anonymity.

Republicans in Congress say the Biden administration sparked the border surge by promising to unwind some of former President Donald Trump's hardline policies against illegal immigration.

MASS SHOOTING IN US

Asian women among 8 killed

White man in custody likely behind all three attacks in Atlanta; many Asian-Americans on edge following recent spike in hate crimes

AFP, Atlanta

Six Asian women were among eight people shot and killed at spas around the US city of Atlanta Tuesday, with a white man in custody on suspicion of staging all three attacks, police said.

The shootings came with many Asian-Americans already on edge following a recent spike in hate crimes against the community, and triggered immediate fears that Asian-run businesses may have been deliberately targeted.

Four of the victims were killed at Young's Asian Massage near Acworth, a suburb of Georgia state capital Atlanta, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported.

Captain Jay Baker of the Cherokee County sheriff's office told the paper the victims were two Asian women, a white woman, and a white man, while a Hispanic man was wounded.

Police separately confirmed that four women had been killed in attacks on two other spas in the northeast



Robert Aaron Long

of the city. Police told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution that all four were Asian women.

South Korea's Yonhap News Agency reported the country's foreign ministry had confirmed that four of the victims were of Korean descent.

Authorities have identified Robert Aaron Long as a suspect in all three shootings based on CCTV footage.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation was assisting in the investigation, a spokesman told AFP.

The shootings come as reports of attacks against Asian-Americans, primarily elders, have spiked in recent months -- fueled during the Covid-19 pandemic, activists believe, by talk of the "Chinese virus" by former president Donald Trump and others.

News of the shootings came just hours after the release of a report by the advocacy group Stop AAPI Hate suggested a marked increase in hate crimes against Asia-Americans -- with women disproportionately affected.

In a tally of incidents reported to the group between March 2020 and February this year, almost 70 percent of Asian-American survey respondents said they had faced verbal harassment and just over one in 10 said they had experienced physical assault.

In an address to the nation last Thursday, President Joe Biden forcefully condemned what he called "vicious hate crimes against Asian-Americans who have been attacked, harassed, blamed and scapegoated."

War in Yemen is 'back in full force: UN

REUTERS, New York

The war in Yemen is "back in full force," the United Nations mediator Martin Griffiths told the Security Council on Tuesday amid renewed attempts to get the warring parties to talk.

He said new fronts in the war is opening up in Hajjah and Taiz and Hudaydah. "The war is back in full force," he told the 15-member council.

A Saudi Arabia-led military coalition intervened in Yemen in 2015 after the Iran-aligned Houthi group ousted the country's government. The Houthis say they are fighting a corrupt system.

The UN describes Yemen as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Some 80% of Yemenis need help, with 400,000 children under the age of 5 severely malnourished.

CLIMATE DISASTERS

10.3m displaced in last 6 months

REUTERS, Singapore

About 10.3 million people were displaced by climate change-induced events such as flooding and droughts in the last six months, the majority of them in Asia, a humanitarian organisation said yesterday.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said about 2.3 million others were displaced by conflict in the same period, indicating the vast majority of internal displacements are now triggered by climate change.

Though the figures cover only a six-month period from September 2020 to February 2021, they highlight an accelerating global trend of climate-related displacement, said Helen Brunt, Asia Pacific Migration and Displacement Coordinator for the IFRC.

Some 60% of climate-IDPs (internally displaced persons) in the last six months were in Asia, according to IFRC's report.

Statistics from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) show that on average 22.7 million people are displaced every year. Globally, 17.2 million people were displaced in 2018 and 24.9 million in 2019. Full-year figures are not yet available for 2020, but IDMC's mid-year report showed there were 9.8 million displacements because of natural disasters in the first half of last year.

More than 1 billion people are expected to face forced migration by 2050 due to conflict and ecological factors, a report by the Institute for Economics and Peace found last year.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

College Education Development Project (CEDP)

Sherpur Govt. Mohila College, Sherpur

New Market, Sherpur Sadar, Sherpur

Invitation for Tenders (Re-Tender)

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Education.			
2	Agency	University Grants Commission/ National University.			
3	Procuring entity name	Principal, Sherpur Govt. Mohila College, Sherpur.			
4	Procuring entity code	N/A.			
5	Procuring entity district	Sherpur.			
6	Invitation for	Goods.			
7	Invitation Ref. No.	SGMC/CEDP/094/2021			
8	Date	18/03/21			
KEY INFORMATION					
9	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (National).			
FUNDING INFORMATION					
10	Budget and source of funds	Development Budget (Government & IDA Credit).			
11	Development partners	International Development Association (IDA), World Bank.			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION					
12	Project code	224017200			
13	Project name	College Education Development Project (CEDP).			
14	Tender Package No.	G-8 (Re-Tender).			
15	Tender package name	Procurement of furniture and fixtures for classroom, labs, library etc. (Re-Tender).			
16	Tender publication date	18/03/2021			
17	Tender last selling date	27-03-2021			
18	Tender closing date and time	28-03-2021, 1.00pm.			
19	Tender opening date and time	28-03-2021, 4.00pm.			
20	Name & address of the office Selling tender document Receiving tender document Opening tender document	(1) Office of the Principal, Sherpur Govt. Mohila College, Sherpur. (2) Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Sherpur. (3) Office of the Superintendent of Police, Sherpur. Office of the Principal, Sherpur Govt. Mohila College, Sherpur.			
21	Pre-tender meeting	Will not be held.			
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER					
22	Eligibility of tenderer	(1) The tenderer shall have a minimum number 03 years general experience in the supply of goods and related services as supplier. (2) The minimum specific experience as supplier in supply of similar goods of at least 01 (one) contract(s) successfully completed within the last 05 (five) years, each with a value of at least Tk 15,00,000.00 (fifteen lac) only. (3) The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the tenderer shall be Tk 20,00,000.00 (twenty lac) only. (4) Other requirement mentioned in Tender Document.			
23	Brief description of works	Executive table, Computer table, Revolving Chair, Visitor Chair, Steel Almirah, Book shelf, Classroom Bench etc.			
24	Brief description of related services	Related service shall be in accordance with Section 4: Particular Conditions of Contract, Section 6: Schedule of Requirements and Section 7: Technical Specification of the tender document.			
25	Tender document price	BDT 1,000.00 (one thousand Tk only).			
26	Lot No.	Identificatio n of lot	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)	Completion time in months
	N/A	N/A	Sherpur Govt. Mohila College, Sherpur	40,000/- (forty thousand)	1.5 months
27	Name of official inviting tender	Professor Afia Ferdous.			
28	Designation of official inviting tender	Principal.			
29	Address of official inviting tender	Sherpur Govt. Mohila College, Sherpur.			
30	Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel: 0931-61460		Email: shergmc@gmail.com	
31	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.				

Professor Afia Ferdous

Principal

Sherpur Govt. Mohila College, Sherpur

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