

KHASHOGGI KILLING

US president defends inaction against MBS

US President Joe Biden defended his decision to waive any punishment for Saudi Arabia's crown prince in the killing of a US-based journalist, claiming that acting against the Saudi royal would have been diplomatically unprecedented for the United States.

Biden, in an ABC News interview that aired Wednesday, discussed his administration's decision to exempt Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) from any penalties for the Oct 2, 2018, killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. US intelligence, in a report released Feb. 26, concluded that the crown prince authorized the team of Saudi security and intelligence officials that killed Khashoggi.

"We held accountable all the people in that organization - but not the crown prince, because we have never that I'm aware of when we have an alliance with a country, gone to the acting head of state and punished that person and ostracized him," Biden said in his first extended public comments on his administration's decision, according to remarks carried by The Associated Press (AP).

Biden was overstating the US relationship with Saudi Arabia, however. The United States has no treaty binding itself with Saudi Arabia, and the kingdom is not one of the Arab countries designated as a major non-Nato ally. The US often refers to the kingdom as a strategic partner because of its oil production, its status as a regional counterbalance to Iran and its counterterrorism cooperation.

The US has imposed visa restrictions and penalties on the Saudi agents who killed and dismembered Khashoggi inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul, however he failed to punish MBS, making clear that America's strategic goals are more important.



Activists participate in a vigil in response to the Atlanta spa shootings in the Chinatown area of Washington, DC on Wednesday evening. A 21-year-old suspect described as a sex addict was charged Wednesday with murdering eight people in spas around the US city of Atlanta, in triple attacks that have deeply shaken the Asian-American community. Police said Robert Aaron Long has denied a racist motive to Tuesday's attacks -- in which six of the victims were women of Asian origin -- but that they had yet to determine the shooter's reason for opening fire.

PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

UN: Widespread ageism worsened by pandemic

Ageism is widespread worldwide and stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination based on age have only been amplified by the Covid-19 pandemic, the United Nations said yesterday. The coronavirus crisis has wreaked a devastating toll on older people and solidarity between the generations will be crucial to the global recovery, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said.

North Korea to ignore US while 'hostile policy' in place

North Korea accused the new US administration of adopting "lunatic theory" yesterday, ruling out any engagement with Washington unless it changed course. The comments from Pyongyang's first vice foreign minister Choe Son Hui came with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin in South Korea on the second leg of an Asian tour to bolster a united front against the nuclear-armed North and an increasingly assertive China.

Indian passenger train 'rolls backwards for 35 km'

An Indian passenger train rolled backwards for 35 kilometres, reports said yesterday, in an alarming but injury-free incident caught in a video that went viral on social media. The "mechanical failure" hit service from New Delhi to Tanakpur, Uttarakhand state, after the driver slammed on the brakes to avoid hitting an animal on the tracks, the NDTV channel reported. The rail company later said the animal in question was a cow. It did not elaborate on how the train was brought under control.

Dutch PM claims win in Covid-dominated vote



Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte claimed an "overwhelming" victory in elections on Wednesday, vowing to use his fourth term in office to rebuild the country after the coronavirus pandemic. Exit polls showed Rutte's liberal party clearly winning the most seats in parliament. The pro-EU D66 party is set to surge into second place, while anti-Islam leader Geert Wilders lost ground to move into third, public broadcaster NOS predicted.

4 hurricane names retired after deadly destruction

The Atlantic hurricane names Dorian, Laura, Eta and Iota are being retired due to the trail of death and destruction left in their wake, the UN's World Meteorological Organization said Wednesday. The four names were wiped off the lists following a two-day virtual meeting of the WMO's 28-country Hurricane Committee serving North America, Central America and the Caribbean. During 2020, the unprecedented number of 30 named Atlantic storms led to at least 400 fatalities and cost \$41 billion in damages. Storms are assigned alternating male and female names in alphabetical order -- this year beginning with Ana, Bill and Claudette. They are reused every six years, though if any hurricane is particularly devastating, its name is retired and replaced.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Covid reinfection rare, 65 plus group vulnerable: study

Existing vaccines effective against Brazilian variant

AFP, Paris

Surviving Covid-19 protects most people against reinfection for at least six months, but elderly patients are more likely to be laid low by the virus a second time, researchers reported yesterday.

An assessment of reinfection rates in Denmark last year showed that just over half a percent of people who tested positive for Covid during the first wave from March to May did so again during the second wave, from September to December.

Among these, the researchers found that initial infection with Covid-19 was likely to bestow 80 percent protection from reinfection among under-65s, but that dropped to just 47 percent in older people.

Of the over 9,000 people aged under 65 who tested positive in the first wave, just 55 -- or 0.6 percent -- tested positive again during the second wave. This compared to 3.6 percent of individuals in this age group who tested positive during the second wave

but not in the first.

Meanwhile, a University of Oxford study yesterday claimed that existing vaccines may protect against the Brazilian variant of the coronavirus. The study highlighted how a variant first found in South Africa poses the biggest headache for vaccine makers.

The scientists used blood samples from people with antibodies generated by both Covid-19 infection and the Oxford/AstraZeneca and Pfizer/BioNTech vaccines that are being rolled out in Britain.

The data showed a nearly three-fold reduction in the level of virus neutralisation by antibodies generated by the vaccines for the P.1 Brazil variant - similar to the reduction seen with the variant first identified in Kent, Britain.

The variant first identified in South Africa triggered a much larger reduction in virus neutralisation, with a 9-fold reduction in Oxford/AstraZeneca's vaccine, and a 7.6-fold reduction for Pfizer/BioNTech.

Covid-19 may become 'seasonal': UN

AFP, Geneva

Covid-19 appears likely to develop into a seasonal disease, the United Nations said yesterday, cautioning though against relaxing pandemic-related measures simply based on meteorological factors.

In its first report, an expert team tasked with trying to shed light on one of those mysteries by examining potential meteorological and air quality influences on the spread of Covid-19, found some indications the disease would develop into a seasonal menace.

The 16-member team set up by the UN's World Meteorological Organization pointed out that respiratory viral infections are often seasonal.

"This has fuelled expectations that, if it persists for many years, Covid-19 will prove to be a strongly seasonal disease," it said in a statement.

The task team therefore insisted that weather and climate conditions alone should for now not be the trigger for loosening anti-Covid restrictions.

'Takes one to know one' Putin replies to Biden 'killer' comment, says Moscow won't sever ties with Washington

AFP, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday mocked US President Joe Biden over his "killer" comment but said that Moscow would not sever ties with Washington over the spat.

Speaking at an event marking seven years since Russia's takeover of Crimea, Putin said Moscow would continue working with Washington but aimed a barb at the US leader.

"It takes one to know one," Putin said in televised remarks, using a saying from his childhood.

"That's not just a children's saying and a joke. There's a deep psychological meaning in this. We always see in another person our own qualities and think that he is the same as us."

Putin added that he wished Biden, 78, good health. "I'm saying this without irony, not as a joke."

In an interview with ABC News on Wednesday, when asked if he thought Putin, who has been accused of ordering the poisoning of opposition figure Alexei Navalny, is "a killer", Biden said: "I do."

The US president's remarks sparked the biggest crisis in bilateral relations in years, and later Wednesday Russia ordered its Washington ambassador back to Moscow for urgent consultations in an unprecedented move in recent diplomatic history.

Putin said the United States was "the only country in the world that used nuclear weapons".

Russia, he added, knows how to "defend its interests" and will work with Washington on terms that are "beneficial" for Moscow.

"And they'll have to deal with it."

Meanwhile, the G7 group of leading economic powers yesterday said it would not accept Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, in a statement marking seven years since the takeover.

Tensions between Moscow and Washington also spiralled into a diplomatic crisis this week after Biden said Putin would "pay a price" after US officials determined that Russia attempted to sway the recent American presidential election.



Supporters of a law to legalise euthanasia gather as the Spanish Parliament votes to approve it, in Madrid, Spain, yesterday. Spanish lawmakers legalised euthanasia and assisted suicide for people with serious and incurable or debilitating diseases who want to end their life, making Spain the fourth country in the European Union to take the step.

PHOTO: REUTERS

For the love of sushi!

AFP, Taipei

A top Taiwanese official yesterday issued a plea for people to stop changing their name to "salmon" after dozens made the unusual move to take advantage of a restaurant promotion.

In a phenomenon that has been dubbed "Salmon Chaos" by local media, around 150 mostly young people flocked to government offices in recent days to officially register a change in their name.

The cause of this sudden enthusiasm was a chain of sushi restaurants. Under the two day promotion which ended Thursday, any customer whose ID card contained "Gui Yu" -- the Chinese characters for salmon -- would be entitled to an all-you-can-eat sushi meal along with five friends.

Taiwan allows people to officially change their name up to three times.

But Taiwanese officials were not amused. "This kind of name-change not only wastes time but causes unnecessary paperwork," deputy interior minister Chen Tsung-yeen told reporters.

Local media ran interviews with people who took advantage of the promotion.

"I just changed my name this morning to add the characters 'Bao Cheng Gui Yu' and we already ate more than Tw\$7,000 (\$235)," a college student surnamed Ma told TVBS news channel.

Roughly translated, Ma's new moniker means: "Explosive Good Looking Salmon".

"I've changed my first name to salmon and two of my friends also did," a woman surnamed Tung told SETV. "We'll just change our names back afterwards."

Other salmon-themed names reported in local media included "Salmon Prince", "Meteor Salmon King" and "Salmon Fried Rice".

Pandemic pushed 32m Indians out of middle class

REUTERS, New Delhi

Financial woes brought by last year's coronavirus pandemic have pushed about 32 million Indians out of the middle class, a report showed yesterday, while job losses pushed millions into poverty.

A year into the pandemic, the numbers of those in the middle class, who earns between \$10 and \$20 a day, has shrunk to 66 million, down a third from a pre-pandemic estimate of 99 million, the US-based Pew Research Centre said.

Nearly 57 million people had joined the middle income group between 2011 and 2019, it added.

The Pew Centre estimated the number of poor people, with incomes of \$2 or less each day, has gone up by 75 million as the recession brought by the virus has clawed back years of progress.

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি, বাংলাদেশ

প্রকল্প পরিচালকের কার্যালয়, স্থায়ী ক্যাম্পাস প্রতিষ্ঠা

১৩/৩, ৪-এ (৪র্থ তলা) গঙ্গারী, মিরপুর-১২, ঢাকা-১২১৬

ফোনঃ ০২৭৬৪-১৭৩০৫৫, ফ্যাক্সঃ ০২-৫৮০৭০৪৫৭, ই-মেইলঃ pdofficebsrmu@gmail.com

Invitation for Tenders

Tender No. BSMRMU Permanent Campus/Establishment-1034/OTM/02 Date: 19 March 2021

| | | |
|----|---------------------------|---|
| 1. | Ministry/Division | Ministry of Education. |
| 2. | Agency | Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University. |
| 3. | Procuring entity name | Project Director, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University Permanent Campus Project. |
| 4. | Procuring entity district | Dhaka, Bangladesh. |
| 5. | Invitation for tender | Works (Sub Soil Investigation in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University Permanent Campus at Hamidchar Chattogram). |
| 6. | Invitation Ref. No & date | |

KEY INFORMATION

| | | |
|----|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 7. | Procurement method | Open Tender Method (OTM). |
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FUNDING INFORMATION

| | | |
|----|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 8. | Budget and source of funds | Development Budget, GOB. |
|----|----------------------------|--------------------------|

PARTICULAR INFORMATION

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|
| 9 | Project/programme code | 224267 |
| 10 | Project/programme name | Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University Permanent Campus. |
| 11 | Tender pack No. | PW-01 |
| 12 | Tender pack Name | Sub Soil Investigation in-Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University Permanent Campus at Chattogram. |
| 13 | Tender publication date | 19-03-2021 |
| 14 | Tender last selling date | (08-04-2021) 1100 hours. |
| 15 | Tender closing date & time | (08-04-2021) 1200 hours. |
| 16 | Tender open date & time | (08-04-2021) 1300 hours. |
| 17 | Name & address of the office | Office of the Project Director, BSMRMU, Plot No. 13/3, Sagufta, De Akbar Pallabi, Mirpur-12, Dhaka-1216. |
| | Selling tender document | Accounts Section, Project Office, BSMRMU. |
| | Receiving tender document | Project Director's Office, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University Permanent Campus Project. |
| | Opening tender document | Project Director's Office, BSMRMU. |
| 18 | Place/date/time of pre tender meeting | Not applicable. |

INVITATION FOR TENDERS

| 19 | Eligibility of tenderer | Lot No. | General experience | Experience of similar works | Average annual turnover | Liquid assets working capital | Other |
|----|--|---|---|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| | | 01 | At least 10 years in the sub-soil investigation works | At least 10 contract of sub soil investigation work up to 50m using hydraulic rotary drilling method successfully completed within the last 5 years each with a value of at least Tk 20 lac BDT or no of boring minimum 400. | Shall be greater than Tk 20 lac BDT over the last 5 years | Minimum BDT 50 lac or credit facilities | As mentioned in the tender document |
| | | 02 | Do | Do | Do | Do | Do |
| | | 03 | Do | Do | Do | Do | Do |
| | | 04 | Do | Do | Do | Do | Do |
| 20 | Brief description of works and location | Sub-Soil Investigation in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University (BSMRMU) Permanent Campus at Chattogram). | | | | | |
| 21 | Description of lots of the works, price of tender document, tender security and completion time of works | Pack. No. | Lot No. | Description of work | Price of tender document | Tender security | Completion time in days |
| | | PW-01 | 01 | Sub-Soil Investigation in BSMRMU Permanent Campus at Chattogram). | 2,000.00 | Tk. 1.5 lac BDT | 60 days |
| | | | 02 | Do | Do | Do | Do |
| | | | 03 | Do | Do | Do | Do |
| | | | 04 | Do | Do | Do | Do |

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 22 | Name of official inviting tender | Captain M Nayeem Golam Muktadir, (H), ndc, psc. BN, Project Director. |
| 23 | Designation of official inviting tender | Project Director, BSMRMU, Permanent Campus. |
| 24 | Address of official inviting tender | Office of the Project Director, BSMRMU, Plot No. 13/3, Sagufta, De Akbar Pallabi, Mirpur-12, Dhaka-1216. |
| 25 | Contact details of official inviting tender | Tel: 09668778868, Mob. 01769721033 E-mail: pdofficebsrmu@gmail.com |
| 26 | Special instruction | i) VAT & tax will applicable on the basis of total package value, not on lot value. ii) The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason. |

MD-556

M N G Muktadir
Project Director
BSMRMU Permanent Campus