

# China, US to work on climate change

Says Beijing after rancorous meeting

REUTERS, Beijing

China and the United States will set up a joint working group on climate change, China's official Xinhua news agency said, in a potentially positive takeaway from what was an unusually rancorous high-level meeting.

The top Chinese and US diplomats, in their first meeting of Joe Biden's presidency on Thursday and Friday, publicly rebuked each other's policies at the start of what Washington called "tough and direct" talks in Alaska.

But the Chinese delegation said after the meeting the two sides were "committed to enhancing communication and cooperation in the field of climate change," Xinhua said.

They would also hold talks to facilitate the activities of diplomats and consular missions, "as well as on issues related to media reporters in the spirit of reciprocity and mutual benefit," the report said.

The US Embassy in Beijing did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment yesterday.

Last year, as tensions between Beijing and Washington worsened dramatically, the two countries expelled journalists and the United States shut China's consulate in Houston, prompting China to shut the US consulate in Chengdu.

The talks in Anchorage, headed by Secretary of State Antony Blinken and China's top diplomat, Yang Jiechi, had a fiery kickoff, in front of TV cameras, and had appeared to yield no diplomatic breakthroughs.

But the Chinese delegation said "both sides share the hope of continuing such type of high-level strategic communication," Xinhua reported.

China and the United States also discussed adjusting travel and visa policies according to the coronavirus pandemic situation, "and gradually promoting the normalization of personnel exchanges between China and the United States," the report said.



A still image taken from video shows a flooded area following heavy rains in Port Macquarie, New South Wales, Australia. Inset, Rescue officials evacuate people. Heavy rains along Australia's east coast over the weekend have brought the worst flooding in half a century in some areas, authorities said yesterday, forcing thousands to evacuate and damaging hundreds of houses. PHOTO: REUTERS

# WEST BENGAL POLLS

## BJP promises CAA if voted to power

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The Bharatiya Janata Party yesterday released its manifesto for West Bengal assembly poll beginning later this month that promises, among other things, quick implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act if the party is voted to power.

"The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) will be implemented in the first Cabinet (meeting) and refugees who have been staying here for 70 years will be given citizenship, Indian Home Minister Amit Shah said while releasing the manifesto. He said each refugee family will get Rs 10,000 per year through direct bank account transfer for five years if BJP wins. West Bengal is set to witness the electoral battle between the BJP and Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress for the coming assembly polls.

Elections to the 294-member state Assembly will be held in eight-phases starting from March 27. The counting of votes will take place on May 2.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Austin makes unannounced Afghanistan visit



US defence secretary Lloyd Austin has arrived in Kabul on his first trip to Afghanistan as Pentagon chief amid swirling questions about how long American troops will remain in the country. Austin arrived in Kabul from India yesterday, state-owned media reported. He was expected to meet President Ashraf Ghani and other senior government officials. Last week, President Joe Biden said it would be "tough" for the US to meet a May 1 deadline to withdraw troops from Afghanistan. But he added that if the deadline, which is laid out in an agreement between former President Donald Trump's administration and the Taliban, is extended, it would not be by a "lot longer". On Friday, the Taliban warned of consequences if the US failed to meet the deadline.

#### EU leaders shift to virtual summit as Covid cases surge

A European Union summit due to take place on March 25-26 in Brussels will now be held via video conference due to the increase in coronavirus infections across Europe, an EU spokesman said yesterday. European Council President Charles Michel, who chairs EU summits, made the decision to move the summit on Thursday and Friday online, citing "the surge of Covid-19 cases in member states", his spokesman Barend Leyts said on Twitter. The EU's 27 leaders were due to discuss in person how to speed up vaccinations across the bloc, as well as industrial policy and relations with Turkey and Russia, according to a draft final summit statement seen by Reuters.

#### Large asteroid zips past Earth

The largest asteroid to pass by Earth this year will swing closest yesterday, giving astronomers a rare chance for a good look at a space rock that formed at the dawn of our solar system. While in astronomical terms this marks a close encounter with the asteroid -- called 2001 FO32 -- NASA says there is no threat of a collision with our planet "now or for centuries to come". The nearest it will get will be two million kilometres (1.25 million miles) away, according to the US space agency. That is roughly 5.25 times the distance of the Earth from the Moon but still close enough for 2001 FO32 to be classified as a "potentially hazardous asteroid." The asteroid is estimated to be about 900 metres (3,000 feet) in diameter and was discovered 20 years ago. Astronomers are hoping to get a better understanding of the asteroid's size and a rough idea of its composition by studying light reflecting off its surface.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

# Massive religious gathering worries India as cases surge

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's health ministry yesterday warned that a huge gathering of devotees for a Hindu festival could send coronavirus cases surging, as the country recorded the most new infections in nearly four months.

The ministry said up to 40 people were testing positive for Covid-19 daily around the site of the weeks-long Mahakumbh that began this month and peaks in April in the Himalayan holy town of Haridwar, next to the Ganges.

The festival is held only once every 12 years. Organisers have said more than 150 million visitors are expected, as many Hindus believe bathing in the river during this period absolves people of sins and bring salvation from the cycle of life and death.

In a letter to the state government of Uttarakhand, where Haridwar is located, the ministry told local authorities their daily coronavirus testing of 55,000 people in Haridwar was not enough given the large numbers of pilgrims expected, and that cases were already rising.

"This positivity rate has the potential to rapidly turn into an upsurge in cases, given the expected large footfall during Kumbh," the ministry said in a statement, citing the letter.

"Currently more than 12 states in India have

shown a surge in Covid-19 cases during the past few weeks, and pilgrims expected to visit Haridwar during the Kumbh Mela could also be from these states."

Uttarakhand's government says it has made mask-wearing mandatory for devotees, would distribute millions of masks for free and also keep sanitising public areas, apart from following rules laid down by the federal government.

India reported 43,846 new coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours, with its richest state Maharashtra again accounting for about 60% of the infections. Deaths rose by 197, the highest in more than two months, to 159,755, data from the health ministry showed.

India's new Covid-19 cases peaked at nearly 100,000 a day in September, and had been falling steadily until late last month.

Under pressure to boost local supplies, the Serum Institute of India has told Brazil, Saudi Arabia and Morocco that shipments of further doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to them would be delayed.

India has so far donated 8 million doses and sold nearly 52 million doses to a total of 75 countries. It has administered more than 44 million doses since starting its immunisation campaign in the middle of January.



This handout photo taken and released by Dawei Watch yesterday shows protesters with signs taking part in a demonstration against the military coup as they ride scooters through a rural part of Launglone township in Myanmar's Dawei district. PHOTO: AFP

# Furore after Modi critic quits top univ

AFP, New Delhi

The resignation of one of India's most prominent intellectuals and a fierce government critic from a top university has sparked student protests and worries about freedom of speech in the world's biggest democracy.

Pratap Bhanu Mehta, a respected scholar on political theory and constitutional law, had long been dismayed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, firing off stinging editorials and speeches denouncing the "death of liberalism".

The Oxford and Princeton alumnus had already stepped down as vice-chancellor of Ashoka University in 2019, reportedly because the trustees were worried by his outspoken views, but remained a political science professor.

But last week he threw in the towel, saying that the board of the university -- founded in 2014 as a bastion of the liberal arts and India's answer to the Ivy League -- saw him as a "political liability".

"My public writing in support of a politics that tries to honour

constitutional values of freedom and equal respect for all citizens perceived to carry risks for the university," he said in his resignation letter.

Ashoka's founders met Mehta recently and said they could no longer protect him in the "current political



environment", the Indian Express daily reported.

According to the university's student newspaper, Mehta's resignation was endorsed by the board because it would speed up efforts to acquire land needed for an expansion.

The university has yet to comment on the controversy but matters escalated Thursday when Arvind Subramanian, a former chief government economic

advisor, resigned from Ashoka in solidarity.

That the university "can no longer provide a space for academic expression and freedom is ominously disturbing," media reports cited his letter of resignation as saying.

Students have held several days of demonstrations at the Ashoka campus outside New Delhi, calling for a boycott of classes.

More than 150 academics worldwide including from Columbia, Yale and Oxford said in an open letter that they were "deeply distressed" that Mehta had resigned "under political pressure".

Indian democracy was this month downgraded to "partly free" from "free" by the Freedom House think-tank. The V-Dem Institute at the University of Gothenburg said in a recent report that India had turned into an "electoral autocracy".

The government rejected the reports, with Foreign Minister S Jaishankar hitting out at the "hypocrisy" of the "self-appointed custodians of the world".

# US EXTRADITION ROW

## North Koreans leave Malaysia after ties cut

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

North Korea's diplomats in Malaysia shuttered their embassy and flew out of the country yesterday, after Pyongyang severed diplomatic ties over the extradition of a citizen to the United States for violating UN sanctions.

Pyeongyang announced the shock move Friday, labelling Malaysia's extradition of a North Korean man an "unpardonable crime" carried out under "blind obedience" to American pressure.

After Pyongyang cut ties, Malaysia gave 48 hours to leave the country.

# Philippines accuses China of 'incursion' in disputed sea

AFP, Manila

The Philippines yesterday accused China of "incursion" after more than 200 militia boats were spotted near a disputed reef in the South China Sea, in a rare rebuke of its superpower neighbour.

The Philippine coast guard detected the boats "in line formation" at the boomerang-shaped Whitsun Reef around 320 kilometres (175 nautical miles) west of Palawan Island on March 7.

"We call on the Chinese to stop this incursion and immediately recall these boats violating our maritime rights and encroaching into our sovereign territory," Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said in a statement.

"This is a clear provocative action of militarizing the area. These are territories well within Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone."

Lorenzana said the government was considering "appropriate action" to take to protect Filipino fishermen, the country's marine resources and maintain peace and stability in the area.

Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin said on Twitter he had lodged a diplomatic protest over the ships.

The Chinese embassy in Manila did not respond to a request for comment.

The United States has previously accused China of using maritime militia to "intimidate, coerce and threaten other nations" over its claims to almost the entire South China Sea.

The resource-rich waterway is also contested by several countries, including the Philippines.

China has ignored a 2016 international tribunal decision that declared its assertion as without basis.

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Govt. Barishal College  
Kalbari Road, Barishal  
Website: [www.gbc.gov.bd](http://www.gbc.gov.bd)

Memo No. CEDP/DG-1103/21/56 Date: 21.3.2021

### e-Tender Notice 02/2020-2021 (Goods)

This is notifying to all concerned that an e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following package:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of package	Last date and time of tender security submission	Tender closing date & time
1.	560785	Supply of Furniture and fixture of Govt. Barishal College.	7.4.2021 14pm	7.4.2021 15pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches up to 6.4.2021 4pm. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

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GD-569

### Chittagong Dry Dock Limited

Bangladesh Navy  
East Patenga, Chattogram, Bangladesh  
Phone: +88(031)2501117, Mobile: +8801769744452  
Fax: +880-31-2501123, E-mail: [drydock.bd@gmail.com](mailto:drydock.bd@gmail.com), Website: [www.ddcl.gov.bd](http://www.ddcl.gov.bd)

23.02.1565.341.53.006.21.180 Dated: 21 March 2021

### INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER

01.	Procuring Entity Name	Chittagong Dry Dock Ltd.
02.	Invitation for	Purchase of Crane Steel Rail Track -634 Meter (Standard: JIS 1101-2001 & DIN 536A75), Crain Rail Fish Plate -50 Pairs, Crain Rail Sole Plate -27 Pcs, 50N Fish Nut & Bolt with Double Spring Washer -220 Pcs Note: Detail Technical Specifications Mentioned on Schedule
03.	Invitation Reference No	23.02.1565.341.53.006.21.181 Date:21 March 2021
04.	Procuring Method	Open Tender.
05.	Submission of Tender Documents	02 (Two) envelopes submission to be followed. Financial documents in 01 (one) envelope and Technical documents in other envelope. Both the envelopes to be sealed in covering envelope.
06.	Budget & Source of Funds	Own Finance of Chittagong Dry Dock Ltd.
07.	Tender Last Selling Date (Office Time only)	21 March 2021 to 06 May 2021 at 12.00 PM
08.	Tender Closing Date and Time	06 May 2021 at 12.15 PM
09.	Tender Opening Date & Time	06 May 2021 at 12.30 PM
10.	Name and Address of the Office(s) for Selling, Receiving and Opening of Tender Documents:	(1) Cash Section, Accounts Department, Chittagong Dry Dock Ltd, Bangladesh Navy, East Patenga, Chattogram. a. Selling Tender Document b. Receiving Tender Document c. Opening Tender Document
11.	Price of Tender Document	1,000 (One Thousand) TK (Non-refundable)
12.	Contact Details	Phone: +88 031 2501117, Fax: 880-31-2501123 Mobile: +8801769744452, E-mail: <a href="mailto:drydock.bd@gmail.com">drydock.bd@gmail.com</a> The procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all or any tenders prior to acceptance without showing any reason.
13.	Special Instructions	

Head of Commerce Department  
For Managing Director

GD- 571