

NEWS IN BRIEF

Gang ransacks Hong Kong newspaper critical of China

A Hong Kong newspaper that is critical of Beijing said yesterday its printing presses were ransacked by a gang of men wielding sledgehammers.

Egypt jails man for 8 years in #MeToo case

An Egyptian court Sunday sentenced a man to eight years in prison for sexually harassing three minors and drug possession, in a case that sparked outrage on social media.



prison for sexually harassing two young women by Egypt's economic court, which tries cyber crimes.

Austrian files climate lawsuit against government

An Austrian multiple sclerosis sufferer has sued his government in the European rights court for failing to protect the climate, saying global warming worsened his condition, an activist group said yesterday.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Protesters stand on top of a police car as they clash after an officer shot and killed a black man in Brooklyn Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota, US on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

SABOTAGE AT NATANZ NUCLEAR SITE

Iran blames Israel, vows revenge

REUTERS, Dubai

Iran yesterday accused arch-foe Israel of sabotaging its key Natanz nuclear site and vowed revenge for an attack that appeared to be latest episode in a long-running covert war.



Iran's semi-official Nournews website said the person who caused an electricity outage in one of the production halls at the underground uranium enrichment plant had been identified.

The incident occurred amid diplomatic efforts by Iran and the United States to revive Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with major powers, an accord Israel fiercely opposed, after former US President Donald Trump abandoned it three years ago.

Iranian authorities described the incident a day earlier as an act of "nuclear terrorism".

Yesterday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif explicitly blamed Israel. "The Zionists want to take revenge because of our progress in the way to lift sanctions... We will not fall into their trap... We will not allow this act of sabotage to affect the nuclear talks," Zarif was quoted by state TV as saying.

"But we will take our revenge against the Zionists."

Multiple Israeli media outlets have quoted unnamed intelligence sources as saying the country's Mossad spy service carried out a successful sabotage operation at the underground Natanz complex, potentially setting back enrichment work there by months.

Iranian nuclear energy chief Ali Akbar Salehi said an emergency power system had been activated at Natanz to offset the outage.

Russia's foreign ministry said yesterday it hoped the power outage at Natanz uranium plant would not "undermine" progress on nuclear talks.

The European Union also warned against attempts to derail talks aimed at returning the US to the nuclear deal.

EU spokesman Peter Stano said the reported incident "could have been an act of sabotage" but insisted that there had been no official attribution over who was responsible.

WB POLLS CAMPAIGN IN BARDHAMAN

Mamata 'clean bowled': Modi

NDTV ONLINE

Mamata Banerjee has been "clean bowled" and her entire team has been asked to leave the field, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared yesterday.

"...if you want to unload your anger, I am here. Abuse me all you want. But don't insult Bengal's dignity and tradition. Bengal won't tolerate your arrogance, tolabaz (extortion), cut money syndicate because people want 'Asol Poribartan (real change)' now," Modi said, campaigning in Bardhaman for the Bengal election that is half-way through.

This was the first of packed rallies the PM addressed in Bengal yesterday amid rocketing Covid cases across the country, especially in states where elections are being held. People in masks as well as without them were seen at various public meetings.

PM Modi used the Trinamool's "Ma, Mati Manush (Mother, motherland, people)" slogan to attack the party, saying: "Tormenting 'Ma', looting 'Mati' and bloodshed of 'Manush' is the reality."

Making cricket references, Modi remarked that the people of Bengal had hit so many boundaries in the first four rounds of voting that the BJP had "already completed its century".

"The people of Bengal hit so many fours and sixes that BJP has already completed a century (of seats) in the first 4 phases of assembly polls. They have wiped out the Trinamool in half the match," he said.

MIGRANT BOAT CAPSIZE

34 die off the coast of Djibouti: IOM

AFP, Djibouti

Thirty-four migrants drowned yesterday after their boat capsized off the coast of Djibouti, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said, the second such accident in just over a month.

Survivors reported that the boat capsized in rough seas at around 4:00 am (0100 GMT) after leaving Yemen with around 60 passengers on board, an IOM official in Djibouti told AFP, asking not to be named.

"The migrants were being transported by people smugglers," Mohammed Abdiker, the IOM's regional director for East Africa and the Horn of Africa, added on Twitter.

"Apprehending and prosecuting people traffickers and smugglers who exploit the vulnerabilities of migrants must become a priority. Too many lives needlessly lost."

There were "many children" among the bodies found, the first official said, adding that survivors were receiving treatment from the IOM and local authorities. The boat capsized in seas north of the Djibouti port town of Obock, a major transit point for thousands of African migrants in the region trying to reach the Gulf.

It follows a similar accident on March 4 when 20 people drowned after smugglers threw dozens of migrants overboard during a journey across the Gulf of Aden. At least 200 migrants were packed aboard that vessel when it left Djibouti. But about 30 minutes into the voyage the smugglers panicked about the weight on board, and threw 80 people into the sea before turning back towards land.

COUP IN MYANMAR

Suu Kyi faces new criminal charge

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi was hit with a fresh criminal charge yesterday, as the junta's tough crackdown on dissent rolls on.

The 75-year-old Nobel laureate has not been seen in public since being detained in the early hours of February 1 as the military deposed her government and seized power.

The generals have used increasingly brutal methods to try to quell a growing protest movement against their rule, while Suu Kyi faces a raft of criminal charges that could see her barred for life from office.

"Aung San Suu has been charged again under section 25 of the natural disaster management law," lawyer Min Min



is under house arrest in Naypyidaw, appeared in good health but it is not clear if she has any idea of the turmoil that has unfolded in Myanmar over the past two months.

Near-daily protests seeking her release and the restoration of democracy have been met with rubber bullets, live rounds and even grenades by the security forces.

More than 700 civilians have been killed in the space of just 70 days since the coup, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners monitoring group, which says more than 3,000 have been arrested.

In Tamu, near Myanmar's border with India, a six-year-old girl was shot dead while walking to the shop to buy snacks yesterday morning, a local in the city told AFP.

Soe told AFP after a court hearing in the capital Naypyidaw, where Suu Kyi appeared by videolink.

"She has been charged in six cases altogether -- five charges in Naypyidaw and one in Yangon."

The most serious charge Suu Kyi faces falls under Myanmar's official secrets laws.

Min Min Soe said Suu Kyi, who



Devotees gather to take a holy dip in the waters of river Ganges during Kumbh Mela, or the Pitcher Festival, amidst the spread of the coronavirus disease, in Haridwar, India yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD. Sylhet Road Division, Sylhet. e-Tender Notice 20 (Twenty) 2020-2021 (Open Tendering Method).

ADVERSE-EVENT. EMA issues post-jab alert for medics. The safety committee of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) has asked those receiving the AstraZeneca vaccine (called Covishield in India) and medical professionals to look out for cases of unusual blood clots with low platelets, a rare adverse event with the vaccine.

The EMA has categorised thrombocytopenia (drop in platelet level) alone as "common", which means the occurrence could be from one in 100 persons to lesser than one in 10 and the occurrence of thrombocytopenia in combination with thrombosis (clotting) as "very rare", which means it may affect less than one in 10,000 vaccinated persons.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Development of Selected Madrasahs Project. Directorate of Madrasah Education. Technical and Madrasah Education Division. Education Ministry. 28-J, Shegun Bagicha, Ramna, Dhaka-1000. Re-Tender Notice No-02/2020-21 (OTM).