

NEWS IN BRIEF

**Gunman kills 8 before taking own life at FedEx site in US**

A gunman shot eight people dead and injured several others at a FedEx facility in Indianapolis before taking his own life, police said early yesterday. The incident occurred at a FedEx operations center near the Indianapolis International airport, after 11pm local time on Thursday night. What triggered the incident is still not known to police. At least 30 people have been killed in mass shootings around the United States in the last month. President Joe Biden has announced limited measures to tackle gun violence, but more ambitious steps may be hard to enact despite broad support.

**Heavy fighting near Yemen's Marib leaves 96 dead**

Heavy fighting near the Yemeni city of Marib has killed 96 combatants over the past two days as Huthi rebels press their offensive on the government's last northern stronghold, loyalist commanders said yesterday. "Clashes between the two sides on several fronts in the Marib area on Wednesday and Thursday killed 36 loyalist troops and 60 rebels," one government military source told AFP. The Iran-backed Shia rebels rarely disclose their own losses. Aircraft of a military coalition led by Saudi Arabia provided air support to government ground forces. The loss of Marib would be a heavy blow for the Yemeni government, currently based in the southern city of Aden, and for its Saudi backers.

**Iran says production of 60% enriched uranium 'underway'**



Iran has begun producing uranium at 60 percent purity and is making nine grams per hour, the head of the Islamic republic's atomic agency said yesterday. "The enrichment of uranium to 60 percent is underway at the Martyr Ahmadi Roshan nuclear facility" in Natanz, Ali Akbar Salehi of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran said, quoted by Tasnim news agency. Iran announced this week that it would boost its uranium enrichment to 60 percent purity in response to an attack Sunday on the Natanz nuclear facility that it blamed on arch-foe Israel. The move takes Iran closer to the 90 percent purity level needed for use in a nuclear weapon. Under the 2015 deal known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, Iran had committed to keep enrichment to 3.67 percent.

**EC tightens curbs as WB heads for 5th round of voting**

A 72-hour campaign silence period will be in place in the remaining rounds of voting in West Bengal, the Indian Election Commission said yesterday, citing rising Covid cases. Rallies or meetings will not be allowed between 7 pm and 10 am, said the election body a day after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee called for clubbing the four phases into one day. The EC ruled out packing the rest of the vote into one day of voting. The poll panel has said all candidates and political parties must wear masks and it will be the duty of organisers of rallies to ensure masks and sanitisers. The usual 48-hour silence period - when all campaigning is on hold ahead of the vote - was earlier extended to 72 hours for the fifth phase in Bengal today.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

COUP IN MYANMAR

**Opponents form unity govt**

*Urge int'l support, aim for 'federal democracy'; EU set to expand sanctions*

AGENCIES

Opponents of Myanmar's junta yesterday announced a National Unity Government including ousted members of parliament and leaders of anti-coup protests and ethnic minorities, saying their aim was to end military rule and restore democracy.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the Feb. 1 coup that ousted a civilian government led by Aung San Suu Kyi which had held power for five years and was starting its second term after a landslide election victory in November.

People have taken to the streets day after day to demand the restoration of democracy, defying crackdowns by the security forces in which more than 700 people have been killed, according to a monitoring group.

At the same time, political leaders, including ousted members of parliament from Suu Kyi's party, have been trying to organise to show the country and the outside world that they and not the generals are the legitimate political authority.

"Please welcome the people's government," veteran democracy activist Min Ko Naing urged world powers in a 10-minute video address announcing the formation of the National Unity Government (NUG).

Meanwhile, European diplomats yesterday said that the European Union was set to impose more sanctions next week, targeting 10 individuals and two businesses controlled by the military.

The measures -- expected to be unveiled following a virtual meeting of EU foreign ministers on Monday -- come after the bloc hit junta chief Min Aung Hlaing and 10 other senior officials with sanctions last month.

Diplomats said the fresh round of EU asset freezes and visas bans will be



In this file photo taken on February 5, 2015 Shan State Army - South (SSA-S) soldiers train at their headquarters in Loi Tai Leng, in Myanmar's northeastern Shan State. Myanmar's coup has opened an unexpected window of opportunity for the various ethnic rebel outfits, which have no loyalty to either the junta or to deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi, but could together pose a threat to the army's rule.

PHOTO: AFP

expanded to two firms tied to the military.

The unity government released a list of office holders including members of ethnic minorities and protest leaders, underlining the unity of purpose between the pro-democracy movement and autonomy-seeking minority communities, some of whom have battled the central government for decades.

Suu Kyi, who has been in detention since the coup, was listed as state councillor, the post she held in government.

NUG's minister of international cooperation, Dr Sasa, told Reuters the objective was to end violence, restore democracy and build a "federal democratic union". Unity government leaders said they intended to form a federal army and were

in talks with ethnic minority forces.

There were no immediate reports of violence at protests on Friday but six people were killed in a shootout between soldiers and a "local group" in the central town of Kani the previous day, the Myanmar Now media agency reported.

Leaders of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), which includes Myanmar, will meet in Indonesia on April 24 to discuss the situation, Thai and Indonesian media reported.

Junta leader Senior General Min Aung Hlaing was due to attend, a Thai broadcaster said, but the Jakarta Post said it had not been confirmed whether the summit would include representatives of the junta or the former government.

**US announces \$1.7b to fight Covid variants**

AFP, Washington

The administration of President Joe Biden yesterday announced it would spend \$1.7 billion to improve its ability to sequence the coronavirus for genetic changes, as new and potentially dangerous variants are poised to dominate the pandemic.

The funding comes from a \$1.9 trillion Covid relief package passed last month and will help the United States come up to speed on genomic surveillance, an area in which it has lagged behind badly relative to other advanced countries.

"In early February, US laboratories were only sequencing about 8,000 COVID-19 strains per week," a White House statement said, adding that thanks to an initial \$200 million investment, the rate was now 29,000 samples a week.

The new funding includes \$1 billion to expand federal and state capacity to expand genomic surveillance; \$400 million to set up six cutting-edge research centers; and \$300 million to build a national IT system for sharing and analyzing data.

An analysis by the Washington Post in December found the United States was 43rd in the world in its ability to sequence coronavirus cases.

This month the variant first detected in the United Kingdom became the most dominant version of the coronavirus. There are also fears about the rise of other variants, such as those first found in South Africa and in Brazil, which are better able to evade antibodies made in response to the original strain. Vaccine makers are currently testing boosters tailored to variants and they could be made available towards the end of the year.



**'Time to deescalate'**

*Biden says after slapping sanctions on Russia*

AFP, Washington

President Joe Biden said Thursday after announcing sanctions against Russia that for both countries "now is the time to deescalate."

Biden described the sanctions, which are aimed at the Russian economy and dozens of individuals, as a "measured and proportionate" response to Moscow's hostile actions against the United States.

He said that during a phone call earlier this week he was "clear with President Putin that we could have gone further" but added that Washington is "not looking to kick off a cycle of escalation and conflict with Russia."

Biden said that with direct communication between him and Vladimir Putin they could establish "a more effective relationship" and that the Kremlin leader "agreed" with this.

Biden's proposed summit with Putin, which he said could take place "this summer in Europe," would be a chance to "launch a strategic stability dialogue."

Putin has not yet responded to the invitation but Biden said "our teams are discussing that

possibility right now."

Biden said there were "critical global challenges that require Russia and the United States to work together, including reining in nuclear threats from Iran and North Korea, ending this (coronavirus) pandemic globally, and meeting the existential crisis of climate change."

Biden said he'd challenged Putin on Russia's invasion of part of Ukraine and current massing of troops on another part of the border.

The Kremlin yesterday said it was "good" that Biden was seeking dialogue with his Russian counterpart Putin, after Biden called for de-escalation.

Meanwhile, Norway, which shares a short border with Russia, yesterday said it has signed a revised agreement with the United States on how to regulate US military activity on its soil.

The agreement between the two Nato allies will let the US build facilities at three Norwegian airfields and one naval base, but will not amount to separate US bases, the government said. The deal made by the minority government of Prime Minister Erna Solberg must be ratified by Norway's parliament before coming into force.



A man is consoled by his relative as he sees the body of his father, who died from the Covid-19, before his burial at a graveyard in New Delhi, India, yesterday. India reported a record 217,353 new cases yesterday as hospitals ran out of oxygen and beds, while politicians held election rallies and hundreds of thousands of Hindu devotees attended a weeks-long festival, infuriating health officials. PHOTO: REUTERS

**US preparing for 1-year Covid-19 booster shots**

REUTERS

The United States is preparing for the possibility that a booster shot will be needed between nine to 12 months after people are initially vaccinated against Covid-19, a White House official said on Thursday.

While the duration of immunity after vaccination is being studied, booster vaccines could be needed, David Kessler, chief science officer for President Joe Biden's Covid-19 response task force told a congressional committee meeting.

Meanwhile, Pfizer Inc Chief Executive Albert Bourla said people will "likely" need a third booster dose of Covid-19 vaccines within 12 months and could need annual shots, CNBC reported based on his comments from April 1, which were made public on Thursday.

Initial data has shown that vaccines

from Moderna Inc and partners Pfizer Inc and BioNTech SE retain most of their effectiveness for at least six months, though for how much longer has not been determined.

Even if that protection lasts far longer than six months, experts have said that rapidly spreading variants of the coronavirus and others that may emerge could lead to the need for regular booster shots similar to annual flu shots.

The United States is also tracking infections in people who have been fully vaccinated, Rochelle Walensky, director of the US Centers of Disease Control and Prevention told the House subcommittee hearing.

Of 77 million people vaccinated in the United States, there have been 5,800 such breakthrough infections, Walensky said, including 396 people who required hospitalization and 74 who died.

**US Democrats unveil bid to expand SC**

AFP, Washington

A group of congressional Democrats launched a daunting bid Thursday to expand the US Supreme Court from nine to 13 justices, angering Republicans who accused their rivals of attempting a power grab to enact President Joe Biden's agenda.

The move appears to be an effort by the party's progressive wing to pressure Biden on the explosive issue, less than one week after the president announced he was forming a commission to study reforming the high court, including the question of adding justices.

The Supreme Court sits as the final arbiter on fundamental American legal matters, which can include minority and LGBTQ rights, racism, the death penalty and electoral controversies -- and its justices are appointed for life.

Several liberal Democrats have said expansion is necessary after Donald Trump gave the bench a 6-3 conservative majority with three picks, including one just eight days before the 2020 election and after millions of Americans had voted.

The bill, which would allow Biden to fill all four new seats, appears doomed to fail -- at least for now.

Asked whether she supports it, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told reporters "no," adding she did not have plans to bring it to a floor vote.

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান অ্যাভিয়েশন অ্যান্ড অ্যারোস্পেস বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়  
পুরাতন বিমানবন্দর, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস, ঢাকা-১২১৫।

**INVITATION FOR TENDERS**

No: BSMRAAU/Registrar/163/2021/Part File-16/OTM-16/03 Date: 17 April 2021

Ministry/Division	Ministry of Education				
Procuring entity name	Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University (BSMRAAU)				
Procuring Entity District	Dhaka, Bangladesh				
Tender Invitation For	<b>Procurement of Digital Electronics Lab Items for BSMRAAU, Lalmonirhat Campus.</b>				
Invitation Reference No	BSMRAAU Open Tender No: OTM-16/2020-2021				
Date	17 April 2021				
<b>KEY INFORMATION</b>					
Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (National)				
<b>FUNDING INFORMATION</b>					
Budget and Source of Funds	Government of Bangladesh				
<b>PARTICULAR INFORMATION</b>					
Tender Last Selling Date & Time	02 May 2021; 16:00 PM				
Tender Submission Date and Time	03 May 2021; 02:30 PM				
Tender Opening Date and Time	03 May 2021; 03:00 PM				
Name & address of the office selling, receiving and opening tender document: registrar office, BSMRAAU, Old Airport Building, Dhaka-1215					
<b>INFORMATION FOR TENDERER</b>					
Eligibility of Tenderer	1. The Tenderer must possess a valid trade license, updated VAT and TAX certificate, up-to-date bank solvency and other documents as per tender document. 2. A pre-bid meeting shall be held on 11:45 AM, 22 April 2021 or later (Subject to extension of lockdown), tenderers are advised to use Covid-19 protective measures.				
Lot No.	Item Description	Quantity	Location	Tender Security	Completion Time
Item By Item	Supply and installation of Digital electronics lab items for BSMRAAU Campus, Lalmonirhat.	As per tender schedule	BSMRAAU Campus, Lalmonirhat Airport at Lalmonirhat Sadar, Lalmonirhat-5500 Bangladesh	2% of the quoted price by the bidder	28 days after awarding Purchase Order/Signing of Contract
Tender Document Price		Tk 1200.00 (Taka One Thousand and Two Hundred) only in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft (non-refundable) from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh in favour of "Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University" (BSMRAAU).			
<b>PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS</b>					
Name Designation of Official Involving		Registrar, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University			
Address of Official Inviting Tender		Registrar Office, BSMRAAU, Dhaka Campus, Old Airport Building, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215			
Contact Details Official Inviting Tender		Tel No: 55065059 Mobile: 01769995061		Web: www.bsmraau.edu.bd Email: procurement@bsmraau.edu.bd	
The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason.					
<b>Procurement Section</b> BSMRAAU					

GD-784