

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Lawmakers urge Biden to back vaccine patent waiver petition

US lawmakers and nonprofit groups on Friday heaped pressure on the Biden administration to back a temporary patent waiver for Covid-19 vaccines to help poor countries contain the pandemic. The groups delivered a petition signed by two million people, adding to separate letters already sent to US President Joe Biden by a group of senators, House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, nearly 100 members of the House and 60 former heads of state and 100 Nobel Prize winners. Critics argue that waiving IP rights could reduce the safety of vaccines worldwide, and say other issues - such as improving distribution networks - are far more urgent priorities.

Chile find AstraZeneca shots safe

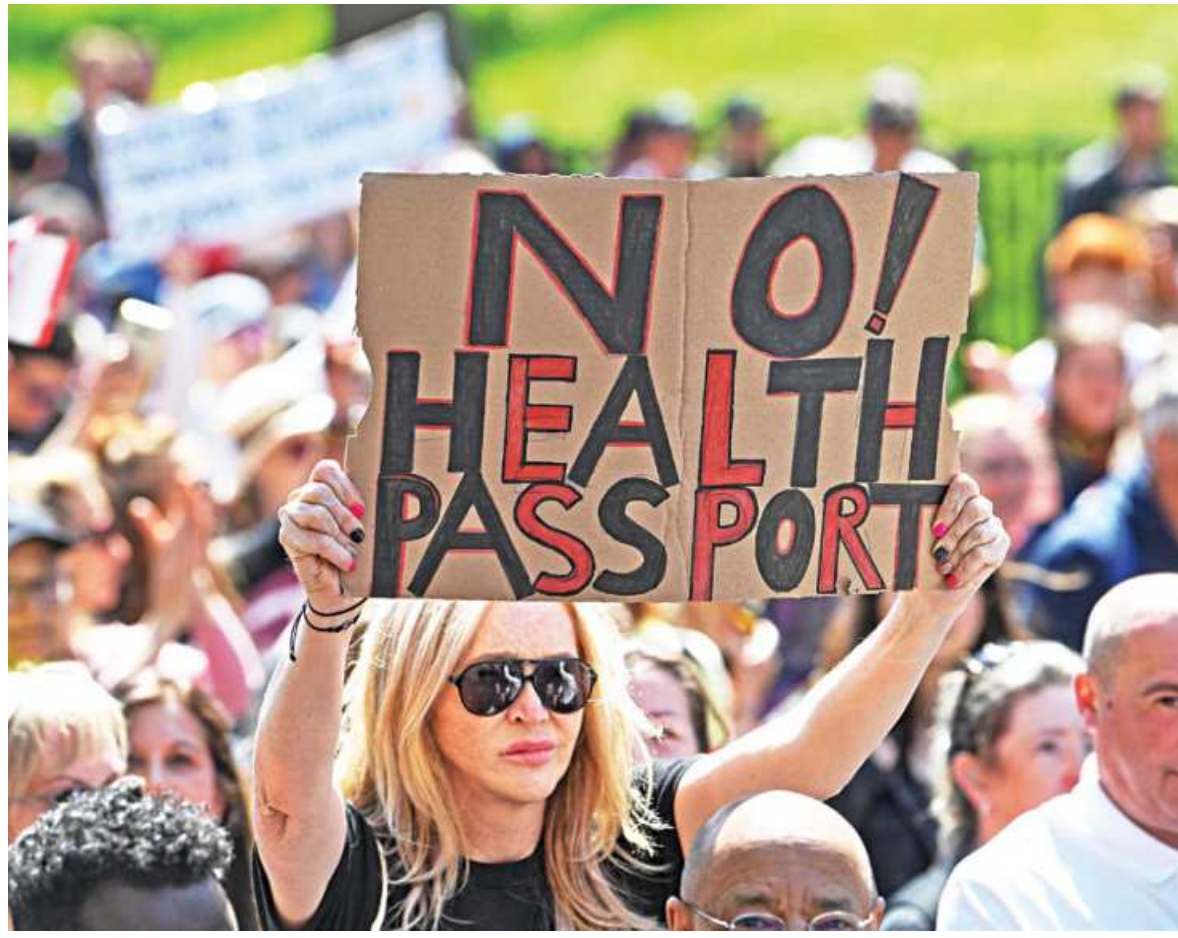
Chilean investigators testing the AstraZeneca-Oxford University Covid-19 vaccination in 2,200 people found no instances of blood clots among participants, they said on Friday. Dr Maria Elena Santolaya, from the University of Chile which led the trial, said the study included people of all ages, with 20% of them over 60 years old. More than a dozen European countries suspended or restricted use of AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine, called Vaxzevria, amid reports of blood clots combined with low platelets in a very small number of people who received it. Vaxzevria was approved for emergency use in Chile in January for men over 18 and women over 55 but will be used only for men since most women over 55 in Chile have already been vaccinated, the health minister said.



Younger Brazilians increasingly hit by Covid-19, study finds

Younger Brazilians are increasingly being affected by Covid-19, with those in their 20s showing the greatest increase in deaths so far this year, according to a report published by government biomedical institute Fiocruz on Friday. It found that the number of COVID-19 deaths among people between the ages of 20 and 29 jumped more than 1,000% between the start of this year and the first half of April. Deaths among those 30 to 39 rose 819%, while fatalities among the 40 to 49-year-old group jumped 933%, the study found. Brazil has been badly hit by the pandemic this year, with a slow vaccine rollout, patchy nationwide restrictions and a highly contagious new virus variant known as the P1 driving new infections.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



A woman holds a placard during an anti-lockdown 'Unite for Freedom' protest, in London, Britain, yesterday.

Ramadan violence flares in Jerusalem

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired at least 36 rockets into Israel yesterday drawing retaliatory air strikes, the Israeli military said, after nightly Ramadan clashes between Palestinians and Israeli police resumed in Jerusalem.

The pre-dawn exchange of fire broke months of relative quiet on the Israel-Gaza frontier. No casualties were reported.

In Jerusalem, Israeli-Palestinian tension has been higher than usual during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Protests turned violent on Thursday with scores of arrests and injuries.

The unrest resumed on Friday night, when Palestinian youths gathered outside the walled Old City and scuffled with hundreds of Israeli police in riot gear. Palestinians threw stones towards police who fired back with water cannons. The Palestine Red Crescent said eight Palestinians were injured.

Israeli police said the unrest later extended to a nearby Palestinian neighbourhood.

In the occupied West Bank, Palestinians clashed with Israeli troops around military checkpoints near West Bank cities. Israel's border police said it dispersed hundreds hurling stones and fire-bombs.

Armenian mass killing 'genocide'

Says Biden; Turkey says US decision based 'solely on populism'

REUTERS, Washington

US President Joe Biden yesterday said the 1915 massacres of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire constituted genocide, a historic declaration that infuriated Turkey and is set to further strain frayed ties between the two Nato allies.

The largely symbolic move, breaking away from decades of carefully calibrated language from the White House, will likely be celebrated by the Armenian diaspora in the United States, but comes at a time when Ankara and Washington have deep policy disagreements over a host of issues.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Turkey "entirely rejects" the US decision which he said was based "solely on populism".

Biden's message was met with "great enthusiasm" by the people of Armenia and Armenians worldwide, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan wrote in a letter to the U.S. president.



In his statement, Biden said the American people honor "all those Armenians who perished in the genocide that began 106 years ago today."

"Over the decades Armenian immigrants have enriched the United States in countless ways, but they have never forgotten the tragic history... We honor their story. We see that pain. We affirm the history. We do this not to cast blame but to ensure that what happened is never repeated," Biden said.

In comments that sought to soften the blow, a senior administration

official told reporters that Washington encouraged Armenia and Turkey to pursue reconciliation and continues to view Ankara as a critical Nato ally.

Turkey accepts that many Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire were killed in clashes with Ottoman forces during World War One, but contests the figures and denies the killings were systematically orchestrated and constitute a genocide.

A year ago, while still a presidential candidate, Biden commemorated the 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children who lost their lives in the final years of the Ottoman Empire and said he would back efforts to recognize those killings as a genocide.

Ties between Ankara and Washington have been strained over issues ranging from Turkey's purchase of Russian S-400 air defence systems - over which it was the target of US sanctions - to policy differences in Syria, and over human rights issues.

BIDEN'S EARTH DAY CLIMATE SUMMIT

Are ambitious carbon cuts even enough?

AGENCIES

As day two of the climate summit hosted by United States President Joe Biden got under way, a question raised by special envoy John Kerry about carbon-reduction pledges by the nations gathered was still looming large.

"Is it enough?" the veteran US negotiator had asked rhetorically at a White House press conference on the summit's opening day on Thursday.

"No," Kerry himself answered matter-of-factly. "But it's the best we can do today and prove we can begin to move [forward]."

Kerry explained afterwards that 20 of the biggest countries at the summit represent 81 percent of global emissions, and that their commitments reflected "environmental justice, equity and fairness".

Kerry's comments were seen as a nod to climate activists - particularly the youth - who have called for an even more aggressive shift to stem the cataclysmic effects of global warming.

Though the US decision to slash emissions by 50 percent by 2030 - and double climate finance contributions by 2024 - may be politically feasible, there is some doubt about whether those and other newly proclaimed measures go far enough to meaningfully tackle the climate crisis.

"There is polite but obvious frustration by many who have contributed so little to the crisis but have to deal with so many of the consequences," said Kerry on Friday.

During the summit all major polluters, including China, India, Brazil, Japan, South



Korea, committed to cut emissions significantly. Activists are skeptical about the pledges the countries have made and also doubt what steps these major emitters will take to help the poorer nations. Their bottom line is that the US and other nations are making big leaps, but the progress is not sufficient - particularly with financing for poor countries to deal with the causes and effects of climate change.

"It's nice to have an administration (in US) serious about addressing the problem," said Brandon Wu, Washington-based director of policy and campaigns at ActionAid USA. "But the bar is not the [former US President Donald] Trump administration. The bar is, what do we actually need to do to solve the climate crisis?"

Wu told Al Jazeera that his organisation, an equity and sustainability non-profit, is most concerned with the science of keeping the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

A study published in March by Climate Action Tracker said that the US would need to

slice emissions around 60 percent in this decade to be consistent with that pathway.

But Wu said that moral considerations - adjusting for wealth and inequality in determining who pays for saving the climate - are critical.

"If we do our 'fair share', then what Biden released [on Thursday] is inadequate," he added, referring to the 70-percent target that the US Climate Action Network estimated would be needed to fulfil US historical responsibility and leverage the nation's financial capacity.

A model by ActionAid USA suggested that the US public sector should contribute \$800bn over the next decade as a "good-faith effort" for the massive amount of climate financing needed to cover least-developed states' mitigation and adaptation, in addition to loss and damage.

"We're finally in a place where people understand the scale of this challenge, and people are saying it's important to take the first step," said Wu. "And it's only a first step."

KNIFE ATTACK

3 held after police worker killed near Paris

AFP, Rambouillet

French investigators were yesterday questioning three people linked to a Tunisian man who stabbed a police employee to death near Paris in a suspected Islamist attack.

The murder at a police station in Rambouillet, a commuter town about 60 kilometres from Paris, revived the trauma of a spate of deadly attacks last year.

The victim was a 49-year-old woman named as Stephanie M., a police administrative assistant and mother-of-two, who was stabbed twice in the throat at the entrance of the station.

Her 36-year-old attacker named as Jamel G. was shot and fatally wounded by an officer at the scene.

National anti-terrorism prosecutors have opened a terror investigation.

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation
BSC Bhaban, Saltgola Road
Chattogram-4100, Bangladesh

Invitation for Local Tender Notice for Supply of 1000 (One Thousand) Metric Ton Cold Rolled Steel Sheet (CRSS) in Two Sizes

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) hereby invites offers from reputed suppliers for supply of CRSS Coil in two sizes in accordance with the terms & conditions set out hereinafter:

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resource/Energy and Mineral Resources Division.
2	Agency	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC).
3	Procuring entity name	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC).
4	Procuring entity district	Chattogram, Bangladesh.
5	Invitation for	Supply of 1000 Metric Tons Cold Rolled Steel Sheet in Coil & Packet.
6	Invitation Ref. No. and date	Ref No. 28.03.0000.041.01.004.20(CRSS-29), Date: 25th April, 2021.
7	Delivery schedule and place	Delivery: Within 20 days from the date of signing contract. Place: ERL Warehouse, North Patenga, Chattogram.
8	Price	Price to be quoted in local currency (BDT).
9	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method.
10	Budget and source of funds	BPC Revenue Budget.
11	Tender package name	Local Tender for Supply of 1000 M. Ton Cold Rolled Steel Sheet in Coil & Packet in Two Sizes.
12	Tender notice publication date	25-04-2021
13	Tender document last selling date	20-05-2021, Time: 1700 hours (BST).
14	Tender closing date and time	23-05-2021, Time: 1200 hours (BST).
15	Tender opening date and time	23-05-2021, Time: 1205 hours (BST).
16	Offer validity time	21-07-2021, Time: 1700 hours (BST).
Name and address of the office(s)		
17	Selling place of tender documents	(i) Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, BSC Bhaban, 1st Floor, Saltgola Road, Chattogram, Bangladesh. (ii) Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, BTMC Bhaban, Level-10, 7-9, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh.
18	Name and address of the office receiving tender	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, BSC Bhaban, 1st Floor, Saltgola Road, Chattogram, Bangladesh.
19	Name and address of the office opening tender	-Do- (in presence of the bidders or their authorized person who would wish to be present.)
20	Qualification of the suppliers	Necessary papers to be submitted complying the conditions mentioned in the tender document.
21	Brief description of goods/items	1000 M. Ton Cold Rolled Steel Sheet in Coil & Packet (CRSS) in Two Sizes as per JISG 3141 SPCC-SD or N.F.A 36-401-83
22	Tender documents price	Tk 3,000/- per set.
23	Bid bond/bank guarantee	All offers must be accompanied by a Bid Bond amounting to Taka 7.50 (seven point five zero) lac must have validity of 88 (eighty-eight) days from the date of tender opening.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
24	Official inviting tender	Md. Abu Hanif.
25	Designation of official inviting tender	Sr. General Manager (Com. & Ops).
26	Address of official inviting tender	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, BSC Bhaban, 1st Floor, Saltgola Road, Chattogram, Bangladesh.
27	Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone: +88031-716121, Mobile: 01755587625 Fax: +880031-720147/724910
28	Bidder(s) must submit along with their offer the original money receipt for tender document purchased in Bangladesh.	
29	Other terms and conditions will be as per BPC's tender document for supply of 1000 M. Tons Cold Rolled Steel Sheet in Coil & Packet (Ref No. 28.03.0000.041.01.004.20 (CRSS-29), Dated 25th April, 2021). All bidders must specify the source of supply mentioning the name of country/countries. Any conditional offer will not be valid. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers in part or in full without assigning any reason.	

GD-808



Linde Continues to Supply Medical Oxygen in Bangladesh

Linde Bangladesh is aware of unfounded speculation that our operations in the country might be disrupted. Hence, it hereby clarifies that such speculation is untrue and that both its Air Separation Plants at Rugganj and Shitalpur are fully functional, and its dedicated engineers remain hard at work to ensure the smooth and reliable operation of these plants. Linde is also in contact with the relevant government authorities to seek uninterrupted supply of electricity and gas for the seamless operations of its plants.

With the resurgence of COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an unprecedented surge in Medical Oxygen demand in almost all the Hospitals putting a strain on the supply chain. For last six weeks there has been a 40% increase in the daily average consumption of medical oxygen, compared to previous months. Linde is working with authorities, industry partners and local communities on variety of different measures, such as upgrading hospital supply systems, to meet this growing need.

Linde Bangladesh remains committed to the wellbeing of the community at large and its customers and staff.

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