

COVID-19 ORIGIN PROBE

Biden gets inconclusive intel report

AGENCIES

A classified US intelligence report delivered to the White House on Tuesday was inconclusive on the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic, in part due to a lack of information from China, according to US media reports.

The assessment, ordered by President Joe Biden 90 days ago, was unable to definitively conclude whether the virus that first emerged in central China had jumped to humans via animals or escaped a highly secure research facility in Wuhan, two US officials familiar with the matter told the Washington Post.

They said parts of the report could be declassified in the coming days.

The debate over the origins of the virus that has killed more than 4 million people and paralysed economies worldwide has become increasingly contentious.

When Biden assigned the investigation, he said US intelligence agencies were split over the “two likely scenarios” -- animals or lab.

China yesterday urged the WHO to visit the US military biolab Fort Detrick, after rejecting its calls for a second stage of the Covid origins probe focusing on Chinese laboratories last month.



“Scapegoating China cannot whitewash the US,” Fu Cong, director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ arms control department, told a briefing.

Despite Biden’s directive that the intelligence community “redouble their efforts” to untangle the origin debate, the 90-day review brought them no closer to consensus, the officials told the Post.

Beijing has rejected calls from the US and other countries for a renewed origin probe after a heavily politicized visit by a World Health Organization team in January also proved inconclusive, and faced criticism for lacking transparency and access.

At the outset of the pandemic, the natural origin hypothesis -- that the virus emerged in bats then passed to humans, likely via an intermediary species -- was widely accepted. But as time has worn on, scientists have not found a virus in either bats or another animal that matches the genetic signature of SARS-CoV-2.



People who have been evacuated from Afghanistan arrive at Melsbroek military airport, Belgium yesterday after Taliban took control of Afghanistan.

PHOTO: REUTERS

US, China jostle for influence in Asia

Accuse each other of ‘bullying’ Southeast Asian nations amid soaring tensions

REUTERS, Hanoi

US Vice President Kamala Harris yesterday again charged China with bullying its Southeast Asian neighbours, the second time in two days she has attacked Beijing during a regional visit, as Washington tries to rally regional partners to take on China’s growing economic and military influence.

The Chinese foreign ministry shot back yesterday and accused the US of meddling in regional affairs and disrupting peace. Earlier in the day, Chinese state media accused Harris of seeking to drive a wedge between China and Southeast Asian nations with comments in Singapore that Beijing used coercion and intimidation to back its unlawful South China Sea claims.

Speaking in Hanoi yesterday, Harris said there was a need to mount pressure on China over its maritime claims and offered to support Vietnam in several key areas, including enhancement of maritime security to take on Beijing’s increasing assertiveness in the South China Sea.

“We need to find ways to pressure, raise the pressure...on Beijing to abide by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and



US VP Harris offers maritime security, supports in key areas to Asian partner

China state media accuses US VP of meddling, says she is seeking to divide Asia

to challenge, its bullying and excessive maritime claims,” said Harris during a meeting with Vietnamese President Nguyen Xuan Phuc.

Harris offered Vietnam more visits by US warships and aircraft carriers, vaccines and aid to tackle Covid-19 and announced the launch of several programs to help combat climate change, according to a White House official who did not wish to be named.

Harris’s seven-day trip to Singapore and Vietnam is part of a broader US strategy to take on

China globally. China, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Taiwan lay claim to parts of the disputed waters of the South China Sea, which is crossed by vital shipping lanes and contains gas fields and rich fishing grounds.

China has established military outposts on artificial islands in the South China Sea and objects to foreign warships sailing through what it claims is its sovereign waters.

The US Navy regularly conducts “freedom of navigation” operations through the disputed waters, which China objects to, saying they do not help promote peace or stability. In 2016, the Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled against China’s claim, but Beijing has rejected it.

“While pointing a finger at China and accusing it of ‘coercion’ and ‘intimidation’, Harris wilfully ignored her own hypocrisy in attempting to coerce and intimidate regional countries to join Washington in its scheme to contain China,” the state run China Daily said in an editorial responding to Harris’s comments in Singapore.

The US administration has called rivalry with China “the biggest geopolitical test” of the century as it cements its pivot towards Asia.

MORE NEWS

Iraq seeks to ease Saudi-Iran hostility at Baghdad summit

Iraq has invited Iran and Tehran’s Gulf Arab foes to a summit in Baghdad with the aim of calming tensions which have brought them close to open conflict in recent years. Officials say the meeting, which will also discuss the war in Yemen, Lebanon’s collapse and a regional water crisis, could take a step towards Saudi-Iranian rapprochement even though they have yet to say what representation they will send. Iraqi officials hope that Iran’s new hardline President Ebrahim Raisi will attend the meeting, planned for Saturday, and expect ministers from Gulf States.

High blood pressure driven by obesity, poverty: WHO

Nearly 1.3 billion people globally suffer from hypertension, a silent killer often driven by obesity that increases the risk of heart disease, stroke and kidney disease, the World Health Organization (WHO) said yesterday. Hypertension can be easily diagnosed by monitoring blood pressure, and treated with low-cost drugs, but half of affected people are unaware of their condition which is left untreated, the WHO and Imperial College London said in a joint study published in The Lancet. While hypertension rates have changed little in 30 years, the caseload has shifted to lower-income countries as wealthy nations have brought it largely under control, the study said. Some 17.9 million people died in 2019 from cardiovascular diseases, accounting for one in three global deaths, with hypertension a major factor, according to the WHO.

‘Xi Jinping Thought’ to be added to China curriculum

China will incorporate “Xi Jinping Thought” into its national curriculum to help “establish Marxist belief” in the country’s youth, the education ministry said in new guidelines published on Tuesday. The Ministry of Education said Chinese President Xi Jinping’s “thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era” would be taught from primary school level all the way to university. Xi Jinping Thought was formally enshrined in the country’s constitution in 2018. Xi’s personal power has also been strengthened by the abolition of presidential term limits.

US issued over 85,000 student visas in China

The United States has issued more than 85,000 student visas in China since May, its Beijing embassy said yesterday, after the Biden administration eased restrictions on applications earlier this year. State Department data showed that 33,896 F1 student visas were issued to Chinese nationals in June, up from just 8 issued in the previous June. The easing of restrictions gives a boost to US universities struggling financially during the pandemic.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



AUGUST 26

1920 - American women won the right to vote when the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified.

1924 - The Catastrophe of Smyrna: known as the Asia Minor Catastrophe to Greeks. The Ottoman army expels Greeks and other non-Turks from Asia Minor.

1998 - World’s first bionic arm fitted and tested in Edinburgh.

2014 - Ceasefire takes effect between Gaza and Israel after 50 days of combat.

SOURCE: WEBSITES



A riot control grenade explodes yesterday as Palestinian locals from the village of Beita in the north of occupied West Bank argue with Israeli soldiers as they protest against the creation of a new road for Israeli settlers while also demanding the removal of the nearby Israeli outpost of Eviatar.

PHOTO: AFP

Xi, Putin show united front on Afghanistan

REUTERS, Beijing

Chinese and Russian leaders discussed Afghanistan yesterday, Chinese state media said, but did not echo the G7’s call for the Taliban to allow people to flee the country after Aug 31, as desperate crowds left behind by the withdrawal of US troops continue to fear for their safety.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin exchanged views on Afghanistan in a call yesterday, a day after leaders of the Group of Seven countries met to discuss the crisis.

In the call with Putin, Xi reiterated China’s position of non-interference and of respecting Afghanistan’s sovereignty and independence, China’s People’s Daily reported.

The report said Putin told Xi he shares China’s positions and interests in Afghanistan and he is willing to work with China to “prevent foreign forces from interfering and destroying” Afghanistan.

Xi urged all parties in Afghanistan to build an open and inclusive political framework, implement moderate, stable policies and cut ties with all terrorist groups.

Putin said Russia also wants to work with China to fight terrorism and drugs smuggling and to prevent the security risks from “spilling out” of Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Russia began evacuating more than 500 people from Afghanistan yesterday while at the same time holding military exercises for its tank forces in neighbouring Tajikistan.

The US exit from Afghanistan is a security headache for Moscow, which sees Central Asia as part of its southern defensive flank and fears radical Islamism spreading into the region.

Russia is holding a month of military exercises in Tajikistan, a Moscow ally, and has reinforced its base there.

RESUMPTION OF REGULAR CLASSES

India hurries to vaccinate teachers

REUTERS, New Delhi

India will supply millions of additional Covid-19 vaccine doses to its states to try to inoculate all school teachers by early next month, the health minister said yesterday, as the country gradually resumes physical classes.

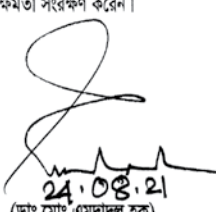
The pandemic has hit the country of 1.35 billion people particularly hard and hundreds of millions of its students have been stuck at home for months, with little or no access to online education for a majority of the poor.

India last week approved its first Covid-19 vaccine for older children and is trying to urgently immunise all of its nearly 10 million school teachers. The country has been vaccinating its adults since the middle of January.

“We have requested all states to try to vaccinate all school teachers on priority before Teachers’ Day, which is celebrated on Sept. 5,” Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Twitter. He said states would be given more than 20 million additional doses for the purpose.

Several states have attempted to reopen schools since the pandemic began last year, but some had to shut them down when infections were detected on campuses.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s home state Gujarat said it would resume physical classes for middle school students from Sept. 2, at half the capacity, for the first time in more than 18 months. Schools reopened for older children nearly a month ago.

		গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার	
		বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ	
		কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল	
		রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা।	
স্মারক নং-কেঃ পুঃ হাঃ/দরপত্র/২০২১-২০২২/২৯০০		তারিখঃ ২২/০৮/২০২১খ্রি।	
“ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি ”			
পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট রেগুলেশন/০৮ (সর্বশেষ সংশোধনী) অনুযায়ী ২০১১-২০১২ অর্থ সালে কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকায় মেডিকেল ইকুইপমেন্ট ক্রয়ের লক্ষে অয়েজি ও অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত নামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।			
১.	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	ঃ	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়।
২.	সংস্থা	ঃ	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।
৩.	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	ঃ	পরিচালক (ডিআইজি), কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা।
৪.	সম্প্রদায়িক প্রকল্প	ঃ	ঢাকা।
৫.	দরপত্রের বিষয়	ঃ	মেডিকেল ইকুইপমেন্ট
৬.	দরপত্রের সূত্র নম্বর ও তারিখ	ঃ	কেঃ পুঃ হাঃ/দরপত্র/২৯০০, তারিখ-২৪/০৮/২০২১ খ্রি।
৭.	দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	ঃ	খোলা দরপত্র।
৮.	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ	ঃ	২৫/০৮/২০২১ খ্রি এবং ২৬/০৮/২০২১ খ্রি।
৯.	দরপত্র সিটিভিল প্রাক্টিস সর্বশেষ তারিখ	ঃ	২২/০৮/২০২১ খ্রি।
১০.	দরপত্র জমা দানের তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	২৩/০৮/২০২১ খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।
১১.	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	২৩/০৮/২০২১ খ্রিঃ দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
১২.	বাজেট এবং অর্থের উৎস	ঃ	রাজস্ব বাজেট (জিওবি)।
১৩.	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারীর অফিস ও ঠিকানা	ঃ	পরিচালক (ডিআইজি), এর কার্যালয়, কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা।
১৪.	দরপত্র সিটিভিল প্রাক্টিস স্থান	ঃ	পরিচালক (ডিআইজি), এর কার্যালয়, কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা।
১৫.	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	ঃ	পরিচালক (ডিআইজি), এর কার্যালয়, কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা।
১৬.	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	ঃ	পরিচালক (ডিআইজি), এর কার্যালয়, কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা।
১৭.	দরপত্রের সাথে যে সকল কাগজপত্র ও প্রমাণাদি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।	ঃ	সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ, ব্যাক সার্ভিসেস, আয়কর, ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ভাটি রেজিস্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট, ব্যাক স্টেটমেন্ট, অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ এবং দরপত্রের বর্ণিত শর্তাদি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
কাজের বিবরণঃ- মেডিকেল ইকুইপমেন্ট।		সিটিভিল মূল্য	দরপত্র জামানত
(ক) রেডিওলজি, প্যাথলজি এবং হিস্টোপ্যাথলজি		১০০০/-	৫,০০,০০০/-
(খ) ফিজিওলজি এবং গুটি		১০০০/-	৫,০০,০০০/-
১৮. (গ) ডেন্টাল এবং গাইনী		১০০০/-	৫,০০,০০০/-
(ঘ) চক্ষু এবং ইএনটি		১০০০/-	৫,০০,০০০/-
(ঙ) চর্ম, ইউরোলজি এবং আইসিইউ		১০০০/-	৫,০০,০০০/-
(চ) ফিজিক্যাল মেডিসিন এবং অন্যান্য ইকুইপমেন্ট		১০০০/-	৫,০০,০০০/-
বিশেষ জ্ঞাতব্যঃ			
ক. প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাডে আবেদন পূর্বক কাশিয়ার কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকার নিকট হতে চলাকালীন সময়ের মধ্যে দরপত্র সিটিভিল ক্রয় করা যাবে;			
খ. দরপত্র সংক্রান্ত অন্যান্য তথ্যাবলি নিম্নাধিকারকারীর অফিস হতে জানা যাবে;			
গ. কার্যালয় প্রদানের পর অর্থ বরাদ্দ সাপেক্ষে বিল পরিশোধ করা হবে;			
ঘ. দরপত্র জমা ও খোলার তারিখ সরকারী ছুটি থাকলে পরবর্তী কার্য দিনে দরপত্র জমা ও খোলা হবে;			
ঙ. দরপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত কাগজপত্র ১ম শ্রেণীর কর্মকর্তা দ্বারা সত্যায়িত থাকতে হবে, অন্যথায় দরপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে;			
চ. সিটিভিল বর্ণিত দরপত্রের শর্তাবলী যথাযথ প্রতিপালন করতে হবে;			
ছ. কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন আবেদন/দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।			
			
24.08.21 (ডায় মৌঃ এমদাদুল হক) বিপি: ৭৭০৫১১৯৮১৯ পুলিশ সুপার (প্রশাসন ও অর্থ) পক্ষে-পরিচালক (ডিআইজি) বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল, ঢাকা ফোন-৮৮২২২৮০০/ফ্যাক্স-৮৩৪২২৯৭।			
GD-1514			