

Vaccine inequity made Omicron variant more likely

Say scientists, health experts

CNN ONLINE

Many of the world's richest countries have spent the past year hoarding coronavirus vaccines, buying up enough doses to vaccinate their populations several times over and consistently failing to deliver on their promises to share doses with the developing world. The World Health Organization said the approach was "self-defeating" and "immoral."

It might be starting to bite. A new and potentially more transmissible variant of the virus likely emerged from a region with low vaccination rates.

The new variant, known as Omicron, was first identified in South Africa, although it is unclear whether it originated there or whether it was brought into the country from elsewhere in the region.

What scientists do know is that the virus is much more likely to mutate in places where vaccination is low and transmission high.

"It has probably emerged in another country and has been detected in South Africa, which has very, very good genomic sequencing capacity and capability ... it might well be a consequence of an outbreak, probably in some parts of sub-Saharan Africa, where there's not a huge

Only **7.5pc** of people in low-income countries received at least one dose of Covid vaccine

63.9pc of people in high-income countries received at least one shot

amount of genomic surveillance going on and vaccination rate is low," Michael Head, a senior research fellow in global health at the University of Southampton, told CNN in a phone interview.

Head said the emergence of new variants was "a natural consequence of being too slow to vaccinate the world."

Scientists and public health experts and advocates have warned that the huge gap between vaccination rates in the developed and developing world is likely to blame.

Jeremy Farrar, the director of the Wellcome Trust, a health research charity, said the new variant shows why the world needs to ensure more equitable access to vaccines and other public health tools.

"New variants are a reminder, if we needed it, that the pandemic is far from over," he said on Twitter. "Inequity is what will extend the pandemic."

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), only 7.5% of people in low-income countries have received at least one dose of the coronavirus vaccine.

Across the eight countries most affected by the travel bans related to the Omicron variant, the proportion of populations that have had at least one vaccine dose ranges from 5.6% in Malawi to 37% in Botswana.

Meanwhile, 63.9% of people in high-income countries have received at least one shot, according to WHO.

In both the European Union and the United States, around 70% of people have received at least one shot, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

While there are many reasons why a country might have a lower inoculation rate -- vaccine hesitancy remains a big problem in many countries, including South Africa -- Head said the lack of access to doses is a major problem.

Climate 'overwhelming' driver of Australian bushfires: study

AFP, Sydney

Climate change is the "overwhelming factor" driving the country's ever-more intense bushfires, Australian government scientists believe -- directly contradicting claims by the country's political leaders.

In a peer-reviewed study, scientists at state agency CSIRO reviewed 90 years' worth of data and concluded climate change was the major influencing factor behind megafires like those that ravaged Australia in 2019-2020.

The experts studied a range of fire risk factors -- from the amount of dead vegetation on the ground to moisture, weather and ignition conditions -- to see what could be driving catastrophic blazes.

"While all eight drivers of fire activity played varying roles in influencing forest fires, climate was the overwhelming factor driving fire activity," said CSIRO chief climate research scientist Pep Canadell.

The findings were published in the latest issue of scientific journal Nature on November 26.

Australia's conservative government has consistently played down the role of climate change in the 2019-2020 fires, which burned across the



southeast coast and cloaked major cities like Sydney in acrid smoke.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison variously insisted that bushfires were normal in Australia or that the issue was forest management -- including the removal of debris.

But researchers found that

"regression analyses with modelled fuel loads show no statistically significant relationships with burned area."

Atmospheric patterns like El Nino or La Nina can influence year-to-year changes in the intensity of bushfires, but researchers found nine out of the 11 years when more than 500,000 square kilometres have burned have taken place since 2000 and as global warming has quickened.

They linked those events to "increasingly more dangerous fire weather" like fire-generated thunderstorms and dry lightning "all associated to varying degrees with anthropogenic climate change."

Burned area has increased by 800 percent on average in the last 20 years versus the decades before, the study found.

In recent years Australia has experienced a litany of climate-worsened droughts, bushfires and floods.



Passengers wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) queue to check-in for their flight at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) in Sepang, Malaysia yesterday, as countries across the globe shut borders and renewed travel curbs in response to the spread of a new, heavily mutated Covid-19 coronavirus variation dubbed Omicron.

PHOTO: AFP

WHO says 'never again' as nations weigh treaty

AFP, Geneva

The world must study the wreckage of Covid-19 and say "never again" by striking a pandemic preparedness treaty, the WHO said yesterday as countries gathered to build a new accord.

World Health Organization director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said another disastrous pandemic was bound to happen again unless countries showed the resolve to strengthen global defences.

Nations were meeting in Geneva from yesterday to Wednesday to discuss an international agreement setting out how to handle the next pandemic -- which experts fear is only a matter of time.

The gathering comes with the planet still besieged by Covid-19, nearly two years on from the first recorded cases, and now shaken by Omicron, the new Covid variant of concern.

WHO member states reached a consensus Sunday on kick-starting the process towards a pandemic treaty.

Countries agreed to set up an intergovernmental body charged with drafting and negotiating a WHO accord on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

Sunday's draft decision, secured after countries agreed to compromise, should be formalised during the meeting.

"The emergence of the highly-mutated Omicron variant underlines just how perilous and precarious our situation is,"

Tedros told world leaders at the start of the three-day gathering.

"Omicron demonstrates just why the world needs a new accord on pandemics."

"We shouldn't need another wake-up call. We should all be wide awake to the threat of this virus. But Omicron's very emergence is another reminder that although many of us might think we're done with Covid-19, it's not done with us."

"It will all happen again unless you, the nations of the world, can come together to say with one voice: never again."

This meeting of the World Health Assembly -- the WHO's decision-making body comprising all 194 member states -- is an unprecedented special session on how to handle the next pandemic.

The final outcome of the process should come into force in 2024.

The draft decision says WHO member states agree to establish "an intergovernmental negotiating body (INB)... to draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response".

The INB's first meeting must be no later than March 1 next year to elect two co-chairs and four vice-chairs. A progress report will be presented at the regular World Health Assembly annual gathering in 2023, with the final outcome presented for consideration at the 2024 WHA.

PANDEMIC RESPONSE



NOVEMBER 30

1939 - Twenty Russian divisions -- almost half a million men -- invaded Finland in the "Winter War."

1995 - Bill Clinton became the first US president to visit Northern Ireland. Given a hero's welcome by Catholics and Protestants alike, he declared: "The time has come for the peacemakers to triumph in Northern Ireland."

2007 - Torres Vedras city council in Portugal awarded world's tallest Santa Claus marionette by Guinness World Records.

SOURCE: REUTERS

MORE NEWS

Sri Lanka breaks up Tamil remembrance of war dead

Armed troops broke up Tamil memorials for Sri Lanka's civil war dead and beat up journalists covering one ceremony in a former battle zone, residents and media organisations said yesterday. Grieving relatives were forced out of cemeteries on the weekend as they attempted to light lamps at graves of loved ones who died in the island's decades-long conflict, which ended in 2009. The Federation of Media Employees' Trade Unions said Tamil journalists covering a memorial in Mullaittivu, a northeastern fishing town where the war's final battle was fought, were assaulted by troops.

Pak mob set fire to police station

Thousands of people mobbed a Pakistani police station, setting fire to it and nearby checkpoints after demanding that officers hand over a man accused of burning the Holy Quran, police said yesterday. The crowd of up to 5,000 people surrounded the police station in Charsadda town in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Sunday night, also setting fire to more than 30 cars. Yesterday morning, around 2,000 people remained outside the police station burning uniforms of officers. "The mob stormed the police station asking to hand over the man to them so they could burn him alive like he burnt the Holy Quran," district police chief told AFP.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Quote of the day



"The emergence of the highly mutated Omicron variant underlines just how perilous and precarious our situation is."

WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL
TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS SOUNDS ALARM OVER NEW COVID VARIANT

Don't yield to 'blackmail'

Israel urges world powers ahead of Iran nuke talks

AGENCIES

Israel yesterday cautioned world powers to beware of what it described as Iranian "nuclear blackmail" as diplomats convened in Vienna to discuss resurrecting a 2015 nuclear deal with Tehran.

"Today, Iran will be arriving at negotiations in Vienna with a clear goal: to end sanctions (on it) in exchange for almost nothing," Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said in a statement.

Then-US President Donald Trump abandoned the nuclear deal in 2018, prompting breaches by Iran of caps on its projects with bomb-making potential. The Iranians deny seeking nuclear arms, reports

Reuters.

Citing Iran's hostility to Israel and internal crackdowns, Bennett said: "Iran doesn't hide its intentions ... Such a murderous regime should not be rewarded."

Bennett's top diplomat Yair Lapid was in Europe yesterday for meetings with British and French leaders to press Israel's case against any concessions to arch foe Iran or a revival of the 2015 nuclear deal.

That pact between Tehran and world powers was designed to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear arsenal by imposing strict limits on its nuclear programme in return for sanctions relief, reports AFP.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges

Bridges Division

Bangladesh Bridge Authority

Widening of Road and Construction of Elevated

Road from Panchaboti-Mukterpur Bridge Project

Setu Bhaban, Banani, Dhaka-1212

www.bba.gov.bd

Ref No. 50.01.0000.856.14.031.21-268

Date: 29 November, 2021

Invitation for Tenders [National]

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges/Bridges Division.		
2	Agency	Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA).		
3	Procuring entity name	Project Director, Widening of Road and Construction of Elevated Road from Panchaboti-Mukterpur Bridge Project.		
4	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.		
5	Invitation for	Tenders.		
6	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM).		
7	Source of funds	GoB.		
8	Development partners	Not applicable.		
9	Project name	Widening of Road and Construction of Elevated Road from Panchaboti to Mukterpur Bridge Project.		
10	Tender Package No.	WD6.		
11	Tender package name	Construction of Boundary Pillar Along the Right of Way for Widening of Road and Construction of Elevated Road from Panchaboti to Mukterpur Bridge Project.		
12	Tender publication date	Date: 30 November, 2021		
13	Tender last selling date & time	Date: 21 December, 2021	Time: 5:00pm (BST)	
14	Tender closing date & time	Date: 22 December, 2021	Time: 2:00pm (BST)	
15	Tender opening date & time	Date: 22 December, 2021	Time: 3:00pm (BST)	
16	Name & address of the office			
	Place of selling tender document	Accounts Section (6th Floor, Room No. 622), Bangladesh Bridge Authority, Setu Bhaban, New Airport Road, Banani, Dhaka.		
	Place of receiving tender	Office of Project Director, Widening of Road and Construction of Elevated Road from Panchaboti to Mukterpur Bridge Project, Bangladesh Bridge Authority, Room No. 915, Setu Bhaban, Banani, Dhaka.		
	Place of opening tender			
17	Date of pre-tender meeting	Pre-tender meeting shall be held on 09 December, 2021; 11:00am.		
	Place of pre-tender meeting	Office of Project Director, Widening of Road and Construction of Elevated Road from Panchaboti to Mukterpur Bridge Project, BBA, Room No. 915, Setu Bhaban, Banani, Dhaka.		
18	Qualification criteria of tenderer	General experience: The minimum number of years of general experience of the tenderer in the construction works shall be 05 (five) years. Specific experience: The minimum specific experience as a Prime Contractor in Civil Construction works with minimum contract value of Tk 15 (fifteen) lac in a Single Contract completed over a period of last 05 (five) years. Average annual turnover: The required average annual turnover of the tenderer shall be at least of the amount of Tk 30.00 (thirty) lac Taka over the best three years in the last 05 (five) years. Liquid assets: The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the tenderer shall be Tk 10.00 (ten) lac.		
19	Description of works		Earth Cutting Works, Pillar Construction, Painting, Erection and engrave by BBA etc.	
20	Site location	Price of tender document	Tender security	Completion period
	Narayanganj-Munshiganj	BDT 1000.00 (one thousand) only	BDT 80.00 (eighty) thousand only	04 months
21	Name of official inviting tender		Shafiqul Islam.	
22	Designation of official inviting tender		Project Director, Widening of Road and Construction of Elevated Road From Panchaboti to Mukterpur Bridge Project.	
23	Address of official inviting tender		Bangladesh Bridge Authority, Setu Bhaban, New Airport Road, Banani, Dhaka-1212.	
24	Contact details of official inviting tender		Tel. No. 880-2-55040374, Fax No. +88-02-55040444 E-mail: pdmukterpur@gmail.com	
25	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all the tenders or annul the tender proceedings.			





Shafiqul Islam

Project Director

Ph: +88-02-55040374

E-mail: pdmukterpur@gmail.com

GD-2194



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
College Education Development Project (CEDP)
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E-mail: rajshahicollegebd@gmail.com, Website: www.rc.gov.bd
online news portal: rcbarta.com, Fax: 0721-771511

Memo No:

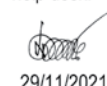
Date: 29/11/2021

e-Tender Notice
The following e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of

SL No.	Tender ID No.	Description of works	Last selling date and time	Closing date and time	Opening date and time
01	632802	Renovation and refurbishment of Classroom, Lab, Library, Common Room and Washroom	14/12/2021 17:00	15/12/2021 12:00pm	15/12/2021 12:00pm

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

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP registered bank branches. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk.



29/11/2021
Principal
Rajshahi College, Rajshahi

GD-2192

MORE NEWS

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SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS