

MORE NEWS

Taliban gov resumes issuing Afghan passports in Kabul

Afghanistan's Taliban authorities yesterday said they will resume issuing passports in Kabul, giving hope to citizens who feel threatened living under the Islamists' rule. Thousands of Afghans have applied for new travel documents to escape a growing economic and humanitarian crisis described by the United Nations as an "avalanche of hunger". Authorities will start issuing the documents from today at Kabul's passport office, Alam Gul Haqqani, the head of the passport department in the interior ministry, told reporters. New applications will be accepted from January 10, he added.

At least 12 killed in Pakistan gas blast

At least 12 people were killed and several more injured yesterday by a gas blast in Pakistan's port city of Karachi, police said. The explosion went off in a bank building in the Sher Shah area and social media and TV footage showed the two-floor structure's windows and doors blown out, with documents scattered across a wide area. Cars and motorcycles parked nearby were also damaged. Provincial police told AFP a bomb disposal squad was investigating, but "apparently the leakage of gas was the cause". They said 12 people had been confirmed killed, and 13 were being treated for injuries. Explosions caused by faulty gas cylinders -- which are used for cooking as well as in cars -- are common in Pakistan.



Death toll from Philippines Typhoon Rai passes 30

At least 33 people were killed in the strongest typhoon to hit the Philippines this year, official figures showed yesterday, with a charity reporting "alarming" destruction on islands that bore the brunt of the storm. Hundreds of thousands fled their homes and beachfront resorts as Typhoon Rai ravaged the southern and central regions of the archipelago, knocking out communications and electricity in many areas, ripping off roofs and toppling concrete power poles. Rai was a super typhoon when it smashed into the popular tourist island of Siargao on Thursday, packing maximum sustained winds of 195 kilometres per hour. The Philippines -- ranked as one of the world's most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change -- is hit by an average of 20 storms and typhoons every year, which typically wipe out harvests, homes and infrastructure in already impoverished areas.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Qatari Emiri Air Force C-17 Globemaster III military transport aircraft release flares while performing aerial maneuvers in the sky above Qatar's capital Doha as the Gulf state marks its National Day, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Quote of the day



"I think we did not hit the lowest point, thank God, and there is a progress in some aspects at the very least and not everything is hopeless. The situation can be stabilized and improved with the help of such agreements."

RUSSIAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER SERGEI RYABKOV ON TIES WITH WEST AND MOSCOW'S PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE THOSE AMID TENSIONS OVER UKRAINE

LIGHTENING SPREAD OF OMICRON

Europe braces for more curbs

AFP, France



The Netherlands yesterday became the latest country to announce stricter measures as Europe braced for more curbs to rein in the spread of the new strain of the coronavirus fuelling a resurgence in Covid-19 cases worldwide.

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen has warned the Omicron coronavirus variant could be dominant in Europe by mid-January.

Many countries have decided to reintroduce travel restrictions and other containment measures since it was first detected in South Africa last month.

"With regard to the acceleration of the pandemic, and the risks related to the end-of-year festivities, authorities should impose significant restrictions," France's scientific panel said.

And Paris municipal authorities announced "with regret that we will have to cancel all the festivities planned on the Champs Elysees on December 31."

"The fireworks will not take place, nor unfortunately will there be any DJ sets," the mayor's office told AFP.

On Friday, Germany designated France and Denmark as high risk zones, and said it would impose quarantine on unvaccinated travellers from its two neighbours, starting from Sunday.

In Ireland, bars and restaurants will have to close from 8:00 pm on Sunday until January 30, prime minister Micheal Martin announced.

Denmark, which this week had the highest per capita new Covid infection rate, said it would close cinemas, theatres and concert halls and restrict restaurant opening hours.

And Switzerland is also stepping up anti-Covid measures from Monday as the country battles an intense fifth wave of the virus, which has killed at least 5,335,968 people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019.

The Dutch government is scheduled to hold an emergency meeting in the afternoon after its team of expert scientific advisers recommended new restrictions to rein in Omicron, media reports said.

A number of countries are opening up their immunisation drives to younger children, even though the EU's health agency has warned that jabs alone will not be sufficient to stop the variant's rise.

Nevertheless, the EU health agency ECDC has said measures like mask-wearing, distance working and the prevention of crowds were essential to reduce the burden on healthcare systems in the time available, with vaccines alone taking too long.

One-year old migrant crossed Med sea alone

AFP, Rome

A one-year-old boy believed to have been sent by his parents to make the dangerous Mediterranean crossing alone has made it safely to the island of Lampedusa, Italian media reports said yesterday.

The child, estimated to be barely a year old, was among 500-plus people who arrived on the small island in seven separate landings over the past two days, the Repubblica daily said.

He was spotted by rescuers in the midst of some 70 men in a boat which landed Friday, the daily said.

"He crossed the Mediterranean before he even learned to walk. He braved the waves alone... too young to reveal his name and his story," it said.

The other migrants had no idea who the child was, but were reportedly begged by his parents to keep him safe during the crossing, possibly because they were prevented from boarding with him, the daily said.

Another arrival was a 14-year-old son of a woman who died during a rescue off the island.

"She was travelling on a boat with 25 other people, including her son who saw her drown," Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said on Twitter.

"Another preventable loss on Europe's doorstep, another life claimed by irresponsible migration policies". Some 1,340 people have died attempting the perilous Central Mediterranean crossing so far this year, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Nuke dialogue with Iran nearing 'end of road'

Warn Western envoys as talks make little progress

AFP, Vienna

Western powers on Friday reported some progress in talks to save the landmark Iran nuclear deal, but European diplomats warned that they were "rapidly reaching the end of the road".

In a blow to European mediators, Iran requested a new pause in the talks in Vienna, which aim to bring the United States back into the 2015 agreement and roll back nuclear activities. The Islamic republic stepped up its nuclear projects after the US withdrawal.

The talks had just resumed in late November after a five-month break following the election of a new hardline government in Iran.

"There has been some technical progress in the last 24 hours, but this only takes us back nearer to where the talks stood in June," Britain, France and Germany, known as E3, said in a statement.

"We are rapidly reaching the end of the road for this negotiation."

Iranian officials did not explain why they had requested a break other than to say there would be consultations in Tehran.

"If the other party accepts Iran's logical views, the next round of talks can be the last round," Iran's chief negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani told reporters.

Underlying Western concerns are fears that Iran will soon have made enough progress that the 2015 accord -- under which it was promised economic relief in return for drastic curbs on its nuclear work -- will be obsolete.

Enrique Mora, the EU official chairing the talks, called for a "sense of urgency" and for talks to resume before the end of the year. "We are not talking anymore about months, we are talking about weeks," Mora said.

The Biden administration has said it is willing to lift sanctions but only if Iran returns to compliance. Amid the deadlock, the United States has increasingly spoken of a "Plan B" of pressure if talks fail.

A group of former officials including Obama's defense secretary Leon Panetta and retired general David Petraeus in a joint statement urged Biden to arrange high-profile military exercises or other actions to strike fear into Iran.

Stay out of East Europe

Russia lists demands to defuse Ukraine crisis; US open for talks

AGENCIES

Russia has unveiled proposals to contain the United States and Nato in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, calling for urgent negotiations with Washington as it amasses forces near Ukraine.

The United States said it was ready to talk but stated upfront that it disagreed with much in the far-reaching proposals, as it renewed warnings of painful reprisals if Russia invades Ukraine.

Russia released unfinished security documents -- an unusual move in diplomacy -- that call for US-led Nato alliance not to bring in new members or establish bases in ex-Soviet countries.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said Russia was ready to hold security talks with the United States as early as Saturday.

President Joe Biden's national security advisor, Jake Sullivan, said the United States was "fundamentally

prepared for dialogue" and would coordinate closely with European allies. Another US official told reporters that the United States would respond "sometime next week" on a format for talks and said that Russia should



already know that parts of the proposal will be "unacceptable" to Washington.

The West says Moscow has readied some 100,000 troops near Ukraine, which has been battling a pro-Moscow insurgency in its east since 2014.

Sullivan said the United States does not assess that President Vladimir Putin, who blames Nato for the rise in tensions, has made a decision on whether to invade.

The Russian draft document addressed to Nato says its members should "commit themselves to refrain from further enlargement, including the accession of Ukraine as well as other states".

It also insists that alliance members not conduct military activity in Ukraine or other countries in Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Moscow and Nato, the document said, should limit the deployment of missiles, set up an emergency telephone hotline and also work to "prevent incidents" in the Baltics and the Black Sea.

The draft said Washington should block Nato membership of any former Soviet country -- a reference to Ukraine as well as Georgia, which have both infuriated Moscow after Western tilts.

In the draft, Russia said the United States should agree not to establish military bases in ex-Soviet states, including in Central Asia, which Moscow sees as its backyard and sphere of influence.



A pedestrian walks past a sign for a 24-hour vaccination centre, where members of the public can receive a dose of a Covid-19 vaccine, in north east London, England, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
District Primary Education Office
Satkhira
<http://dpe.satkhira.gov.bd>

Memo No. dpeo/satkhira/gps/-2048

Date: 12/12/2021

e-Tender Notice No. 01/2021-22

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of following works:

Sl. No.	Name of scheme	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Tender/proposal document last selling/downloading date & time	Tender/proposal closing date & time	Remarks
1.	Goods, Supply of Furniture for additional classrooms and Teacher's rooms of Government Primary School's Constructed under NBIDGPS-1 Project of DEBHATA & KALAROA Upazila under SATKHIRA District FY-2021-2022.	554458	e-Tender NBIDGPS-1/G1.0027	09-January-2022 17:00	10-January-2022 12:00	OTM
2.	Goods, Supply of Furniture for additional classrooms and Teacher's rooms of Government Primary School's Constructed under NBIDGPS-1 Project of KALIGONG Upazila under SATKHIRA District FY-2021-2022.	554456	e-Tender NBIDGPS-1/G1.0028	09-January-2022 17:00	10-January-2022 12:00	OTM
3.	Goods, Supply of Furniture for additional classrooms and Teacher's rooms of Government Primary School's Constructed under NBIDGPS-1 Project of SATKHIRA SADAR & SHYAMNAGAR Upazila under SATKHIRA District FY-2021-2022.	554457	e-Tender NBIDGPS-1/G1.0029	09-January-2022 17:00	10-January-2022 12:00	OTM
4.	Goods, Supply of Furniture for additional classrooms and Teacher's rooms of Government Primary School's Constructed under NBIDGPS-1 Project of TALA Upazila under SATKHIRA District FY-2021-2022.	554460	e-Tender NBIDGPS-1/G1.0030	09-January-2022 17:00	10-January-2022 12:00	OTM

This is an 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 tender/proposal document to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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GD-2337