

MORE NEWS

Dissident artists lament HK Tiananmen statue's removal

Dissident Chinese artists, including Ai Weiwei, have decried a Hong Kong university's removal of a statue honouring protesters killed at Tiananmen Square, telling AFP that artistic freedoms are evaporating as Beijing tightens control. In the early hours of yesterday, Hong Kong's oldest university dismantled and removed a statue commemorating democracy protesters killed by Chinese troops around Tiananmen Square in 1989. The eight-metre (26-foot) high "Pillar of Shame" by Danish sculptor Jens Galschiot had sat on the campus since 1997, the year the former British colony was handed back to China.

Trump candidacy would motivate 2nd term run: Biden

Though he isn't even a year into his first term, US President Joe Biden says one factor could help convince him to run again in 2024: a rematch against 2020 rival Donald Trump. "That would increase the prospect of running," Biden told ABC News on Wednesday. When asked about whether he would stand for re-election, the 79-year-old Democrat responded that he would. "But look," he said. "I'm a great respecter of fate. Fate has intervened in my life many, many times. If I'm in the health I'm in now, if I'm in good health, then in fact I would run again."



A man dressed as Santa Clause greets children at their school to celebrate Christmas in Chennai, India yesterday. Members of Christian faith across the world will celebrate Christmas Day tomorrow commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ.

PHOTO: AFP

Hospital risk lower with Omicron

Suggest UK studies

AFP, Washington

Two separate studies from UK published Wednesday showed Covid infections with Omicron are less likely to result in hospitalization compared to the Delta variant.

The preliminary studies -- one paper from Scotland and the other from England -- were cautiously welcomed by experts, who nonetheless stressed that any advantage in milder outcomes could still be negated by the new strain's heightened infectiousness, which may still lead to more overall severe cases.

"We're saying that this is qualified good news -- qualified because these are early observations, they are statistically significant..." Jim McMenamin, a co-author of the Scottish research, told reporters on a call. The second paper, from England, found there was a 20-25 percent reduction in any attendance at hospital for Omicron compared to Delta, and a 40-45 percent reduction in hospitalizations.

Two dead after blast in Indian court building

Two people were killed and two others injured after a powerful explosion ripped through an Indian court building yesterday, police said. Footage showed police officers carrying the injured out of the building and asking others to leave the premises after the explosion near a restroom of the judicial complex in Ludhiana, north of the capital New Delhi. "There's been a blast but we can not confirm the cause," a police officer at the scene said. "We can confirm that four people are injured and out of four, two are dead," he added. The blast damaged the walls of the bathroom and shattered glass in other rooms, broadcaster NDTV reported.

Iraq pays final Kuwait war reparations

Iraq has paid its last war reparations to Kuwait more than 30 years since the invasion of the Gulf country by former autocrat Saddam Hussein, officials said yesterday. On August 2, 1990, Hussein ordered his army to invade Kuwait and seize what he described as "Iraq's 19th province", before being pushed back seven months later by a US-led coalition. "Iraq has closed the file of the Kuwait war reparations, having paid the last of its dues," Muzher Saleh, the prime minister's economic advisor, was quoted as saying by the official Iraqi News Agency. In total, Iraq has paid \$52.4 billion in reparations, he said. "This is not a small amount," he added. "The sum would have been enough to construct an electricity network that would have served Iraq for many years."

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

TENSIONS WITH WEST, UKRAINE

Russia doesn't want conflict: Putin

REUTERS, Moscow

Russia wants to avoid conflict with Ukraine and the West, President Vladimir Putin said yesterday, demanding an "immediate" response from the US and its allies to Moscow's demand for security guarantees.

"This is not our (preferred) choice, we do not want this," Putin said at his annual news conference when asked about the possibility of conflict with Ukraine.

He said Russia had received a generally positive initial response to security proposals it handed to the United States this month and that negotiations would start early next year in Geneva.

"I hope the development of the situation will proceed along that path," he said.

In a separate answer, Putin grew more heated when recalling how Nato had "cheated" Russia with successive waves of expansion since the Cold War, and said Moscow needed an answer urgently.

"You must give us guarantees, and immediately - now." Russia rejects Ukrainian and US accusations that it may be preparing an invasion of Ukraine as early as next month by tens of thousands of Russian troops poised within reach of the border.

It says it needs pledges from the West - including a promise not to conduct Nato military activity in Eastern Europe - because its security is threatened by Ukraine's growing ties with the Western alliance as well as the possibility of Nato missiles being deployed against it on Ukrainian territory.

"We just directly posed the question that there should be no further Nato movement to the east. The ball is in their court, they should answer us with something," Putin said.

Tensions have been slowly building since mid-November when Washington sounded the alarm over a massive Russian troop build-up around Ukraine and accused Putin of planning an invasion.

Very little chance of survival

Says Myanmar fire department official as scores buried by landslide at jade mine in Hpakant township near Chinese border

AGENCIES

Dozens of jade miners who remain missing yesterday following a landslide in Myanmar's Kachin State have "very little chance of survival", according to a fire department official.

Rescuers pulled three bodies from the nearby lake in Hpakant township near the Chinese border yesterday, adding to the one found the previous day.

"It is so difficult to estimate how many were missing, but we estimate at least 50 missing and they have very little chance of survival," said Pyae Nyein, captain of Hpakant Township's fire department, told Reuters news agency.

A landslide of dirt and rubble ripped down the waste heap of Hpakant on Wednesday, burying workers under



the debris. Hpakant is the centre of the country's secretive jade industry, which draws poor workers from across the country in search of gems mostly for export to China.

Initial reports said that between 70 and 100 people were missing, but the number was later reduced to at least 50.

Rescuers called off the second day's search due to fading light, said Ko Jack of the Myanmar Rescue Organisation.

They would be back at the lake for a third and final day today, he added,

after which his team would only come and retrieve the bodies "if they appear on the water".

Hundreds of diggers came to Hpakant during the rainy season to prospect in the treacherous open-cast mines despite a junta ban on digging until March 2022, according to a local activist.

Determining how many people were working when the disaster struck would be difficult, rescuers said, with families hesitant to admit their relatives were there and survivors unwilling to come forward.

Rescuers said increased pressure from the weight of dumped soil and rock had pushed the ground downhill into the nearby lake, reports AFP.

The incident is the latest tragedy to hit the poorly regulated multi-billion-dollar industry.

PASSPORT OFFICE GATE

Suicide bomber killed in Kabul

REUTERS, Kabul

A suicide bomber was killed at the gate of a passport office in the Afghan capital Kabul yesterday, a government spokesman said, and several people were injured in the blast, according to unconfirmed reports.

A spokesman for Afghanistan's interior ministry said the attacker was shot and killed while trying to enter the passport office premises. One member of the Taliban who was a witness told Reuters multiple people were injured.

Large crowds of Afghans have been thronging outside the passport office in a bid to get travel documents in recent days after the service was restarted after weeks of suspension.

High temperatures hit Greenland

AFP, Copenhagen

Temperatures have soared in Greenland recently, the Danish Meteorological Institute said on Wednesday, in line with warming trends experts have linked to global warming.

In the capital Nuuk, the mercury hit 13 Celsius (55 Fahrenheit) on December 20, compared to the -5.3C that is average for this time of year.

In Qaanaaq in the north, temperatures reached 8.3C, when the seasonal average is usually -20.1C, DMI said.

DMI did not say whether the temperatures recorded had broken records set on the island.

"One of the reasons we're seeing high temperatures is the foehn meteorological phenomenon," a warm wind that is common in the world's largest island, DMI climatologist Caroline Drost Jensen told AFP in an email.

"It is a bit unusual that it is simultaneously happening across such a vast territory and for so long," she said.

"Global warming is supporting the elevated temperatures that we are currently observing over Greenland," she said.

Over the summer, temperatures 10 degrees higher than average led to loss of glaciers across the vast territory.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

শেখ হাসিনার বাংলাদেশ পরিচ্ছন্ন পরিবেশ

Office of the Project Director
Integrated and participatory project to Control noise pollution
Department of the Environment
E/16, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

No. 22.02.0000.002.14.008.21.954 Date: 23/12/2021

Request for Re-Expressions of Interest (Re-Eoi)

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
2	Agency	Department of Environment (DoE).
3	Procuring entity name	Project Director of Integrated and participatory project to Control noise pollution.
4	Procuring entity code	Not used at present.
5	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.
6	Expression of Interest for Selection of	Consulting Firm (National) (lump-sum).
7	Title of service	Making & Broadcasting of TV and Radio program on Noise Pollution.
8	Eoi Ref No.	22002.0000.002.14.008.21.954
9	Date	23.12.2021
KEY INFORMATION		
10	Procurement method/ sub-method	Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS).
FUNDING INFORMATION		
11	Budget and source of funds	GoB.
12	Development partners (if applicable)	N/A.
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
13	Project/programme code (if applicable)	224310900
14	Project/programme name (if applicable)	Integrated and participatory project to Control noise pollution.
15	Eoi closing date and time	Date: 09/01/2022 Time: 03:00pm
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT		
16	Brief description of assignment	Making episode-based television programs on noise pollution in a combination of TV talk-shows, interviews, TVCs, documentaries, cultural programs, noise pollution Olympiads, dramas and quizzes. Shooting should be done in HD 4 K resolutions. Colour grad and must use original music track. If needed adequate dubbing must be done in professional manner. Created programs on noise awareness shall be broadcasted through BTV & 8-10 or higher number of Top most popular Private TV Channels at Peak-time and also Bangladesh Betar and two private radio channels. Private channels shall be selected alternatively (Different Channel for different program). The names of private TV and radio channels will be finalized at the negotiation meeting. Which program will be broadcast on which channel will be decided by the client. Prior to broadcasting program, the name of the television and radio and time schedule of broadcasting must be approved by the client. At least one program should be broadcast on the television channel every week during peak hours.
17	Experience, resources & delivery capacity required	(1). The interested applicants (Advertising/Media production Firm) shall have to submit the following documents: i. Valid trade license/registration of the firm; ii. Tax Identification Number (TIN); iii. VAT registration number; iv. Brushier of the organization/firm; v. Copies of last 3 years Audit Report; vi. Previous work experience with mentioning the name of client organization; vii. A detailed profile of the Chief Consultant/Team Leader and a brief CV of the other members should be submitted where their role is mentioned in the relevant work. (2). The interested applicants (Advertising/Media production Firm) shall have the following resources and experiences: i. Applicant Organization/Firm must have at least 5 years of experience in creating and broadcasting environmental awareness programs; ii. Preference will be given to organizations/Firms with previous work experience with the Department of Environment; iii. Applicant Organization/Firm must have work experience on production and broadcast of TV Spot, Documentary, Multimedia and Radio program; iv. Work experience with national and international organizations; v. Preference will be given to organizations with previous work experience in noise pollution; vi. Applicant organization/firm must have separate sections for manuscript writing; vii. The organization/firm must have at least 5 years' experience in directing for making documentaries; viii. The organization/firm must have at least 5 years' experience in camera operation and video editing; ix. The organization/firm must have special video editing panels; x. The team leader and other members of the team must be experienced in the relevant work.
18	Other details (if applicable)	The Project Director of Integrated and participatory project to Control noise pollution now invites eligible Firm (National) to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Firm should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. Please visit www.doe.gov.bd for Eoi Notice and details Terms of Reference (ToR).
19	Association with foreign firm is	N/A.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
20	Name of official inviting EOI	Md. Humayun Kabir.
21	Designation of official inviting EOI	Project Director, Integrated and participatory project to Control noise pollution, DoE.
22	Address of official inviting EOI	Office of the Project Director, Integrated and participatory project to Control noise pollution, Department of the Environment, E/16, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
23	Contact details of official inviting EOI	Telephone No. +88-02-8181767 E-mail: adg@doe.gov.bd
24	The procuring entity reserve the right to accept and reject of all Eois.	

GD-2375

Md. Humayun Kabir
Project Director