

Virus cases emerging faster globally: WHO

Sudden surge of infections is deeply concerning, says its chief; U.S. warns pandemic is likely

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE GENEVA There are now more new cases of COVID-19 reported each day outside China than inside the hardest-hit country, the World Health Organization said on Wednesday.



Street sanitisation: Workers in protective suits spraying disinfectant as a precaution against the coronavirus at a bus garage in Seoul, South Korea, on Wednesday.

There are now more new cases of COVID-19 reported each day outside China than inside the hardest-hit country, the World Health Organization said on Wednesday.

Wednesday morning, 78,190 cases of COVID-19 had been registered in China, including 2,718 deaths.

"signal that we can no longer contain the virus, which is not true."

The UN health agency put the number of new cases in China at 411 on Tuesday and those registered outside the country stood at 427.

Germany said on Wednesday that it was heading for a coronavirus epidemic and could no longer trace all cases.

That compares with 2,790 cases and 44 deaths reported across 37 other countries.

Question of 'when' not 'if' Meanwhile, the U.S. warned of a pandemic.

Cash doles for HK residents

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE HONG KONG Hong Kong's government said on Wednesday it will give a HK\$10,000 (\$1,280) payout to permanent residents in a bid to jump-start an economy in recession after months of protests and the COVID-19 outbreak.

The cash handout to around seven million permanent residents will cost HK\$71 billion, but officials hope consumers will plough much of the money back into local businesses.

Malaysia's decades-old political rivals Mahathir Mohamad and Anwar Ibrahim set out claims to lead the Southeast Asian country on Wednesday after Mr. Mahathir's shock resignation as Prime Minister sparked turmoil.

Malaysia in turmoil as Mahathir, Anwar vie for power

72, who formed a surprise pact to win a 2018 election, has shaped Malaysian politics for more than two decades.

Pak. confirms first 2 infections

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE KARACHI Pakistan detected its first two COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, days after Islamabad closed its border with Iran, where 19 people have died from virus.

Latin America reports 1st case

ASSOCIATED PRESS RIO DE JANEIRO Brazil's government confirmed on Wednesday that a 61-year-old Brazilian man who travelled to Italy this month has Latin America's first confirmed case of the contagious new coronavirus.

Sri Lanka notifies UN about rights resolution withdrawal

We are committed to achieving sustainable peace: Minister

MEERA SRINIVASAN COLOMBO Sri Lanka on Wednesday formally notified the UN Human Rights Council that it was withdrawing from the UN resolution on post-war accountability and reconciliation.



Dinesh Gunawardena

"I wish to place on record, Sri Lanka's decision to withdraw from co-sponsorship of Resolution 40/1 on Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka."

remesinghe told The Hindu in Bengaluru, on the sidelines of 'The Huddle', the newspaper's recently-held annual thought conclave.

However, Sri Lanka cannot pull out of the resolution until 2021, according to former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, whose unity government helmed by President Maithripala Sirisena co-sponsored the resolution.

'Pawn on chess board' The commitments made bound the country to carry out an "impractical, unconstitutional and undeliverable" process, Mr. Gunawardena said, adding that they had made Sri Lanka "a pawn on the chess board of global politics".

Mr. Gunawardena's statement at the High-Level Segment at the ongoing UNHRC session follows President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's earlier announcements that Sri Lanka would not honour Colombo's commitments to the Council.

ELSEWHERE



Not even a 'smallest step back' in Idlib: Erdogan

ISTANBUL President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday vowed Turkey would not take the "smallest step back" in an escalating stand-off with Damascus and Russia over the northern Syrian region of Idlib.

Pak. will act against anyone targeting minorities: Khan

He condemns the violence in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ISLAMABAD Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday warned that anyone targeting minorities in the country would be dealt with strictly, as he condemned the ongoing violence in India.



Imran Khan

"I want to warn our people that anyone in Pakistan targeting our non-Muslim citizens or their places of worship will be dealt with strictly. Our minorities are equal citizens of this country," he said.

"Now 200 million Muslims in India are being targeted. The world community must act now," he tweeted.

Pak. declares Nawaz Sharif 'absconder'

Pakistan's former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has been declared an "absconder" by the government for violating the bail requirements by not presenting his medical report from his doctors in London, according to a media report on Wednesday.

Mr. Sharif, 70, left for London in November last for treatment.

The government on Tuesday decided not to extend Mr. Sharif's bail for not presenting his medical report before a board formed on the order of Islamabad High Court, Dawn newspaper reported.

Sanders, under attack, hits back in feisty Democratic debate

Rivals call him too radical to appeal to fellow Americans

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE CHARLESTON Democratic White House hopefuls rounded on leftist frontrunner Bernie Sanders at a feisty debate on Tuesday, attacking him as too extreme for American voters and a flawed challenger to President Donald Trump.



Bernie Sanders

Joe Biden, who needs a victory in South Carolina's crucial primary on Saturday to keep his campaign alive, hit Mr. Sanders as soft on gun control, while billionaire tycoon Michael Bloomberg claimed Russia was working to help Mr. Sanders win the nomination.

buchar laid into his ability to deliver on costly programmes such as universal health care and tuition-free college.

Mr. Buttigieg warned a fight between Mr. Sanders and Mr. Trump would spell "chaos" and divide the nation.

The 78-year-old hit back at the charge his policies were too "radical," insisting such ideas "exist in countries all over the world," including the notion that health care is a human right.

German court scraps ban on assisted suicide

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE KARLSRUHE Germany's highest court on Wednesday ruled that a 2015 law banning professional assisted suicide was unconstitutional, saying in a landmark decision that people have "the right to a self-determined death".

The ruling is a major victory for the terminally ill patients, doctors and assisted suicide organisations who brought the case, complaining that the existing law went too far.

Judge Andreas Vosskuhle said the right to a self-determined death included "the freedom to take one's life and seek help doing so".

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12869

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1 through 28 indicating starting points for clues.

(set by Vulcan)

- 13 Moralist checked corruption in project (8)
15 Abandon and betray a soldier (6,3)
16 Peaceful up to this time (5)
17 Section of the crowd yelling - what do you call it? (5)
19 I run about, nothing ever stopped me (4,5)
22 Air conditioning not good in transport, it could be a bug (8)
24 One about to step over this is going to feel cold (3,3)
26 Symbols discussed in Physics for instance (7)
27 Eye specialist's clout is slipping (7)
28 Key measures brought about to protect life, primarily for one in need of protection (6,6)

SUDOKU

9x9 Sudoku grid with some numbers pre-filled.

Solution to puzzle 12868 and solution to yesterday's Sudoku.

FAITH

What is wealth?

What is wealth? It would seem this question is easy to answer, but Tamil poets have not gone by the conventional definition of the word.

Thiruvalluvar shows us the importance of education in four sections. Listening to the speech of scholars and morally upright men adds to one's wealth of knowledge, and this is clearly shown by Thiruvalluvar in a verse, where he says that of all possible forms of wealth, that which we acquire through listening is the best.

The Tamil work Vivekachintamani explains why education is the best wealth one can have. It says that education is not lost in a flood; it cannot be destroyed by fire; it is not diminished if you impart knowledge to others; it cannot be stolen by thieves.

QR code and text: To play an interactive version of this crossword online, scan the QR code