

## News in brief

◆ **At least 15 people were killed on Tuesday in a suicide bombing as recruits lined up outside an army camp in the Somali capital Mogadishu, a Reuters witness who counted the bodies at Madina Hospital said.** Officials at the hospital confirmed the dead were killed in an attack earlier in the day at a checkpoint outside the General Degaban military training camp in the capital. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Islamist group al Shabaab frequently carries out bombings in the Horn of Africa country. Dozens of people crowded outside Madina Hospital searching for their missing relatives.



**At least 15 killed in suicide bombing at army camp in Somalia**

◆ **A US aircraft carrier group led by the USS Ronald Reagan has entered the South China Sea** as part of a routine mission, the US Navy said yesterday, at a time of rising tensions between Washington and Beijing, which claims most the disputed waterway. "While in the South China Sea, the strike group is conducting maritime security operations, which include flight operations with fixed and rotary wing aircraft, maritime strike exercises, and coordinated tactical training between surface and air units," the US Navy said. "Carrier operations in the South China Sea are part of the US Navy's routine presence in the Indo-Pacific."

**US Navy says carrier group operating in S.China Sea**



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◆ **Israel told its citizens they could stop wearing masks indoors on Tuesday, ending one of its last main restrictions** as new COVID-19 infections continued to wane even as vaccinations tapered off after a record rollout. Children headed to school and adults to work without masks for the first time in more than a year. Israelis have not had to wear masks outdoors since April. About 55% of Israel's 9.3 million population are fully vaccinated - a turnout largely unchanged by this month's expansion of eligibility to include 12- to 15-year-olds.

**Israel scraps indoor mask order as COVID-19 infections wane**



◆ **A nurse who was among the last people to see Diego Maradona alive was questioned on Monday by Argentine prosecutors over accusations of neglect in the football icon's final days.** Ricardo Almiron, 37, was Maradona's nighttime carer and is suspected of lying when he claimed the World Cup winning captain was sleeping and breathing normally hours before he died. An autopsy revealed he was dying at that time.

**Maradona's nurse first to be questioned over his death**



## Astra cocktail fails to prevent COVID-19 symptoms



A vial labelled with the AstraZeneca coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccine

Reuters

AstraZeneca said yesterday a late-stage trial failed to provide evidence that its COVID-19 antibody therapy protected people who had contact with an infected person from the disease, a small setback in its efforts to find alternatives to vaccines.

The study assessed whether the therapy, a cocktail of two types of antibodies, could prevent adults who had been exposed to the virus in the past eight days from developing COVID-19 symptoms. The therapy, AZD7442, was 33% effective in reducing the risk of people developing symptoms compared with a placebo, but that result was not statistically significant - meaning it might have been due to chance and not the therapy.

The Phase III study, which has not been peer reviewed, included 1,121 participants in the United Kingdom and the United States. The vast

majority, though not all, were free of the virus at the start of the trial.

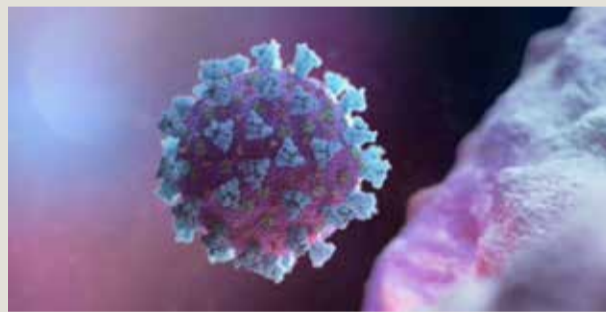
Results for a subset of participants who were not infected to begin with was more encouraging but the primary analysis rested on results from all participants.

"While this trial did not meet the primary endpoint against symptomatic illness, we are encouraged by the protection seen in the PCR negative participants following treatment with AZD7442," AstraZeneca Executive Vice President Mene Pangalos said in a statement.

The company is banking on further studies to revive the product's fortunes. Five more trials are ongoing, testing the antibody cocktail as treatment or in prevention.

The next one will likely be from a larger trial testing the product in people with a weakened immune system due to cancer or an organ transplant, who may not benefit from a vaccine.

### Targeted alternatives



AZD7442 belongs to a class of drugs called monoclonal antibodies which mimic natural antibodies produced by the body to fight off infections.

Similar therapies developed by rivals Regeneron and Eli Lilly have been approved by U.S. regulators for treating unhospitalised COVID patients.

European regulators have also authorised Regeneron's therapy and are reviewing those developed by partners GlaxoSmithKline and Vir Biotechnology as well as by Lilly and Celltrion.

Regeneron is also seeking U.S. authorisation for its therapy as a preventative treatment.

But the AstraZeneca results are a small blow for the drug industry as it tries to find more targeted alternatives to COVID-19 inoculations, particularly for people who may not be able to get vaccinated or those who may have an inadequate response to inoculations.

The Anglo-Swedish drugmaker, which has faced a roller-coaster of challenges with the rollout of its COVID-19 vaccine, is also developing new treatments and repurposing existing drugs to fight the virus.

AstraZeneca also said on Tuesday it was in talks with the U.S. government on "next steps" regarding a \$205 million deal to supply up to 500,000 doses of AZD7442. Swiss manufacturer Lonza was contracted to produce AZD7442.

The full results will be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed medical journal, the company said.

## China says radiation levels

● **Media reports said that abnormal levels of radioactive gas had leaked from Taishan plant**

Reuters

China said yesterday that radiation levels around the Taishan nuclear project in the southeastern province of Guangdong remained normal, following media reports of a leak at one of its reactors.

French utility EDF, one of the project's owners, said on Monday that it was investigating media reports that abnormal levels of radioactive gas had leaked from the plant.

CNN had reported that Framatome, the EDF unit that designed Taishan's reactors, was warning



A nuclear reactor and related facilities as to be operated by China Guangdong Nuclear in Taishan, Guangdong province, October 1

of an "imminent radiological threat" at the project following a build-up of krypton and xenon.

Zhao Lijian, a spokesman for China's foreign ministry, told a news briefing that the plant was fully compliant with all requirements and there were no signs of abnormalities in its vicinity.

## World Wide Web c

● **Berners-Lee, a London-born computer scientist, invented the World Wide Web in 1989**

● **The digitally signed Ethereum blockchain non-fungible token includes the original source code, an animated visualization, a letter written by Berners-Lee and a digital poster of the full code from the original files**

Reuters

The original source code for the World Wide Web that was written by its inventor Tim Berners-Lee is up for sale at Sotheby's as part of a non-fungible token, with bids starting at just \$1,000.

Berners-Lee, a London-born computer scientist, invented the World Wide Web in 1989, revolutionising the sharing and creation of information in what is seen as one of the most significant inventions since



World Wide Web founder Tim Berners-Lee for a photograph following a special festival 2018 in London, Britain

the printing press appeared in the 15th Century Germany.

The digitally signed Ethereum blockchain non-fungible token, a kind of digital asset which includes the original animated visualization, a

### COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths	Global tally
1 USA	34,335,515	615,247	177,155,777
2 India	29,617,058	377,061	
3 Brazil	17,454,861	488,404	
4 France	5,741,354	110,454	3,829,347
5 Turkey	5,336,073	48,795	Recovered: 161,385,805
6 Russia	5,236,593	127,180	
7 UK	4,573,419	127,907	New cases +132,775
8 Italy	4,245,779	127,038	
9 Argentina	4,145,482	86,029	New deaths +1,746
10 Colombia	3,777,600	96,366	
11 Spain	3,741,767	80,517	
12 Germany	3,724,348	90,534	
13 Iran	3,049,648	82,351	
14 Poland	2,877,819	74,626	

Figures as of closing

### Middle East

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	273,795		15,654		201,739	56,402
Saudi Arabia	468,175	+1,269	7,606	+16	450,255	10,314
UAE	601,950	+2,127	1,734	+4	581,139	19,077
Kuwait	329,526		1,828		311,559	16,139
Oman	238,566	+2,126	2,565	+33	212,064	23,937
Qatar	219,887		579		217,143	2,165

## Egypt upholds death sentence for 12 Muslim Brotherhood figures

Reuters

Egypt's highest civilian court on Monday upheld death sentences for 12 senior Muslim Brotherhood figures over a 2013 sit-in which ended with security forces killing hundreds of protesters, judicial sources said.

The ruling, which cannot be appealed, means the 12 men could face execution pending approval by President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. They include Abdul Rahman Al-Bar, commonly described as the group's mufti or top religious scholar, Mohamed El-Beltagi, a former member of parliament, and Osama Yassin, a former minister.

Many Muslim Brotherhood figures have been sentenced to death in other cases related to the unrest that followed the military's ousting of Brotherhood president Mohamed Mursi in 2013, but the Court



Muslim Brotherhood's senior member Mohamed El-Beltagi sits behind the bars during a court session in Cairo, Egypt

of Cassation ordered retrials.

Monday's ruling relates to a mass trial of hundreds of suspects accused of murder and incitement of violence during pro-Brotherhood protests at Rabaa al-Adawiya square in Cairo in the weeks after Mursi's overthrow.

In September 2018, an Egyptian criminal court sentenced 75 people to death and issued varying jail terms for more than 600 others.