

News in brief

**Nigeria's top army commander killed in air crash**



General Ibrahim Attahiru was killed when his plane crashed in the country's north, an air force spokesman said. Chief of Army Staff Attahiru was just appointed by President Muhammadu Buhari in January in a shakeup of the top military command to better fight surging violence and a more than decade-long jihadist insurgency.

◆ Nigeria's top-ranking army commander Lieutenant

**President Joe Biden said that he and South Korean President Moon Jae-in had agreed on a comprehensive partnership on COVID-19 vaccines and that the United States would provide vaccinations for 550,000 South Korean soldiers.**

Speaking during a news conference at the White House, Moon said the vaccine partnership would contribute to boosting supplies in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.

**Biden says US will vaccinate South Korean soldiers against COVID-19**



**Myanmar ethnic army attacks jade mining town**



Myanmar's coup, attacked military positions at the northwestern jade mining town of Hkamti, local media reported. The attack marks an advance into new territory by the KIA at a time Myanmar has been plunged into chaos since the army seized power on Feb. 1, detained elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi and cut short a decade of democratic reforms.

◆ Forces of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), one of the ethnic factions opposed to

**US authorities have confiscated roughly \$90,000 from a Utah man who sold footage of a woman being fatally shot during the Jan. 6 attack on the US Capitol by supporters of former President Donald Trump, according to court filings.**

Prosecutors also have filed additional criminal charges against the man, John Earle Sullivan, a self-described political activist who is accused of entering the Capitol building and participating in the riot, the filings unsealed on Thursday showed.

**US seizes \$90,000 from man who sold footage of Capitol riot**



**Biden says he won't let Justice Dept seize reporters' phone, email records**



his Justice Department to seize the phone or email records of reporters, saying any such move would be "simply wrong". Biden's comments came a day after CNN reported that the Justice Department had told its correspondent Barbara Starr that the former Trump administration had secretly obtained two months of her phone and email records in 2017.

◆ US President Joe Biden said he would not allow

**COVID-19: Countries worst affected**

Country	Total cases	Total deaths
1 USA	33,871,086	603,665
2 India	26,522,164	299,150
3 Brazil	15,976,156	446,527
4 France	5,593,962	108,526
5 Turkey	5,178,648	46,071
6 Russia	4,992,554	118,125
7 UK	4,460,446	127,716
8 Italy	4,188,190	125,153
9 Germany	3,648,020	87,887
10 Spain	3,636,453	79,620
11 Argentina	3,447,044	73,391
12 Colombia	3,177,212	83,719
13 Poland	2,864,546	72,691
14 Iran	2,823,887	78,381

**Global tally**  
166,867,602  
**Deaths**  
3,464,665  
**Recovered:**  
147,811,307  
**New cases**  
+402,419  
**New deaths**  
+7,165

**Middle East**

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	251,539		14,611		185,243	51,685
Saudi Arabia	439,847	+1,142	7,237	+13	423,795	8,815
UAE	554,516	+1,596	1,648	+4	534,481	18,387
Kuwait	297,206		1,719		282,913	12,574
Oman	208,607		2,239		192,973	13,395
Qatar	215,160	+330	543	+2	210,589	4,028

**Biden, South Korea's Moon express willingness to engage North Korea**

Reuters | Washington

US President Joe Biden and South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Friday injected fresh urgency into attempts to engage North Korea in dialogue over its nuclear weapons, with Biden saying he would meet its leader Kim Jong Un under the right conditions.

Biden and Moon said the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is their goal, with Biden stressing he was "under no illusions" about the difficulty of getting North Korea to give up its nuclear arsenals after his predecessors failed.

"We both are deeply concerned about the situation," Biden said at a joint news conference, adding that he and Moon shared a willingness to engage diplomatically with the North and "to take pragmatic steps to reduce tensions."

North Korea has rebuffed US entreaties for diplomacy since Biden took over from Donald Trump, who had three summits with Kim and famously exchanged "beautiful letters" with the third-generation leader.

Kim refused to give up his nuclear weapons but did impose a freeze on testing them. He has not tested a nuclear bomb nor launched an inter-continental ballistic missile since 2017, although experts believe his arsenal has steadily grown.

Biden said he would be willing to meet Kim under the right conditions - if he agreed to discuss his nuclear program and that his advisers first met with their North Korean counterparts to lay the groundwork.

"I would not do what had been done in the recent past; I would not give him all he's looking for - international recognition as legitimate and allow



US President Joe Biden, US climate envoy John Kerry, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin participate in an expanded bilateral meeting with South Korea's President Moon Jae-in at the White House, in Washington

**"I would not do what had been done in the recent past; I would not give him (Kim Jong Un) all he's looking for - international recognition as legitimate and allow him to move in the direction of appearing to be more ... serious about what he wasn't at all serious about"**

JOE BIDEN

him to move in the direction of appearing to be more ... serious about what he wasn't at all serious about."

Biden's comments appeared to reflect a shift in his thinking given that the White House said in March it was not his intention to meet with Kim.

**Special envoy**

Biden appointed veteran State Department official Sung Kim as special US envoy for North Korea.

South Korea had been push-

ing for the appointment of an envoy, and Moon, for whom engagement with North Korea is a legacy issue before he leaves office next year, said Sung Kim would help explore whether North Korea is willing to engage diplomatically. He said he expected a positive response.

Sung Kim is a Korean-American diplomat who served as special envoy for North Korea under President Barack Obama and helped set up Trump's summits with Kim Jong Un.

Jenny Town of 38 North, a Washington-based North Korea project, said Sung Kim's appointment was positive after the administration had signaled it was in no hurry to fill the post.

However, it has given no indication of what concessions it might offer to bring about talks. A joint summit statement called for full implementation of international sanctions Pyongyang wants lifted.

"The problem has been that the administration has only talked about denuclearization and continues to characterize any interactions with North Korea as nuclear negotiations," Town said.

**China takes**

China joins the United States

**The Zhurong rover drove down the ramp of the lander on to the surface of Mars**

Reuters | Beijing

A remote-controlled Chinese motorised rover drove down the ramp of its landing capsule yesterday and onto the surface of Mars, making China the first nation to orbit, land and deploy a land vehicle on its inaugural mission to the Red Planet.

Zhurong, named after a mythical Chinese god of fire, drove down to the surface of Mars at 10:40 am Beijing time (0240 GMT), according to the rover's official Chinese social media account.

China this month joined the United States as the only nations to deploy land vehicles on Mars. The former Soviet Union landed a craft in 1971, but it lost communication seconds later.

The 240-kg (530-pound) Zhurong, which has six scientific instruments including a high-resolution topography camera, will study the planet's surface soil and atmosphere.

Powered by solar energy, Zhurong will also look for signs of ancient life, including any sub-surface water and ice, using a ground-penetrating radar during its 90-day exploration of the Martian surface.

Zhurong will move and stop in slow intervals, with each interval

**Myanmar junta leader says Suu Kyi will soon appear**

AFP | Yangon

Myanmar's junta leader Min Aung Hlaing said deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi was healthy at home and would appear in court in a few days, in his first interview since overthrowing her in a Feb. 1 coup.

The coup has plunged the Southeast Asian country into chaos and one of several ethnic armed groups opposed to the ruling junta advanced to attack a military post in a northwestern jade mining town yesterday, local media said.

Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate for her long struggle against previous military rulers, is among more than 4,000 people detained since the coup. She faces charges that range



Protesters making the three-finger salute while holding posters featuring detained civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi during a demonstration

from illegally possessing walkie-talkie radios to violating a state secrets law.

"Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is in good health. She is at her home and healthy. She is going to face trial at the court in a few days," Min Aung Hlaing said by video link with the Hong Kong-based Chinese language broadcaster Phoenix Television, in excerpts released yesterday.

The interviewer asked him what he thought of the performance of Suu Kyi, 75, who is widely admired in the country of 53 million for her campaign that had brought tentative dem-

ocratic reforms which were cut short by the coup.

"She tried all she could," Min Aung Hlaing responded.

Suu Kyi's next court appearance is due on Monday in the capital Naypyidaw. So far she has appeared only by video link and as yet to be allowed to speak directly to her lawyers.

The junta has cited security reasons for not allowing her to speak to her lawyers in private at a time the military authorities have not established control of the country in the face of daily protests, strikes and renewed insurgencies.

**"Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is in good health. She is at her home and healthy. She is going to face trial at the court in a few days"**

MIN AUNG HLAING

**Nepal calls new**

AFP | Kathmandu

Nepal's parliament was dissolved for the second time in five months yesterday and new elections called for November as the Himalayan country battled political turmoil alongside the coronavirus pandemic.

President Bidhya Devi Bhandari made the order after declaring that neither Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli nor Sher Bahadur Deuba, leader of the opposition Nepali Congress, had a majority to form a new government.

Political rivalries between the communist prime minister and his former Maoist allies hit a new peak as the country battles a severe coronavirus wave with acute shortages of oxygen and vaccines.

Authorities have been reporting about 200 deaths a day, but experts say there are a lot more and the United Nations has launched an emergency Covid-19 appeal saying that Nepal is at "breaking point".

Bhandari dissolved parliament in the early hours of Saturday after a new breakdown in talks.

"The president... has dissolved the current House of Representatives and fixed the first phase of general elections on November