

News in brief

◆ The death toll from days of tribal clashes in Sudan's West Darfur has risen to 50, with 132 wounded, the West Darfur State Doctors' Committee said yesterday. The government declared a state of emergency in the state on Monday after three days of clashes in El Geneina, the state capital. The United Nations said on Monday that at least 40 people had been killed and 58 injured. The bloodshed is the latest in a resurgence of violence in the Darfur region since the signing of a peace agreement late last year and the withdrawal of UN peacekeepers.



Death toll from clashes in Sudan's West Darfur climbs to 50

A Chinese carrier group is exercising near Taiwan and such drills will become regular, China's navy said late yesterday in a further escalation of tensions near the island that Beijing claims as its sovereign territory. China's navy said the

China says carrier group exercising near Taiwan, drills will become regular



carrier group, lead by the Liaoning, the country's first aircraft carrier put into active service, was carrying out "routine" drills in the waters near Taiwan. The

aim is to "enhance its capability to safeguard national sovereignty, safety and development interests", it said. "Similar exercises will be conducted on a regular basis in the future," the navy added, without elaborating.

◆ The World Health Organisation (WHO) does not back requiring vaccination passports for entry or exit, due to uncertainty over whether inoculation prevents transmission of the virus, as well as equity concerns, a spokeswoman said yesterday. The WHO now expects to review China's COVID-19 vaccines Sinopharm and Sinovac for possible emergency use listing around the end of April, as more data is required, WHO spokeswoman Margaret Harris added at a UN news briefing.

WHO does not back vaccination passports for now: spokeswoman



◆ Democratic US Representative Alcee Hastings has died at the age of 84, his office said on Tuesday,



Democratic US congressman Hastings of Florida dies

further narrowing the party's majority in the lower chamber of Congress. Hastings, a former judge and civil rights activist, has served 15 terms in the U.S. House of Representatives in a Florida district that now includes parts of Fort Lauderdale, Palm Beach and the area around Lake Okeechobee, his website said. He most recently won his seat with 78.7% of the vote. In January 2019, Hastings said he was diagnosed and receiving treatment for pancreatic cancer. His death leaves a sixth vacancy in the House of Representatives, which Democrats would now control with 218 seats, against Republicans' 211, according to a tally by the House press office.

Myanmar protesters paint Yangon red, call for boycott of Water Festival



Reuters

Myanmar's pro-democracy protesters sprayed red paint on roads in Yangon on Tuesday in a reminder to the junta that it had blood on its hands as the crisis created by a military coup in the Southeast Asian nation dragged on with no end in sight.

Several groups called for a boycott of next week's Thingyan Water Festival, which marks the Buddhist new year. Leaflets calling for the ban, distributed in Yangon, said it would be a sign of compassion for the families of those killed. About 570 people have been killed during two months of unrest since the Feb. 1 coup,

and security forces have arrested close to 3,500 people, with about four-fifths of them still in detention, advocacy group the Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) said on Tuesday.

Demonstrators woke early in Yangon, Myanmar's biggest city, to spray and splash pavements, roads and bus shelters with red paint in protest at a sweeping crackdown by security forces that has caused weeks of international outrage. "The blood has not dried," said one message in red.

Another daubed across a bus shelter implored rank-and-file soldiers not to be exploited by kleptocratic generals clinging onto power.

Bezos, Musk top Forbes' billionaire list



Elon Musk



Jeff Bezos

Reuters

Forbes' annual world's billionaires list includes a record-breaking 2,755 billionaires, with Amazon.com Inc founder Jeff Bezos topping it for the fourth consecutive year, the media company said on Tuesday.

The ranks of the ultra-wealthy are expanding after a year in which the coronavirus pandemic upended world economies and threatened the livelihoods of people across the globe.

This year's billionaires are worth a combined \$13.1 trillion, up from \$8 trillion last year, Forbes said.

"The very, very rich got very, very richer," said Forbes' Chief Content Officer Randall Lane,

in an interview with Reuters Video News.

Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk jumped into second spot on the list, up from 31st last year.

Bernard Arnault, chief executive of luxury goods firm LVMH, Microsoft founder Bill Gates and Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg round out the top five of the world's richest billionaires.

Investor and business tycoon Warren Buffett fell out of the top five for the first time in over two decades, as tech executives dominate the Forbes rankings.

This year's list has 493 newcomers, including Whitney Wolfe Herd, chief executive of dating app Bumble, which went public this year.

Global COVID-19 death toll surpasses 3 million

COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths
1 USA	31,500,372	Global tally 132,597,727 Deaths 2,876,699 Recovered: 106,880,036 New cases +165,496 New deaths +3,288
2 Brazil	13,023,189	
3 India	12,709,047	
4 France	4,833,263	
5 Russia	4,597,868	
6 UK	4,362,150	
7 Italy	3,678,944	
8 Turkey	3,529,601	
9 Spain	3,311,325	
10 Germany	2,906,509	
11 Poland	2,456,709	
12 Colombia	2,456,409	
13 Argentina	2,407,159	
14 Mexico	2,251,705	

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	205,732		12,210		156,574	36,948
Saudi Arabia	393,377		6,704		380,305	6,368
UAE	474,136	+1,988	1,516	+4	458,885	13,735
Kuwait	238,549		1,365		223,269	13,915
Oman	165,480	+1,206	1,728	+6	148,303	15,449
Qatar	184,334		306		166,441	17,587



Worldwide COVID-19 deaths are rising once again

it took more than a year for the global coronavirus death toll to reach 2 million

The next 1 million deaths were added in about three months.

Reuters

Coronavirus-related deaths worldwide crossed 3 million yesterday, according to a Reuters tally, as the latest global resurgence of COVID-19 infections is challenging vaccination efforts across the globe.

Worldwide COVID-19 deaths are

rising once again, especially in Brazil and India. Health officials blame more infectious variants that were first detected in the United Kingdom and South Africa, along with public fatigue with lockdowns and other restrictions.

According to a Reuters tally, it took more than a year for the global coronavirus death toll to reach 2 million. The next 1 million deaths were added in about three months. Brazil is leading the world in the daily average number of new deaths reported and accounts for one in every four deaths worldwide each day, according to a Reuters analysis.

The World Health Organisation acknowledged the nation's dire condition due to coronavirus, saying the country is in a very critical condition with an overwhelmed healthcare system.

"Indeed there is a very serious situation going on in Brazil right now, where we have a number of

states in critical condition," WHO epidemiologist Maria Van Kerkhove told a briefing last Thursday, adding that many hospital intensive care units are more than 90% full.

India reported a record rise in COVID-19 infections on Monday, becoming the second nation after the United States to post more than 100,000 new cases in a day.

India's worst-affected state, Maharashtra on Monday began shutting shopping malls, cinemas, bars, restaurants, and places of worship, as hospitals are being overrun by patients.

The European region, which includes 51 countries, has the highest total number of deaths at nearly 1.1 million.

Five European countries including the United Kingdom, Russia, France, Italy and Germany constitute about 60% of Europe's total coronavirus-related deaths.

The United States has the

highest number of deaths of any country at the world at 555,000 and accounts for about 19% of all deaths due to COVID-19 in the world. Cases have risen for the last three weeks but health officials believe the nation's rapid vaccination campaign may prevent a rise in deaths. A third of the population has received at least one dose of a vaccine.

At least 370.3 million people or nearly 4.75% of the global population have received a single dose of COVID-19 vaccine by Sunday, according to latest figures from research and data provider firm Our World in Data.