

News in brief

◆ **President Joko Widodo said on Wednesday he hoped Indonesia's COVID-19 vaccination rollout will hit one million shots a day by July, as authorities opened up inoculations to anyone aged over 18 in Jakarta to contain increased transmission in the capital.** Health officials in the world's fourth most populous country, which aims to vaccinate 181.5 million people by next year, are trying to speed up the rollout after facing some supply issues. During a visit to Depok, south of Jakarta, the president said he wanted vaccinations to hit a targeted 700,000 doses a day this month and then rise again.



Indonesia aims to speed up vaccinations as Jakarta opens to over 18s

◆ **Gunmen shot dead 10 Afghans working for the international demining organisation** the Halo Trust in an attack on their camp in the north of the country, Halo said yesterday. Halo did not attribute blame for Tuesday's attack, saying only that an "unknown

Gunmen kill at least 10 Afghans working for mine-clearing agency



armed group" carried it out. Afghan officials blamed it on Taliban insurgents. Reuters had earlier erroneously reported that Halo had said the Taliban were responsible for the killings.

◆ **One of the top universities in China is under fire for using women to lure applicants in a sexually suggestive online advertisement, with critics saying the college is objectifying women.**

Top Chinese university under fire for using sex to sell school



Nanjing University (NJU) used the advertisement on Weibo on Monday, the first day of the gaokao exams, China's national college entrance tests. The advertisement featured six photos of current students holding up signs in front of different parts of the campus. Two of the photos attracted the most criticism. One included a pretty woman holding up a sign that read, "Do you want to live at the library with me, from morning till night?" and the other said, "Do you want me to become part of your youth?"

◆ **A US pharmacist has been jailed for three years after pleading guilty to tampering with hundreds of Moderna coronavirus vaccines, the Justice Department said on Tuesday.** Steven R. Brandenburg, 46, "purposefully removed" vaccine vials from their refrigerator unit even though they must be stored at a certain temperature until used, court documents said. The pharmacist was also ordered to pay \$83,800 in compensation to the Wisconsin hospital where he worked. He removed the vials on two overnight shifts in December, leaving them outside for hours before returning them to be used on

US pharmacist jailed for 3 years after tampering with Covid vaccines



recipients the following day. A total of 57 people received vaccines with the vials that Brandenburg had tampered with, the Justice Department statement said.

Three killed in Russian COVID-19 ward blaze, official blames ventilator



A view shows firefighting vehicles following an accident at a hospital in the city of Ryazan, Russia

Reuters

Three people were killed yesterday in a blaze that broke out at a Russian hospital treating patients with COVID-19, the authorities said, with one official suggesting a faulty ventilator was to blame.

Since the start of the pandemic, Russia has reported several fires at intensive care units that doctors said were caused by malfunctioning ventilators used to treat patients severely ill with the virus.

The fire broke out in the early hours of Wednesday at a hospital in the city of Ryazan, some 180 kilometres (112 miles) from Moscow, in a ward

treating COVID-19 patients.

The region's governor, Nikolai Lyubimov, told state television that a ventilator in the ward had overheated and caught fire, the Interfax news agency reported.

Nurses attempted to extinguish the blaze, but were unsuccessful in doing so, with some of them sustaining severe burns, the governor said.

The Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, said it had opened a criminal case to determine whether the fire had been caused by negligence. It said the investigation was considering different possible causes of the blaze.

Iraq releases Iran-aligned commander arrested on terror charges



Qasim Muslih, who commands the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) is seen after being released in Kerbala, Iraq

Reuters

Iraq has released an Iran-aligned militia commander arrested in May on terrorism-related charges after authorities found insufficient evidence against him, in the latest blow to government attempts to rein in armed groups.

Security forces arrested Qasim Muslih, an Iran-aligned paramilitary leader who operates mostly in Iraq's western Anbar province and is from the southern holy city of Kerbala, on May 26.

The military had said the charges were terrorism-related but did not give details.

Security officials said at the time the arrest was linked to attacks on US forces stationed in Iraq. Some media and an-

alysts said it was because of Muslih's alleged involvement in the killing of peaceful pro-democracy activists.

Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi has placed himself publicly in opposition to Iran-backed militias and parties, and Muslih's arrest was a major attempt to rein in their power.

His release without prosecution is a blow to those efforts and one of a number of unsuccessful attempts to crack down on armed groups.

The two most high-profile moves against Iran-backed factions - the arrest of Muslih in May and the detention in June 2020 of fighters allegedly involved in rocket fire against U.S. targets - have each resulted in no prosecutions and all those arrested being released.

UAE bars entry for travellers from Zambia, DR Congo, Uganda

Reuters

The United Arab Emirates will suspend entry for travellers coming from Zambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda starting June 11, as part of efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus, the state news agency WAM said yesterday.

Malaysia king meets politicians as discontent rumbles over virus crisis

Reuters

Malaysia's king started a series of meetings with leaders of political parties on Wednesday, amid public discontent over the government's handling of a coronavirus crisis that has forced the nation into a third lockdown.

Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin's administration imposed strict COVID-19 measures from June 1-14 to address a surge in infections and deaths, on top of an ongoing national emergency to curb the spread of the disease.

But those have led to public frustration over a perceived slow rollout of vaccinations, haphazard policymaking and uneven enforcement of coronavirus curbs that critics say royalty and elites have been allowed to skirt.

Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, who spent an hour on Wednesday with King Al-Sultan Abdullah, said the national emergency has done more harm than good.



Malaysia's King, Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah, inspects an honour guard during the 62nd Merdeka Day (Independence Day) celebrations in Putrajaya, Malaysia

**Man he...
medic...**



Still images taken from a video show a man

● **A police source identified the suspect as 28-year-old Damien Tarel**

● **Macron was on a tour to take the pulse of the country before the next presidential election**

Reuters

The man alleged to have slapped French President Emmanuel Macron in the

Israel appeal Charles over

Reuters | Jerusalem

Israel's president appealed to Prince Charles yesterday to help bring to Israel a 2-year-old Israeli girl with a serious brain injury, after the High Court in London ruled that her life-sustaining care in a British hospital be withdrawn.

The family of Alta Fixsler say their Ultra-Orthodox Jewish faith means they cannot agree with any course of action that would bring her death any closer. They have sought to appeal the May 28 ruling.

In its decision, the court found that no action could improve Alta's condition and that the transfer procedure itself could cause her suffering.

In a letter on Wednesday, Israeli

COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths	Global tally
1 USA	34,242,866	613,052	174,822,809
2 India	29,089,069	353,557	
3 Brazil	17,038,260	477,307	Deaths
4 France	5,719,937	110,137	
5 Turkey	5,300,236	48,341	3,764,741
6 Russia	5,156,250	124,895	
7 UK	4,528,442	127,854	Recovered:
8 Italy	4,235,592	126,690	
9 Argentina	4,008,771	82,667	158,276,479
10 Germany	3,712,595	90,084	
11 Spain	3,711,027	80,309	New cases
12 Colombia	3,611,602	92,923	
13 Iran	2,990,714	81,519	+87,125
14			

Middle East

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	269,527		15,437		197,832	56,258
Saudi Arabia	461,242	+1,274	7,503	+15	443,810	9,929
UAE	587,244		1,704		566,677	18,863
Kuwait	320,257		1,801		303,637	14,819
Oman	228,579	+1,931	2,448	+14	206,844	19,287
Qatar	218,980		570		215,899	2,511

Elephants in India 1

AFP | Coimbatore, India

Twenty-eight elephants have been tested for Covid-19 at a forest reserve in southern India, officials said yesterday, after the reported death of a rare Asiatic lion from the virus.

In what is believed to be the first known death of an animal in India from the coronavirus, a nine-year-old lioness at a zoo in Chennai in Tamil Nadu state passed away in early June, local media reported.

The feline was among nine lions that had tested positive for the virus, including two who were in critical condition, Chennai's The New Indian Express newspaper reported last week.