

News in brief

◆ **After much delay and on the cusp of a third wave of Covid-19 infections, South Africa yesterday launched a large-scale immunisation drive, targeting around five million people aged over 60 by the end of June.** Health Minister Zweli Mkhize was on hand as nurses administered jabs at an elderly care facility in the mining town of Krugersdorp, around 30 kilometres (18 miles) west of Johannesburg. Among the first seniors to receive their vaccinations under the mainstream campaign was 89-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner and retired archbishop Desmond Tutu.



South Africa launches large-scale vaccination rollout

◆ **Britons streamed into pubs, museums and other indoor venues on Monday as the country eased pandemic restrictions.** "Together we have reached another milestone in our roadmap out of lockdown, but we must take this next step with a heavy dose of caution," British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Sunday. "We are keeping the spread of the variant first identified in India under close observation and taking swift action where infection rates are rising." Across England, Wales and most of Scotland, people on Monday could once again grab a drink, a bite and dine inside pubs, restaurants and cafes.

Britain eases virus lockdown



◆ **The US military has offered to provide some Johnson & Johnson's (J&J) coronavirus vaccines for South Korean troops,** the defence ministry said on Monday, as South Korea struggles with a shortage of COVID-19 shots. The offer comes days before President Moon Jae-in is due to visit Washington for his first summit with U.S. President Joe Biden, amid calls for Moon to secure more and faster deliveries of U.S.-made vaccines.

US military offers J&J vaccines for South Korean troops



◆ **Thailand reported a new daily high of nearly 10,000 coronavirus cases yesterday, more than two-thirds of them in prisons, as the kingdom battles its third wave of the pandemic.** The kingdom's Covid-19 task force reported 9,635 new cases, 6,853 of which were among prisoners. Nearly half of 24,000 inmates tested at eight prisons, mainly in Bangkok and its suburbs, including several where prominent democracy activists have been detained, were found to have the virus.

Thailand virus cases soar with prison clusters

◆ **Cannabis and cocaine seized in big Niger and South Africa drug busts**

◆ **Drugs with a street value of nearly 100 million euros have been seized in operations in Africa and the Middle East, including two major busts that show how traffickers are packing larger loads into their shipments, Interpol said yesterday.** Interpol worked with customs and police officials from 41 countries for two operations in March and April that coordinated enforcement action at borders and other hotspots.

COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths	Global tally
1 USA	33,727,307	600,308	164,139,714
2 India	25,227,970	278,751	
3 Brazil	15,627,475	435,823	
4 France	5,877,787	107,616	3,400,790
5 Turkey	5,127,548	44,983	
6 Russia	4,949,573	116,211	Recovered: 142,832,376
7 UK	4,452,756	127,684	
8 Italy	4,162,576	124,296	New cases +185,707
9 Spain	3,615,860	79,432	
10 Germany	3,608,143	86,860	New deaths +3,171
11 Argentina	3,307,285	70,522	
12 Colombia	3,118,426	81,300	
13 Poland	2,855,190	71,675	
14 Iran	2,765,485	77,222	

Middle East

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	245,721		14,327		181,478	49,916
Saudi Arabia	433,980	+886	7,174	+12	418,914	7,892
UAE	547,411	+1,229	1,633	+2	527,519	18,259
Kuwait	291,629		1,693		277,820	12,116
Oman	206,297	+786	2,206	+13	191,065	13,026
Qatar	213,485	+302	532	+2	207,796	5,157



Bill Gates had an affair with an employee

Reuters

Microsoft conducted a probe into co-founder Bill Gates' involvement with an employee almost 20 years ago after it was told in 2019 that he had tried

to start a romantic relationship with the person, the company said on Monday. Microsoft said it had received a concern in the latter half of 2019 that Gates "had sought to initiate an intimate relationship with a company employee in the year 2000," a Microsoft spokesman said in a statement. "A committee of the Board reviewed the concern, aided by an outside law firm to conduct a thorough investigation. Throughout the investigation, Microsoft provided extensive support

to the employee who raised the concern," the statement said. **The Wall Street Journal reported on Sunday that Microsoft's board had decided that Gates' involvement with the female employee was inappropriate and he needed to step down in 2020, citing people familiar with the matter.**

The Microsoft spokesman declined to comment on whether the board had decided it should go. In a statement to the Street Journal, a spokesman for Gates said his decision to leave the board of Microsoft had nothing to do with his involvement as an employee. "There was an affair most 20 years ago which ended amicably. Bill's decision to transition off the board was in no way related to this matter," the statement said. "In fact, he had expressed an interest in spending



The affair came to light after the Microsoft employee wrote to the board in 2019 detailing it - and allegedly asked that Gates' estranged wife Melinda Gates, 56, read the letter.

2020

Gates, 65, quit the board suddenly in March 2020 while the investigation was still underway.



Chile's gov't in shock loss as voters pick independents to draft constitution



Poll workers wearing protective masks sort through and count the votes

Reuters

Chile's center-right ruling coalition suffered a shock loss on Sunday night after failing to secure a critical one-third of seats in the body that will draft the country's new constitution. With 90% of the votes counted, candidates backed by President Sebastian Pinera's centre-right Chile Vamos coalition had won only a fifth while independents picked up the most votes. New proposals will require two-thirds approval and without a third of the delegates, the government will struggle to block radical changes to the constitution unless it can forge new alliances. The result and defeats for Chile Vamos candidates in mayoral, gubernatorial and municipal elections held at the same time bode ill for the ruling coalition ahead of general and presidential elections in November.

France, Germany and Spain strike deal over joint combat jet

Reuters



France, Germany and Spain said on Monday they had reached a deal over the next steps of the development of a new fighter jet, Europe's largest defence project at an estimated cost of more than 100 billion euros (\$121.4 billion). France in particular has billed the combat jet project -- which includes a next-generation manned and unmanned aircraft -- as crucial for Europe to strengthen its defence autonomy and face competition from China, Russia and the United States. The next development phase for the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) is expected to cost 3.5 billion euros (\$4.25

billion), to be shared equally by the three countries. "France, Germany and Spain are building one of the most important tools for their sovereignty and that of Europe in the 21st century," French Armed Forces Minister Florence Parly tweeted. France's Dassault Aviation, Airbus and Indra - the latter two representing Germany and Spain respectively - are involved in the scheme to start replacing French Rafale and German and Spanish Eurofighters from 2040. The sum will cover finalisation of the designs of both the combat jet and drone by 2024 and the building of demonstrators for both.

Monster cyclone

AFP News

More than 200,000 people were evacuated from their homes in the Indian state of Gujarat and authorities shut ports and major airports as the most powerful cyclone in more than two decades made landfall in the state late yesterday. Rain intensified and several incidents of power outages were reported in the state. Electricity pylons and trees were uprooted and buildings were damaged in coastal areas of Gujarat, state authorities said. With the worst of the storm expected to last for several hours after it slammed into the state's coast, it piles more pressure on Indian authorities already struggling with a huge caseload of COVID-19 infections. "This cyclone is a terrible double blow for millions of people in India whose families have been

Bengal tiger found unharmed

AFP News

A Bengal tiger last seen a week ago roaming the lawns of suburban Houston and terrifying locals has been found unharmed and was moved Sunday to an animal sanctuary, police said. "We got him, and he's healthy," Houston police commander Ron Borza was seen saying in a video. The animal, named India, had been in the custody of the wife of its owner, a 26-year-old man seen in social media videos last week kissing the untethered tiger before placing it into his car and driving off. The man, identified as Victor



A Bengal tiger called "India" is seen in a cage after being captured by authorities nearly a week after being seen roaming in Houston