

News in brief

◆ **British Prime Minister Boris Johnson sought to avoid a second lockdown last autumn, arguing that most of those dying were over 80, according to his former aide-turned bitter foe Dominic Cummings.**



UK PM resisted 2nd lockdown as 'most dying over 80': ex-aide

In a BBC interview airing on Tuesday, the mastermind of Johnson's anti-EU Brexit campaign said his former boss "put his own political interests ahead of people's lives". In the latest of a series of attacks on the government following his resignation as chief Downing Street advisor in November, Cummings shared WhatsApp messages apparently from Johnson. In one message shown by Cummings to the BBC, the prime minister allegedly wrote in October that most people were dying from the virus at an age above the average life expectancy.

◆ **Stabbing attempt on Mali interim president**



◆ **Two armed men, including one who wielded a knife, attacked Mali's interim president Assimi Goita yesterday in the great**

mosque in the capital Bamako, a journalist saw. The attack took place during prayers for the Islamic festival of Eid al-Adha. Goita has since been taken from the scene, according to the journalist, who said it was not immediately clear whether he had been wounded. Religious Affairs Minister Mamadou Kone told AFP that a man had "tried to kill the president with a knife" but was apprehended.

◆ **A confidante of deposed Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi and stalwart**

Confidante of Myanmar's Suu Kyi dies after contracting Covid in junta jail



democracy campaigner died

Tuesday after becoming infected with Covid-19 in prison, authorities said. Nyan Win, a veteran senior member and former spokesperson of the National League for Democracy (NLD) party -- led by Suu Kyi -- was 78. He had been arrested after the February 1 coup removed the NLD from power and was held in Yangon's notorious Insein prison on charges of sedition.

◆ **China reports its first death of a human from rare Monkey B virus**



report Saturday.

◆ **A man in China has died after contracting a rare infectious disease from primates, known as the Monkey B virus, Chinese health officials revealed in a**

The victim, a 53-year-old veterinarian based in Beijing, was the first documented human case of the virus in China. According to the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the man worked in a research institute that specialized in nonhuman primate breeding and dissected two dead monkeys in March. He experienced nausea, vomiting and fever a month later, and died May 27. His blood and saliva samples were sent to the center in April, where researchers found evidence of the Monkey B virus. Two of his close contacts, a male doctor and a female nurse, tested negative for the virus, officials said.

COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths
1 USA	35,018,753	624,983
2 India	31,181,493	414,657
3 Brazil	19,391,845	542,877
4 Russia	6,006,536	149,922
5 France	5,871,881	111,492
6 Turkey	5,537,386	50,604
7 UK	5,473,477	128,727
8 Argentina	4,769,142	101,955
9 Colombia	4,655,921	116,753
10 Italy	4,289,528	127,874
11 Spain	4,161,850	81,119
12 Germany	3,753,835	91,921
13 Iran	3,576,148	87,624
14 Indonesia	2,950,058	76,200

Global tally

191,897,948

Deaths

4,116,137

Recovered:

174,697,664

New cases

+199,006

New deaths

+3,499

Figures as of closing

Middle East

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	283,762		16,452		224,299	43,011
Saudi Arabia	512,142	+1,273	8,103	+14	493,240	10,799
UAE	664,027	+1,541	1,904	+4	641,750	20,373
Kuwait	386,869		2,238		368,420	16,211
Oman	289,042		3,498		263,752	21,792
Qatar	224,402		599		222,257	1,546



Pilgrims stone the dev

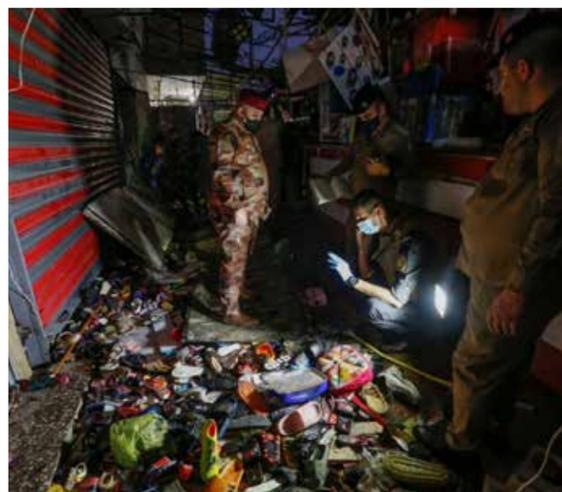
Reuters | Jamarat, Saudi Arabia

Restrictions aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19 during the Hajj in Saudi Arabia have also reduced the risk of the deadly crowd crushes that have marred the pilgrimage's symbolic stoning of the devil in past years, worshippers said yesterday. Before the pandemic, the annual Hajj rite typically drew more than two million faithful from

around the world, with crowding regularly leading to dangerous incidents, most recently a 2015 stampede that killed hundreds. But only a limited number of mask-clad pilgrims hurled pebbles at a wall in a symbolic renunciation of the devil - historically the Hajj's riskiest ceremony - during Tuesday's Eid al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice). For the second year running Saudi Arabia has banned worshippers from abroad and has allowed only 60,000 citizens and residents to participate in the Hajj. "In the past it was overly

pilgrims hold stones before casting them at a pillar symbolizing Satan

Suicide attack in Iraq's Sadr City kills at least 35, wounds dozens



Iraqi security forces inspect the site of an explosion in Sadr City district of Baghdad, Iraq

Reuters | Baghdad

A suicide bomber killed at least 35 people and wounded dozens in a crowded market in the Sadr City neighbourhood of Baghdad on Monday, the eve of the Eid al-Adha festival, security and hospital sources said.

More than 60 people were wounded, a police source said. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack, the group's Nasheer news agency said on Telegram. It said one of its militants blew up his explosive vest among the crowds. Hospital sources said the death toll could rise as some of the wounded were in critical condition.

Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi held an urgent meeting with top security commanders to discuss the attack, the premier's office said in a brief statement.

President Barham Salih posted a tweet saying: "With an awful crime they target civilians in Sadr city on the eve of Eid ... We will not rest before terrorism is cut off by its roots."

In April, the Sunni Muslim militant group Islamic State claimed responsibility for a car bomb attack on a market in Sadr City, Baghdad's main Shi'ite Muslim neighbourhood, that killed four people and wounded 20.

Islamic State also claimed responsibility for a bomb attack last January that killed more than 30 in the crowded Tayaran Square market in central Baghdad - Iraq's first big suicide bombing for three years.

Large bomb attacks were once an almost daily occurrence in the Iraqi capital but have dwindled since an Islamic State invasion of northern and western Iraq was defeated in 2017.

Subway passengers trapped waist-high in floodwaters as Chinese river banks burst



A resident wearing a rain cover stands on a flooded road in Zhengzhou, Henan province, China

Reuters | Beijing

Heavy rain pounded the central Chinese province of Henan yesterday, bursting the banks of major rivers, flooding the streets of a dozen cities and trapping subway passengers waist-high in floodwaters.

Henan, a populous province double the size of Austria, has been hit by storms since the weekend in an unusually active rainy season.

No deaths or casualties have been reported, but the daily lives of the province's 94 million people have been upended by transport closures.

In Zhengzhou, the capital of Henan on the banks of the Yellow River, more than 200 mm of rain fell in one hour on Tuesday, forcing the city to stop all subway train services.

Dramatic video shared on social media showed commuters waist-deep in murky floodwaters on a subway train and an underground station turned into a large, churning pool.

Henan is a major logistics hub

but train services were suspended, while many highways were closed and flights delayed or cancelled.

In Ruzhou, a city southwest of Zhengzhou, streets have been turned into torrents, sweeping away cars and other vehicles, footage on social media showed.

A rising Yi River also threatened to hit the Longmen Grottoes, a UNESCO World Heritage site featuring millennium-old Buddhist statues etched into limestone cliffs near the city of Luoyang.

Like the Longmen Grottoes, the Shaolin Temple in Dengfeng city, famous in the West for its martial arts, has been temporarily shut.

Also in Dengfeng, an aluminium alloy plant exploded on Tuesday as water from a river surged into the factory.

At least 31 large and medium-sized reservoirs in the province have exceeded their warning levels.

From Saturday to Tuesday, 3,535 weather stations in Henan saw rainfall exceed 50 mm, of which 1,614 registered levels above 100 mm and 151 above 250 mm.