

China says WHO gave blessing for vaccine emergency use

China has said that the World Health Organisation allowed it to use coronavirus vaccine for emergency use while clinical trials are still underway

● Hundreds of thousands of essential workers and others considered at high risk of infection have been given the vaccine

Reuters | Beijing

The World Health Organization gave China its support and understanding to start administering experimental coronavirus vaccines to people while clinical trials were still underway, a Chinese health official said yesterday.

China launched its emergency programme in July, having communicated with the WHO in late June, according to Zheng Zhongwei, a National Health Commission official.

Hundreds of thousands essential workers and other limited groups of people considered at high risk of infection have been given the vaccine, even though its efficacy and safety had not been fully established



A technician works in a lab in China producing potential COVID-19 vaccine

as Phase 3 clinical trials were incomplete.

“At end-June, China’s State Council approved a plan of COVID-19 vaccine emergency use program,” Zheng told a news conference.

“After the approval, on June 29, we made a communication with the relevant representatives of the WHO Office in China, and obtained support and understanding from WHO,” Zheng said.

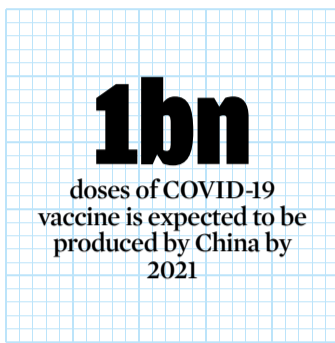
WHO’s representative in China did not immediately respond

to a request for comment.

WHO chief scientist Soumya Swaminathan said in Geneva this month that national regulatory authorities could approve use of medical products within their own jurisdictions in the current emergency situation, but described that as a “temporary solution”.

The long-term solution lay in completion of Phase 3 trials, the WHO official said.

Beijing has not publicly released full details of its emergency use programme.



At least three vaccination candidates, including two developed by state-backed China National Biotech Group (CNBG) and one from Sinovac Biotech, all in Phase 3 trials overseas, are included in the emergency use programme.

A fourth experimental vaccine developed by CanSino Biologics were approved to be used in the Chinese military in June.

China’s annual production capacity of COVID-19 vaccines is expected to reach 610 million doses by end-2020 and 1 billion doses by 2021, Zheng said.

In China, the vaccine price will be affordable for the general public, Zheng added.

Lake Trump? Disputed reservoir could be named after US president

AFP | Washington

In addition to his own golf clubs and hotels, Donald Trump may soon have a lake named after him following proposals to christen a contested Balkan reservoir in his honour.

The lake in question is a 24-kilometre (15-mile) stretch



The lake at Serbia and Kosovo’s border

of water straddling the border of former war foes Serbia and Kosovo, who both claim ownership and have different names for it.

A huge banner appeared Thursday on Kosovo’s side of the reservoir reading “Lake Trump”, while another hung over a bridge thanked Trump

for “bringing peace” following recent US-brokered agreements between Kosovo and Serbia.

The tussle over ownership of the lake -- called Ujman in Kosovo and Gazivode in Serbia -- is one of many disputes still haunting the neighbours 20 years after they broke apart in war.

News in brief

Poll shows jump in Bolsonaro approval amid pandemic



◆ The approval rating of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro’s government has jumped, with the right-wing leader enjoying growing popularity even as Brazil suffers the world’s second highest COVID-19 death-toll, a poll showed.

The number of Brazilians that rate his government as great or good has risen to 40% from 29% in December, while those that view it as bad or terrible has dropped to 29% from 38% in the previous poll, the survey by CNI/Ibope said.

◆ A British police officer has been shot dead by a man who was being detained at a custody centre in south London.

Police said incident occurred while a man was being detained at the Croydon Custody Centre at about 2.15 a.m. The unnamed officer was treated at the scene and taken to hospital where he died. A 23-year-old man was detained at the scene of the shooting and was taken to hospital having also suffered a gunshot wound. He is in a critical condition in hospital.

UK police officer shot dead at custody centre in south London



US executes seventh federal inmate in three months

◆ The United States executed an African-American man sentenced to death for a 1999 double murder, the seventh execution of a federal inmate in three months despite pleas from his lawyers that he was not mentally an adult at the time of the crime.

Christopher Andre Valva, 40, died by lethal injection at 6:46 pm at the federal prison at Terre Haute, Indiana, the Department of Justice said.

◆ The United States executed an African-American man sentenced to death for a 1999 double murder, the seventh execution of a federal inmate in three months despite pleas from his lawyers that he was not mentally an adult at the time of the crime.

The State Department rescinded an award for a Finnish journalist who reported on Russian disinformation after spotting her social media postings critical of President Donald Trump, an internal review said. The State Department’s inspector general found that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had agreed to give the International Women of Courage award, to be presented in March 2019 for International Women’s Day, to journalist Jessikka Aro.

US rescinded prize to Finnish journalist for tweeting on Trump

Rio scraps famed carnival



◆ Brazil has postponed Rio de Janeiro’s famed carnival for next year, the latest spectacle hit by the pandemic as governments across the globe struggle to contain a surge in coronavirus infections. Rio’s carnival, famous for its gyrating Samba dancers, drummers and dancing crowds, draws millions for all night parties in packed streets, making social distancing all but impossible. Brazil now has the world’s second highest death toll after the United States -- nearly 140,000 fatalities -- and is still battling to bring the virus under control.

◆ Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed concluding a pact with Washington against interfering in one another’s elections and internal affairs, just weeks before the US hosts a divisive presidential vote. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov read out Putin’s statement in a video released by the ministry, while the Kremlin chief was visiting massive military drills involving China and Iran in southern Russia.

Putin proposes election non-interference pact with US

No decision on Assange extradition before US vote: UK judge

AFP | London

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange will have to wait until after the US election to find out whether he will be extradited to face espionage charges there, the British judge presiding over his hearing said yesterday.

Assange faces 18 charges in the US relating to the 2010 release by WikiLeaks of 500,000 secret files detailing aspects of military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Evidence in the extradition hearing at London’s Old Bailey court is due to close next week, but judge Vanessa Baraitser agreed to Assange’s lawyer’s request for time to prepare his closing arguments.

“Evidently it seems unlikely we will be able to get judgment before November 4,” lawyer Edward Fitzgerald, representing the Australian, told the court.

“You have to bear in mind there is an election and the future is uncertain.”

Pope rejects ‘erosion of multilateralism’ in UN speech

AFP | Vatican City

Pope Francis warned world leaders yesterday against a growing breakdown of multilateralism, appealing in a speech to the United Nations for an end to what he called a global “climate of distrust”.

“At present we are witnessing an erosion of multilateralism, which is all the more serious in light of the development of new forms of military technology,” the Argentine pope said in a video address to the UN General Assembly in New York.

“We need to break with the present climate of distrust,” said the pontiff, who called for relaxing international sanc-



Pope Francis

tions as harmful to civilian populations, without citing specific countries.

Francis’ sharply worded rebuke to the UN did not call out any one nation or leader.

But the spiritual head of 1.3 billion Catholics worldwide reproached the international community for what he characterized as a lax and disjointed response to a host of pressing social issues, including human rights, refugees and humanitarian crises, destruction of the environment, economic inequality and nuclear proliferation.

He contrasted his comments before the body to his last address in person in 2015, a time “marked by truly dynamic multilateralism,” he said.

“At present we are witnessing an erosion of multilateralism, which is all the more serious in light of the development of new forms of military technology. We need to break with the present climate of distrust”

POPE FRANCIS

Global		Countries worst affected						
Country	Total cases	New cases	Total Deaths	New deaths				
Covid-19 Cases:	32,653,305							
Deaths:	990,918							
Recovered:	24,090,934							
New cases:	+224,094							
New deaths:	+3,765							
Middle East		Figures as of closing						
Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases	Serious, Critical	Tot cases/1m pop
Egypt	102,513		5,835		92,644	4,034	41	997
Saudi Arabia	332,329	+472	4,625	+26	315,636	12,068	1,043	9,512
UAE	89,540	+1,008	409	+2	78,819	10,312		9,028
Kuwait	102,441	+590	595	+3	93,562	8,284	111	23,906
Oman	95,907		885		86,765	8,257	185	18,674
Qatar	124,650	+225	212		121,512	2,926	63	44,394