

**MUSTREAD**

**Russia records 28,717 new Covid-19 cases**

**Moscow:** Russia recorded 28,717 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, up from 28,190 the day before, bringing the cumulative total to 7,861,681, the federal response center said on Wednesday. "Over the past day, 28,717 COVID-19 cases were confirmed across 85 Russian regions, including 2,493 cases (8.7 percent) without clinical symptoms," the center said, adding that the rate of increase grew to 0.37 percent. Moscow has the highest number of new cases with 4,410 daily infections, down from 4,699 the day before. The Russian capital is followed by St. Petersburg with 2,470 cases, up from 2,158, and the Moscow region with 1,898 cases, up from 1,804.

**S Korea reports 3,405 new cases of COVID-19**

**Seoul:** South Korea reported 3,405 more cases of COVID-19 variants over the past week, bringing the total number of such cases to 39,671, the health authorities said Wednesday. Among the new infections detected in the week until Oct. 9, 138 were imported cases while the remaining 3,267 were locally transmitted, according to the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA). The far higher number of locally acquired cases indicated a domestic spread of COVID-19 virus variants in the Asian country. Of the new cases, 3,401 came from the Delta variant, and four from Alpha.

**Pakistan reports 1,021 new COVID-19 cases**

**Islamabad:** Pakistan on Tuesday reported 1,021 new confirmed cases of COVID-19, the National Command and Operation Center (NCOCC) said on Wednesday. The NCOCC, a department leading campaign against the pandemic, said that the country has conducted 19,997,075 tests so far, confirming overall 1,260,669 cases, including 1,191,425 recoveries. The number of active cases has dropped to 41,070 who are under treatment in different hospitals across the country, including 2,257 those who are in critical condition. According to the NCOCC, the pandemic killed 21 people on Tuesday, raising the overall death toll to 28,173.

**Malaysia reports 7,276 new COVID-19 infections, 103 new deaths**

**Kuala Lumpur:** Malaysia reported another 7,276 new COVID-19 infections as of midnight Tuesday, bringing the national total to 2,353,579, according to the health ministry. None of the new cases are imported, with all being local transmissions, data released on the ministry's website showed. Another 103 more deaths have been reported, bringing the death toll to 27,525. About 10,555 patients have been released after recovery, bringing the total number of cured and discharged to 2,217,057.

**Chinese mainland reports 22 new COVID-19 cases**

**Beijing:** The Chinese mainland reported 22 new confirmed COVID-19 cases, all imported from outside the mainland, the National Health Commission said in its daily report on Wednesday. Among these cases, eight were reported in Guangxi, five in Yunnan, two each in Shanghai and Guangdong, and one each in Beijing, Tianjin, Zhejiang, Fujian and Shandong, according to the commission, adding that the new case in Zhejiang was previously an asymptomatic case. Shanghai reported one new suspected case who arrived from outside the mainland, it said. There were no new deaths from COVID-19.

**Philippines reports 7,181 new Covid-19 cases**

**Manila:** The Philippines' Department of Health (DOH) reported 7,181 new COVID-19 infections on Wednesday, pushing the number of confirmed cases in the Southeast Asian country to 2,690,455. The DOH also reported that 173 more people died from COVID-19 complications, bringing the country's death toll to 40,069. Wednesday's caseload is the lowest since Aug. 3. "The relatively low cases today is due to lower laboratory output (on) Monday," the DOH said in a statement.

**Armenia keen to join Chabahar port in Iran, says Jaishankar**

**Yerevan (Armenia)/New Delhi (UNI)**  
External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who is on a two-day visit to Armenia, on Wednesday said that Armenia has evinced interest in joining the Chabahar port in Iran being developed by India and both sides have proposed that the port could be included in the International North South Transport Corridor.  
In his media remarks after a bilateral meeting with his Armenian counterpart Ararat Mirzoyan, Jaishankar said they also discussed the possibility of starting direct flights between the two countries.  
Jaishankar said he had a very fruitful meeting with the Armenian foreign minister with a comprehensive review of the bilateral relations. "We also discussed regional and multilateral issues and most important we agreed on a roadmap for future cooperation. Both agreed that while bilateral relations have expanded there is clearly scope for further strengthening our economic and commercial cooperation, especially in tourism, hospitality, infrastructure sectors," he said.  
He said the lack of land and air connectivity is a hindrance to enhancing people to people contacts and economic and commercial exchanges.  
"Both India and Armenia are part of the International North South Transport Corridor which



has the potential to bridge the connectivity barrier," he said, adding that both ministers "discussed the interest that Armenia has shown in utilisation of the Chabahar port in Iran which is being developed by India".  
"We've also proposed that Chabahar port be included in the INSTC," he added.  
"We also discussed the possibilities of direct flights between our

two countries."  
Armenia is a member of the Eurasia Economic Union and India is currently negotiating a trade agreement with the Eurasia Economic Union "and I am sure it will boost our trade relations", he added. He said both had agreed "to encourage the business community, chambers and trade bodies on both sides to engage more and the government will play the role of facilitator".  
He said an Indian business team visited Armenia last month to participate in 30th edition of the Armenian Expo, which was the first visit post Covid. "I am confident there will be more visits which will give further impetus to bilateral trade and commerce".  
He said the relations between the two nations go back several centuries, and there is recorded history of Indian diaspora in the landlocked country in the Caucasus, and that India has a rich Armenian heritage.

**Billionaire Alibaba founder Jack Ma reappears in Hong Kong**  
**Agencies, Hong Kong:** Alibaba Group founder Jack Ma, largely out of public view since a regulatory clamp-down started on his business empire late last year, is currently in Hong Kong and has met business associates in recent days, two sources told Reuters.  
The Chinese billionaire has been keeping a low profile since delivering a speech in October last year in Shanghai criticising China's financial regulators. That triggered a chain of events that resulted in the shelving of his Ant Group's mega IPO.  
While Ma made a limited number of public appearances in mainland China after that, as speculation swirled about his whereabouts, one of the sources said the visit marked his first trip to the Asian financial hub since last October.



**Philippines shifts to practical, achievable approach to reverse global warming**

**Manila (UNI/Xinhua)**  
The Philippines has refreshed its climate change commission (CCC) by appointing new technical experts doing "practical and achievable work" on the ground to reverse the "apocalyptic course" of global warming.  
Philippine Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez said Wednesday that the new commission's panel of technical experts mirrors the country's paradigm shift in its stepped-up drive to combat climate change. The strategy now moves from merely delving on theories to implementing on the ground "practical and achievable" applications to help reverse the "apocalyptic course" of global warming, he added.  
To mobilize people to help save the planet from the worsening environmental crisis, the CCC will have to implement at the local level "achievable" mitigation and adaptation programs that will help "build



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the resilience of our communities, reverse the degradation, and protect our vital food sources," Dominguez said in an online briefing Wednesday. He said the CCC's reconstituted 16-member national panel of technical experts (NTPE) will provide the practical advice urgently needed by the climate change body to effectively implement these programs and help engage and educate local communities in adopting them.  
Dominguez, the CCC chairperson-designate, called for the reconstitution of the NTPE following the Philippines' declaration of its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75 percent over the next decade as its nationally determined contribution (NDC) to the Paris Agreement.  
The Philippines submitted its first NDC, with a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75 percent by 2030. "We will achieve that commitment. To do so, we need to implement achievable programs on the ground. We need to convince our people that climate change is reversible if we all act together and begin reducing our carbon footprint," Dominguez said in the online briefing where he introduced the new NTPE members.

**China claims it's military drills near Taiwan aimed at preventing outside interference**

**Beijing (UNI/Sputnik)**  
China conducts military exercises near the border with Taiwan to guard its "national sovereignty" and prevent foreign interference in the relations between China and Taiwan, Ma Xiaoguang, spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, said on Wednesday.  
"The PLA (People's Liberation Army) exercises are necessary actions to protect state sovereignty and territorial integrity, they are aimed against separatist movements advocating 'Taiwan independence' and external interference," the diplomat told a briefing.  
The drills are also aimed at protecting the interests of the Chinese people, as well as specific interests of "Taiwanese compatriots,"  
The island's independence would bring "disastrous effects" to them the Taiwanese people, Ma



Xiaoguang said conveying a veiled threat.  
"The security and well-being of Taiwanese compatriots can be ensured only through resolutely restraining attempts of [achieving Taiwan's] 'independence,'" he added.  
Last week, Taiwanese Defense Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng said that Beijing might consider mounting a full-scale invasion of the island by 2025. The statement came after Beijing sent nearly 150 military aircraft into Taiwan's air defense zone on October 1. Taiwan has been independent since 1949. Beijing claims the island as its province, while Taiwan — a territory with its own democratically elected government — maintains that it is an autonomous country and has political and economic relations with several other nations that recognize its sovereignty.

**Naravane meets Sri Lankan Defence Secretary, Chief of Defence Staff in Colombo**



**Agencies, Colombo**  
Indian Army Chief General MM Naravane on Wednesday met Sri Lankan Defence Secretary General Kamal Gunaratne (Retd) and Chief of Defence Staff and Commander of Sri Lankan Army General Shavendra Silva and expressed keen interest in exploring newer avenues for deepening ties between India and Sri Lanka.  
Taking to Twitter, Indian High Commission in Colombo said, "Gen MM Naravane #COAS #IndianArmy met Defence Secretary Gen Kamal Gunaratne (Retd), & Gen @SilvaShavendra CDS&Cdr of #lkaArmy. Close camaraderie & cooperation were recalled. Expressed keen interest to explore newer avenues for deepening defence ties between India and Sri Lanka."

General Naravane arrived in Sri Lanka on Tuesday. He was welcomed by General Shavendra Silva, Chief of Defence Staff and Commander of Sri Lankan Army at the airport.  
"Gen Naravane arrived in Sri Lanka and was extended a warm welcome by General Shavendra Silva Chief of Defence Staff and Commander of Sri Lankan Army at the airport," the Indian Army said in a tweet.  
Indian High Commission in Colombo said in a tweet that the visit will pave the way for deeper cooperation in defence between India and Sri Lanka.  
General Naravane is on a five-day visit to strengthen bilateral military ties, according to army officials.

**Japan's largest opposition party focuses on human rights in party platform**

**Agencies, Tokyo**  
Japan's largest opposition group unveiled a marketing campaign platform on Wednesday that stated it could stand for rights like supporting same-sex marriage and completely different surnames for (couples), marking out variations with the conservative ruling party.  
The Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDPJ), led by Yukio Edano, is going through a vital check in the Oct 31 basic election, the primary it's contesting since its formation final 12 months, hoping to make a dent in the ruling party coalition that holds a transparent majority in parliament.  
But it's struggling in opinion polls, and with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) additionally emphasizing social security nets and related insurance policies lengthy espoused by the Democratic Party from which the CDPJ was fashioned, it's going through



a battle to stake out its personal territory.  
Party president Yukio Edano instructed a news convention that the emphasis on authorized steps in direction of range could be one of many greatest variations between the 2 teams — though the CDPJ additionally needs to steer away from nuclear energy, which the LDP would retain as an choice.  
"This is clearly our biggest difference — (allowing) couples with different surnames, equality laws for LGBTQ, and laws recognising same-sex marriage," he stated.  
"We'd like a comprehensive strengthening of human rights so nobody is left behind."  
The LDP stays socially conservative and, whereas progress has been made on LGBTQ rights in society, way more must be executed. New Prime Minister Fumio Kishida stated in the course of the LDP management race that he was not in favour of same-sex marriage, for instance.

**Five killed in Somali suicide bombing**

**Mogadishu:** At least five people were killed and six others injured in a suicide bombing in the Somali capital Mogadishu on Tuesday evening, police and witnesses said.  
A police officer who declined to be named told Xinhua that a suicide bomber walked into a restaurant near the Fagah intersection and blew himself up, resulting in the death of five people and injuries of several others.  
"We can confirm that five people died in the blast and six others got injured," he said.  
Witnesses said they heard a huge blast at Mogadishu's Fagah junction.  
"The blast was huge and I saw injured people being taken to the hospitals," said Abdurahman Mohamed, a witness.



**Differences crop up over new ISI chief**

**Pak PM Imran Khan wants Lt Gen Hameed to stay**  
**Islamabad (UNI)**  
Within days of the announcement of a new chief for its spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), differences appear to have cropped up between Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan and the all-powerful army establishment over the new appointment, with Imran Khan keen to continue with Lt Gen Faiz Hameed.  
On Tuesday, Imran Khan was huddled with the chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa to iron out differences over the appointment of Lt General Nadeem Ahmed Anjum.  
Imran Khan on Tuesday informed the federal cabinet that he had told Gen Bajwa that he wanted Lt Gen Faiz Hameed to continue as ISI director general for some time citing the critical situation in Afghanistan.  
Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf chief whip in the National Assembly Amir Dogar told Dawn news agency that Imran Khan and Gen

Bajwa held a detailed meeting late Monday night on the matter.  
Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry told the media on Tuesday that the issue of appointment of new ISI DG Lt Gen Nadeem Ahmed Anjum had been resolved and that the PM enjoyed the authority to appoint the chief of the country's premier spy agency in accordance with law and Constitution.  
Last week, the military's media affairs wing, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) had announced that Lt Gen Anjum had been appointed the new ISI chief. Lt Gen Hameed, formerly the ISI director general, was posted as Peshawar corps commander.  
However, despite the passage of days following the ISPR announcement, a notification confirming Lt Gen Anjum's appointment as the new DG ISI was not issued by the Prime Minister's Office, leading to feverish speculation in the federal capital.

**Girls, teachers urge Taliban to reopen schools**

**Agencies, Kabul**  
Girls and teachers have urged the Taliban to reopen schools for girls and young women.  
Schools for girls have been closed for about two months after the Taliban takeover. Only three provinces in Afghanistan — Balkh, Kunduz and Sar-i-Pul — have reopened schools for girls.  
Madina, a 12th-grade student of a school in Kabul wished for schools to reopen in the capital city and other provinces too.  
"I am optimistic about reopening schools in some provinces. We wish that schools will be opened in Kabul and other provinces. As the winter is coming and the weather is getting cold and facilities are very limited in public schools, so then we can't study," she said.  
Ashoquallah, who is a schoolteacher, said that girls have the



right to education and schools must be reopened immediately.  
"Girls also have the right to education and the schools must be immediately opened. A big section of society, which is women, should not be affected," Ashoquallah said.  
Earlier on Monday, United Na-

tions Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that the Taliban has broken all the promises made to Afghan women and girls.  
"I am alarmed to see promises made to Afghan women and girls by the Taliban being broken," Guterres said.