

USD	01	GBP	01
AFN	79.38	AFN	109.34

INR	1000	PKR	1000
AFN	1073	AFN	498

EUR	01	IRR	1000
AFN	94.46	AFN	8.37

AFN	8.37	AFN	8.37
AFN	8.37	AFN	8.37

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Open Xinjiang to 'independent observers', Canada tells China

More than 40 countries urged China on Tuesday to allow the United Nations human rights chief immediate access to its far western region of Xinjiang to investigate reports that more than a million mostly Muslim ethnic Uighurs have been detained - some subjected to torture or forced labour - prompting a furious response from China.

The statement at the Human Rights Council in Geneva was backed by Australia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain and the United States, among others.

Beijing must allow UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet and other independent observers "immediate, unrestricted and unfettered access" to Xinjiang, and end the "arbitrary detention" of Uighurs and other Muslim minorities, it said.

Credible reports indicate that over a million people have been arbitrarily detained in Xinjiang and that there is widespread surveillance disproportionately targeting Uighurs and members of other minorities and restrictions on fundamental freedoms and Uighur culture," the statement said.

The Canadian-led statement cited reports of torture, forced sterilisation, sexual violence and forced separation of children from their parents.

China has denied mistreating the Uighurs, once a majority in their ancestral homeland until waves of ethnic Han Chinese began to migrate there with the support of the state. Beijing has denied all allegations of abuse of Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims and said the centre are vocational skills training centres necessary to combat "religious extremism".

Bachelet told the council on Monday that she hoped to agree on terms for a visit this year to China, including Xinjiang, to examine reports of serious violations against Muslim Uighurs. Her office has been requesting access since September 2019.

The widely anticipated statement, which had been in the pipeline for several days, "sends a critical message to China's authorities that they are not above international scrutiny", said Agnes Callamar, head of the rights group Amnesty International.

But countries "must move beyond handwringing and take real action," she added. "Deeply concerned" about that the statement was coming, China had responded earlier it was defending "legitimate" of "border diplomacy" for identification of two Canadians in December 2019.

Beijing's representative read out a statement on behalf of a group of countries that said they were "deeply concerned about serious human rights violations against the indigenous people in Canada".

Bolton, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Sri Lanka, Syria and Venezuela were among the co-signatories, according to the United Nations.

"Historically, Canada robbed the indigenous people their land, killed them, and eradicated their culture," the statement said. It referenced the recent discovery of 215 unmarked graves at a former residential school in western Canada - one of many boarding schools set up a century ago to forcibly assimilate Canada's Indigenous people.

Some experts believe that switching COVID vaccines for second doses could boost immunity and several medical studies are under way.

One small UK study into using different COVID vaccines in two-dose inoculations found that people who received Pfizer's vaccine followed by a dose of AstraZeneca, or vice versa, were more likely to report mild or moderate coronavirus post-vaccination symptoms than if they received two doses of the same type.

Norovirus, which is developing a coronavirus vaccine, said on May 21 it would take part in a six-and-a-half COVID-19 vaccine trial to test the use of an additional vaccine dose from a different producer as a booster. The trial will start in June in the UK.

Meanwhile, Canada, which is facing supply shortages, has recommended that the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines can be used interchangeably.

Canada's vaccine rollout is slow, with only about 100,000 doses administered since it came into force.

Diplomats from the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand were outside the court and proceedings got under way at about 10:45am (02:45 GMT), according to CNN News.

Al Jazeera's Darya Goudarzi, who is in Hong Kong, said the proceedings against Hong Kong were being seen as a "landmark" case in jurisdiction where jury trials are seen as a cornerstone of the common law system.

"Many are watching for clues on how security cases will be conducted," she said. "There is already concern that this case will undermine the rule of law in Hong Kong."

Teng was detained on July 1, hours after the legislation was passed, after he allegedly drove his motorcycle deliberately into a group of police officers during his protests against the security law.

Under the security legislation, cases can be decided by three judges rather than a jury. The three judges hearing Teng's case were appointed by the territory's chief executive.

Separately, Hong Kong police announced on Wednesday they had arrested a 35-year-old man on suspicion of "colluding" with foreign forces, which is also an offence under the security law.

The arrest was linked to the last week on the pro-democracy Apple Daily, the police added.

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German Chancellor Angela Merkel received a Moderna coronavirus vaccine as her second jab, after getting the first dose of AstraZeneca vaccine, a government spokesman said on Tuesday.

The 66-year-old took her first dose of AstraZeneca's vaccine in April, more than two weeks after German authorities recommended the use of the jab only for people aged 60 and above.

Millions of doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine have been sold, administered in Europe, but concerns, largely over a rare type of blood clot seen in an extremely small number of recipients, meaning that some people in early pregnancy groups due to their age or pre-existing health conditions have been holding off on getting it, preferring to wait for another vaccine.

Doses of coronavirus proved the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine in March or received them to older adults. However, several have since returned use either fully or with restrictions after health regulators said the benefits of the shot outweigh any risks.

Germany recommended in April that people who received a first shot of the AstraZeneca vaccine should receive a different shot for their second dose. Several other European countries made similar decisions.

After a summer stalemate, Germany's vaccination rollout has sharply accelerated in recent weeks. As of Tuesday, one in two, or 51.2 percent of the population have received their first dose.

Some experts believe that switching COVID vaccines for second doses could boost immunity and several medical studies are under way.

One small UK study into using different COVID vaccines in two-dose inoculations found that people who received Pfizer's vaccine followed by a dose of AstraZeneca, or vice versa, were more likely to report mild or moderate coronavirus post-vaccination symptoms than if they received two doses of the same type.

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Angela Merkel receives Moderna dose after first AstraZeneca shot



Iran executed at least 95 people in the first half of 2021: UN report

Iran executed at least 95 people, including six women, so far this year, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said Tuesday.

Lawson, Iran executed at least 207 people, including nine women, she added.

The report found that prisoners were also subjected to mistreatment and intimidation, as well as the extended use of solitary confinement in punishment and to prevent information from spreading to the outside world.

Protesters, human rights defectors, lawyers, journalists and civil society activists continue to be subjected to intimidation, arbitrary detention and criminal prosecution, including the death penalty, she said.

The first decision is to the court, but if it refuses to sentence him, it must justify it," he said on the second day of the closed-door trial in the State Security Court in Tehran.

Former royal court chief head al-Hadi and the court are accused of trying to help Prince Hamzah overthrow King Abdullah II. They have pleaded not guilty.

Prince Hamzah, 41, is not facing trial, although the indictment says he "was determined to fabricate personal relations to rule, in violation of the Hashemite constitution and customs."

The court heard two prosecution witnesses on Monday, while three others gave written statements.

On Tuesday, it heard the last witnesses presented by the prosecution, the largest said.

"On the next hearing on Sunday, at the next session we will ask the court to hear five to 10 defence witnesses," he said.

As part of the prosecution's case is based on witness conducted by the security services, AFP said "the defence plans to call out testimony and forensic experts to verify the authenticity of the recordings."

King Abdullah II appointed Hamzah as crown prince in 1999, but removed him from the post in 2004 to appoint his son, Prince Hussein, as next in line to the throne in 2009.

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UAE-Israel Greentech collaboration to reach \$500million in five years: Expert

As the first anniversary of the US-backed Abraham Accords draws to a close, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Israel are continuing to expand bilateral relations with both high-tech industries in the field of green technology, an expert told Al Arabiya English.

The UAE and Israel are expected to surpass \$500 million over the next five years, according to Ashraf Toubi, a senior advisor to the UAE's Ministry of Economy. "And that is a conservative estimate," he said.

The UAE, said Friedman, has made huge strides in the green energy space, with the realisation and implementation of some of the world's most advanced green tech projects.

The country has already developed two of the world's largest green hydrogen projects, one in the Middle East's first facility for carbon capture and storage, and in Masdar City, an international pioneer in sustainable urban living.

"There is incredible synergy in the cooperation, from joint capital investments to the sharing of best practices and the UAE is particularly has great strengths in taking innovative ideas and making them into reality."

"Together, these countries will undoubtedly be a force to be reckoned with."

According to the latest Global CleanTech Innovation Index, Israel ranked second in the world in emerging clean-tech innovation, and sixth in clean-tech overall.

Friedman said investments in infrastructure over the coming years will include large-scale projects to build companies in areas such as water treatment and reuse, and renewable energy.

He said there are also expected to see partnerships in fields such as renewable energy, artificial intelligence and sustainable agriculture.

Given that both Israel and the UAE are highly active in sustainability-related projects around the world, their presence in first world nations and developing regions are likely to evolve over the next two to three years, said Friedman.

The UAE has several state-owned and private companies in the renewable energy sector, including Masdar, which is a leading player in the field of green technology.

"I have had visits to Masdar and there is a lot of interest in potential Israeli companies setting up shops and pilot schemes there. There will also be large-scale projects in water recycling, which will be one of the first projects in the green technology space, and in making buildings more energy efficient as well as a focus on low carbon mobility," Friedman said.



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