

NEWSIN brief

Iran demands closure of IAEA probe

AFP, Tehran

Iran said yesterday there would be no final implementation of a nuclear deal with world powers unless a probe into allegations of past weapons research is closed. The declaration, by a top security official, comes after the head of the UN nuclear watchdog (IAEA) said a report into the possible military dimensions of Iran's activities would not be "black and white".

Germany may deploy 1,200 troops for IS fight

AFP, Berlin

Germany is planning to deploy 1,200 troops to help France in the fight against Islamic State jihadists in Syria, its army chief said yesterday. "From a military point of view, around 1,200 soldiers would be necessary to run the planes and ship," army chief of staff General Volker Wiewer told Bild am Sonntag newspaper, adding that the mission would begin "very quickly once a mandate is obtained".

Palestinian shot dead in Jerusalem

AP, Jerusalem

A Palestinian stabbed an Israeli police officer in Jerusalem yesterday before being shot dead by security forces, and another Palestinian stabbed a woman in the back as she was waiting for a bus, police said, as a two-month wave of violence showed no sign of relenting. The violence erupted in mid-September over tensions at a Jerusalem holy site.

18 civilians killed in Syria air strikes

AFP, Beirut

At least 18 civilians were killed and 40 wounded in "probably Russian" air strikes on a rebel-held town in northwestern Syria yesterday, a monitoring group said. The strikes hit the Idlib province town of Ariha, which is controlled by the Army of Conquest, a rebel alliance of mainly Islamist groups, including Al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Nusra Front, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

C'wealth wants legally binding COP21 result

AFP, Valletta

The Commonwealth on Saturday pledged itself towards an "ambitious", legally-binding outcome from the world climate change summit, saying it was "deeply concerned" about the disproportionate threat to its most vulnerable members.

Leaders from the 53-country family, which represents around a third of the world's population, produced a "message of Commonwealth ambition and determination" for the COP21.

"We are committed to working towards an ambitious, equitable, inclusive, balanced, rules-based and durable outcome of COP21 that includes a legally-binding agreement," they said in a Statement on Climate Action, agreed at their summit in Malta.

Among the few things concluded at the flop 2009 Copenhagen global climate change summit were those things agreed beforehand by the Commonwealth.

It committed to hold the increase in global average temperature "below two or 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels". The Commonwealth launched a Climate Finance Access Hub, a network aimed at smaller island states that want to get access to funds to mitigate against the effects of climate change. The organisation has also come up with a debt swap for climate change action initiative, where developing countries could see their debt written down in return for undertaking projects on improving the



RALLIES FOR CLIMATE DEAL

Protesters take part in global climate rallies in New Delhi, Sydney, Paris, Berlin, Madrid, Athens, and Seoul demanding a deal at the Paris World Climate Change Conference, known as the COP21 summit, to save the world, yesterday. Tens of thousands of people from Sydney to London joined one of the biggest days of climate change activism yesterday, telling world leaders that there is "No Planet B" in the fight against global warming. Apart from Paris where demonstrators clashed with cops, rallies were held peacefully. The goal of the climate talks is to limit average global warming to two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), perhaps less, over pre-Industrial Revolution levels by curbing fossil fuel emissions blamed for climate change. PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

HUGE STAKES, DEEP DIVIDES

Will climate summit deliver?

AGENCIES

"Copenhagen". The mere mention of the Danish capital's name can send a chill down the spine of even the toughest climate negotiator.

It was there in December 2009 that high hopes for a legal pact to curb climate-harming greenhouse gases came crashing down as diplomacy foundered in extra time.

Now, six years later, 195 nations will try again, this time in Paris.

Much has changed in the climate arena since 2009, and observers say there is reason to be hopeful that negotiators may finally seal some sort of deal.

"The world has learned some valuable lessons from the experience in Copenhagen," former US vice president turned climate activist Al Gore told AFP.

A key difference is that heads of state and government, who swooped in at the end of the 2009 summit, have been invited to attend only the first day in Paris.

When leaders failed to reach consensus six years ago, a handful among them -- representing key players such as the United States,

European Union, Japan, China, India and Brazil -- huddled together to thrash out a face-saving "accord".

Instead of ratifying it, shell-shocked delegates simply "took note" of the non-binding document -- an event French President Francois Hollande remembered this week as "an immense failure".

To avoid a repeat, summit host France has opted to leave heads of state out of the nitty-gritty haggling over text. Instead, they will give back-to-back speeches on the first day of the November 30-December 11 marathon, seeking to imbue it with a sense of mission.

Bureaucrats who have been hammering out a blueprint for the last six years will take a final stab at drafting, and then leave it to ministers to seal the deal.

Another change is that delegates to the 21st annual Conference of Parties (COP 21) in Paris will work with a much slimmer draft, weighing in at 55 pages. In Copenhagen, it was 300 pages.

There are other reasons to expect a more positive outcome.

The risk has come into sharper focus as scientific evidence has



accumulated since 2009 of mankind's devastating impact on Earth's climate system.

At the same time, many now argue that shifting away from climate-harming fossil fuel makes not only environmental but also economic sense.

And on a political level, observers say Paris has more buy-in.

In the build-up, some 170 nations responsible for more than 90 percent of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have submitted carbon-curbing

pledges.

They include number one and two polluters China and the United States -- both perceived as a drag on the Copenhagen process. This time, they have joined forces to become the engine of COP21.

The pledges for Paris are voluntary, or "bottom-up" in climate jargon, rather than imposed "top-down" targets, opposed by Washington and others.

According to Japanese negotiator Aya Yoshida, the level of mutual trust ahead of Paris is "far, far better".

Many say the jihadist attacks that killed 130 people in Paris little over two weeks before the summit may forge a common resolve among nations, many of whose leaders said they decided to come in fact to take a stand against violence.

Some things, however, have not changed since Copenhagen.

Rich and developing nations are still at odds about how to divvy up responsibility for emissions cuts, and who should pay.

But UN climate chief Christiania Figueres told AFP there was "no comparison" between the two, "other than, you know, they are on the same continent".

DOWNING OF RUSSIAN PLANE IN SYRIA

Turkey to return pilot's body

AFP, Ankara

The body of a Russian pilot killed when his plane was shot down by Turkey last week will be handed over to a Russian representative after being retrieved from Syria, Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said yesterday.

"The pilot who lost his life during the air violation was received by us on the (Syrian) border last night," Davutoglu told reporters in Istanbul before leaving for a meeting with EU leaders in Brussels.

Davutoglu added that a Russian official would travel "soon" to the southern Hatay region with a Turkish military official to take possession of the body.

One of the two pilots aboard the plane which was downed on Tuesday was shot dead in Syria after parachuting from the burning aircraft, while

the second was found safe and sound.

Turkey's military said the Su-24 bomber was shot down by two of its F-16s after it violated Turkish airspace 10 times within a five-minute period on Tuesday. Russia however said no



warning had been given and that the aircraft did not violate Turkish airspace, and demanded an apology.

The incident has led to a sharp deterioration of relations, with Moscow, a major trade partner and Turkey's largest energy supplier, on Saturday announcing a package of

economic sanctions against Turkey.

Russia announced an end to charter flights between the two countries, a ban on Russian businesses hiring any new Turkish nationals and import restrictions on certain Turkish goods. It also asked Russian tour operators to refrain from selling trips to Turkey, normally a top holiday destination for Russian tourists. The new measures come into effect from January 1, 2016.

The Kremlin announcement came just hours after Erdogan made his most conciliatory comments to date over the shooting down of the jet, saying he wished Tuesday's incident had never happened.

He also renewed a call to Putin for a face-to-face meeting in Paris on the sidelines of a UN climate summit on Monday. But the Turkish leader stopped short of apologising for the incident, as a furious Putin had earlier

Saudi women begin polls campaigns

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi women began their first-ever campaigns for public office yesterday, in a step forward for women's rights in the conservative kingdom's slow reform process.


More than 900 women are standing in the December 12 municipal elections, which will also mark the first time women are allowed to vote.

Ruled by King Salman, oil-rich Saudi Arabia has no elected legislature but has faced intense Western scrutiny over its rights record. The country's first municipal elections were held in 2005, followed by another vote in 2011, but in both cases only men were allowed to participate.

Saudi Arabia is the only country in the world where women are not allowed to drive. Women must also cover themselves in black from head-to-toe in public and require permission from male family members to travel, work or marry.

In other Gulf states, women have had some voting rights for several years. About 7,000 people are vying for seats on 284 municipal councils in the vote, the Saudi electoral commission says.

Only around 131,000 women have signed up to vote, compared with more than 1.35 million men, out of a native Saudi



Dr. B. Vivek Joseph


from **C.M.C., Vellore** has joined us!

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Senior Consultant - Neurosurgery

- MBBS from the Armed Forces Medical College in Pune
- **Fellowship** at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (FRCSI).
- Trained in Neurosurgery from Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore and earned MCh in Neurosurgery.
- Joined the Neurosurgery Faculty at CMC Vellore and later worked as Neurosurgery Fellow in Adelaide, Australia.
- Worked as a Clinical Spine Fellow at the University of Toronto.
- Professor of Neurosurgery at the Christian Medical Hospital, Vellore,
- Member of the Neurological Society of India and the Neuro Spinal Surgeons Association of India.

Awards:

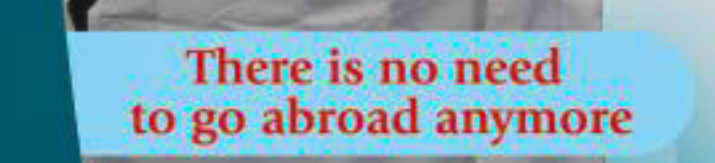
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2C OR 1.5C?

UN has set the bar at 2 C. But Poor countries and low-lying, small-island states -- which will be hit first and hardest by climate change -- say 2.0 C is not good enough, and favour a tougher goal of 1.5 C (2.4 F). To have a 50/50 shot at 2 C, global CO2 emissions must peak by 2025 and drop dramatically thereafter. By 2050, humans must no longer be adding CO2 to the atmosphere.

REASONS FOR OPTIMISM

There are plenty! The weather has played a large role in softening the public's appetite to make the considerable lifestyle sacrifices that are likely to result from drastic emissions cuts. In 2014, America and China, the two biggest polluters, made an unprecedented joint pledge to make concrete reductions in their carbon emissions. Support from the non-state actors appears to be stronger than ever before. Corporate giants like Mars, Unilever, Ikea are all making bold commitments of their own and calling on governments to back them up. Financial behemoths like Allianz are starting to cut fossil fuels out of their investments, while international banks are creating specific green funds for the first time and pointing out the risks of the carbon bubble. Religious leaders are getting in on the act too. Pope Francis famously published an encyclical called Laudato si' - intended, in part, to influence the Paris conference. Meanwhile, leading representatives of Islam have also called for action to tackle climate change across the world.