

WORLD LEADERS SPEAK AT COP21

FATE OF DEAL RESTS WITH YOU:

BAN KI-MOON

Let me be clear: The fate of the Paris agreement rests with you. The future of your people, the future of our planet. We have never faced such a test -- a political moment like this may not come again, said UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.

FUTURE OF LIFE AT STAKE:

HOLLANDE

Never have the stakes of an international meeting been so high, because it concerns the future of the planet, the future of life, and yet just two weeks ago right here in Paris a group of fanatics sowed death in the streets, said Hollande as he gave the opening speech.

RISE TO THE MOMENT:

OBAMA

US President Barack Obama urged world leaders to act now to secure a future for humanity. The "future is one that we have the power to change right here right now, but only if we rise to this moment," Obama told 150 leaders at the summit.

READY TO CUT EMISSIONS:

PUTIN

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Russia was ready to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by almost one-third over the next 15 years compared with 1990 levels - although the fall in Russia's economy since 1990 means that it could still increase its current emissions.

DEAL NEEDS BINDING REVIEWS:

MERKEL

Paris climate talks need to agree on a binding UN framework, complemented by binding reviews to ensure progress to limit global warming, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said.

RESPECT THE DIFFERENCES AMONG

COUNTRIES: XI JINPING

Xi said it was crucial the climate talks addressed economic differences between nations and allowed different countries to develop their own solutions to the problem of global warming. "It is important to respect the differences among countries, especially developing countries," he said.

YOU HAVE POWER TO PUT PLANET ON

LIFE SUPPORT: PRINCE CHARLES

If the planet were a patient, we would have treated her long ago. You, ladies and gentlemen, have the power to put her on life support, and you must surely start the emergency procedures without further procrastination, said Prince Charles of Britain.



Clockwise from left: French President Francois Hollande and US President Barack Obama place flowers at a makeshift memorial to pay tribute to the victims of the Paris attacks at the Bataclan in Paris yesterday. A French policeman with a sniffer dog inspects journalists equipment on the opening day of the World Climate Change Conference 2015 at Le Bourget. Obama shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping during their meeting at the start of the summit.



PHOTO: REUTERS

World billionaires launch energy coalition

Investment fund promises to develop a technical fix to the planet's climate woes

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The heads of 147 states attend the UN climate change conference in Paris - also there will be Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg and 27 other billionaires, who have pledged to fund research to develop a technical fix to the planet's climate woes.

The Breakthrough Energy Coalition - which also includes Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, Virgin's Richard Branson and Alibaba founder Jack Ma - was announced yesterday with a promise to "invest early, invest broadly, invest boldly, invest wisely and invest together".

In a statement on their website, the coalition said the "poorest parts of the world require an aggressive global program for zero-emission energy innovation". The group said that government research "was not enough" and they needed to "add the skills and resources of leading investors with experience in driving innovation from the lab to the marketplace".

The coalition founders timed the news to coincide with the start of the Paris climate change talks.

Leaders from 150 countries around the world are meeting to draw up new plans to reduce carbon emissions.

175 countries have tabled proposals to stop global temperatures rising by an average of 2.7C but the United Nations would prefer the temperature rise to be capped at 1.5C.

Other prominent members of the coalition include Salesforce.com founder Marc Benioff, LinkedIn founder Reid Hoffman, investor George Soros, HP CEO Meg Whitman, Saudi Arabian investor Prince Alwaleed bin Talal and Japanese telecom investor Masayoshi Son. In addition to Virgin Group's Branson, coalition members from Europe include Hasso Plattner of Germany,

who cofounded software firm SAP; Xavier Niel of France, founder of the telecom-focused Iliad Group; and Chris Hohn of the UK, founder of The Children's Investment Fund, a hedge fund.



The operating principle of the coalition is that "the world needs widely available energy that is reliable, affordable, and does not produce carbon," according to the coalition's website. "The only way to accomplish that goal is by developing new tools to power the world." The coalition is working with the countries that have agreed to the Mission Innovation initiative.

A perfect storm brewing

Experts see a war-torn future for humanity if climate deal fails

AFP, Paris

Violence cast a long shadow over a climate summit opening in Paris yesterday, two weeks after 130 people were killed in a coordinated jihadist onslaught on the French capital.

As more than 150 world leaders met under heightened security, analysts warned of an increasingly war-torn future facing humanity if they fail to limit global warming.

The Paris attacks on November 13 were claimed by the Islamic State group that has a brutal war in Syria -- a conflict rooted in part, experts say, on an historic drought from 2006 to 2010.

It drove some 1.5 million farmers and herders off their land and into cities and towns like Homs, Palmyra and Damascus.

"It's not a coincidence that, immediately prior to the civil war in Syria, the country experienced the worst drought on record," US Secretary of State John Kerry said in Milan last



Climate protestors clash with riot police during a rally against global warming in Paris on Sunday. PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN brief

Cop held for sale of MH17 'souvenirs'

AFP, The Hague

Dutch police have suspended an officer who tried to sell online souvenirs said to have come from the wreckage of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 shot down over war-torn Ukraine last year. The man is under arrest for embezzlement and an investigation has been launched and the man is under arrest for embezzlement, police said in a statement late Sunday.

Thai army detain opposition leaders

AFP, Bangkok

Two prominent Thai opposition leaders were detained by soldiers yesterday as they tried to visit a public park at the centre of a corruption scandal that has rocked the kingdom's military. Thailand's generals seized power last year partially justifying their takeover as a necessary move to curb endemic corruption among the kingdom's civilian politicians and protect the royal family.

US embassy warns of attack in Kabul

AFP, Kabul

The United States warned its citizens in Kabul yesterday of an "imminent attack" in the city within the next two days, amid renewed official efforts to revive stalled peace talks with the Taliban. The US embassy in Kabul urged extreme caution during this period of "heightened threat" but gave no details on potential targets or methods of the planned attack.



Indian security personnel detain activists of the Indian Youth Congress who were shouting slogans against the Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance government during a protest against intolerance in New Delhi yesterday.

Top leaders to hold talks with Suu Kyi

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's top leaders will hold talks this week with opposition chief Aung San Suu Kyi, the first since her party's landmark election success, officials said yesterday.

Suu Kyi has requested "national reconciliation" discussions with the president and army chief to smooth that transition. The call until now had gone unanswered, sparking jitters.

Both President Thein Sein and powerful army chief General Min Aung Hlaing have now agreed to meet Suu Kyi on Wednesday.

"The president will meet with Daw Suu on December 2nd," presidential spokesperson Zaw Htay told AFP without elaborating.

Christians, Muslims are 'brothers': Pope

AFP, Bangui

Pope Francis said yesterday that Christians and Muslims were "brothers", urging them to reject hatred and violence while visiting a mosque in the Central African Republic's capital which has been ravaged by sectarian conflict.

On the last leg of a three-nation tour of Africa, the leader of the world's 1.2 billion Catholics visited a flashpoint Muslim neighbourhood in Bangui on what was the most dangerous part of his 24-hour visit.

Thousands of people gathered at the roadside, cheering as his popemobile drove down the red dirt roads. As his vehicle passed, many waving Vatican flags and dressed in long traditional robes, ran down the road after it, an AFP correspondent said.

"Christians and Muslims are brothers and sisters," he said after meeting Muslim leaders at the Koudoukou mosque in the PK5 district, the last Muslim enclave in Bangui where tensions remain high after months of violence.

"Together, we must say no to hatred, to revenge and to violence, particularly that violence which is perpetrated in the name of a religion or of God himself," he said.

The pope later flew out of Bangui at the end of his first trip to Africa that has also taken him to Kenya and Uganda.

Francis' message of peace appeared to have made a powerful impression, with a group of Muslim rebels turning up to join a papal mass at Barthelemy Boganda Stadium.



Turkey will not apologise: PM

AFP, Brussels

Turkey will not apologise for downing a Russian fighter jet on the Syrian border but Moscow should reconsider retaliatory sanctions, Turkish premier Ahmet Davutoglu said yesterday as he held talks at Nato headquarters.

"Protection of our airspace, our border is not only a right but a duty for my government and no Turkish premier or president ... will apologise (for) doing our duty," Davutoglu told a joint press conference with Nato head Jens Stoltenberg.

Davutoglu added that "we hope Russia will reconsider these measures in both our interests", referring to the sanctions that Moscow imposed after the shooting down of the jet last week.

"If the Russian side wants to talk, we are ready; if they want more information, we are ready; if they want to normalise relations, we are ready to talk," he said.

Meanwhile, Turkey yesterday sent back to Russia the body of a pilot killed when his plane was shot down by the Turkish air force for allegedly violating its air space on the Syrian border, reports said.

TACKLING MIGRANT CRISIS EU, Turkey agree 3bn euro aid deal

AFP, Brussels

The European Union and Turkey agreed on a deal to stem the migrant crisis, including a three-billion-euro (\$3.2-billion) aid package for Syrian refugees in Turkey, EU president Donald Tusk said after a summit in Brussels on Sunday.

"Our agreement sets out a clear plan for the timely re-establishment of order at our shared frontier. We will also step up our assistance to Syrian refugees in Turkey through a new refugee facility of three billion euros," Tusk told a press conference with Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu.

The EU also agreed to open a new chapter in Turkey's stalled bid for membership of the bloc in exchange for Turkey's cooperation in reducing the flow of refugees and migrants, Tusk said.

Visa requirements for Turkish citizens visiting

the EU's passport-free Schengen area would also be relaxed by October 2016, he said.

Brussels would "monitor closely at least once a month" the progress being made by Turkey, Tusk added.

Davutoglu said the deal would "re-energise" Turkey's EU accession process, which has made little headway since it started in 2005.

"This is a historic day and a historic meeting, the first meeting of this kind since 11 years," the Turkish premier added.

"No one can guarantee anything on the Syrian issue, we don't know what will go on in Syria, but I can assure that Turkey will be fulfilling all the promises of the joint plan. Our purpose with the EU is to prevent new waves of refugees from Syria and to manage the existing refugee crisis," he said.

"This three billion euros is to be spent for refugees in Turkey, it's not for Turkey."

