

NEWS IN brief

New Zealand makes 'zero carbon' target law

AFP, Wellington

New Zealand's plan to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 became law yesterday, when it cleared its final hurdle in parliament. The legislation, which was supported on both sides of the political divide, mandates that, in net terms, the country should produce no greenhouse gases -- except methane -- by the middle of the century, as part of New Zealand's bid to meet its Paris climate accord commitments. Methane -- a by-product of the key agricultural sector -- will be cut by 24-47 percent over the same time frame.

China jails 9 people for selling fentanyl into US

AFP, Xingtai

China yesterday jailed nine people for selling fentanyl to Americans, the result of a landmark joint probe, and pledged further co-operation following President Donald Trump's fury at Beijing's perceived inaction against Chinese suppliers fuelling the deadly US opioid crisis. Despite Trump's criticism earlier this year that Beijing had reneged on its promise to crack down on the production of the drug, China said it was "willing to conduct sincere and concrete anti-drug cooperation" with the US to tackle fentanyl trafficking.

Jihadists kill 37 people in Burkina Faso

AFP, Ouagadougou

An ambush on a convoy transporting employees of a Canadian mining company in Burkina Faso killed 37 people on Wednesday, the deadliest attack in nearly five years of jihadist violence in the West African country. The impoverished and politically fragile Sahel country has been struggling to quell a rising jihadist revolt that has claimed hundreds of lives since early 2015.

Sri Lanka PM set to lose job after presidential vote

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe looks set to lose his job after next week's presidential election, with the two leading candidates declaring yesterday they will dump him. Main opposition candidate Gotabhaya Rajapakse and Sajith Premadasa from Wickremesinghe's ruling United National Party (UNP) are in a close race ahead of the November 16 polls and both said they would appoint their own PMs if they win. "I will appoint a new prime minister who can command the majority of parliament," Premadasa, 52, said in a televised address yesterday. His remarks appeared to seal the fate of Wickremesinghe, 70, who is nominally the leader of the UNP but faces a revolt within the ranks of the party hierarchy.

'Abe is an idiot and villain'

North Korea slams Japanese PM over missile criticism

AFP, Seoul

North Korea yesterday slammed Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as an "idiot and villain" and warned he will never set foot in Pyongyang after he condemned the North's latest weapons test. Pyongyang last week tested what it called "super-large multiple rocket launchers" but Japan said they were likely ballistic missiles that violated UN sanctions, sparking a colourful personal diatribe against Abe. "Abe, prime minister of Japan, is an idiot and villain," said Song Il Ho, ambassador of the North's foreign ministry, in a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency. The Japanese prime minister was "a deformed child" and "an underwit", Song said, accusing Abe of being unable to tell the difference between multiple rocket launchers and missiles. Japan, which is one of the most hawkish of the major powers on



Hong Kong students, many wearing banned black masks, chant anti-government slogans at their graduation at the Chinese University yesterday, with some holding up banners urging "Free Hong Kong, Revolution Now". The students defied a ban on masks that the government imposed last month in a bid to curb sometimes violent unrest that has rocked the Chinese-ruled city for more than five months.

Ayodhya on tenterhooks

India deploys thousands of security forces, social media monitors ahead of verdict on Babri mosque site

AFP, New Delhi

India has deployed thousands of additional security forces and roped in about 16,000 "digital volunteers" to sanitise social media of inflammatory posts ahead of a crucial Supreme Court verdict on a disputed religious site. Hindus and Muslims have for decades been bitterly divided over the 16th-century Babri mosque in Ayodhya, a city in the northern Uttar Pradesh state that Hindus believe is the birthplace of their god Ram.

Tensions boiled over in 1992 when Hindu zealots destroyed the mosque, sparking religious violence that killed 2,000 people. India's top court is expected to hand down its ruling on competing claims to the site's ownership before Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi retires on November 17.

"Thousands of (additional) security personnel from different agencies have been deployed in and around Ayodhya. Additional vehicles, CCTV cameras, body cameras and drones too have been brought in," Ayodhya police senior superintendent Ashish Tiwari told AFP Wednesday. "The police is also making other efforts to ensure that things remain calm. We have enlisted around 16,000 digital volunteers from 1,600 villages in the region to help monitor and flag sensitive content on the social media." The monitors will report what they deem is inappropriate content to police, who could then try to track down the posters and demand that they delete their posts or messages. Ayodhya -- considered one of the holiest Hindu sites -- is visited by religious pilgrims from all over India throughout the year. Around one million pilgrims are expected to be there early next week for a bathing ritual in the Saryu river that flows in the region. "We just have to stay alert and sensitive to the security of the visiting pilgrims," Ayodhya district magistrate Anuj Kumar Jha told AFP. "We are also keeping a very close watch on the social media to ensure there are no rumours or incitement." Authorities clamped down on movement and assembly of people in the region last month when the court was concluding its hearing into the dispute.



India readies facial recognition system

Rights groups warn of risks to privacy

THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION, New Delhi

As India prepares to install a nationwide facial recognition system in an effort to catch criminals and find missing children, human rights and technology experts yesterday warned of the risks to privacy from increased surveillance.

Use of the camera technology is an effort in "modernising the police force, information gathering, criminal identification, verification", according to India's national crime bureau.

Likely to be among the world's biggest facial recognition systems, the government contract is due to be awarded today.

But there is little information on where it will be deployed, what the data will be used for and how data storage will be regulated, said Apar Gupta, executive director of non-profit Internet Freedom Foundation.

"It is a mass surveillance system that gathers data in public places without there being an underlying cause to do so," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"Without a data protection law and an electronic surveillance framework, it can lead to social policing and control," he said. A spokesman for India's Home Ministry did not return calls seeking comment.

Worldwide, the rise of cloud computing and artificial intelligence technologies have popularised the use of facial recognition for a range of applications from tracking criminals to catching truant students.

There is a growing backlash however, and in San Francisco authorities banned the use of facial recognition technology by city personnel, and "anti-surveillance fashion" is becoming popular.

Facial recognition technology was launched in a few Indian airports in July, and Delhi police last year said they had identified nearly 3,000 missing children in just days during a trial.

But technology site Comparitech, which ranked the Indian cities of Delhi and Chennai among the world's most surveilled cities in a recent report said it had found "little correlation between the number of public CCTV cameras and crime or safety".

Indian authorities have said facial recognition technology is needed to bolster a severely under-policed country.

Use of camera technology is an effort in modernising police force: crime bureau
Technology was launched in a few Indian airports in July

ANTI-GOVT PROTEST

'Too busy' to get involved in political issue

Says Pakistan army

PTI, Islamabad

The Pakistan army on Wednesday said that it was "too busy" in matters of national security to get involved in any political issue, apparently referring to the massive protest led by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman demanding the ouster of country's Prime Minister Imran Khan. Maj Gen Asif Ghafoor, Pakistan army spokesman, made the comments in an interview to Hum News Channel when asked if the army chief will mediate in the ongoing demonstration by Rehman.

Rehman is leading the massive protest, which entered the sixth day on Wednesday. Dubbed as 'Azadi March', the protestors demand Prime Minister Khan's resignation, accusing him of "rigging" the 2018 general elections.

Rehman said the anti-government sit-in was staged with a view to fulfilling a "national responsibility".

Ghafoor told the channel that army had nothing to do with the politics of sit-ins.

"We are too busy in matters of national security and defence to become involved in things like these and respond to these allegations," he said.

When asked if army chief would try to resolve the ongoing dharna against the government, he said, "the dharna is a political activity which the army as an institution has nothing to do with."



A policeman takes away a baby stroller as migrants are evacuated by the police and Gendarmes, in Paris yesterday. More than thousand migrants and homeless had settled in this area for few months. PHOTO: AFP

'Abe is an idiot and villain'

North Korea slams Japanese PM over missile criticism

AFP, Seoul

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the nuclear-armed North, has relentlessly pursued a summit with its leader Kim Jong Un over the fate of a handful of Japanese abductees in North Korea. But the statement said: "Abe would be well-advised not to dream forever of crossing the threshold of Pyongyang." Pyongyang has also railed against former South Korean president Park Geun-hye as a "witch" and a "crafty prostitute" who had Obama as her "pimp". The commentary signals a setback for Abe's hope of resolving the issue of the abducted Japanese citizens. He has vowed to bring all of them and has said he was willing to meet Kim without conditions. In 2002, North Korea admitted that its agents had kidnapped 13 Japanese from the 1960s to the 1980s. Japan says 17 of its citizens were abducted, five of whom were repatriated.



Korea's Moon Jae-in in recent years. The North has a long history of colourful personal attacks against foreign leaders. It has called Trump a "mentally deranged US dotard" and his predecessors Barack Obama and George W. Bush a "monkey" and "half-baked man".

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২	সংগ্রাহক/স্বত্বাধিকারীর নাম
৩	অর্থায়নের উৎস
৪	আহবানকৃত দরপত্রের স্মারক ও তারিখ
৫	দরপত্রের নাম/কাজের বিবরণ
৬	সংগ্রাহক স্বত্বাধিকারীর জেলা
৭	ক্রম প্রক্রিয়া
৮	দরপত্রদাতাদের যোগ্যতা
৯	দরপত্র তফসিলের মূল্য (অফারতথ্য)
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