

'Be united, or be doomed'

UN chief says on climate change, urges all to take lessons from Covid-19 crisis

AFP, London

World powers must pull together and retool their economies for a green future or humanity is "doomed", UN chief Antonio Guterres has warned, telling AFP that failure to control the coronavirus pandemic illustrates the danger of disunity.

Before the virus struck, 2020 was billed as a pivotal year for the plan to dodge the bullet of catastrophic global warming, with high profile summits planned to catch a wave of public alarm over the future of the planet.

The coronavirus crisis may have shunted climate into the sidelines as nations launched unprecedented shutdowns to try to slow its spread, but Guterres said the need for climate action was more urgent than ever.

In a searing assessment of the international response, Guterres said the pandemic should sharpen governments' focus on cutting emissions, urging them to use the crisis as a springboard to launch "transformational" policies aimed at weaning societies off fossil fuels.

"I think the failure that was shown in the capacity to contain the spread of the virus -- by the fact that there was not enough international coordination in the way the virus was fought -- that failure must make countries understand that they need to change course," he told AFP.

"They need to act together in relation

to the climate threat that is a much bigger threat than the threat of the pandemic in itself -- it's an existential threat for our planet and for our lives."

The UN chief said "pollution and not people" should be taxed and called for nations to end fossil fuel subsidies, launch massive investments in renewables and



commit to "carbon neutrality" -- net zero emissions -- by 2050.

"We need to have a number of transformational measures in relation to energy, in relation to transportation, in relation to agriculture, in relation to industry, in relation to our own way of life, without which we would be doomed," he said.

His comments come as the landmark Paris climate deal goes into effect this year in a bid to cap the rise in temperature to "well below" two degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels.

Guterres said there was currently no

clear sign that a United States government recovery policy would align with Paris goals, but he expressed hope that states, businesses and individuals "will compensate for the lack of political commitment that exists at the present moment."

He said much now rests on the actions of major emitters, China, the US, Europe, Russia, India and Japan, in interviews with AFP and other members of Covering Climate Now, a global collaboration of news outlets committed to increased climate coverage.

"We have never been as fragile as we are, we never needed as much humility, unity and solidarity as now," he said, blasting "irrational demonstrations of xenophobia" and the rise of nationalism.

"Either we are united, or we will be doomed," he added, ahead of a largely virtual UN General Assembly this month.

He said the pandemic had demonstrated society's capacity to adapt to transformation. "I don't want to go back to a world where biodiversity is being put into question, to a world where fossil fuels receive more subsidies than renewables, or to a world in which we see inequalities making societies with less and less cohesion and creating instability, creating anger, creating frustration," he added.

"I think we need to have a different world, a different normal and we have an opportunity to do so."

China unveils global data security initiative

Says some countries bullying others

REUTERS, Beijing/Shanghai

China yesterday announced an initiative to establish global standards on data security, saying it wanted to promote multilateralism in the area at a time when "individual countries" were "bullying" others and "hunting" companies.

The announcement, by State Councillor Wang Yi, comes a month after the United States said it was purging "untrusted" Chinese apps under a program dubbed "Clean Network". India has also banned scores of Chinese apps in retaliation amid border tensions.

China's initiative calls for technology firms to prevent the creation of so-called backdoors in their products and services that could allow data to be obtained illegally, as well as for participants to respect the sovereignty, jurisdiction and data management rights of other countries.

It also calls for participants to not engage in large-scale surveillance of other countries or illegally acquire information of foreign citizens through information technology.

It did not detail the nature of the initiative or say whether any other country had joined.

"Some individual countries are aggressively pursuing unilateralism, throwing dirty water on other countries under the pretext of 'cleanliness', and conducting global hunts on leading companies of other countries under the pretext of security. This is naked bullying and should be opposed and rejected," said Wang.

China tightly controls and censors its own cyberspace through the popularly dubbed Great Firewall, which has for years restricted access to firms such as US majors Twitter Inc., Facebook Inc and Google owner Alphabet Inc.

NEWS IN BRIEF



UK judge rejects Assange bid to delay US extradition case

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who is fighting to avoid extradition to the United States from Britain, failed on Monday in a bid to further delay hearings that resumed after a pause of months caused by the coronavirus lockdown. The US authorities accuse Australian-born Assange, 49, of conspiring to hack government computers and of violating an espionage law in connection with the release of confidential cables by WikiLeaks in 2010-2011. Assange, clean-shaven and wearing a suit at Monday's hearing, formally declined to be extradited. He has been presented with a new, wider superseding indictment issued by US authorities in June, which contains 18 alleged offences of conspiring to hack government computers and espionage. The judge rejected his lawyers' application for the case to be adjourned until January to allow them more time to consider new US accusations.

Japan ruling party launches race for Abe's successor

Japan's ruling party yesterday kicked off the race to pick Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's successor, with his powerful right-hand man Yoshihide Suga commanding an all-but-insurmountable lead. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, 71, has already secured the support of major factions in the Liberal Democratic Party ahead of its leadership vote on September 14. But he isn't running unchallenged, with a popular former defence minister and the party's policy chief standing against him. Thanks to the LDP's solid legislative majority, the race's winner is certain to win a parliamentary vote on September 16 and be named the country's next prime minister. The LDP race began after Abe, Japan's longest-serving premier, abruptly announced late August that he would resign for health reasons.

Australian journalists flee China fearing arrest

Two Australian journalists yesterday fled China under diplomatic protection, fearing arrest as political pawns in the rapidly worsening relationship between Canberra and Beijing. Their dramatic overnight exit came following days of secret wrangling that had seen both men holed up in Australia's diplomatic missions to escape the clutches of China's feared security police. Bill Birtles and Michael Smith had to consent to questioning before they were allowed to leave China, shepherded out of the country on a late-night flight by Australian diplomats. Both men were quizzed about fellow Australian journalist Cheng Lei, who has been detained since last month. China confirmed the two men had been questioned, but insisted the move had been legitimate.

18 killed and more trapped in Pakistan mine rockslide

At least 18 miners were killed and more than a dozen were still trapped yesterday after a rockslide at a marble mine in northwest Pakistan, officials said. Boulders of white marble came crashing down on workers on Monday evening in the mountainous Mohmand district in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, near the border with Afghanistan. Officials said around 20 more miners were still believed to be trapped under the rubble with a rescue mission under way.

EU warns Serbia over Jerusalem embassy move

The EU voiced "serious concern and regret" on Monday over Belgrade's commitment to move its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, casting a shadow over the resumption of Serbia-Kosovo talks. The EU is still committed to the "two state solution" -- under which Jerusalem would be the capital of both Israel and a future Palestinian state -- and its own diplomatic mission is in Tel Aviv. The bloc expects prospective members such as Serbia to align with its foreign policy positions. "In this context any diplomatic steps that could call into question the EU's common position on Jerusalem are a matter of serious concern and regret," EU foreign affairs spokesman Peter Stano told reporters in Brussels.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

BELARUS UNREST

Key protest leader detained at border

Lukashenko rejects dialogue

REUTERS, Kyiv

Prominent opposition leader Maria Kolesnikova was detained by Belarusian authorities, a border official said, after thwarting what a Ukrainian government minister described as an attempt to expel her from Belarus.

The Interfax Ukraine news agency said the activist had deliberately ripped up her passport so that Ukrainian border officials would not be able to let her through.

Soon after the incident, President Alexander Lukashenko told Russian reporters that he would not rule out holding new elections after four weeks of mass protests, but rejected any talks with opponents who he said were bent on steering the country towards disaster.

The fate of Kolesnikova had been a mystery since supporters said she was snatched in the street by masked men in the capital Minsk on Monday.

Lukashenko, who has crushed dissent in Belarus for the past 26 years, conceded in his interview with Russian journalists that he may have held onto power too long. But the 66-year-old leader said he was the only person capable of protecting the country for now.

Lukashenko denies opponents' accusations of vote-rigging and has accused foreign powers of trying to topple him in a revolution. He retains the backing of Russian President Vladimir Putin, a key ally, but faces the prospect of EU sanctions later this month.



A home is engulfed in flames during the "Creek Fire" in the Tollhouse area of unincorporated Fresno County, California early yesterday. Wildfires in California have torched a record more than two million acres, the state fire department said, as smoke hampered efforts to airlift dozens of people trapped by an uncontrolled blaze.

PHOTO: AFP

Campaign enters final stretch

Biden, Trump trade blows as survey shows race tightening

AFP, Milwaukee

Donald Trump and his Democratic rival Joe Biden traded tough blows Monday as the White House race entered its final stretch, with the Republican leader branding his opponent "stupid" -- and the Democrat firing back that the president lacked the "guts" to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic.

As Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris took their campaign message to must-win swing states Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, the president convened a surprise news conference at the White House.

In a freewheeling and grievance-laden performance, Trump once more teased the possibility of a Covid-19 inoculation by Election Day -- something experts say remains unlikely -- and accused his opponents of playing politics with a vaccine after Harris said she would not take his word alone on its safety.

Touting an upswing in job creation -- after tens of millions lost jobs -- and claiming the US is turning the corner on the pandemic, he called Biden "stupid," saying he "wants to surrender our country to the virus, he wants to surrender our families to the violent left-wing mob, and he wants to surrender our jobs to China."



Labor Day traditionally kicks off the final sprint of the campaign, with less than two months until the November 3 election -- but the rival campaigns have been knocked off stride by multiple layers of turmoil, from the pandemic to the struggling US economy to deep racial unrest.

Addressing an event in the swing state Pennsylvania, Biden hit back at Trump, charging that "he didn't have the guts to take on Covid."

"We know he's been great for his rich friends, but he hasn't been so great for the rest of us," charged Biden, who went on to assail Trump over a report in The Atlantic magazine that he has disparaged the military and its veterans. "He's downright un-American," Biden fumed.

Biden's visit to Pennsylvania on Monday kicked off a flurry of travel to battleground states this week by both Biden and Trump as some opinion polls show the race tightening with less than 60 days to go until the Nov. 3 election.

Polls in Pennsylvania, which Trump won narrowly in 2016, have consistently put Biden in the lead, but averages show that margin narrowing to roughly 4 to 5 percentage points, down from about 8 points in late June.

RUSSIAN COVID-19 VACCINE

First batch produced for public circulation

THE STATESMAN/ANN

In some good news for millions living in hope for a Covid-19 vaccine shot, the Russian Health Ministry yesterday said that the first batch of Sputnik V vaccine has been produced for civilian circulation.

The supplies of the medication to the Russian regions are expected soon, the Health Ministry told reporters, reports Tass news agency.

"The first batch of the vaccine for preventing the novel coronavirus infection, Gam-COVID-Vac (Sputnik V) developed by the Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology of the Russian Health Ministry passed the required quality tests and was produced for civilian circulation. In the near future, the supplies of the first batches of the vaccine to the regions are expected," the ministry said.

Earlier this month, a study published in the peer-reviewed journal The Lancet said a Russian Covid-19 vaccine has shown no serious side effects and elicited an immune response in early human trials.

Russia last month registered the "Sputnik V", becoming the first country to approve a Covid-19 vaccine.

Meanwhile, India yesterday said it has received an offer from Russia to conduct a trial and manufacture its "Sputnik-V", with several Indian companies currently studying the proposal, an official said yesterday.

"The government of India attaches great importance to this offer of partnership from a friend," he added. The outcome of discussions on the offer were expected soon, he added.

Mawlana Bhasani Science and Technology University (MBSTU)
Planning, Development & Works Office
Santosh, Tangail-1902

Memo No. PDW/e-GP/Chemistry/2020-2021/01/100 Date: 08/09/2020

e-Tender Notice (OTM) No. 01/2020-2021

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of Scientific Equipment under the Strengthening of MBSTU Project this tender is as follows:

Sl No.	Invitation Ref	Tender ID No.	Name of work	Tender security (Tk)	e-Tender document price (Tk)	Tender last selling date & time	Closing and opening date & time
01	PDW/e-GP/Chemistry/2020-2021/01	491911	Procurement of Scientific Equipment for the Department of Chemistry under the Strengthening of MBSTU Project	1,50,000.00	2,500.00	22-09-2020 17:00	23-09-2020 11:45
02	PDW/e-GP/Chem-AC/2019-2020/4038/20/19/R (Re-Tender)	488811	Procurement of Scientific Equipment for the Department of Chemistry under the Strengthening of MBSTU Project	40,000.00	1,000.00	22-09-2020 17:00	23-09-2020 11:40
03	PDW/e-GP/BGE/2019-2020/4038/19/R (Re-Tender)	488809	Procurement of Scientific Equipment for the Department of BGE under the Strengthening of MBSTU Project	50,000.00	1,000.00	22-09-2020 17:00	23-09-2020 11:30

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches date on 22-09-2020 at 17:00 of receiving tender. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Sd/-
Md. Mostafa Kamal
Director
Planning, Development and Works Office
MBSTU, Santosh, Tangail-1902
Phone: 0921-51328

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