

55pc CO2 cut by 2030

EU finalises target; Xi to attend Biden's climate summit

AFP, Brussels

The European Parliament and EU member states yesterday agreed a target to cut carbon emissions by at least 55 percent by 2030, in what was called a "game changer" just ahead of a US-hosted climate summit.

The deal, reached before dawn after 14 hours of negotiations, sets about putting parts of the 2016 Paris climate accord into binding legislative effect across a range of sectors, underpinning the European Union's ambition to lead the world on the issue.

The EU vice president responsible for the bloc's Green Deal, Franz Timmermans, called the agreement "a landmark moment for the EU and a strong signal to the world" alongside a 5:00 am tweeted picture showing the moment it was struck.

But top environmental groups Greenpeace and WWF immediately slammed the agreement as insufficient to limit global warming to the 1.5-degree-Celsius threshold enshrined in the

Paris accord.

Greenpeace noted that Britain, a former EU member, vowed this week to slash carbon emissions by 78 percent by 2035.

The EU climate law agreement ended a deadlock between



member states, which insisted on the 55-percent goal agreed in November, and MEPs who wanted the target hiked to 60 percent.

The EU announcement and the wider debate will feed into a virtual climate summit hosted Thursday and Friday by US President Joe Biden, who has made climate a top priority. He is expected to

unveil ambitious new US targets on reducing carbon emissions.

Biden has invited 40 world leaders to the online gathering, Chinese President Xi Jinping -- leader of the biggest carbon-emitting country -- has said he will attend.

European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen tweeted that "our political commitment to becoming the first climate neutral continent by 2050 is now also a legal one".

However the EU executive faces challenges as it looks to reform its legislation on everything from transport to taxes to energy so they all reflect the shift to a green-friendly future.

Among those are plans to levy a carbon border adjustment mechanism -- a tariff on goods imported into the EU by countries that are not as ambitious in their carbon-emission goals -- and division among EU member states as to whether plants powered by nuclear energy or natural gas can be considered "green".

COUP IN MYANMAR Junta attacks displace nearly 250,000: UN

AFP, Yangon

The Myanmar military junta's crackdown on anti-coup protesters has displaced close to a quarter of a million people, a United Nations rights envoy said yesterday.

The military has stepped up its use of lethal force to quash mass demonstrations against a February 1 coup which ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

At least 738 people have been killed and 3,300 are languishing in jails as political prisoners, according to a local monitoring group.

"Horrible to learn that... the junta's attacks have already left nearly a quarter (of a) million Myanmar people displaced, according to sources," UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar Tom Andrews tweeted yesterday.

"The world must act immediately to address this humanitarian catastrophe."

Amid mounting violence, South East Asian leaders and foreign ministers are set to hold talks on the Myanmar crisis in Jakarta on Saturday.

Coup leader Min Aung Hlaing's expected involvement in the summit has angered activists and human rights groups.

"Min Aung Hlaing, who faces international sanctions for his role in military atrocities, should not be welcomed at an intergovernmental gathering to address a crisis he created," Human Rights Watch's Brad Adams said.



'A giant step forward'

Biden calls systemic racism a 'stain on our nation's soul' as ex-cop found guilty of Floyd's murder

AGENCIES

US President Joe Biden called systemic racism a "stain on our nation's soul" in a televised address to the nation Tuesday after a white former police officer was convicted of murdering a Black man during an arrest.

Biden spoke out after a jury in the Midwestern city of Minneapolis found Derek Chauvin guilty of intentionally suffocating handcuffed George Floyd as he lay defenseless, with the officer's knee pressing on his neck for more than nine minutes.

As he lay facedown on the ground, Floyd repeatedly said "I can't breathe."

The jury deliberated less than 11 hours before finding 45-year-old Chauvin guilty of all three charges against him: second-degree murder, third-degree murder and manslaughter.

A crowd gathered outside the heavily guarded downtown Minneapolis courtroom erupted in cheers, and some wept tears of relief, when the verdicts were announced after a three-week trial that had an entire nation on edge.

Chauvin, who had been free on bail, was put in handcuffs after Hennepin County Judge Peter Cahill read out the unanimous verdicts reached by the racially diverse, seven-woman, five-man jury.

Chauvin faces up to 40 years in prison on the most serious charge -- second-degree

murder. His sentencing will take place in eight weeks, Judge Cahill said.

The 46-year-old Floyd's death during his May 25, 2020 arrest for allegedly passing a counterfeit \$20 bill sparked protests against racial injustice and police brutality around the world.

Ahead of the verdict, cities across the United States had been braced for potential unrest and National Guard troops have been deployed in Minneapolis.

Biden called members of the Floyd family to say he was "relieved" by the verdicts, then later he and Vice President Kamala Harris addressed the nation in televised remarks.

"This can be a giant step forward in the march towards justice in America," Biden said, as he called on citizens to "unite" against racism and violence.

Harris, America's first female and first Black vice president, told the family it was "a day of justice in America," and that "history will look back at this moment."

Floyd family lawyer Ben Crump hailed the conviction as a landmark victory for civil rights and a springboard to legislation currently before Congress to reform police forces in their dealings with minorities.

Three other former police officers involved in Floyd's arrest are to go on trial later this year.



NEWS IN brief

Australia scraps Victoria state's BRI deal with China

Australia yesterday announced it would revoke a state government's deal to join China's Belt and Road initiative, saying it was inconsistent with the nation's foreign policy. Foreign Minister Marise Payne used new powers to scrap the Victorian state government's 2018 agreement with China, saying the arrangement was "inconsistent with Australia's foreign policy or adverse to our foreign relations".

Ufa abducts govt employees in Assam

Three employees of India's state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) were abducted yesterday by suspected United Liberation Front for Asom (Independent) militants owing allegiance to their fugitive leader Paresh Barua from an oilfield in Sivsagar district of Assam. A car used by the militants as been found near Nagaland border. No demand for ransom or anything else has been received so far. ONGC said a complaint has already been lodged with the local police and higher officials have reached the site.

ME states dominate execution toll: Amnesty

Four states in the Middle East, led by Iran, made "ruthless and chilling" use of the death penalty in 2020 despite an overall decline during the Covid-19 pandemic, dominating the global toll of executions, Amnesty International said yesterday. The London-based rights group said it recorded 483 executions in 18 countries worldwide last year, a decrease of 26 percent from the 657 recorded in 2019. The report found that 88 percent of all recorded executions took place in just four countries in the Middle East -- Iran (246), Egypt (107), Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia saw 85 percent drop in recorded executions and numbers were cut by more than half in Iraq.

SOURCE: AFP, STAR

Don't cross 'red lines'

Putin warns West amid rising tensions

REUTERS, Moscow

President Vladimir Putin yesterday warned the West not to cross Russia's "red lines", saying Moscow would respond swiftly and harshly to any provocations in a way that would force those behind them to regret their actions.

Putin made his comments at a time when relations with the United States and Europe are under acute strain over Ukraine and the health of jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

"We want good relations... and really don't want to burn bridges," Putin said in his annual state of the nation address to both houses of parliament.

"But if someone mistakes our good intentions for indifference or weakness and intends to burn down or even blow up these bridges, they should know that Russia's response will be asymmetrical, swift and harsh."

Russia would determine where its red line lay in each specific case, he said.

His comments came at the climax of a 78-minute speech dominated by Russia's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting economic hardship.



Recent weeks have seen an intensification of confrontation between Russia and Western countries which say Moscow is massing tens of thousands of troops near Ukraine.

Last week, Washington tightened sanctions on Russia over accusations of computer hacking and election interference, and the Czech Republic accused Moscow of a role in explosions at an arms depot in 2014. Both expelled Russian diplomats. Russia denied wrongdoing and responded with tit-for-tat expulsions.

Putin made no mention of Navalny, the jailed opposition politician three weeks into a hunger strike, whose supporters, even as Putin spoke, were beginning a series of rolling protests across the country.

Two of Navalny's closest allies were arrested yesterday, their lawyers said.

Navalny, Russia's leading opposition politician, is gravely ill in prison following his decision to launch a hunger strike in protest against what he calls inadequate medical treatment for leg and back pain. His team have urged people across the vast country to take to the streets.



Members of the police stand guard as people protest against the government measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus disease, as the lower house of parliament Bundestag discusses additions for the Infection Protection Act, in Berlin, Germany yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

A winged 'intruder'

BSF seeks FIR against pigeon from Pakistan

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's Border Security Force has sought registration of an FIR against a winged "intruder" from Pakistan--a pigeon--in the northern state of Punjab bordering Pakistan.

The Punjab Police are seeking legal opinion on this.

The pigeon perched itself on the shoulder of a BSF jawan at Rorawala border post in Amritsar district last Saturday, apparently after flying across the border, an official said.

A small piece of paper with a contact number was tied around its leg, the official said.

The BSF personnel handed over the bird to the police. The number tagged on the pigeon's leg is being analysed, police said.

The pigeon is being kept at Khangarh police station.

Pigeons have been captured in the past too border areas with security forces suspecting espionage attempts. Homing pigeons can be used to courier information and the tags can carry coded messages.

Four weddings and a fine

Taiwan couple maximise leave with repeat weddings and divorces

AFP, Taipei

Keen to make the most of a statutory holiday for newlyweds, a couple from Taiwan found a novel way to maximise their honeymoon -- by marrying four times in just over a month.

The unusual story, confirmed by Taipei's Labour Department on Wednesday, is the latest to go viral and highlight innovative, if somewhat bizarre, loophole wrangling by Taiwanese citizens.

Taiwanese companies are legally obliged to offer eight days of paid leave to newlyweds.

But an unnamed bank employee decided to game the system last year, claiming 32 days of leave using a novel ruse.

Over a period of 37 days, he and his wife got married four times and divorced three times, claiming the full eight days for each of their nuptials.

The bank balked and the employee appealed to Taipei city labour department, which initially fined his employer Tw\$20,000 (\$670) for violating the leave regulations.

That was because as far as the law goes, there is currently no restriction on how often an employee can apply for marriage leave. The bank, which was only willing to offer eight days off, said the man had "abused" the law.

The case has sparked heated online criticism of the bank employee for taking advantage of legal loopholes and the labour department for issuing the fine.

Last week the Labour Department revoked the fine against the bank "to recognise a mistake and improve," it said in a statement.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
National Board of Revenue (NBR)
Internal Resources Division (IRD)
Ministry of Finance
Corrigendum

Tender Name: Procurement of Supply, Installation, Commissioning, Testing of 6 units fixed X-ray Container Scanners, 12 Units of Radioactive Portal Monitors, 6 Units Weighbridge and Central Image Monitoring System and Regional Image Monitoring System and interfacing between Central and Local Image Monitoring System to the X-ray Container Scanner along with the weigh bridge and ASYCUDA World system and 5 years Operation, Maintenance and Service.
Tender Number: File-08.01.0000.067.82.001.20
Corrigendum No. File-08.01.0000.067.82.001.20
Date: 21/04/2021

Due to unavoidable circumstances, the Tender Invitation Notice published for "Procurement of Supply, Installation, Commissioning, Testing of 6 units fixed X-ray Container Scanners, 12 Units of Radioactive Portal Monitors, 6 Units Weighbridge and Central Image Monitoring System and Regional Image Monitoring System and interfacing between Central and Local Image Monitoring System to the X-ray Container Scanner along with the weigh bridge and ASYCUDA World system and 5 years Operation, Maintenance and Service" has been changed as follows:

Serial Number as per invitation notice	Description of the content	As per tender schedule content	Amended content
6	Invitation Ref. No. & Date	File-08.01.0000.067.42.013.20 Date: 31-03-2021	File-08.01.0000.067.82.001.20 Date: 31-03-2021
16	Tender last selling date	24/05/2021, Time: 3.00pm	23/06/2021, Time: 3.00pm
17	Tender closing date & time	25/05/2021 Time: 3.00pm	24/06/2021 Time: 3.00pm
18	Tender opening time	25/05/2021 Time-3.40pm	24/06/2021 Time: 3.40pm
19	Selling tender document (principal)	Member (Customs Audit, Modernization and International Trade), Room: 512, National Board of Revenue, Segunbagicha, Dhaka. Tender schedule will be collected through Treasury Challan on Misc. Code is 1-1131-000-0421 at Sonali Bank/Bangladesh Bank in favour of Member (Customs Audit, Modernization and International Trade), National Board of Revenue, Dhaka.	Member (Customs Audit, Modernization and International Trade), Room: 512, National Board of Revenue, Segunbagicha, Dhaka. Tender schedule will be collected through Treasury Challan on Misc. Code is 1-1103-0000-2681 at Sonali Bank/Bangladesh Bank in favour of Member (Customs Audit, Modernization and International Trade), National Board of Revenue, Dhaka.
20	Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting	Conference Room, VAT Online Project, 7th Floor, 160/A, IDEB Bhaban, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Date: 25/04/2021, Time: 11.00am, Queries will be taken in written within 21/04/2021 before 5.00pm.	Conference Room, VAT Online Project, 7th Floor, 160/A, IDEB Bhaban, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Date: 27/05/2021, Time: 11.00am, Queries will be taken in written within 20/05/2021 before 5.00pm.
Tender schedule	Description of the content	Existing content	Previous amended content
Tender Data Sheet, Page No. 34	ITT 10.1	The Pre- Tender meeting shall be chaired and held: Member (Customs Audit, Modernization and International Trade), Conference Room, VAT Online Project, 7th Floor, 160/A, IDEB Bhaban, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. City: Dhaka, Country: Bangladesh, Time: at 11.00am, Date: 25-04-2021	The Pre- Tender meeting shall be chaired and held: Member (Customs Audit, Modernization and International Trade), Conference Room, VAT Online Project, 7th Floor, 160/A, IDEB Bhaban, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. City: Dhaka, Country: Bangladesh, Time: at 11.00am, Date: 27-05-2021
Tender Data Sheet, Page No. 36	ITT 36.1	The deadline for submission of tenders is: Time & date: 25/05/2021 at 3.00pm	The deadline for submission of tenders is: Time & date: 24/06/2021 at 3.00pm
Tender Data Sheet, Page No. 36	ITT 42.2	The deadline for opening of tenders is: Time & date: 25/05/2021 at 3.40pm	The deadline for opening of tenders is: Time & date: 24/06/2021 at 3.40pm

02. All other terms and conditions of the tender document will remain unchanged.

Khondaker Muhammad Aminur Rahman
 Member (Customs Audit, Modernization and International Trade)
 National Board of Revenue, Rajashsha Bhaban, Segunbagicha, Dhaka
 Phone: 8392360

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