

Impose UN arms embargo on Myanmar

Urge 200 rights groups

REUTERS, New York

More than 200 civil society groups, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, called on the UN Security Council on Wednesday to impose an arms embargo on Myanmar to help protect civilians peacefully protesting a military coup.

Since the military seized power on Feb. 1, Myanmar has seen daily protests and a surge of violence with security forces killing more than 770 civilians.

“Imposing a global arms embargo on Myanmar is the minimum necessary step the Security Council should take in response to the military’s escalating violence,” the civil society groups from around the world said in a joint statement.

“The time for statements has passed. The Security Council should take its consensus on Myanmar to a new level and agree on immediate and substantive action,” the civil society groups said.

Silver lining in climate fight

Study says 1.5C warming cap could ‘halve’ sea level rise from melting ice

AFP, Paris

Limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius could halve how much sea levels rise due to melting ice sheets this century, according to a major new study modelling how Earth’s frozen spaces will respond to ever-increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

Since 1993, melting land ice has contributed to at least half of global sea level rise and scientists have previously warned that the vast ice sheets of Antarctica were disappearing faster than worst-case scenarios.

An international team of more than 50 climate scientists combined hundreds of melt simulations of the Antarctica and Greenland ice sheets, which contain enough frozen water to raise the world’s seas some 65 metres (213 feet).

They also included melt modelling from Earth’s more than 220,000 glaciers, which make up only one percent of ice on the planet but contribute as much as a fifth of sea level rise.

The team analysed the models to

Under 3C of warming scenario, sea-level will rise by 25 centimetres

If world can limit warming to 1.5C, sea level to rise by 13 centimetres

World’s glacial melting will also be halved if countries keep climate pledges



come up with probability estimates of how much melting ice would raise oceans under a variety of emissions pathways.

They found that if mankind successfully limits warming to 1.5C -- the goal set down in the Paris climate deal -- it could halve ice’s contribution to sea level rise by 2100.

This is compared with the roughly 3C of warming Earth would undergo if countries’ current emissions-cutting pledges played out.

“Global sea level is going to continue to rise,” said lead study author Tamsin Edwards, from King’s College London’s department of geography.

“But we could halve that contribution from ice melting if we limit warming

to 1.5C degrees, relative to current pledges.”

The study, published in the journal Nature, found that the average contribution to sea level rise from melting ice at 1.5C was 13 centimetres (five inches) by 2100, compared to the 25 centimetres currently projected.

The analysis showed that sea level rise attributed to the Greenland ice sheet would fall 70 percent if the 1.5-C target was met, and land-based glaciers’ contribution would roughly halve.

However the projections were less clear and varied widely when it came to Antarctica.

Co-author Sophie Nowicki, from the Nasa Goddard Flight Center, said the uncertainty in the models was largely

down to what extent increased snowfall across a warming continent would offset melting from the ice shelves.

“Greenland is really sensitive to atmospheric changes, and so in a warmer world you get more melting on the surface of the ice sheets,” said Nowicki.

“In Antarctica it is very complex. A warmer world could mean more snowfall, but it could also mean more melt at the side of the icesheet.”

The calculations showed a 95 percent chance that Antarctica would contribute less than 56 centimetres to sea level rise by 2100.

But under a “pessimistic scenario”, the study showed, Antarctica could raise global oceans by more than that even if humanity manages to cap warming at 1.5C.

A second study, also published Wednesday in Nature, found that limiting warming to 2C above industrial levels was likely to maintain the current rate of ice melt in Antarctica.

However, if current emissions-cutting pledges are not intensified by 2060, the models showed that the continent could contribute half a centimetre to sea levels every year by 2100.

Furthermore, the study warned that if emissions continue at their current levels, a tipping point will be reached around 2060 which would lead to Antarctic melt that would be “irreversible on multi-century timescales”.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ex-Maldives leader Nasheed injured in ‘bomb attack’



A suspected bomb blast injured former Maldives president and current parliament speaker Mohamed Nasheed yesterday and he has been rushed to hospital, officials and residents said.

The explosion went off as Nasheed, 53, was getting into his car in the capital Male, an official from his Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), told AFP by telephone. “It looks like some sort of an improvised explosive device, possibly rigged up to a parked motorcycle,” the official said adding that an investigation was under way. There were no details of the injuries suffered by Nasheed. At least one of his bodyguards was also taken to hospital. Nasheed became the country’s first democratically elected president after winning the first multi-party elections in 2008.

Tensions high as Jerusalem clashes wound 22 Palestinians

Twenty-two Palestinians were wounded in overnight clashes with Israeli police in annexed east Jerusalem, the Red Crescent said yesterday, as tensions flare over a controversial land rights case. Police confirmed 11 arrests in the latest unrest to rock the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood near Jerusalem’s walled Old City, where land disputes between Palestinians and Jewish settlers have fuelled hostility for years. The legal case centres on the homes of four Palestinian families on land claimed by Jews. Earlier this year, a Jerusalem district court ruled the homes legally belonged to the Jewish families, citing purchases decades ago. The Palestinian families implicated in the case have provided evidence that their homes were acquired from Jordanian authorities, who controlled east Jerusalem from 1948 to 1967. Israel’s Supreme Court to hear the case on Monday.

Blinken warns Russia against ‘reckless actions’



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken yesterday called on Russia to cease “reckless and aggressive actions” against Ukraine, saying that Moscow has kept “significant forces” near the border. “We stand strongly with you... and we look to Russia to cease reckless and aggressive actions,” Blinken told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kiev. Blinken’s one-day visit comes after Russia last month amassed 100,000 troops on Ukraine’s borders, the biggest mobilisation since Moscow seized the majority-Russian peninsula of Crimea in 2014 and war broke out in eastern Ukraine. But Russia quickly announced a pullback after the latest buildup, leading some experts to believe President Putin was testing the will of Biden while seeking to intensify pressure on Ukraine.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



French fishing boats protest in front of the port of Saint Helier off the British island of Jersey, yesterday. Britain withdrew its Royal Navy vessels from the waters off Jersey yesterday but said it would remain on standby to support the Channel island after a dispute with France over post-Brexit fishing rights escalated rapidly. France and Britain both deployed maritime patrol vessels to the area after a flotilla of French trawlers sailed in protest to Jersey’s main harbour. French fishermen say they are being unfairly deprived of access to rich fishing grounds off the coast of Jersey, a self-governing British Crown Dependency.

PHOTO: AFP

METHANE EMISSIONS

UN says 30pc cut in a decade possible

AFP, Paris

Industry could cheaply and easily slash humanity’s methane emissions by at least 30 percent in a decade, the United Nations said yesterday, adding that such cuts would slow global warming and prevent hundreds of thousands of deaths.

Curbing emissions of methane from farming, fossil fuel operations and waste management is a crucial part of efforts to restrain runaway climate change. The powerful greenhouse gas, which is short-lived but many times more potent than carbon dioxide, also contributes to toxic air pollution, harming human health, plants and ecosystems.

Certain sectors already have it in their power to dramatically cut their emissions, according to the new Global Methane Assessment by the UN-led Climate and Clean Air Coalition.

Technical solutions -- mostly in the fossil fuel and waste sectors -- are “readily available” and can reduce humanity’s methane emissions by more than 30 percent this decade, the analysis found.

Together with other affordable measures that are currently available, the reduction could be as much as 45 percent, it said. It said the more ambitious 45 percent reduction could avoid nearly 0.3 degrees Celsius of warming over the next two decades and reduce ground level ozone pollution.

It would also, each year, prevent 255,000 premature deaths, as well as effectively increasing global crop yields by 26 million tonnes.

Methane has a warming potential 28 times greater than CO2 over a 100-year period and its concentration in the atmosphere has more than doubled since the Industrial Revolution. Over a 20-year period, it is more than 80 times as potent.

Taliban capture key Afghan dam as fighting escalates

Afghan journalist shot dead after Taliban warning

AFP, Kandahar

The Taliban have captured Afghanistan’s second-biggest dam after months of fierce fighting in their former bastion of Kandahar, the insurgents and officials said yesterday, as US began to pullout from the country.

Dahla Dam, which provides irrigation to farmers via a network of canals as well as drinking water for the provincial capital, was now under Taliban control, local officials told AFP.

“We have seized the Dahla Dam in Arghandab,” Taliban spokesman Qari Yousef Ahmadi told AFP. Haji Gulbuddin, governor of an adjacent district, confirmed the dam “is now in the control of the Taliban.

Dahla was built by the United States nearly 70 years ago to provide water for irrigating land in about seven districts of Kandahar.

In neighbouring Helmand, thousands of people have fled their homes in the face of a massive Taliban offensive against government forces. US warplanes have been providing air support for the Afghan forces despite the drawdown of foreign troops.

Meanwhile, a high-profile Afghan television journalist was shot dead in southern Kandahar city yesterday, officials said, a day after the Taliban warned against “biased reporting” by the media.

Nemat Rawan was until last month a popular talk show host with the country’s leading broadcaster Tolo News, before joining the ministry of finance as a communications specialist.

There was no claim of responsibility for the attack, but the Taliban have been blamed for a wave of assassinations targeting journalists in recent months.

Drug raid in Rio slum kills at least 25

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

A massive police operation against drug traffickers in a Rio de Janeiro favela yesterday left at least 24 suspects and a policeman dead, Brazilian media reports said.

The early-morning raid turned the impoverished neighborhood of Jacarezinho, on Rio’s north side, into a battlefield, with residents posting videos on social media of explosions, heavy gunfire and helicopters hovering overhead.

The sting targeted drug traffickers accused of recruiting minors, police said in a statement.

India’s neighbours close borders over virus rampage

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka yesterday became the latest of India’s neighbours to seal its borders with the South Asian giant as it battles a record coronavirus surge.

Bangladesh and Nepal have also banned flights and sought to close their borders with India, where a huge rise in numbers in the past three weeks has taken deaths past 230,000 and cases over 21 million.

All three countries are fighting their own pandemic surges, which Red Cross leaders have described as a “human catastrophe”.

The Sri Lankan government banned flight passengers from India entering, as the country reported its highest daily toll of 14 deaths and 1,939 infections in 24 hours.

Sri Lanka’s navy said it had stepped up patrols to keep away Indian trawlers, adding that on Tuesday it stopped 11 such vessels which had crossed the narrow strip of sea dividing the two neighbours.

Bangladesh halted all international



flights on April 14 because of its own surge and shut its border with India on April 26.


Nepal suspended international flights a week ago, until May 14. Border crossings are only allowing starved Nepalis to return home.

Many hospitals, specially bordering India, in Nepal are overflowing with Covid-19 patients, according to the International Federation of Red Cross

and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

Even the luxury tourist destination of the Maldives has tightened restrictions for Indian visitors, insisting on negative test results on entry.

India is the largest tourist market for Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Sri Lanka has reported 117,529 infections with 734 deaths since the start of the pandemic. The Maldives has reported 32,665 cases with 74 deaths.




Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Project Director

Railway Connectivity Improvement Preparatory Facility Project

Bangladesh Railway, Railbhaban

16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka, Bangladesh



Date: 06.05.2021

Memo No. 54.01.0000.689.07.004.21-06

Request for Expression of Interest (FIRM) (International)

for

Consultancy Services for Railway Connectivity Improvement Preparatory Facility Project [ADB Loan 6030 BAN]

1.	Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for implementing Railway Connectivity Improvement Preparatory Facility Project. A portion of the loan is intended to be used for payments under the Contract for Consultancy Services for which this Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) is being issued.										
2.	Bangladesh Railway (BR), Ministry of Railways of the Government of Bangladesh will implement the project as the Executing Agency. The Project Director of Railway Connectivity Improvement Preparatory Facility Project shall be the Client for the Consulting Service Contract.										
3.	Brief Description of the Services: The assignment will advance project readiness of ensuing projects (i.e., subprojects) in the railway sector of Bangladesh, by preparing feasibility study, detailed design, safeguard documents, bidding documents and other project documents for 11 subprojects to be studies under the Consultancy Services. Detailed terms of Reference (ToR) have been uploaded at ADB's website.										
4.	The Consultant will be selected under Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS; 80:20) Method in accordance with the procedures set out in the ADB Procurement Policy 2017 ("Policy") and the Procurement Regulations for ADB Borrowers 2017 ("Procurement Regulations"): https://www.adb.org/documents/adb-procurement-policy https://www.adb.org/documents/procurement-regulations-adb-borrowers										
5.	BR will conduct 'short-listing' of the interested Consulting Firms who will have submitted Expression of Interest (EOI) for the abovementioned Consultancy Service. For this purpose, qualifications and experience of the Consulting Firms required are as follows: <table><tr><td>a)</td><td>Technical Competence: general experience, specific experience in similar assignments (Detailed Design, Feasibility Study of similar railway projects with comparable scale and technical complexity);</td></tr><tr><td>b)</td><td>Geographic Experience: experience in similar geographic area;</td></tr><tr><td>c)</td><td>Contractual Management Experience: Substantial experience in managing FIDC contracts as a Firm and by the key members of the team;</td></tr><tr><td>d)</td><td>Management Capabilities: Financial (Annual Turnover); capability to retain the required number of Key Experts who are preferably permanent employees of the consulting firms with adequate qualifications.</td></tr><tr><td>e)</td><td>Experience to work with Multilateral Development Banks-MDBs (i.e. ADB, WB etc.) The interested applicants should submit necessary documentary evidence in favor of their submission i.e. in case of turnover audited financial report in USD/BDT. Applicants may obtain further information by applying to undersigned during normal office hours preferably by email.</td></tr></table>	a)	Technical Competence: general experience, specific experience in similar assignments (Detailed Design, Feasibility Study of similar railway projects with comparable scale and technical complexity);	b)	Geographic Experience: experience in similar geographic area;	c)	Contractual Management Experience: Substantial experience in managing FIDC contracts as a Firm and by the key members of the team;	d)	Management Capabilities: Financial (Annual Turnover); capability to retain the required number of Key Experts who are preferably permanent employees of the consulting firms with adequate qualifications.	e)	Experience to work with Multilateral Development Banks-MDBs (i.e. ADB, WB etc.) The interested applicants should submit necessary documentary evidence in favor of their submission i.e. in case of turnover audited financial report in USD/BDT. Applicants may obtain further information by applying to undersigned during normal office hours preferably by email.
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6.	The applicants may associate with other firm(s) to enhance their qualifications and association with foreign firms is encouraged.										
7.	According to ADB's Procurement Regulations, an REOI for this Consulting Service has been published electronically in the ADB's Consultant Management System (CMS) which can be accessed through the following link: https://selfservice.adb.org/OA_HTML/adbxxcrs/jsp/ADBCsmFwd.jsp?sel=168517 The applicants shall have to submit their EOI electronically through ADB's CMS by 17 June 2021 on 11:59pm Manila Local Time (Bangladesh Local Time 09.59pm).										
8.	If any contradiction is found between CMS notice and Newspaper notice, the information on CMS notice shall prevail. For technical inquiries/assistance, the Consultants may seek advice by emailing to the following email address: cmshelp@adb.org										
9.	Offline submission of EOI is NOT allowed .										
10.	The Client will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by the firm(s) in connection with the preparation or delivery of the EOI. The Executing Agency reserves the right to accept any EOI or reject all EOIs without assigning any reason.										

Md. Mahubur Rahman

Project Director

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