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G20 leaders wrangle over climate

COP26 starts today
AFP, Rome

Leaders of the world's major economies yesterday met at the G20 summit in Rome, heading for a new deal on global taxation but still haggling on the pressing issue of climate change.

In their first in-person gathering for two years, the G20 leaders expressed "broad and cross-party support" for a 15 percent minimum tax rate for the biggest multinationals, according to a source close to negotiations.

The reform plan, which seeks to end the practice of big corporates such as Apple and Google parent Alphabet of sheltering profits in low-tax countries, has been backed by almost 140 countries and is expected to be formally approved in the G20 communique today.

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A woman taking drinking water from a hand pump in the middle of flooded fields in Gatirgheri area of Koyra, Khulna. Severe Cyclonic Storm Yaas made landfall in late May. But the breach in embankment by the surge still causes floods in vast areas in the coastal region.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

COASTAL PEOPLE

Not merely at mercy of nature

Locals in Khulna's Koyra suffer as embankment, damaged by Yaas, not repaired in six months

PINAKI ROY with DIPANKAR ROY

"Many are leaving this area and going someplace else to live. Their homes are submerged and they have no means of livelihood here. It is hard even to get drinking water sometimes."

Gautam Das looks apprehensive as he says this standing by the Shakbaria river near Gatirgheri village in Khulna's Koyra upazila.

Around 80 families of the village have been living on the embankment in the open, around six months after severe cyclonic storm Yaas breached parts of the embankment, flooding their village.

With their homes damaged and livestock washed away, many are now considering to leave everything behind and migrate elsewhere in search of livelihoods.

Sitting in the southern coastal district of Khulna, one of the climate-vulnerable regions, Koyra faces climate-induced hazards frequently. When cyclone Aila lashed the coastal belt in 2009, the tidal surge flooded village after village, forcing many families to live out in the open.

Back then, too, the protection embankment caved in and the authorities took two years to fix it. All the while, many homesteads remained under water, and the embankment was the only home for many families.

After the embankment was repaired in 2011, they returned to whatever was left of their "homes" to start from scratch. But when Yaas struck in May this year, all they had built over the last 10 years were gone under the saline water again.

"They cannot go back home until the earthen embankment is repaired. Even if

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REMITTANCE INFLOW

Hundi, layoffs pull it down

Experts also cite sharp drop in recruitment amid pandemic

JAMIL MAHMUD

The worrying dip in remittance flow in recent months is the result of a reemergence of illegal channels of money transfer after the coronavirus restrictions were lifted, a sharp decline in overseas recruitment, and layoffs, experts said.

From July-September, the country received about \$5.4 billion through formal channels, down from about \$6.7 billion during the same period last year, according to Bangladesh Bank (BB) data.

Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Malaysia -- the countries from where most of the remittances come from -- sent home around \$932.7 million less than the amount they sent in those three months last year, according to BB and Bureau of Manpower, Employment and

"The dip in remittance through formal channels will create pressure on the government's foreign currency reserve and exchange rate. Since remittance is crucial for the government, there is reason to worry."

PROF SELIM RAIHAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SOUTH ASIAN NETWORK ON ECONOMIC MODELING

Training (BMET).

Also, Bangladesh received \$771.6 million less in remittance in the first quarter of 2021-2022 fiscal year compared to the immediate past quarter, BB data says.

Remittance inflow soared in the last fiscal

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Editors voice concern over press freedom

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Free press is under an onslaught from multiple spheres -- beginning from the legal system, to the corporate domination of the media, to politicisation of journalists, said speakers at an event organised by Sampadak Parishad yesterday.

"Protecting the interests of any individual or group is not the responsibility of a media outlet," said Syed Manzoorul Islam, former professor of English at Dhaka University.

He was speaking at a discussion titled "50 Years of Bangladesh: Media Achievements and Future Challenges" at the capital's the CIRDAP auditorium.

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The 'dance club' racket

Rab busts gang that trafficked over 100 women to India; 8 routes identified, 11 held

MUNTAKIM SAAD

On September 21, a 19-year-old woman was invited by a dance club to perform at an event in Rangpur.

After two days, the garment factory worker called her family and said she was being trafficked to India. The family members then called her numerous times but couldn't reach her.

On September 26, her father, a house painter, filed a general diary with Badda Police Station.

Rab officers conducted several raids in Dhaka and elsewhere in the last two days and arrested 11 members of two human trafficking gangs that allegedly trafficked women to India and the Middle Eastern countries, promising them of a better life abroad.

Rab also rescued 23 women, including 22 from three "safe-houses" in the capital's Mirpur, Uttara, and Tejgaon.

Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of Rab Legal and Media Wing, told a press briefing at Rab-4

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17 files go missing from health ministry

Probe body formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health and family welfare ministry yesterday formed a three-member committee to probe how 17 files, all deemed important, went missing from its premises on Thursday.

The committee, which is led by Md Shah Alam, additional secretary (administration) of the Health Education Division, has been asked to submit their investigation report within five working days.

The two other members are Md Ahsan Kabir, joint secretary (medical education), and Mohammad Abdul Qader, deputy secretary (medical education-1) of the ministry.

The majority of the files were related to procurement by different medical colleges and health institutions, according to the missing list.

The dockets include purchase documents related to Shaheed Taj Uddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital in Gazipur and Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, the National Institute of Population Research and Training's data on breast and cervical cancer screening programmes and purchases, vehicle purchase of different training schools.

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