

## EU'S \$2.8B ANTI-TRUST FINE Blow as Google loses appeal

AFP, Brussels

Google yesterday lost an appeal against a 2.4-billion-euro (\$2.8-billion) fine imposed by the European Union for abusing its search engine dominance -- a big win for the bloc's anti-trust tussle with the tech titan.

The ruling by the Luxembourg-based General Court confirmed the landmark decision taken by the European Commission in 2017.

The matter could be challenged again, however, if Google decides to turn to the EU's highest court, the European Court of Justice, for a final say.

"Today's judgment delivers the clear message that Google's conduct was unlawful and it provides the necessary legal clarity for the market," the European Commission said in a statement.

The case centres on Google's shopping service and is one of three against the search engine giant currently moving through the EU's drawn-out appeals system.

At the time, the fine was the EU's biggest ever. But it was later exceeded by a 4.3-billion-euro fine against Google over its Android smartphone operating system.

In its appeal, Google and its parent company Alphabet had argued the EU was "wrong on the law, the facts, and the economics" in the search engine case.

But the court said it dismissed "for the most part the action brought by the two companies, and upholds the fine imposed by the Commission".

It said that, by favouring its own Google Shopping service over rivals in its search result rankings and positioning, "Google departed from competition on the merits".

A Google spokesperson said the company will examine the ruling.

While Google was dealt a setback in the EU, the company fended off a separate legal case in Britain yesterday as the Supreme Court blocked a \$4 billion class-action lawsuit accusing it of illegally tracking millions of iPhone users.



A photo taken on Monday and released yesterday shows stranded migrants at the Belarusian-Polish border in the Grodno region. Inset, A man holding a child reacts as he waits in freezing cold with his family to cross the border. PHOTO: AFP

Quote of the day



"I am appalled that large numbers of migrants and refugees continue to be left in a desperate situation in near-freezing temperatures at the Belarus-Poland border. I urge the states involved to take immediate steps to de-escalate and resolve this intolerable situation. proposed."

UN HUMAN RIGHTS CHIEF  
MICHELLE BACHELET

### MORE NEWS

#### Trump Capitol attack records can be released to Congress

A US judge Tuesday ordered White House records that could implicate former President Donald Trump in the January 6 attack on the Capitol be released to a Congressional committee, despite the ex-leader's attempts to keep them secret. The documents have been sought by the House Select Committee investigating the January 6 violence, in which hundreds of Trump supporters forced the shutdown of Congress and delayed a joint session to confirm that Joe Biden won the November 2020 election and would become president. Trump sued seeking a stay to halt the release of the documents, arguing that, as a former president, he retained executive privilege to keep the communications and visitor logs related to that day under seal.



#### Malala gets married

Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai, who was shot by the Pakistani Taliban for campaigning for girls' education, got married on Tuesday in a small ceremony in Birmingham, central England, she announced on social media. "Today marks a precious day in my life. Asger (Malik) and I tied the knot to be partners for life," she wrote on Twitter, where she also posted images of herself and her new husband on their wedding day. Yousafzai was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize as a 17-year-old in 2014, sharing the award with Kailash Satyarthi, a children's rights activist from India.

#### Taiwan gov't faces 5 million cyber attacks daily: official

Taiwan's government agencies face around five million cyber attacks and probes a day, an official said yesterday, as a report warned of increasing Chinese cyber warfare targeting the self-ruled island. Speaking in parliament, cyber security department director Chien Hung-wei said Taiwan's government network faces "five million attacks and scans a day". A scan in cyber security refers to an attempt to locate weaknesses in a server. Taipei has accused Beijing of ramping up cyber attacks since the 2016 election of President Tsai Ing-wen, who views the island as a sovereign nation. Beijing views democratic Taiwan as part of its own territory and has vowed to one day seize the island, by force if necessary.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

## 'We've already run out of time'

UN says climate change to intensify humanitarian crisis, aid system collapse

THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION

In the six years since the Paris Agreement on climate change was adopted in 2015, Madagascar has had only one decent rainy season, leaving more than a million people severely hungry in the southeast African island nation.

The drought and unexpected sandstorms have ruined crops in the south, according to the UN World Food Programme, forcing families to eat locusts, wild leaves and cacti, with their malnourished children too weak to laugh or cry.

About 14,000 people in Madagascar are now on the brink of famine.

From Madagascar to Afghanistan, where drought is displacing people already beset by conflict, hotter global temperatures are stoking hunger, poverty and migration among tens of millions in the most fragile countries, UN agencies warned on Tuesday.

Aid workers are struggling to keep pace with the rising number of disasters even at global warming of 1.2 degrees

Celsius today, the UN humanitarian agency OCHA said at the COP26 climate talks in Glasgow, pointing to the challenges of operating in troubled places like Haiti, Mali and Yemen.

"A rise of 2.7C, our current trajectory, or beyond would lead to a



runaway global humanitarian crisis, the sheer magnitude of which would seriously threaten the (aid) system's collapse," it said in a preview of a report to be released early next year.

The research highlights that from 2000-2019, nearly 7,000 disasters were recorded worldwide, a rise of 83% from the previous two decades, with floods increasing by 134% over that same period and extreme temperature events by 232%.

"I believe we have already run

out of time," OCHA's chief of policy Hansjoerg Strohmeyer told journalists in Glasgow.

"Tens of millions today have run out of time, because for them, the climate crisis is real - it's daily, it's irreversible and it's now."

The agencies called for governments to deliver on an unmet promise to provide \$100 billion a year from 2020 to help developing nations tackle climate change, and to ensure the money makes a difference to lives in places like Niger and South Sudan.

In a bid to build the resilience of vulnerable people to climate change impacts, donor governments have this week made new contributions to two key funds set up to help the world's poorest countries adapt to a warmer planet. Yet despite the new money, finance for adaptation - at little more than \$20 billion a year - remains far below the annual \$70 billion in estimated needs among developing countries - an amount that could rise to \$300 billion by 2030, the UN said.

### MIGRANT CRISIS AT POLAND-BELARUS BORDER

## West accuses Belarus of orchestrating crisis

AFP, Sokolka, Poland

Poland yesterday said it had seen a surge in attempts to breach its border and had pushed back hundreds of migrants to Belarus, after it accused Minsk and Moscow of trying to orchestrate a crisis on Europe's borders.

The migrants, mainly from the Middle East, have spent days in freezing temperatures on the border, blocked by rows of Polish border guards behind razor-wire.

Western governments have accused Belarusian strongman Alexander Lukashenko of luring the migrants to his country and sending them to cross over into EU member Poland in retaliation for sanctions.

Poland has gone a step further, saying Lukashenko's main backer, Russian President Vladimir Putin, is masterminding the crisis.

Between 2,000 and 4,000 migrants, reported to be mainly Kurds, have set up a camp near the border after they made a concerted effort to cross on Monday but were pushed back by Polish border guards. Polish police said more than 50 migrants were detained and handed over to border guards to be sent back to Belarus.

The Polish defence ministry said Belarus was using intimidation to force migrants to breach the border. Belarus has levelled its own accusations against Poland, saying Warsaw is violating international norms by blocking the migrants and beating them back with violence.

The EU, Nato and the United States have all said Lukashenko is provoking the crisis in response to Western sanctions imposed over his heavy crackdown on the opposition following a disputed election last year.

## 'Well, that was a bedtime fail, wasn't it?'

Daughter interrupts NZ PM's livestream

AFP, Wellington

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern was busy telling the nation about important revisions to Covid-19 restrictions when an unexpected voice cut in: "mummy"?

In a situation familiar to parents worldwide, the leader's three-year-old daughter Neve had decided everything, even the affairs of state, could wait. "You're meant to be in bed, darling," the 41-year-old Kiwi leader says, turning away from the Monday's Facebook livestream to offer an also-familiar observation-cum-plea.

"No," Neve responds undeterred, launching what ended up being protracted, and for Ardern, fruitless, negotiations.

"It's bedtime, darling, pop back to bed. I'll come and see you in a second. I'll come and see you in a minute. Okay, -- sorry, everybody," Ardern says with a wry smile.

"Well, that was a bedtime fail, wasn't it? I thought here's a moment I'll do a Facebook Live. It will be nice and safe. Does anyone else have kids escape like three, four times after bedtime? Thankfully, my mum's here so she can help out."

"Okay, where were we?" Ardern tried to continue. The little voice returns: "What's taking so long?"

"I'm sorry, darling, it is taking so long. Okay. I'm sorry, everyone. I'm going to just go and put Neve back to bed. Because this is well past her bedtime. Thanks for joining me."

While not as dramatic as the moment the children of Korea analyst Robert Kelly interrupting his 2017 BBC interview, it is not the first time Neve has stolen the limelight.

In 2018 Ardern became the second prime minister in the world -- after Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto -- to give birth while in office, later taking Neve onto the floor of the UN Assembly in New York.



A model of the Democracy Monument built by activists is lit on fire outside the Constitutional Court of Thailand in Bangkok yesterday, after the court ruled that three Thai protesters' demands on monarchy reform amounted to calls to overthrow the constitutional monarchy. PHOTO: AFP

## 'Europe is in danger'

Bloc's top diplomat to propose EU military doctrine

REUTERS, Brussels

The European Union's top diplomat was set to warn the bloc yesterday that it must agree an ambitious doctrine as the basis for joint military action abroad, including with a deployable crisis force, according to excerpts of a draft seen by Reuters.

Josep Borrell will present his fellow European Commissioners with the first draft of the "Strategic Compass", the closest thing the EU could have to a military doctrine and akin to Nato's "Strategic Concept" that sets out alliance goals.

"Europe is in danger," the EU's foreign policy chief will say, according to a draft foreword.

He will stress that the US-led Nato alliance remains primarily responsible for Europe's collective defence.

While European countries have

highly-trained soldiers and cyber, naval and air power, resources are duplicated across 27 militaries and EU train-and-assist missions are modest in size.

Member states also lack the logistics and command and control capabilities of the United States and cannot match its intelligence-gathering.

A separate threat assessment is confidential, but diplomats cite the failing states on Europe's frontiers as areas where the EU might need to send peacekeepers or evacuate citizens.

EU foreign and defence ministers will take up the issue on Monday, aiming to agree a final political document in March.

With the blessing of US President Joe Biden in a communique with French President Emmanuel Macron last month, the EU argues it can be a more useful ally to the US if it develops

standalone military capacities.

Britain's exit from the EU, while depriving the bloc of a military power, has given Paris an opportunity to push ambitions for a bigger EU role in defence, with Berlin. But despite progress on building a common defence fund to develop weapons together since late 2017, the EU has yet to deploy its battalion-sized battlegroups in a crisis.

Borrell is set to say that the Strategic Compass is not just another EU document, noting past failures in defence.

"The difference this time lies in the speed at which the geo-political context is changing. This makes the case for action more urgent," Borrell said in the foreword to the draft.

"All the threats we face are intensifying and the capacity of individual member states to cope is insufficient and declining."



Hindu devotees offer prayers during 'Chhath Puja' festival on the banks of the Mahananda River in Siliguri, yesterday. Prayers during Chhath puja are dedicated to the solar deity, Surya, to show gratitude and thankfulness for bestowing the bounties of life on earth and to request the granting of certain wishes. PHOTO: AFP

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY



NOVEMBER 11

**1918** - The First World War ended at 11 am.

The armistice was signed in a railway carriage at Compiègne, France, bringing to a close a conflict in which more than 10 million people died.

**1992** - Overturning centuries of tradition, the Church of England voted to allow women to become priests.

SOURCE: REUTERS