

MORE NEWS

Biden, Xi to hold virtual summit tomorrow

US President Joe Biden will hold a hotly anticipated virtual summit with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping tomorrow, with both sides indicating they will not give ground on flashpoint issues such as Taiwan. Relations between the world's two largest economies have recently deteriorated, in particular over Taiwan, a self-ruling democracy claimed by China, which last month made a record number of air incursions near the island. Biden and Xi have talked by phone twice since the veteran Democrat moved into the White House. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Blinken on Saturday had a preparatory phone call for the summit.

Duterte's daughter to run for Philippines vice president

Philippines "First Daughter" Sara Duterte yesterday entered the vice presidential race for the 2022 elections, in a surprise move that could boost the chances of presidential hopeful Ferdinand Marcos Jr winning the country's highest office. Outgoing President Rodrigo Duterte, who is constitutionally barred from seeking a second term, also flagged plans to contest the vice presidency -- triggering chaotic scenes at the Commission on Elections office handling last-minute changes to candidacies ahead of a November 15 cutoff. Sara Duterte, 43, had been widely expected to seek the presidency in a bid to succeed her father, and potentially protect him from criminal charges in the Philippines and International Criminal Court investigators probing his deadly drug war.



Bannon indicted for refusing to testify in Capitol riot probe

Former US president Donald Trump's longtime advisor Steve Bannon was indicted Friday for refusing to testify to the congressional committee investigating the Capitol riot, the Justice Department announced. A federal grand jury returned the indictment in a significant victory for the House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6 Attack. The indictment came hours after Trump's former chief of staff, Mark Meadows, declined to show up for a committee deposition after being subpoenaed, which could lead to similar charges of contempt. Investigators think Meadows and Bannon could have information on links between the White House and the Trump supporters who invaded the Capitol to prevent the certification of Joe Biden as winner of the November 2020 presidential election.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Performers from the Blue Rebels conduct a funeral ceremony at Glasgow Necropolis to symbolise the failure of the COP26 process, at Glasgow Cathedral in Glasgow yesterday, during the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference.

PHOTO: AFP

Quote of the day



"I want everyone to know. We have nothing to do with it. ... We should not forget where these crises associated with migrants came from... Western countries themselves, including European countries.

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN ON BELARUS-POLAND BORDER CRISIS AS WEST ACCUSES MOSCOW OF FANNING THE CRISIS BECAUSE OF THE SANCTIONS IT IMPOSED ON RUSSIA'S ALLY BELARUS

AIR POLLUTION IN NEW DELHI

'How will we live otherwise?'

Indian SC suggests a 'pollution lockdown'; schools ordered to close for week amid 'air emergency'

AGENCIES

The Chief Justice of India yesterday asked the central government to come up with an emergency plan to tackle New Delhi's toxic air quality and dangerous smog conditions, calling the situation "very serious".

India's pollution control body has warned of a looming health emergency in New Delhi as deteriorating air quality in the capital turned the sky a murky grey.

The city is ranked one of the world's most polluted, with a hazardous melange of factory emissions, car exhaust fumes and smoke from agricultural fires settling in the skies over its 20 million people each winter.

New Delhi's chief minister yesterday ordered schools to close for

a week.

"Starting Monday, schools are being shut so that children don't have to breathe polluted air," Arvind Kejriwal told reporters.

Yesterday, pollution levels in the megacity were 437 on a scale of 500 on the Air Quality Index, data from the Central Pollution Control Board showed.

The Board on Friday told New Delhi residents to "limit outdoor activities and minimise their exposure" and advised government authorities to prepare "for implementation of measures under 'emergency' category".

It added the poor air quality would likely run until November 18 due to "low winds with calm conditions during the night".

Yesterday, the Supreme Court

suggested imposing a pollution lockdown on Delhi to help with the air quality crisis.

"How will we live otherwise?" Chief Justice NV Ramana said.

At the COP26 global climate summit this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made it clear that carbon emissions-cutting pledges from India and other developing nations would require finance from rich, historic emitters.

A 2020 report by Swiss organisation IQAir found that 22 of the world's 30 most polluted cities were in India, with Delhi ranked the most polluted capital globally.

The same year, the Lancet said 1.67 million deaths were attributable to air pollution in India in 2019, including almost 17,500 in the capital.

Amazon deforestation hits monthly record in Brazil

AFP, Brasilia

Deforestation of the Amazon rainforest hit a new record in October, a Brazilian government agency said Friday, just days after President Jair Bolsonaro announced ambitious environmental goals at the COP26 climate summit.

An area more than half the size of the city of Rio de Janeiro -- 877 square kilometers (339 square miles) -- of Amazon's lush rainforest was cleared, the largest ever recorded for October since Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (INPE) started documenting deforestation in 2016.

The October figure was a five percent increase from the corresponding period last year.

Attributed mostly to illegal mining and farming activity, deforestation of the Amazon surged in 2020, and is on track to reach similar highs in 2021, with 7,880 square kilometers of forest cleared and two months yet to go.

Brazil was among the signatories to an international pledge made at the COP26 summit in Glasgow to end deforestation by 2030.

Bolsonaro also went further by pledging to eliminate illegal deforestation in the giant South American country -- home to 60 percent of the Amazon -- by 2028, pulling forward a previous target by two years.

But the commitments have been met with skepticism by environmental groups who along with Brazil's opposition squarely blame Bolsonaro for a spike in deforestation, due to his support for an increase in agriculture and mining work.

They have also accused him of defunding environmental protection organizations.



Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) activists shout slogans during an anti-government demonstration against the inflation, unemployment and other economic issues in Karachi, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

YEMEN WAR

Air strikes kill '186 rebels'

AFP, Riyadh

The Saudi-led coalition fighting rebels in Yemen yesterday said that its air strikes over the previous 24 hours killed 186 Huthi fighters in the battleground provinces of Marib and Al-Bayda.

The Saudi-led coalition has been reporting high death tolls in almost daily strikes since October aimed at repelling a rebel offensive on the city of Marib, the government's last stronghold in the north.

The Iran-backed Huthis rarely comment on the tolls, which have exceeded 3,000 in total. AFP cannot independently verify the coalition's figures.

A coalition statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency said that the latest strikes had focused on the front line west of Marib.

West at risk of conflict with Russia: UK army chief

Putin slams huge US, Nato Black Sea drills

REUTERS, London

There is a greater risk of an accidental war breaking out between the West and Russia than at any time since the Cold War, with many of the traditional diplomatic tools no longer available, Britain's most senior military officer said.

General Nick Carter, chief of the defence staff, told Times Radio there was a greater risk of tensions in the new era of a "multipolar world", where governments compete for different objectives and different agendas.

"I think we have to be careful that people don't end up allowing the bellicose nature of some of our politics to end up in a position where escalation leads to miscalculation," he said in an interview to be broadcast today.

Tensions have been mounting in eastern Europe in recent weeks after the European Union accused Belarus of flying in thousands of migrants to engineer a humanitarian crisis on its border with EU-member state Poland, a dispute that

threatens to draw in Russia and Nato.

President Vladimir Putin yesterday said that unscheduled Nato drills in the Black Sea posed a serious challenge for Moscow and that Russia had nothing to do with the crisis on close ally Belarus's border with the bloc.

"The United States and its allies in Nato are carrying out unplanned exercises in the Black Sea. Not only is a rather powerful naval group involved in these exercises, but also aviation, including strategic aviation. This is a serious challenge for us," Putin said in an interview.

Carter said authoritarian rivals were willing to use any tool at their disposal, such as migrants, surging gas prices, proxy forces or cyber attacks. "The character of warfare has changed," he said.

Following the bi-polar world of the Cold War, and the unipolar world of US dominance, diplomats now face a more complex multi-polar world, he said, adding that "traditional diplomatic tools and mechanisms" of the Cold War were no longer available.



Sudan anti-coup protesters rally as army tightens grip

One killed; West slams new ruling council

AFP, Khartoum

Sudanese security forces yesterday shot dead at least one protester in a crackdown on anti-coup demonstrations, medics said, after the military tightened its grip by forming a new ruling council.

The pro-democracy protests came nearly three weeks after top general Abdel Fattah al-Burhan ousted the government, detained the civilian leadership and declared a state of emergency.

"One protester was killed in Omdurman by the bullets of the putschist military council," the Central Committee for Sudanese Doctors said in a statement referring to security forces.

Other demonstrators in Khartoum's twin city were wounded by "live rounds", it added. An AFP correspondent reported hearing the sound of gunfire as well at a protest in east Khartoum.

Tear gas was also fired at many protests in Khartoum and neighbouring cities

as security forces sought to disperse the demonstrations, witnesses and an AFP correspondent there said.

"No, no to military rule", "Civilian (rule) is the people's choice", the protesters in southern Khartoum shouted.

Thousands rallied nationwide, with protests taking place in the cities of Atbara, Wad Madani as well as in the central state of North Kordofan and in Port Sudan city and Kassala state, witnesses said.

The military's October 25 takeover drew widespread international condemnation, as did a deadly crackdown on street demonstrations by people demanding it restore the country's democratic transition.

Any hopes the demonstrators had that the military would back down were dashed Thursday, when Burhan named himself as the head of a new ruling Sovereign Council that excludes the country's main civilian bloc, triggering more condemnation from the West.

'I want to start a youth movement'

Facebook whistleblower Haugen puts her trust on youth power

AFP, Paris

What exactly does one do after leaking thousands of documents from the world's most powerful social media company? For Frances Haugen, the answer is obvious: start a youth movement.

Facebook has faced stinging criticism over the whistleblower's document drop, not least the revelations that the company knew its Instagram photo app had the potential to harm teen mental health.

Ex-Facebook engineer Haugen believes young people have more reason than anyone else to pressure social media companies to do better.

"I want to start a youth movement," she told AFP in a wide-ranging interview, adding that youngsters who have grown up online should not feel so "powerless" over the social networks enmeshed in their lives.

Haugen has spent nearly two months in the spotlight over her claims that Facebook has consistently



prioritised profits over people's safety, and supporters and foes alike are wondering what comes next.

The interview on Friday at a luxury Paris hotel, carefully watched by her lawyer, came at the end of a European tour that was managed by a slick public relations team, with financial backing from the philanthropic organisation of eBay founder, Pierre Omidyar.

Haugen, 37, has addressed lawmakers in London, Brussels and Paris, as well as a cheering crowd of thousands at a Lisbon tech conference. Both Britain and the EU are currently

debating new tech regulation.

Haugen worked at Facebook for two years before resigning in May, saying she was immediately "very shocked" by a persistent failure to tackle harmful side-effects such as spiralling hate speech in politically volatile countries like Myanmar.

Despite her attempt to influence legislation in Europe, Haugen's faith in regulation is limited -- by the time lawmakers agree, the technology will have moved on.

Instead, she wants Facebook to be legally required to implement policies in response to potential harms identified by the people who use it.

If Facebook was forced to release data indicating the scale of the problem -- the number of misleading posts with more than 1,000 shares each week, for instance -- the company might feel pressured to come up with better solutions, she argues.

"Anytime you have more sunlight, it makes things a little bit cleaner."

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



NOVEMBER 14

1914 - Religious leader Sheikh-ul-Islam declares an Islamic holy war on behalf of the Ottoman government, urging his Muslim followers to take up arms against Britain, France, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro in World War I.

2003 - World's first drivable fuel cell vehicle makes first appearance in China.

2012 - Israel launches multiple strikes against Gaza starting an eight-day war.

SOURCE: WEBSITES