

UKRAINE WAR, US-SAUDI SPAT G20 fails to issue joint communique

AFP, Washington

The G20 closed talks in Washington on Thursday without issuing a joint communique, as a growing US-Saudi feud created new tensions in a group already divided over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Finance ministers and central bankers from the Group of 20 major economies met during the IMF and World Bank annual meetings that have focused on the war, soaring inflation and the climate crisis.

Washington and Riyadh are at odds over a decision by the OPEC+ group of oil exporters, led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, to sharply cut production – a move that could send energy prices soaring higher.

President Joe Biden threatened “consequences” for Saudi Arabia in a CNN interview on Wednesday. Riyadh has repeatedly said the decision was not “politically motivated.”

The OPEC+ cut comes as the G7 is seeking to impose a price cap on Russia's crude exports in an effort to cut Russia's funding to its war machine. But gaining broad global approval for a price cap may prove to be a major challenge. While West has imposed unprecedented sanctions on Russia, other countries have maintained economic ties with Moscow, with India and China stepping up their purchases of Russian oil.

Eco-activists throw soup on ‘Sunflowers’

AFP, London

Two environmental protesters were arrested yesterday after throwing tomato soup over Vincent van Gogh's “Sunflowers” painting at the National Gallery in central London.

Two protesters wearing T-shirts with the slogan “Just Stop Oil” lobbed cans of soup at the iconic painting, a video posted on Twitter showed.

After gluing themselves to the wall, one of the activists shouted: “What is worth more, art or life?” “Are you more concerned about the protection of a painting or the protection of our planet and people?” she asks. They demanded a halt to new oil and gas projects taken by UK government.

It said the painting has an estimated value of \$84.2 million. It was not immediately clear whether the painting is protected by glass.



Mourners console the mother of a Palestinian man killed following an Israeli forces raid in Jenin refugee camp, during his funeral, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, yesterday. Two Palestinians including a doctor were killed yesterday in the raid, the Palestinian health ministry said. Dozens of Palestinians have been shot dead in recent months during near-daily Israeli raids across the West Bank.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Erdogan agrees with Putin's gas hub proposal

Tells govt to start work as energy concerns grow in Europe

AFP, Ankara

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan backs the Kremlin's idea of creating an international gas hub in Turkey and wants his government to quickly present implementation plans, media reported yesterday.

Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed piping natural gas to southern Europe via Turkey following the near total disruption of Russian supplies via the Nord Stream project.

The idea raised the immediate alarm of European powers such as France saying it made “no sense.”

Russia already supplies Turkey with gas via the TurkStream link under the Black Sea.

Erdogan said on his return flight from talks with Putin in Kazakhstan on Thursday that the new distribution centre would probably be established in Thrace, a northwestern region near Bulgaria.

“We have a national distribution centre, but of course now this will be an international distribution centre,” Erdogan told reporters after holding his fourth meeting with the Russian leader in the past three months.

“There will be no waiting on this issue,”

Gas prices have skyrocketed since the beginning of Russia's war and Europe has struggled to find alternative energy supplies after Russia strangled deliveries in

response to Western sanctions.

The latest spike came after a series of blasts this month destroyed both lines of Russia's Nord Stream pipeline to Germany.

Putin said this week that Russia has also thwarted a planned attack against the TurkStream pipeline, without providing evidence or details. “We are quickly establishing a security net” for the new gas distribution centre project, Erdogan said.

A new distribution centre would take years to complete and require massive investments that Russia might not be able to afford as its economy shrinks from the impact of Western sanctions imposed over its invasion of Ukraine.

Turkey introduces jail terms for ‘fake news’

AFP, Ankara

Turkey's parliament on Thursday approved a tough pre-election law that could see reporters and social media users jailed for up to three years for spreading “fake news”. The Council of Europe said the measure's vague definition of “disinformation” and accompanying threat of jail could have a “chilling effect and increased self-censorship, not least in view of the upcoming elections in June 2023”. The new law imposes a criminal penalty for those found guilty of spreading false or misleading information. It also allows the courts to sentence accredited reporters and regular social media users who “openly spread misleading information” to between one and three years in jail.

5.3b cell phones to become waste in 2022

AFP, Paris

More than five billion of the estimated 16 billion mobile phones possessed worldwide will likely be discarded or stashed away in 2022, experts said Thursday, calling for more recycling of the often hazardous materials they contain. Stacked flat on top of each other, that many disused phones would rise 50,000 kilometres (30,000 miles), more than a hundred times higher than the International Space Station, the WEEE research consortium found.

UK PM Truss fires finance minister

AFP, LONDON

British Prime Minister Liz Truss fired her finance minister Kwasi Kwarteng yesterday, shortly before she is expected to scrap parts of their economic package in a desperate bid to survive the market and political turmoil gripping the country.

Kwarteng said he had resigned at Truss's request after rushing back to London overnight from IMF meetings in Washington. Truss, in power for only 37 days, will hold a news conference later yesterday. Former foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt was appointed as Kwarteng's replacement, making him Britain's fourth finance minister this year.



Sri Lanka

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Despite 2014 champions Sri Lanka failing to automatically qualify for the Super 12, skipper Dasun Shanaka believes they can go far after beating India and Pakistan on their way to winning the Asia Cup last month.

“The momentum is there and winning the Asia Cup really helps going ahead to the World Cup,” he said.

“Qualifiers will really help because we will play in the conditions before the main tournament happens, so it will be good for us.”

They must first get past an experienced Namibia led by Gerhard Erasmus, who is hoping for more big performances from talisman David Wiese and paceman Ruben Trumpelmann, both of whom played key roles last year.

The Africans also played Sri Lanka first up in 2021, crashing by seven wickets, before beating the Netherlands and Ireland to qualify from the first round.

Municipality mayor

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However, Dr Mahmuda Aktar of Mirsarai Upazila Health Complex said several bullets hit the abdomen, waist and shoulder of Mayor Rezaul.

“He was referred to Chattogram Medical College Hospital as his condition deteriorated,” she added.

Russia doesn't want

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would have been worse for us. So we're doing everything right,” Putin said.

He also said he saw “no need” for talks with his US counterpart Joe Biden. “We should ask him if he's ready to hold such talks with me or not. I don't see the need, to be honest,” Putin said, asked about a potential meeting with Biden on the sidelines of a G20 summit in November.

He did however acknowledge that Moscow's ex-Soviet allies are “worried” about the conflict.

Wall Street's main indexes opened higher yesterday after Putin's comments on easing geopolitical worries, while major American banks reported mixed results, reports Reuters.

Russia's faltering invasion has confronted Putin with the deepest crisis of his 22 years as Russia's paramount leader, as even loyal Kremlin allies have attacked his generals' failings and the chaotic nature of the mobilisation.

Putin, Baku criticise Macron for ‘unacceptable’ Karabakh remarks

AFP, Astana

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Azerbaijan yesterday slammed “unacceptable” comments from French leader Emmanuel Macron's on the decades-long conflict between arch foes Baku and Yerevan.

The Caucasus neighbours have fought two wars – in 2020 and in the 1990s – over Azerbaijan's Armenian populated region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Deadly clashes in September along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border have raised the fears of a fresh all-out conflict.

In comments to French television Wednesday, Macron accused Russia of “destabilising” and “seeking to create disorder” in the Caucasus.

The French leader's remarks “show a lack of understanding of the course of the conflict,” Putin said during a meeting of leaders of Commonwealth of Independent States members in Kazakhstan.

He added that Macron's accusations “sounded incorrect” and were “unacceptable.”

“There will be an opportunity”

to “discuss” this with Macron, Putin said as he also invited the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan to Russia for talks “at any time, in any place”.

“Russia has always sincerely sought to resolve any conflicts, including issues related to Karabakh,” he said.

Macron also accused Azerbaijan of launching “a terrible war, with many deaths, atrocious scenes”.

More recently, “Azerbaijan has launched several offensives along the border (with Armenia). We have condemned them. We will not abandon Armenians,” he said.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev reacted angrily yesterday, saying Macron “came up with insulting, unacceptable, false and provocative statements”.

“We do not see any further possibility for France to play any role in the process of normalisation of Azerbaijani-Armenian relations,” he said.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who was also present at the meeting in Astana, said Baku was preparing “to annex more Armenian lands”.

Lawmakers vote

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Representatives is expected to flip after November elections to the Republicans, who plan to immediately end the investigation.

But the move marks an aggressive escalation of the probe, which has issued more than 100 subpoenas and interviewed more than 1,000 people since its inception in 2021.

While not sitting president has ever been forced to testify before Congress, lawmakers have summoned former presidents to discuss their conduct in office.

Trump didn't say whether he would testify, but if he refuses to comply, the full House can hold him in criminal contempt in a vote recommending him for prosecution.

The vote came as a spectacular coda to an already stunning hearing in which the committee offered fresh evidence that Trump had planned to declare victory in the 2020 election – regardless of the outcome.

Trump had a “premeditated plan” formulated months before the vote to claim he had won on election

night, whatever the vote tally showed, panel member Zoe Lofgren told the hearing, citing evidence gathered by the committee.

Across eight hearings in the summer the panel unveiled reams of evidence on the former president's involvement in a labyrinthine series of connected schemes to overturn the election.

Blockbuster witness testimony in June and July provided stunning examples of Trump and his allies pressuring election officials and trying to get lawfully-cast votes nullified in swing states, and of Trump's inertia amid the mob uprising.

Lawmakers plan to release a final report by the end of the year, although preliminary findings could be announced before November's midterm elections.

The committee has not announced formally whether it will make direct criminal referrals over January 6, although several members see the issue as moot, since the Justice Department is already investigating.

Sultan of Brunei

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to the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Brunei in April 2019.

During his stay in Dhaka, the Sultan will lay wreaths at the National Martyrs' Memorial in Savar and Bangabandhu Memorial Museum on Dhanmondi-32 in the capital.

The Sultan will hold meetings with President Hamid and attend a banquet hosted by him.

He will hold a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen will also call on him at Hotel InterContinental.

The two countries may sign at least three memorandums of understanding on introducing direct flights between Bangladesh and Brunei; labour recruitment and mutual recognition of mariners' certificates.

Around 20,000 Bangladeshis currently work in Brunei. Officials said Brunei was eager to recruit workers through the state-owned recruiting agent, Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited (BOESL), to streamline the recruitment process, according to officials concerned.

Foreign Minister Momen said the proposal for a direct flight between the two countries has already been approved by the Bangladesh cabinet. This can help reduce travel cost of Bangladeshi workers and boost trade.

At a press conference on October 11, Momen said Brunei is eager to source halal food from Bangladesh. Especially, the Sultan likes the Black Bengal goat of Bangladesh.

Brunei, which is heavily dependent on food imports, wants Bangladesh to provide expertise to it in fisheries and agriculture, especially fish and shrimp.

Momen said the two countries are in advanced state of discussion on importing fuel oil from Brunei, which is rich in gas, oil and LNG.

4 more die

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The mortality rate remained unchanged at 1.45 percent and the recovery rate rose to 97.11 percent.

In September, the country reported 40 Covid-linked deaths and 13,251 cases.

Bangladesh registered its highest daily caseload of 16,230 on July 28 last year and its highest number of fatalities of 264 on August 10 the same year.

Complainant ‘unavailable’

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persons with Tejgaon Industrial Police Station on the day of the attack.

“We are yet to present the first information report before the court as the complainant did not appear for testimony despite repeated court summons and non-bailable arrest warrants,” Assistant Public Prosecutor Salahuddin Howlader told The Daily Star.

He said that after police informed the court that the complainant was living in Buraydah, the capital of Al-Qassim province of Saudi Arabia, the court order to produce the complainant for testimony was sent to the foreign ministry three times in 2019 and 2020.

“If the complainant's statements cannot be recorded, there might be some incompleteness in the judgment; even the accused could be acquitted in the case,” Salahuddin said.

He said the police is the only agency responsible for producing witnesses before the court.

Emdadul Haque, officer-in-charge of Ramganj Police Station in Lakshmipur, told The Daily Star that he assigned ASI Shakhawat Hossain to serve the latest summons issued against complainant Masud.

ASI Shakhawat on August 22 sent a report to the court, saying the respected citizens of the area concerned did not know the complainant. He also requested the court to send the proper name and address of the complainant.

Contacted, Shakhawat told The Daily Star on September 19, “I have heard that the complainant's family lives in Dhaka. But I'm not sure whether the complainant is in the country or abroad.”

However, Masud Alam, member of Chandipur Union Parishad under Ramganj, told The Daily Star, “The complainant is now doing business in Dhaka after his return from Saudi Arabia.”

Mohammad Shaheenoor Islam, a noted criminal lawyer in Dhaka, said, “There are instances of police not

Webb telescope

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MIRI's spectrometer that was used to reveal the composition of the dust, formed mostly from the material ejected by the star which is a special type known as a Wolf-Rayet star.

This type of star is born with at least 25 times more mass than the Earth's sun and is nearing the end of its life.

Burning hotter than in its youth, a Wolf-Rayet star generates powerful winds that push huge amounts of gas into space.

The Wolf-Rayet star in this

visiting the witness' address to serve a summons. Instead, they send reports to the court, saying the witnesses' addresses could not be found.”

He added, “Sometimes police can't serve the summons due to changes in witness' addresses.”

THE CASE

Over the killing of Oyasiquir, Shah Md Mashir Rahman, an inspector of the Detective Branch, submitted a charge sheet to a Dhaka court on September 2, 2015, accusing five members of ABT.

The Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court 3 of Dhaka on July 20, 2016 framed charges against the five ABT members – Zikrullah, Ariful Islam, Saiful Islam, Akram Hossain Hasib alias Boro Bhai and Junayed Ahmed alias Taher.

Of them, Zikrullah, Ariful and Saiful are behind bars, while the other two are on the run.

According to the prosecution, 24 witnesses out of 40 gave their depositions before the court.

The court set October 27, 2020 for delivering judgment in the case, but withheld its decision following a petition from the prosecution for adding section 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Penal Code.

The court on November 4, 2020 reframed the charges against the accused.

After reframing of charges, some of the key witnesses have been recalled, but Masud never appeared, according to the prosecution.

The last hearing of the case took place on September 20.

Legal experts said even if the complainant becomes “hostile”, the prosecution can still cross-examine him or her. But there is no scope to change the complainant in criminal cases, they added.

Khurshid Alam Khan, a criminal law expert, said, “Even if the complainant becomes hostile in a case, the court can award appropriate punishment to the accused, considering statements of other witnesses or circumstantial evidence.”

particular pair may have shed more than half its original mass via this process, experts suggest.

Researchers say transforming gas into dust is somewhat like turning flour into bread – it requires specific conditions and ingredients. Hydrogen, the most common element found in stars, cannot form dust on its own.

But because Wolf-Rayet stars shed so much mass, they also eject more complex elements typically found deep in a star's interior, including carbon.