



We cannot expect any insights or political wisdom from anyone in the West now... especially from Great Britain, where the current head of the executive is not elected by the people.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov



The entire world needs Venezuela's oil and natural gas... On the other side, there's been embargoes on the Iranian oil. Remove these sanctions... if you want the prices to drop... You cannot solve the problem by threatening a country.

Turkish FM Mevlut Cavusoglu



This discussion (among EU leaders) showed a very clear will to avoid being naive, but neither did we want to embark into a logic of systematic confrontation (with China).

European Council chief Charles Michel



Police use teargas to disperse protestors of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) during a demonstration against the decision to disqualify former prime minister Imran Khan from running for political office, in Islamabad, Pakistan, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

### CAP ON ENERGY PRICES

## EU agrees 'roadmap'

Amid spat with US, Saudi, China agree to strengthen energy cooperation

#### AGENCIES

EU leaders has reached an agreement on a "roadmap" aimed at putting in place measures within weeks to shield European consumers from soaring energy prices.

The accord came after 11 hours of wrangling over broad proposals to lower energy bills as gas prices pushed skywards by the war in Ukraine.

The bloc's 27 member states have been squabbling for months over which joint initiatives to adopt, riven by the fact that energy mixes in the countries vary greatly.

While the announcement of the summit text made a public show of unity, it was clear that the coming negotiations would remain difficult. One step in that would come next week with a meeting of EU energy ministers in Luxembourg.

The summit agreement set out a "solid

roadmap to keep on working on the topic of energy prices", European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen told a media conference.

At least 15 EU countries -- more than half the bloc -- are pushing for an ambitious cap on prices and are increasingly unsettled by strikes and protests over the cost of living spreading across France, Belgium and other member states.

But the price-cap idea has met resistance from Germany, the EU's biggest economy, fearing that gas supplies could end up shifting to more lucrative markets in Asia.

Several smaller economies are also furious that the German government will not back a gas cap and for going it alone in helping its citizens pay for high prices with a 200-billion-euro (\$196 billion) spending bonanza.

In the end, the agreed text said a "cost and benefit analysis" of a price cap for electricity generation should be carried out, and that the

impact beyond Europe would be assessed.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's energy minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman and the director of China's National Energy Administration Zhang Jianhua on Friday said they would strengthen their ties in the energy sector, the Saudi state news agency SPA reported.

The officials spoke in a teleconference call and stressed the importance of stable long-term supplies to crude oil markets, SPA said.

The Saudi minister reaffirmed earlier on Friday from New Delhi that OPEC+ is doing the right job to ensure stable and sustainable oil markets.

The United States and Saudi Arabia have been at odds since a decision by OPEC+ group of oil producers, of which Saudi is the de facto leader, to cut output even after the Biden administration sought to stay OPEC's hand for a month with an eye on US mid-term elections.

## Pakistan taken off Faft 'grey' list

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan has been removed from an international grey list that warrants increased surveillance for terrorism financing, the head of the international money laundering watchdog which makes the list said yesterday. The decision was taken at the end of a two-day meeting in Paris, Financial Action Task Force (FATF) president T Raja Kumar told a news conference. With its removal from the list, Pakistan would essentially receive a reputational boost and get a clean bill of health from the international community on terrorist financing.

## Lanka votes to curb presidential powers

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's parliament yesterday voted to curtail the powers of the president, a partial concession to the protest movement that forced the island nation's former head-of-state into exile. An unprecedented economic downturn this year fuelled intense public anger, with the government accused of mismanagement and of precipitating drastic food and petrol shortages. Parliament voted overwhelmingly to endorse a constitutional amendment that limited presidential control of the police, judiciary and appointments to the civil service.

### CONTEMPT OF CONGRESS

## Bannon sentenced to 4 months in jail

REUTERS, Washington



Steve Bannon, a prominent figure on the American right who served as a senior strategist for former President Donald Trump, was sentenced by a judge on Friday to four months in prison for refusing to cooperate with lawmakers investigating last year's US Capitol attack by a pro-Trump mob. US District Judge Carl Nichols during a sentencing hearing also ordered Bannon to pay a fine of \$6,500. Bannon, 68, helped articulate the "America First" right-wing populism and stout opposition to immigration that helped define Trump's presidency.

## Essentials' prices

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global recession. This danger must be faced by all together."

Tipu said though the edible oil price has been reduced in the country, some unscrupulous traders are selling the essential cooking ingredient at higher prices.

"Strict actions will be taken against the dishonest traders who tamper with edible oil prices. The Directorate of National Consumers Rights Protection already started monitoring the market," he said.

The minister mentioned that the edible oil price has fallen in the world market. The tariff commission has fixed its price, taking into account of oil price in the global market and the value of US dollar in the country.

Rangpur Deputy Commissioner Md Asif Ahasan, Superintendent of Rangpur police Md Ferdous Ali Chowdhury, Rangpur metropolitan chamber President Rezaul Islam Milon and local Awami League leaders were present.

## Five centuries

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"The research carried out in Jerusalem embraces religions and cultures worldwide," he said in a statement.

"Believers, pilgrims and visitors seeking to make contact with sanctified Jerusalem, left traces."

## Over half

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patients are still undergoing treatment and 1,025 of them are from outside Dhaka.

Experts urged the authorities concerned to conduct extensive drives, identifying Aedes mosquito-prone areas immediately.

In Rajshahi, the number of dengue patients has been increasing at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) since September 14

At present, 35 patients are undergoing treatment there. Of them, 19 are workers of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant in Pabna.

Muktadirul Islam Sifat, an intern doctor at RMCH, said the number of dengue patients has increased in the last few days.

Even if the number of patients goes up, adequate treatment and medicine are being provided to them, he said.

The Rajshahi City Corporation has started a special cleanliness drive in the city from Wednesday to prevent dengue.

[Our Rajshahi correspondent contributed to this report.]

## Prime minister

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She will also lay the foundation stone of a water treatment plant - having 50 million litres per day (MLD) capacity, he added.

Of the industrial plants, which will be inaugurated, four establishments are at the Bangabandhu Shilpa Nagar.

McDonald Steel Industries Ltd, one of these, produces prefabricated structural steel, used in steel bridges and steel high rise buildings, factories and power plants.

Nippon & McDonald Steel Industries Limited produces MS Plate manufacturing from imported steel, purlin, slitting sheets and coil.

Asian Paints Bangladesh Limited, which produces paints and allied products, emulsions, has invested \$34 million in the economic zone.

Samuda Construction Limited, manufacturer of phc pile, is constructing their factory on 4-acre land with an investment of \$8.2 million.

BEZA aims to establish economic zones in all potential areas in Bangladesh including backward and underdeveloped regions with a

## Militants given

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wing. Earlier, it had disclosed another list of 38 missing youths with the phone numbers and addresses.

"The militant outfit's ameer developed a good relationship with KNF chief Nathan Bom in late 2020. At the beginning of last year, they struck a three-year agreement," the Rab director told the briefing.

As per the deal, the KNF was providing shelter, training and other support to the militants. In return, the militant outfit was giving the KNF Tk 3 lakh per month and the expenditure for food, he added.

The seven arrested Jama'atul Ansar members are Sayed Maruf Ahmed Manik, 31, from Sunamganj, Imran Hossain Shaon, 31, from Pirojpur, Kawsar alias Shishir, 46, from Jhenidah, Jahangir Ahmed Jonu, 27, from Sylhet, Md Ibrahim Ali, 19, from Barishal, Abu Bakar Siddique Bappi, 23, from Sylhet and Rofu Mia, 26, from Sunamganj.

The Rab in a press release said three arrested "separatists" -- Jouthang Sang Bom, 19, Stephen Bom, 19, and Mal Som Bom, 20, -- are members of KNA, the military wing of KNF. The three hail from Bandarban.

Md Anisur Rahman alias Mahmud is the ameer of Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya. Arrestee Manik is a Majlish e Shura (the highest policy-making body) member of the militant outfit. He was also serving as the second in command of its military

view to encouraging rapid economic development through increase and diversification of industry, employment, production and export.

Of the planned 100 economic zones, the government has approved 97 economic zones, 28 of which are currently under development.

So far, 12 privately owned economic zones have received licenses to operate and nearly \$4 billion have been invested in these economic zones.

The goal is to create employment for 10 million people directly and indirectly. It is also expected to produce and export products worth \$40 billion annually in these economic zones.

Investors can avail of tax holiday, duty-free imports of raw materials and machinery at the economic zones.

The economic zones have attracted foreign direct investments from countries including Japan, China, India, Australia, the Netherlands, Germany, America, the United Kingdom, Singapore, South Korea, and Norway.

## Supply crunch

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supply of gas to refining units. If the gas problem is not solved, the supply of sugar will not return to normal.

There are many complications in opening LCs and the taka has weakened, he said, fearing that imports of sugar may fall in the future.

Taslim Shahriar, senior assistant general manager of Meghna Group of Industries, said their production has decreased by 60 percent due to the gas crisis. If the crisis is not resolved, there will be a lot of problems in the sugar market.

The Bangladesh Sugar Refiners Association said they are not getting any solution even after informing the government.

Mill owners said the country's annual demand for sugar is 25 lakh tonnes. Domestic sugar mills can produce up to 1 lakh tonnes. The rest of the sugar comes from abroad.

According to data of the National Board of Revenue (NBR), 90-95 percent of imported sugar is unrefined.

Mill owners import unrefined sugar from Brazil, India, Australia, the United Kingdom and Malaysia, before refining it and supplying it to the market.

The NBR data showed that about 7.40 lakh tonnes of sugar worth Tk 4,045 crore -- including custom duties, VAT and tax -- were imported during the first three and a half months of this fiscal year, till October 20.

## Turkey calls for end to embargoes on Iran, Venezuela

AFP, Istanbul

Turkey yesterday said the lifting of Western sanctions on countries including Iran and Venezuela would alleviate the global energy crisis triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Venezuela has been hit by US oil sanctions since 2019 and Iran is under US sanctions as talks between Tehran and Washington over reviving a 2015 nuclear deal stall.

Iran has the world's second largest natural gas reserves, after Russia, but lacks the infrastructure to increase exports, which are currently limited to Iraq and Turkey.

"The entire world needs Venezuela's oil and natural gas... On the other side, there's been embargoes on the Iranian oil," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said.

## Imran barred from polls

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Government officials must declare all gifts, but are allowed to keep those below a certain value. More expensive items must go to Toshakhana, but in some cases the recipient can buy them at around 50 percent of their value -- a discount Khan raised from 20 percent while in office.

Khan's opponents were delighted by the Election Commission's ruling.

"He who would spread lies about alleged corruption of his political opponents has been caught red handed," tweeted Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Legal experts and analysts were more circumspect, however.

"The silver lining for Mr Khan is that... he hasn't been disqualified by the apex court so he has a right of appeal," independent lawyer Osama Malik told AFP.

"This decision will escalate the political tension in the country and the situation will deteriorate," said analyst Hassan Askari Rizvi.

Pakistani newspapers have for months carried lurid stories alleging Khan and his wife received lavish gifts worth millions during trips abroad -- including luxury watches, jewellery, designer handbags and perfumes.

Khan has said he did not register some gifts on national security grounds, but in a written submission admitted buying items worth nearly 22 million rupees (\$100,000), and later selling them for more than twice that amount.

## Johnson or Sunak

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"He can turn it around again. And I'm sure my colleagues hear that message loud and clear," Conservative lawmaker Paul Bristow told LBC radio. "Boris Johnson can win the next general election."

But Johnson, who left office comparing himself to a Roman dictator twice brought into power to fight crises, might not reach the 100 nomination threshold after his three-year premiership was blighted by scandals and allegations of misconduct.

The Financial Times said a Boris comeback would be "farfical".

One of his former advisers, who no longer speaks to Johnson and requested not to be identified, said he was unlikely to reach the target, having alienated dozens of Conservative lawmakers.

Will Walden, who also once worked for Johnson, said the former leader was returning from holiday and taking soundings. Business minister Jacob Rees-

Unless overturned by the courts, Khan's ban will stymie one of his key tactics to disrupt the country's political process as he presses for a general election ahead of the one scheduled for October next year.

All PTI lawmakers have quit the National Assembly -- parliament's lower house -- forcing a series of by-elections.

In most of them so far, Khan has been his party's only candidate.

This week he won six of eight National Assembly seats he stood for in a weekend by-election, a vote he called a referendum on his popularity.

Individuals can stand in multiple constituencies in Pakistani elections and choose which to forfeit if they win more than one.

Khan regularly holds rallies drawing tens of thousands of people across the country, giving fiery speeches criticising state institutions -- including the powerful military -- for allegedly conspiring to topple his government.

He has also vowed to soon announce the date of a "long march" of his supporters on the capital.

Khan rode to power in 2018 on a populist platform promising social reforms, religious conservatism and a fight against corruption, overturning decades of rule by two feuding political dynasties interspersed with military takeovers.

But under his tenure, the economy stagnated and he lost the support of the army, which was accused of helping to get him elected.

Mogg tweeted his support, using the hashtag "#Borisorbust".

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace ruled himself out of the running and said he was leaning towards backing Johnson, who led the party to a large majority at a 2019 national election.

Sunak, the former Goldman Sachs analyst who became finance minister just as the Covid-19 pandemic arrived in Europe and was runner-up to Truss in the summer's leadership contest, is the favourite with bookmakers, followed by Johnson.

None have formally declared their candidacy.

Third placed is Penny Mordaunt, a former defence minister popular with party members who came third last time, yesterday launched her bid to replace Truss as prime minister.

"I'm running to be the leader of the Conservative Party and your Prime Minister - to unite our country, deliver our pledges and win the next GE (General Election)," Mordaunt said on Twitter.