

## NATURE DEAL China to offer compromise text at COP15

AFP, Montreal

China, which chairs a high-stakes UN biodiversity summit in Montreal, was due to present a long-awaited compromise text yesterday in an attempt to seal the "peace pact with nature" that the planet sorely needs.

More than 10 days of fraught biodiversity negotiations look to be coming to a head as delegates prepare to wrangle over the compromise draft agreement.

"It is not a perfect document, not a document that will make everyone happy, however it is a document that is based on the efforts of all of us over the last four years," said China's Environment Minister Huang Rinqiu.

"It is a document that must be adopted at this meeting that is highly expected by the international community."

Observers had warned the COP15 conference risked collapse as countries squabbled over how much the rich world should pay to fund the efforts, with developing countries walking out of talks at one point.

But conference leaders turned upbeat Saturday on their chances of securing a deal.

Huang said he was "greatly confident" of a consensus and his Canadian counterpart Steven Guilbeault said "tremendous progress" had been made.

Huang said he would publish a draft agreement and hear lead delegates' feedback later yesterday.



Palestinian protesters hurl rocks at members of the Israeli army during a reported raid in the Palestinian Askar refugee camp near Nablus in the occupied West Bank, yesterday. Israel expelled French-Palestinian lawyer Salah Hamouri yesterday morning, the Interior Ministry announced, after he had been detained without charge since March.

PHOTO: AFP

## EU strikes deal to boost carbon market

Imposes new CO2 price for buildings, households from 2027

REUTERS, Brussels

European Union negotiators reached a political deal yesterday to overhaul the bloc's carbon market, cutting planet-heating emissions faster and imposing new CO2 costs on fuels used in road transport and buildings from 2027.

The EU carbon market requires around 10,000 power plants and factories to buy CO2 permits when they pollute - a system central to meeting the EU's target to cut its net emissions 55 percent by 2030 compared with 1990 levels.

Under the deal agreed by negotiators from EU countries and the European Parliament, the EU carbon market will be reformed to cut emissions by 62 percent from 2005 levels

by 2030.

The plan involves removing 90 million CO2 permits from the system in 2024, 27 million in 2026 and cutting the rate at which the cap on CO2 permits in the system falls by to 4.3 percent from 2024-2027 and 4.4 percent from 2028-2030.

"From 2027 on, its crunch time. Everybody needs to reduce emissions by then or will have to pay a lot," said the European Parliament's lead negotiator Peter Liese, adding that he hoped this looming deadline would encourage investment in green energy.

From 2026-2034, the EU will phase out the free CO2 permits it currently gives industries to protect them from foreign competition. Those permits will be wound down as the EU

phases in a carbon border tariff designed to prevent domestic firms from being undercut by overseas competitors.

After 30 hours of talks that started on Friday, the EU also agreed to launch a new carbon market covering suppliers of CO2-emitting fuels used in cars and buildings in 2027.

After EU lawmakers resisted including households in the scheme, negotiators agreed several measures to shield citizens from high CO2 prices.

If fuel prices are as high in 2027 as today, the introduction of the carbon market would be delayed to 2028. If its CO2 price hits 45 euros (\$47.62), then extra CO2 permits will be released into the market to attempt to tame prices.

## DECLINE IN SHARK POPULATION

### Spielberg regrets 'Jaws' impact

AFP, London

Film-maker Steven Spielberg has said he truly regrets the "decimation of the shark population" following the success of his 1975 film "Jaws". Spielberg's Oscar-winning thriller told the story of a man-eating great white shark that attacked a US seaside town, prompting a rise in sports fishing across America. "I truly and to this day regret the decimation of the shark population because of the book and the film. I really, truly regret that," Spielberg, 75, told BBC Radio's Desert Island Discs programme. According to a study in Nature last year, the world's population of oceanic sharks has fallen by 71 percent since the 1970s due to overfishing. The Shark Conservation Fund, meanwhile, says 36 percent of the world's 1,250 shark and ray species are currently threatened with extinction. Researchers have blamed films such as "Jaws" for playing a role in the public's perception of sharks, driving support for killing them. Others, however, argue that this attributes too much significance to the influence of Hollywood.

## CRACKDOWN ON PROTESTS

### Iran urged to free top actor

AFP, Paris



Celebrities and rights groups yesterday called on Iran to free the actor Taraneh Alidoosti, one of the most prominent figures yet arrested in its three-month crackdown on protests. Alidoosti, 38, was arrested on Saturday, official media said, after a string of social media posts supporting the protest movement including removing her headscarf and condemning the execution of protesters. The unrest was sparked by the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, 22, whom the morality police accused of violating the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women. Iran blames the United States and other "enemies" for trying to destabilise the country by fuelling the demonstrations. Other prominent figures including footballers have been detained in connection with the protests, but Alidoosti has considerable international renown.

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