

EMISSION REDUCTION

No consensus in G20 climate talks

REUTERS, Chennai

Climate talks between representatives of the Group of 20 countries (G20) failed to reach a consensus on emission reduction and mitigation targets, an official said.

Developed countries in the group demanded mitigation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2025 to limit global warming to around 1.5°C, and a reduction of absolute GHG emissions by 43 percent by 2030.

Both demands were opposed by developing countries, the official, who did not want to be named, said.

The EU's Environment Commissioner criticised the outcome of the meeting in the Indian city of Chennai, which he said showed G20 countries were "nowhere" on their commitments to address climate change.



A caravan wades past a string of buoys, being constructed to deter migrants crossings through the Rio Grande river, as they look for an opening in the concertina wire to enter into Eagle Pass, Texas, US n Thursday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Junta kills 3 Myanmar students

AFP, Bangkok

At least three Myanmar students were killed in an early morning military raid in the country's northwest, a student union said yesterday.

The All Burma Federation of Student Unions said in a Facebook post that the students had been killed in a raid on an office where activists stayed in the Sagaing region's Budalin township.

A local villager who declined to be named due to fear of reprisals said the three student activists, aged late teens to early 20s, had died from stab wounds.

"They stabbed knives into their chests. They cut out their tongues," the villager told AFP, adding that at least five houses had been burnt down in the incident and an unknown number of people arrested.

'End Ukraine war'

African leaders press Putin; Moscow intercepted missile targeting Russian city; Qatari PM pledges USD 100 million to Ukraine

REUTERS, Moscow

African leaders pressed Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday to move ahead with their peace plan to end the Ukraine war and to renew a deal on the export of Ukrainian grain that Moscow tore up last week.

While not directly critical of Russia, their interventions on the second day of a summit with Putin were more concerted and forceful than those that African countries have voiced until now.

Meanwhile, Russia yesterday said it intercepted a Ukrainian missile, with debris falling on the southwestern Russian city of Taganrog, near the border with Ukraine, injuring more than a dozen people.

Qatar will provide Ukraine with USD 100 million in humanitarian aid to support health, education and demining, Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said after talks with the Gulf state's prime

minister.

Qatar yesterday announced that Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, who also serves as foreign minister, was visiting Ukraine.



"This money will be channelled for reconstruction in the health and education sectors, humanitarian de-mining, and other important social and humanitarian projects," Shmyhal told a joint briefing.

During the second day of

Russia-Africa summit, African Union Commission Chairman Moussa Faki Mahamat told Putin and African leaders in St Petersburg that "this war must end. And it can only end on the basis of justice and reason."

"The disruptions of energy and grain supplies must end immediately. The grain deal must be extended for the benefit of all the peoples of the world, Africans in particular."

Reuters reported in June that the African plan floats a series of possible steps to defuse the conflict including a Russian troop pull-back, removal of Russian tactical nuclear weapons from Belarus, suspension of an International Criminal Court arrest warrant against Putin, and sanctions relief.

Putin gave it a polite but cool reception when African leaders presented it to him last month. On Friday he said Moscow respected the proposal and was carefully studying it.

MANIPUR SEXUAL ASSAULT

Case handed over to CBI

INDEPENDENT ONLINE

India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will probe the sexual assault of women whose video of being paraded naked sent shockwaves across the country.

Home minister Amit Shah on Thursday announced that CBI will take over the probe from the local police in the northeastern state of Manipur.

The video of two women from the minority Kuki community being paraded naked and assaulted by a mob of men triggered outrage in India and drew international condemnation, prompting authorities to finally take action after two months.

Police have arrested seven people, including a juvenile, in connection with the case so far.

NIGER COUP

Head of president guard declares himself leader

AFP, Niamey

Niger's putschists named an army general as the new leader of the unstable jihadist-hit nation yesterday and warned against any foreign military intervention.

General Abdourahmane Tchiani, head of the Presidential Guard since 2011, appeared on state television saying he was the "president of the National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland".

The general presented the coup as a response to "the degradation of the security situation" linked to jihadist bloodshed.

A statement followed from the putschists on TV which warned of "the consequences that will flow from any foreign military intervention".

"Certain dignitaries... are in thinking of confrontation" which "will end in nothing but the massacre of the Nigerien population and chaos," they claimed.

On the third day since President Mohamed Bazoum was detained, former colonial master France demanded the restoration of the democratically elected government saying it "does not recognise" the putschists, and calling Bazoum "sole president".

The coup has prompted mounting international concern, and yesterday Kenyan President William Ruto called the army takeover "a serious setback" for Africa.

"The aspirations of the people of Niger for constitutional democracy were subverted by an unconstitutional change of government," he said in a video message.

The European Union threatened to cut aid to Niamey.

US PRESIDENTIAL POLLS

Trump vows to continue campaign if sentenced

Faces fresh charges

AFP, Washington



Former US president Donald Trump said yesterday he would not end his run for the White House if he were convicted and sentenced in any of the criminal investigations mounting against him.

The 77-year-old Republican frontrunner was asked about his reaction to the federal and state charges he faces as he bids for a second term in 2024, a day after federal prosecutors added three felony counts to the indictment against him over his handling of classified documents.

Asked by right wing radio host John Fredericks if being sentenced would stop his campaign, he quickly responded: "Not at all. There's nothing in the Constitution to say that it could."

Trump said previous presidents including Barack Obama and George W Bush "took documents... Nobody has ever gone through this. This is crazy," he added, mischaracterizing the law and a previous civil dispute over presidential documents to argue that he had done nothing wrong.

Israel judicial reform 'minor correction'

Says Netanyahu

AFP, Washington

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday minimised his hard-right government's judicial reform package in interviews with US media, calling it a "minor correction" while dismissing international and domestic criticism.

"It's described as the end of Israeli democracy -- I think that's silly and when the dust settles, everybody will see it," Netanyahu told ABC.

Both parties

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BNP were asked to check the rally participants with metal detectors before they entered the venue, but no such activity took place at either gathering.

Also, no fire safety systems, a requirement by the DMP, were visible at the rallies.

Though loudspeakers were allowed in the specified rally areas, they were also seen being used outside as well by both parties.

Meanwhile, neither camp followed the timeframe imposed by the DMP.

Both AL and BNP were told to begin their programmes at 2:00pm and end them by 5:00pm. However, both rallies ended around 6:30pm.

Adding to those, both parties were asked to assemble not before two hours prior to the programmes, but leaders and activists of both parties began gathering at their respective venues well before noon.

They were also directed not to create obstacles for vehicular movement on main roads, but traffic was stagnant in many areas of the capital for several hours due to both rallies.

Don't compare

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intelligence will be enhanced in the era of the 4th industrial revolution. "So, we'll have to attain the skills..."

The PM congratulated the students who succeeded in this year's SSC and its equivalent examinations.

She, however, urged those who couldn't succeed not to be upset, rather take better preparations for the next time to get a good result.

Education Minister Dipu Moni handed over the combined result statistics of the SSC and its equivalent examinations to the prime minister.

Later, the chairmen of 11 education boards -- nine general, one madrasa and one technical -- handed over the result statistics of their respective boards to the premier.

Hasina then published the results, which is available at the respective educational institutions and online.

Some 20,78,216 students -- 10,24,980 boys and 10,53,246 girls -- under the 11 education boards appeared for this year's SSC and its equivalent examinations. The theoretical tests were held on April 30 to May 23.

Infrastructure improves

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"On the other hand, thousands of unskilled and untrained drivers are on the roads while other road users are not well aware of traffic rules."

As many as 564,739 vehicles still have fitness checks due for clearance as of April 30, shows BRTA data.

Hadiuzzaman said that "the unholy nexus among the political and influential groups for their own benefits" is to blame for the persisting anarchy in the road and transport sector.

"The problem is political and thus strong political decisions can solve the problem, otherwise the situation will not change and our roads will never be safe."

Saidur Rahman, executive director of the Road Safety Foundation, an NGO, said the government had taken several initiatives following the 2018 movement, but those could not be implemented due to some vested interests.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, he blamed the resistance from transport associations to the road transport act not being fully implemented.

"Yet, the prerequisite for ensuring road safety is the full and proper use of the act."

He added that the authorities concerned are focused more on

constructing roads as foreign funds are involved. "Bringing discipline on the roads is not a priority for them."

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity said the Awami League, in its 2018 election manifesto following the road safety movement, had pledged to ensure safe roads.

"But as it [the ruling party] failed to keep its pledge, 39,522 people lost their lives in 28,299 road crashes over the last five years," it said yesterday.

Contacted, ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, secretary of the road transport and highways divisions, refuted the allegations of failing to ensure road safety and said they were constructing separate lanes on around 700km of roads for slow-moving vehicles in this regard.

He said the number of vehicles has increased but conditions of the roads have improved compared to 2018.

"All these things have to be taken into consideration before concluding whether road crashes have increased or not."

He added that many stakeholders opposed their initiatives to control the speed limits of bikes and three-wheelers in a bid to reduce the number of road accidents.

"Everyone has to play their role here. A social movement has to be waged in this regard," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

More work needed

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"This is something that I think businesses need to be aware of that the game is changing on how working conditions and labour rights are being seen," Gilmore said.

He said Bangladesh has had considerable experience now of working the scheme of trade preferences. "Those trade preferences are conditional. I think we have seen progress. I think what we have to be looking towards now is their [relevant conventions] implementation."

Gilmore said there is a monitoring mission that will be coming in September to discuss relevant trade and labour issues.

Asked about using human rights as tools to gain politically, he said, "We see human rights are universal. They belong to people, they belong to people everywhere, doesn't matter what the political composition of a government or deeper political system in a country. These are rights that belong to individual people everywhere."

Gilmore said the human rights tools are established to ensure that people can enjoy those rights equally. "And that's what we support. And across the work to the European Union, we work to an action plan, which has been agreed by our 27 member states. And that action plan is rolled out across the countries around the world for the European Union as delegations."

The EU special representative also held meetings with Law Minister Anisul Haq, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam and discussed the "centrality of human rights" to the EU-Bangladesh relationship.

Gilmore also spent time in the Rohingya camps during his five-day visit to Bangladesh with a wide-ranging agenda.

Four more die

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According to the DGHS data, a total of 6,766 people in the 21-25 age group were hospitalised with dengue infection as of yesterday. Of them, 24 died.

During the same period, a total of 5,959 people in the 26-30 age group were hospitalised. Of them, 22 died.

Pass rate hits 13-year low

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She also emphasised the need to further improve the quality of education and take measures so that the children of the country can keep up with the rest of the world.

13-YEAR LOW

Unveiling the results at a press conference in the capital, Education Minister Dipu Moni said 16,33,919 students sat for the SSC exams this year, from April 30 to May 28, after a two-month delay.

The delay, she said, was due to the after-effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, along with floods in Sylhet and other regions.

Around 81 percent of the examinees passed this year -- lower than last year's 88.10. Board officials said this year's pass rate was the lowest since 2010, when it was 78.19.

The number of students with GPA-5 was 1,59,220 -- 75,543 less than last year's.

Taking into account the Dakhil exams under the madrasa board and SSC vocational tests under the technical board, the combined pass rate was 80.39 percent -- a drop from last year's 87.44.

Meanwhile, 1,83,578 students under those boards combined got GPA-5 -- 86,024 less than last year's 2,69,602.

Mymensingh education board Chairman Professor Gazi Hasan Kamal said poor performances in Sylhet and Dhaka boards dragged the entire pass rate down.

Sylhet had the lowest pass rate -- 78.82 percent -- among all general boards.

Prof Tapan Kumar Sarker, chairman of the Dhaka education board and chief of the Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee, said the pass rate came down as students were tested on a higher number of subjects than last year.

Dipu Moni reiterated that last year's pass rate was higher due to a lower number of subjects. "This

year's pass rate is similar to those of the normal times in the pre-Covid period."

Prof Tapan and Sylhet Board's exam controller Arun Chandra Paul also blamed poor performances in mathematics as another reason for the success rate to fall this year.

"The pass rate was also low among humanities students as their number, compared to students of other disciplines, is higher," Arun said.

Inter-education board results show 71.72 percent of humanities students passed the exams, while the percentage of science students was 94 and of business students was 82.

This year, Dhaka board's pass rate too hit a 13-year low at 77.55 percent, officials said.

Under it, 63.54 percent of humanities students passed. While 80.56 percent of the students sitting for mathematics were able to clear the hurdle -- the lowest among all general boards.

On the other hand, the Barishal board had a 90.18 pass rate -- the highest among all boards, while Dhaka topped in terms of GPA-5 achievers.

GIRLS LEAD AGAIN

For the seventh year in a row, girl students had a higher pass rate compared to their male counterparts, while they had a higher number of GPA-5s for the sixth consecutive year.

This year, 82.39 percent girls passed the exams, while the boys' success rate was 79.34 percent. On the other hand, 88,245 girls achieved GPA-5 -- 17,270 higher than the number of boys.

At the press conference, Dipu Moni said they will try to hold the SSC and equivalent examinations in the first week of February from next year, like before.

She also called upon all political parties to refrain from holding any programmes during pre-scheduled exam routines, so as to not hamper the education of children.