

NEW RESEARCH

G20 per capita coal emissions growing

AFP, Bangkok

G20 per capita coal emissions continue to rise despite climate pledges and transition efforts by some members of the group of major economies, new research showed yesterday.

The group, whose leaders meet in New Delhi this weekend, accounts for 80 percent of global power sector emissions.

But in talks in July, it failed to agree that global emissions should peak by 2025 or to massively ramp up renewable energy use.

Between 2015 and 2022, per capita G20 coal emissions rose nine percent, according to the research published yesterday by Ember, an energy think tank that pushes for renewable power.

Twelve G20 members were able to significantly decrease per capita emissions.

INDIA'S KASHMIR

Top judges to consider direct rule

AFP, New Delhi

India's Supreme Court yesterday concluded its hearing on a challenge to New Delhi's 2019 imposition of direct rule in Jammu and Kashmir, a snap decision that led to protests and mass arrests.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government suspended Article 370 of the constitution that guarantees limited autonomy to the disputed region.

The five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud will now retire to consider if the move was legal despite lacking the endorsement from parliament usually required for constitutional change. No timeline has been given for their decision.

The Supreme Court in New Delhi heard arguments over 16 days from government lawyers, constitutional experts representing Kashmir's pro-India political parties, and others challenging the move.

India has for decades stationed more than half a million soldiers on its side of divided Kashmir, which is also claimed by Pakistan.

The rivals have fought three wars over control of the region.



From left to right, Cook Islands PM Mark Brown, Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin, Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., Singapore PM Lee Hsien Loong, Thailand Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sarun Charoensuwan, Vietnam's PM Pham Minh Chinh, Indonesian President Joko Widodo, Lao PM Sonexay Siphandone, Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Cambodia's PM Hun Manet, Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim and East Timor's PM Xanana Gusmao hold hands as they pose for a family photo during the opening ceremony of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit in Jakarta, Indonesia yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Russia downs Ukrainian drones targeting Moscow

Almost 50 flights disrupted; Kyiv says its troops regain more territory on eastern front

REUTERS

Russia shot down at least three Ukraine-launched drones early yesterday that were targeting the country's capital, the Russian defence ministry said.

The ministry said that its air defence systems destroyed two drones over the Kaluga and Tver regions, which border the Moscow region, as well as one closer to the capital, over the Istra district of the Moscow region.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said that the drones "were trying to carry out an attack on Moscow" and that a consumer services facility was damaged in the Istra district, which is located some 65 km (40 miles) northwest of the Kremlin.

There was no damage or casualties elsewhere, the mayor defence ministry said.

Sobyanin said that drone debris in the Tver region fell in the Zavidovo village. According to RIA state news agency, Zavidovo is home to "Rus", an official residence palace of the Russian president.

President Vladimir Putin's main residences are the Novo-Ogaryovo residence in the Moscow region as well as the Grand Kremlin Palace - where official events are held.

Russian news agencies reported that almost 50 flights were cancelled or postponed early yesterday from the four major airports around the capital - Vnukovo, Domodedovo,



Sheremeteyev and Zhukovsky.

Meanwhile, Ukraine said its troops had regained more territory on the eastern front and were advancing south in their counteroffensive against Russian forces while President Zelensky visited two front-line areas.

Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar said Kyiv's forces had retaken about 3 square km (1.16 square miles) of land in the past week around the eastern city of Bakhmut, which was captured by Russian troops in May after months of heavy fighting.

However, Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu yesterday described Ukraine's counteroffensive as completely unsuccessful, but said the situation in part of the southern Zaporizhzhia region which Russia

controls was tense.

At least 916 people were killed or injured by cluster munitions in Ukraine last year amid broad Russian use of the widely-banned weapons, propelling global casualty figures to record levels, a report showed yesterday.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February last year, it has "extensively" used stocks of old cluster munitions and newly developed ones, the Cluster Munition Coalition said in an annual report.

In a separate development, Cuba has uncovered a human trafficking ring that has coerced its citizens to fight for Russia in the war in Ukraine, its foreign ministry said, adding that Cuban authorities were working to "neutralize and dismantle" the network.

Iran arrests Mahsa Amini uncle ahead of death anniversary

AFP, Paris

Iranian authorities yesterday arrested an uncle of Mahsa Amini, the young Iranian Kurdish woman who died in custody sparking months of protests, just ahead of the first anniversary of her death, reports said yesterday.

Safa Aeli, 30, was arrested by security forces in the family's hometown of Saqez in western Iran and taken to an unknown location, the Kurdish-focused Hengaw rights group, France-based Kurdistan Human Rights Network and the 1500tasvir protest monitor said in separate statements.

Hengaw said Iranian authorities deployed a convoy of five vehicles filled with members of the security forces to forcibly enter Aeli's residence, without presenting any legal documentation.

Media based outside Iran said Saqez is under particular scrutiny, with hotels told not to accept outsiders and new security cameras being set up including around Amini's grave.

The arrest comes as activists accuse the Iranian government of stepping up a crackdown ahead of September 16 anniversary of the death of Amini, 22.

Myanmar junta 'likely' to hold polls in 2025

Say party officials; source says ex-leader Suu Kyi ailing

AGENCIES

Myanmar's junta will likely hold elections in 2025, party officials told AFP yesterday, even as the military struggles to crush resistance to its rule. The military justified its February 2021 putsch with unsubstantiated claims of widespread fraud in 2020 elections won resoundingly by Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD). Meanwhile, a source familiar with the shadow government said yesterday Suu Kyi is ailing and a request for an outside physician to see her has been denied by the country's military rulers. The 78-year-old Nobel laureate instead has been treated by a prisons department doctor, reports Reuters. "She was suffering swelling in her gums and could not eat well and is feeling light-headed along with vomiting," said the source, who declined to be identified due to fear of arrest. A senior member of the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party told AFP: "Elections are likely to be held in 2025." "We have a census-taking process in 2024. Because of the situation and that nationwide census process, next year is impossible," they said. Thirty-six political parties have been granted permission to take part in any future polls, the junta-stacked election commission said yesterday.

REPORT INTO VIOLENCE

Manipur charges four journalists

The Editors Guild urges the govt to drop the cases

REUTERS, Guwahati

Indian police in Manipur state have filed criminal charges against four journalists, accusing them of misrepresenting facts in a report about the violent clashes between ethnic groups earlier this year. The four were senior journalists working on a report, which was released this month, for the Editors Guild of India that was seeking to assess how coverage of violence in the state was being conducted. The report stated that there "are clear indications that the leadership of the state became partisan during the conflict". Manipur's chief minister N. Biren Singh on Monday accused the journalists of trying to "provoke clashes" with the coverage. In a statement, the Editors Guild urged the government to drop the cases, saying it was shocked by the chief minister's comments.

The journalists - Seema Mustafa, who is president of the Editors Guild, Seema Guha, Bharat Bhushan and Sanjay Kapoor - could not be immediately reached for comment. The New Delhi-based Press Club of India also demanded that the charges be withdrawn.

At least 180 people have been killed in Manipur after deadly ethnic violence broke out in May between members of the majority Meitei ethnic group and minority Kuki community over the sharing of economic benefits and quotas. An internet shutdown ordered in the state governed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) contributed to biased reporting by local media aligned with warring ethnic groups, the journalists' report said.



Tk 104,926cr

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According to the list provided by Nasrul, Meghnaghat 450MW Power Ltd, 210MW Rural Power Co Ltd, 335MW Summit-Meghnaghat Power Ltd and 414MW Sembcorp NWPC Ltd are the four other top recipients of capacity charges. They got Tk 5,475 crore, Tk 4,004 crore, Tk 3,644 crore and Tk 2,823 crore respectively.

Among the rental power plants, 145MW Aggreko International Projects Ltd was paid the highest - Tk 2,341 crore.

Nasrul Hamid said there are some terms and conditions to get the capacity charges, including 90 percent annual availability of the plant, completing dependable capacity test annually, providing operation security, having an insurance, and obtaining environmental clearance.

"The power plants should supply electricity according to the demand of the National Load Dispatch Centre, and if they are unable to be available at least 90 percent time of the year, the capacity charges are cut," he added.

In response to a question from AL lawmaker Habibur Rahman, the state minister said the net loss of the Rural Power Development Board in FY 2022-23 is Tk 2,563 crore.

Currently, Desco's net loss stands at Tk 226.69 crore.

Nasrul Hamid also said 2,656 megawatts of electricity is being imported from India.

UN body voices concern over

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human rights in Geneva, briefed the media.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk said Prof Yunus has faced harassment and intimidation for almost a decade. He currently faces two trials that carry potential prison sentences - one on charges of violating labour laws and the second for alleged corruption.

Volker Türk said, "We are concerned that smear campaigns against him, often emanating from the highest levels of government, risk undermining his right to a fair trial and due process in line with international standards."

He called on the Bangladeshi authorities to create a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders and other civil society representatives to carry out their essential work for the welfare and protection of all people in Bangladesh.

Volker Türk said the UN has been following closely the cases against Odhikar leaders Adilur Rahman Khan and Nasiruddin Elan, in which the verdicts are due to be delivered tomorrow.

The criminal charges relate to a "fact-finding report they compiled 10 years ago on extrajudicial killings". Both have faced harassment and intimidation, and their organisation's licence was not renewed, he said.

The high commissioner urged

the judicial authorities to ensure the most rigorous review in these cases to ensure that rights to due process and fair trial are strictly and consistently applied.

He said the UN is also studying closely the proposed cyber security law, which has been tabled in parliament to replace the Digital Security Act.

The proposed law will replace imprisonment with fines and increase the scope for bail for several offences, but it is very important that parliament addresses the remaining concerns to prevent any further arbitrary use of the proposed law to suppress freedom of expression, Volker Türk said.

Palak termed the law liberal.

The four non-bailable sections are 17, 19, 27 and 33.

In the proposed law, the offences are related to intrusion into key information infrastructures, damaging computers and computer systems, cyber terrorist activities, and hacking related crimes.

A provision of the proposed law stipulates that the trials of already filed cases will continue under the Digital Security Act.

Cyber Security Bill placed in JS

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proposed Cyber Security Act will be identified as a black law like the Digital Security Act if the draft law is passed unchanged."

One of the fundamental rights of the people is freedom of expression, he said, adding that media freedom has been curtailed by the Digital Security Act. The provisions of the DSA have also been kept in the draft law. Many consider this draft law restrictive, he said.

Human rights groups, journalist unions, media rights defenders and

Make filing of false cases

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Father of the Nation, national anthem or national flag.

The BFUJ demanded further specifications, saying, "It should be mentioned that 'spreading hatred, confusion, and slander campaigns against the Father of the Nation, national anthem, and national flag would be considered offences."

It also demanded the amendment or scrapping of section 25, which criminalises the publication of "false", "offensive" or "threatening" information.

"Political speeches often contain elements of attack. Such elements can also be found when aggrieved workers agitate demanding unpaid wages. Would all these be considered offences?" Bulbul asked in the letter.

He demanded further clarification of section 28, which criminalises "hurting religious sentiments".

The letter also said the inclusion of section 29, which deals with defamation, is unnecessary as section 499 of the Penal Code already recognises it as an offence.

Voicing concerns over section 31, which deals with deterioration of law and order, the letter stated that while the section is ambiguous, its application could create an environment of fear.

"The section could target anyone taking part in political or labour-

related protests."

Speaking as the chief guest, the law minister said they would consider the BFUJ recommendations.

"Many people commit crimes while posing as journalists ... We want to ensure that this proposed law will not be used against journalists who are doing genuine journalism. Our goal is to implement the act through dialogue with the journalist community," he added.

About BFUJ's demand for a provision for actions against plaintiffs of false cases, the minister said, "We are working to impose penalties in this regard."

About the fate of journalists accused in cases filed under the DSA, Anisul said steps are being taken to bring those cases under the CSA and they are trying to resolve those as soon as possible.

Presided over by BFUJ President Omar Faruk, the discussion was moderated by the foundation's Secretary General Dip Azad.

Former information adviser to the Prime Minister Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, former BFUJ Secretary General Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, former President of Dhaka Union of Journalists Quddus Afrad, current President Sohail Haider Chowdhury, and General Secretary Akter Hossain, among others, spoke.