

# INTERNATIONAL

## COP28 SUMMIT

### World to reckon with future of fossil fuels

REUTERS, Duba

Delegates from nearly 200 countries will convene today for the COP28 climate summit in Dubai, where conference host and OPEC member the UAE hopes to sell the vision of a low-carbon future that includes, not shuns, fossil fuels.

That narrative, also backed by other big oil producer nations, will throw the spotlight on international divisions at the summit over the best way to combat global warming: countries are split over whether to prioritize phasing out coal and oil and gas, or scale up technologies like carbon capture to scrub away their climate impact.



The annual United Nations summit from November 30 to December 12 is taking place as the world is poised to shatter another record for the hottest year in 2023, and as new reports confirm countries' current climate pledges are not enough to avert the worst impacts of global warming.

Among the key decisions nations must make in Dubai - a gleaming high tech city in a country awash in petrodollars - will be whether to agree, for the first time, to gradually "phase out" global consumption of fossil fuels and replace them with sources like solar, wind and others.

Underscoring the rift, the International Energy Agency, the West's energy watchdog, issued a report ahead of the conference defining its position. It called the idea of widespread carbon capture an "illusion".

### Pratapnagar's climate woes never end

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"Almost the whole union was submerged for over two years," he said.

According to union parishad data, there were 37,000 people living in 23 villages. Since Amphan, a few hundred families have left the union after their homes were washed away.

"After the embankment was breached, many people had to leave to different cities or relatives' homes further away from the union."

He added that the union, in Sathkira's Assasuni upazila, is surrounded by two rivers -- Shibsa and Kobadak -- and is protected by a circular embankment.

"You will notice there aren't any fully grown trees here. They have all been newly planted after the embankment was repaired. You will also see, there is no cattle grazing. You can guess how bad the damage was [from Amphan]."

"Here, the constant challenge is to protect the embankment."

Though it was repaired just months ago, it is still vulnerable at some points.

"We have to keep a constant watch," the chairman said, adding they are trying to use the rain water to grow rice on the embankment.

"However, we are barring anyone from cultivating shrimp by bringing in saline water from the river."

Two years ago, he said, when saline water entered the embankment, all the trees had died.

This time, with the repaired embankment, the locals made sure saline water was barred from seeping into it.

"But if anyone starts farming shrimp, this will happen again. Such farming only benefits a few individuals; it does not help the village or the union."

"But agriculture benefits whoever has a little piece of land. Through rice cultivation, not only can we protect the embankment but the people who are suffering from the effects of the

### Over 20,000 opposition men

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at the South Hall of the Supreme Court Bar Association, BJAF Secretary General Kayser Kamal said, "More than 50 lakh leaders and activists have been accused in 1.5 lakh cases between 2009 and 2023."

He claimed that a court on November 15 sentenced Supreme Court lawyer Nur A-Alam Siddique Sohag to two years in a false case.

Earlier, two lawyers from Sathkira were jailed for 10 years in a false and political case, Kayser claimed.



Palestinians cook among the houses destroyed in Israeli strikes during the conflict, amid the temporary truce between Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas, at Khan Younis refugee camp, in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

### 'High risk of famine' for Gaza, WFP warns

AGENCIES

The population of Gaza, especially women and children, risk famine if humanitarian food supplies do not continue, the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) warned.

The WFP said it had delivered food to 121,161 people in Gaza since Friday, when a four-day truce between Israel and Hamas began. The truce was extended by two days on Tuesday.

"Thanks to the pause, our teams have been in action on the ground, going into areas we haven't reached for a long time. What we see is catastrophic," said WFP's director for the Middle East, Corinne Fleischer, on Tuesday.

WFP estimated that it was "highly likely that the population of Gaza, especially women and children, are at high risk of famine if WFP is not able to provide continued access to food".

The agency said that six days was "not enough to make any meaningful impact", calling for "uninterrupted and regular supplies" of food into

Gaza, reports AFP.

In Gaza, WFP has reached 759,082 people with food and vouchers since the start of the crisis.

Samer Abdelfaber, the WFP representative and country director in Palestine, said that program's teams witnessed "hunger, despair, and destruction" among people who have not received any relief for weeks, reports Anadolu online.

The humanitarian pause provided a moment of relief, he said, "which we hope will pave the way for long-term calm."

The uninterrupted and secure delivery of humanitarian aid must continue now without obstacles, he added.

Unicef spokesperson James Elder told Anadolu he arrived in Gaza ahead of the humanitarian pause between Hamas and Israel and found the situation "worse" than he had imagined.

Elder told in a virtual interview that he witnessed the devastation, trauma and stress on faces when he arrived in the besieged enclave.

### GRAFT CASE Pak court acquits ex- PM Sharif

REUTERS, ISLAMABAD

A Pakistan court overturned the conviction of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif in a corruption case yesterday, his lawyer said, removing one of the many obstacles for him to qualify to stand in elections in February.

The veteran politician, who arrived back home from four years of self-imposed exile in London last month, is eyeing to become the prime minister for a fourth time, according to his party.

### Deadline for nomination

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are participating in the election scheduled for January 7. Nineteen of the 44 registered parties have said they would not because fair elections were not possible under the current government.

The BNP and its like-minded parties called countrywide blockades multiple times since the EC announced the polls schedule on November 15. The party called a strike for today as well.

Moreover, leader of the opposition in parliament Raushan Ershad last night said she would not participate in the election under the leadership of her party's chairman GM Quader. The party is on the verge of a split due to conflicts between the two leaders.

The ruling AL announced names of its candidates for 298 constituencies, JP for 287, JSD (Inu) for 181, Workers Party for 35, Tarika Federation for 123, and Liberal Islamic Alliance for 121.

Two parties participated in the 2014 election which was boycotted by the BNP and several other parties. A total of 153 lawmakers got elected by virtue of being the only ones running for parliament in their constituencies.

The 2018 election was fraught with allegations of voter fraud. Thirty-nine parties participated in it, and the results were rejected by the BNP and several other parties.

#### VIOLATION OF ELECTORAL CODE

Many of the aspirants, mostly from the ruling AL, have been submitting nomination papers with large crowds of followers, which according to experts is a violation of the electoral code of conduct.

In Savar, AL nominee for Dhaka-19 constituency Enamur Rahman submitted his nomination papers with several hundred followers yesterday.

Contacted, Mazarul Islam, the returning officer, said he was aware that Enamur was accompanied by a large crowd.

Enamur could not be contacted over the phone.

In Brahmanbaria, AL nominee Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury did the same thing Enamur had done in Savar.

There, Returning Officer Shahgir Alam said the electoral code of conduct was not breached.

In Barishal's Babuganj upazila, Jatiya Party nominee Golam Kibria Tipu submitted his papers while several trucks full of supporters were behind him.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shakila Rahman said she rebuked the candidate for the breach of code.

In Natore-3, AL nominee Zunaid Ahmed Palak, also the state minister for ICT, went to the Assistant Returning Officer's (ARO) office along with over a hundred supporters.

Contacted, ARO Mahmuda Khutun said, "I have asked all candidates to strictly follow the electoral code."

Renowned cricketer Shakib Al Hasan, who is running for Magura-1, went to his constituency with a motorcade of over 100 vehicles.

In Narsingdi-5 constituency, AL nominee Raziauddin Ahmed Razu led a gathering of several thousand followers.

RO Badul Alam said he was not aware of the matter.

[Our correspondents from the districts contributed to the report.]

### Bangladesh to seek fund

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deals as hosts of the global event.

International media, including CNN, BBC and The Guardian, leaked briefing documents that reveals the UAE's plan to discuss fossil fuel deals with at least 15 countries. However, the climate talks are held to make decisions on to help the environment and hosts are expected to act without bias or self-interest.

Meanwhile, a 33-member delegation of Bangladesh government, which would include ministers, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's special envoy on Environment and Climate Change, government officials and experts, will attend the conference. Other stakeholders are expected to join.

It is expected to end on December 12.

Bangladesh is one of the leading countries that has prepared a NAP on climate change.

It has identified 113 interventions, including 90 high-priority and 23 moderate-priority ones and estimated that Bangladesh will need

\$8.5 billion per year, including \$6.0 billion per year from external sources or international climate funds and development partners.

Speaking to The Daily Star over phone yesterday, Mirza Shaikat Ali, director of the Department of Environment and a delegate for the conference, "We prepared the NAP last year, now we need the money to implement it to avert the adverse impacts of climate change.

"Also, we are hoping to the Loss and Damage fund will be made operational with a provision that ensures easy access for vulnerable countries like Bangladesh."

Advocate M Hafizul Islam Khan, member of the transitional committee on Loss and Damage said, the board concerned has approved nine recommendations that the committee has prepared.

Initially, the World Bank has been asked to manage the Loss and Damage fund for four years.

"The recommendation includes that developed countries would volunteer to create the fund,"

Hafiz said, adding, "They should be approved in the upcoming meeting if any party does not oppose them."

UN Climate Change conferences -- or COPs -- has been taking place every year since 1995 and are the world's only multilateral decision-making forum on climate change with almost complete membership of every country in the world.

More than 70,000 delegates, including

business leaders, members of the youth, climate scientists and experts, indigenous communities, journalists, and other stakeholders are among the participants.

#### REMEMBERING DR SALEEMUL HUQ

The Bangladesh delegation will conduct a memorial at the Bangladesh pavilion of the conference centre in Dubai today, in remembrance of late Professor Doctor Saleemul Huq, a global leading figure on climate change research and policy.

He passed away on October 28 this year.

### BNP accuses govt, AL of repression

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Meanwhile, Rab in a statement said they detained 795 people across the country since October 28 over violence and sabotage.

At least three vehicles were set on fire in Dhaka and Gazipur yesterday.

A bus was set alight in the capital's Dholaiapar area around 5:30am. A fire engine rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze, said fire officials.

Another bus was set on fire in the capital's Sayedabad area around

7:30pm, said Rafi Al Faruk of the Fire Service and Civil Defence.

In Gazipur, criminals torched a bus on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in the north Salna area of the city.

Two fire engines rushed there and doused the fire. No one was injured, said fire officials.

In another development, two people were injured in crude bomb explosions in Dhaka and Rajshahi.

In the capital's Bijoynagar area, three crude bomb exploded that left two people hurt around 3:00pm

yesterday.

Talking to reporters at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, one of the injured said he is a Swecchhasebok League leader of Dhaka south city unit.

In Rajshahi, criminals exploded a crude bomb on the Rajshahi Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court building premises yesterday.

Three people were detained in this connection, said Rofiqul Haque, officer-in-charge of Rajpara Police Station.

### EC cannot intervene in political disputes

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in Dhaka.

He said the EU delegation visited the EC to know about its preparations for the 12th national election.

"We conveyed to them the message that we have a constitutional obligation to conduct a free and fair election. I think they have understood that," said the CEC.

Earlier, after the meeting, EU Ambassador to Bangladesh Charles Whitley, who led the delegation, said the world expects the next general election in Bangladesh would be held in a democratic, credible, peaceful

and participatory manner.

The other delegation members were Dr Bernd Spanier, deputy head of mission; Sebastian Riger Brown, political officer; Swedish Ambassador Alexandra Berg Von Linde; Spanish Ambassador Francisco de Asis Benitez Salas; Italian Ambassador Antonio Alessandro; Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands Irma van Dueren; Ambassador of Denmark Christian Brix Moller; Deputy Head of Mission at the French Embassy Gillaume Audren de Kerdrel and Chargé d'Affaires at Embassy of Germany Jan Janowski.

A four-member team of EU election experts arrived in Bangladesh early yesterday to observe the January 7 national election.

The expert mission will start working formally from Sunday and will stay in Bangladesh for almost two months, a foreign ministry official told The Daily Star.

In July, an EU exploratory mission visited Bangladesh. Weeks after the visit, the EU announced that it would not send a fully-fledged election observation mission as it had doubts that the environment was conducive to hold elections.