

Europe must step up efforts to protect environment Says EEA

AFP, Copenhagen

Europe is a world leader in the fight against climate change but must do more to improve its resilience against global warming, the European Union's environment agency warned on Monday.

While "significant progress" has been made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, the general state of Europe's environment was "not good", the European Environment Agency (EEA) said after compiling data from 38 countries.

Its director, Leena Yla-Mononen, told reporters in Brussels that biodiversity was on the decline "due to persistent pressures driven by unsustainable production and consumption patterns".

Water resources, likewise, were under "severe pressure", with one-third of the European population being affected by water stress, she said.

The climate assessment, conducted every five years, comes after EU member states at a UN climate summit last week were unable to present a 2035 plan to further slash greenhouse gases, due to disagreements within the 27-nation bloc.

The EU is also unable to agree on an ambitious proposal from the European Commission to reduce emissions by 90 percent by 2040 from 1990 levels.

EU greenhouse gas emissions have dropped 37 percent since 1990, outpacing reductions by other major polluters like China and the United States, due to reduced fossil-fuel use and a doubling of renewable energy capacity since 2005.

But the EEA said EU countries must go further in implementation of policies aiming for better sustainability already agreed under a European Green Deal.

Nature on the continent "continues to face degradation, overexploitation and biodiversity loss," the EEA said.

Water in particular is an increasingly scarce resource, and land is over-exploited.

Some 81 percent of protected habitats are in poor or bad condition, 60 to 70 percent of soils are degraded, and 62 percent of water bodies are not in good ecological condition, the report said.

Even though climate change ramps up water scarcity, the EEA said there was scope to save up to 40 percent of water in agriculture, water supply and energy production through better governance, technological innovation, water reuse and public awareness.



Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus and UN Secretary General António Guterres shake hands before their meeting at the UN Headquarters in New York yesterday.

PHOTO: CA'S PRESS WING

Trophy row turns Asia Cup final into political showdown

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India and Pakistan produced the best Asia Cup final in recent memory on Sunday in Dubai, a match that went down to the last over with India coming out on top by five wickets.

But the game itself got overshadowed by the chaotic presentation ceremony that followed and by the trading of barbs that continued throughout the next day, all centring around politics, not cricket.

The first shot was taken by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who likened the team's win to Operation Sindoor, a military operation undertaken by its armed forces in May in response to the terror attacks in Pahalgam of India's Jammu and Kashmir on April 22, for which it blames Pakistan.

"#OperationSindoor on the games field. Outcome is the same - India wins! Congrats to our cricketers," Modi wrote on X right after the game ended.

Mohsin Naqvi, the chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and the country's federal interior minister, retorted on X, saying, "If war was your measure of pride, history already records your humiliating defeats at Pakistan's hands. No cricket match can rewrite that truth. Dragging war into sport only exposes desperation and disgraces the very spirit of the game."

He was one of the central figures of what had transpired after the game at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

As the president of the Asian Cricket

Council (ACC), Naqvi was supposed to hand over the trophy to the captain of the winning team, Suryakumar Yadav.

The problems began when the Indian team refused to collect the trophy from Naqvi and wanted some other dignitary to do the honours.

But Naqvi refused.



After several false starts, the presentation ceremony finally began almost an hour after the match ended. Naqvi stood at the podium as all the individual prizes were handed over by other dignitaries.

But when it was time to call upon the Indian captain, the dignitaries walked off the stage, the trophy was taken inside, and then announcer Simon Doull said, "I have been informed by the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) that the Indian cricket team will not be collecting their awards tonight."

The Indian team then celebrated without the trophy – a bizarre and never-before-seen occurrence in international cricket.

"This is one thing which I have never seen since I started playing cricket that the champion team is denied the trophy... We took the call on the ground about not taking the trophy," Suryakumar said at the post-match press conference.

He also praised the Indian prime minister for his reaction after the game, saying, "It feels good when the country's leader himself bats on the front foot," according to Indian news agency ANI.

However, his Pakistani counterpart, Salman Ali Agha, wasn't amused by all that happened, saying it was "bad for cricket".

"If they think they disrespected us by not shaking hands, then I say they disrespected cricket... What they did today [Sunday], a good team doesn't do that. Good teams do what we have done. We waited for our medals and took them."

"It's been seen for the first time. I do not know where it will stop. What has happened in this tournament is bad for cricket."

Tensions were high heading into the final owing to the Indian team's refusal to shake hands with their Pakistani counterparts in their earlier two meetups in the tournament to show solidarity with their armed forces and the Pahalgam attack victims. The handshake was snubbed in the final as well.

As per several Indian outlets, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is planning to lodge a formal complaint with the ICC against Naqvi for refusing to give the trophy. All signs indicate that the fallout from the Asia Cup final is far from over.

Gaza peace plan

FROM PAGE 1

following months of heavy casualties.

"Their leadership has been killed three times over, so you're really dealing with different people than we've been dealing with over the last four years, five years," he continued.

He earlier warned that if Hamas rejects the deal, the US would back Israel's continued incursion into Gaza.

"If Hamas rejects the deal, which is always possible, they're the only one left," Trump said, turning to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "But if not, as you know Bibi, you'd have more full backing to do what you would have to do."

The Gaza plan also calls for 'amnesty' for Hamas members who lay down arms, coexist.

The 20-point plan states that on agreement by both sides, "the war will immediately end" with Israeli withdrawals timed to the release of the last hostages held by Hamas. During that initial period, there would be a ceasefire.

Key points include the deployment of a "temporary international stabilisation force" and the creation of a transitional authority headed by Trump.

The deal would demand Hamas militants fully disarm and be excluded from future roles in the government. However, those who agreed to "peaceful co-existence" would be given amnesty.

Following the Israeli withdrawal, the borders would be opened to aid and investment.

The plan would involve the drawing up of a timeline for Israeli forces to withdraw from the Palestinian enclave in phases.

"Working with the new transitional authority in Gaza, all parties will agree on a timeline for Israeli forces to withdraw in phases," Trump told reporters at the White House, referring to a new body that would govern the Palestinian territory.

In a crucial change from Trump's earlier apparent goals, Palestinians will not be forced to leave and instead, the document said, "we will encourage people to stay and offer them the opportunity to build a better Gaza."

The US president had met key Arab leaders at the United Nations last week and said Sunday on social media that "ALL ARE ON BOARD FOR SOMETHING SPECIAL, FIRST TIME EVER."

Netanyahu yesterday said that Israel would "retain security responsibility" for Gaza under the US-backed peace plan, and that it would "finish the job" of destroying Hamas if the Palestinian group rejected the deal.

"Hamas will be disarmed. Gaza will be demilitarised. Israel will retain security responsibility, including a security perimeter, for the foreseeable future. And lastly, Gaza will have a peaceful, civilian administration that is run neither by Hamas nor by the Palestinian Authority," said Netanyahu at the joint press conference with Trump.

"If Hamas rejects your plan, Mr President, or if they supposedly accept it and then, then basically do everything to counter it, then Israel will finish the job by itself. This can be done the easy way, or it can be done the hard way, but it will be done," Netanyahu said.

Netanyahu has recently given little reason for optimism, vowing in a defiant UN speech Friday to "finish the job" against Hamas and rejecting Palestinian statehood – recently recognised by several Western nations.

Normally a staunch ally of Netanyahu, the US president has shown increasing signs of frustration ahead of the Israeli premier's fourth White House visit since Trump's return to power.

Trump was infuriated by Israel's recent strike on Hamas members in the key US ally Qatar.

And he warned Netanyahu last week against annexing the Israeli-occupied West Bank, as some of Netanyahu's cabinet members have urged, a move that would seriously complicate the route to Palestinian statehood.

Netanyahu's coalition government is propped up by the far-right ministers who oppose a peace deal.

Meanwhile, Israeli strikes continued across the Gaza Strip, killing at least 33 people, according to the Hamas-run territory's civil defence agency.

Families of Israeli hostages held in Gaza urged Trump to uphold his Gaza proposal.

"We respectfully ask you to stand firm against any attempts to sabotage the deal you have brought forth," the Hostages and Missing Families Forum said in an open letter to Trump.

Eerie calm in scarred Ramesu

FROM PAGE 1

Tayiching Marma, 20, Athwipru Marma, 21, and Akhrau Marma, 22, were all residents of Guimara, said Chattogram Range's Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Ahsan Habib Palash.

The police are yet to confirm whether they belonged to any group.

"Their bodies will be handed over to their families after autopsy. A murder case has been filed. Local administration is working to determine the extent of damage in the area," the DIG told The Daily Star.

Eleven injured in the violence belong to Chakma, Marma, and Tripura communities, said Khagrachhari Civil Surgeon Saber Ahmed.

According to police, journalists and other sources, residents of Ramesu Bazar, fearing further violence, have been leaving their homes in search of safe shelters. Several residents said their houses were looted during the violence.

Speaking to journalists yesterday, Priyanka Pal, a local, said, "During the violence, I, along with my children, left home. Shops and other establishments were torched. The sound of repeated gunfire spread panic in the area. I spent the night elsewhere. In the morning, I returned to collect my belongings."

"I'm leaving again," said the woman whose husband works in Khagrachhari Sadar.

Chaypru Marma, a nursing student, said, "We ran away from our house when they started attacking the bazar and setting it on fire on Sunday. We had left all our belongings. Our home was torched. I'm staying in a relative's house in a neighbouring area."

Speaking to journalists, Lincoln Marma, a teacher of Guimara Government High School, said a group of Bangalee people attacked his home in Bangalipara during Sunday's violence when he was with his wife and two sons.

Protesting the rape of the schoolgirl, Jumma Chhatra Janata, a platform of the indigenous community, enforced a road blockade in the three hill districts yesterday. Section 144 has been in force in Khagrachhari's Sadar and Guimara upazilas.

However, the Khagrachhari-Chattogram and Khagrachhari-Dhaka routes have been excluded from the blockade.

In a Facebook post yesterday, Jumma Chhatra Janata said the blockade was relaxed on the two routes from 12:00pm

to facilitate funeral arrangements for those killed in violence and for the treatment of those injured.

DIG Ahsan Habib Palash told The Daily Star, "Local SP and DC held a meeting over the issue today [Monday]. The extent of the damage will be assessed, and compensation is expected to be provided to the victims. Both indigenous and Bengali communities have suffered losses in the violence, which are being taken into consideration. We are in discussions with all parties to find a solution. The



accused of the rape was arrested and taken into remand, but why this incident occurred cannot be determined without a proper investigation.

8-POINT DEMAND

A six-member delegation of Jumma Chhatra Janata submitted an eight-point demand to the administration during a meeting last night.

The meeting brought together the CHT adviser, the Khagrachhari Hill District Council chairman, the deputy commissioner, the superintendent of police, the additional SP, and intelligence officers, according to a statement posted on Jumma Chhatra Janata's official Facebook page.

The organisation said the civil administration verbally agreed to all the demands, except the withdrawal of section 144, citing that restrictions on public gatherings would remain in force until the ongoing blockade is lifted.

"We welcome the beginning of an official dialogue with the government

and administration, but this in no way means we will go home empty-handed," read the statement.

The platform reiterated that Jumma Chhatra Janata is neither a political party nor a separatist group. "Our spontaneous movement cannot be suppressed by labelling us UPDF or by any other tags," it said.

They demanded that the ISPR statement that tagged them as UPDF must be withdrawn immediately.

"The communal attacks carried out by illegal settlers on September 27 and

the indiscriminate firing by the army in Guimara on September 28 are wholly unacceptable; they are heinous, barbaric and crimes against humanity," it added.

The demands include an independent, impartial and judicial investigation into all incidents of killing, looting, arson and shooting that took place in Sadar and Guimara upazila on September 27 and 28.

"State forces cannot escape responsibility for wrongdoings. If the administration fails to implement our demands, or if the army, settlers, or any other force continues harassment, arrests, house searches, threats, or communal attacks on our people, then Jumma Chhatra Janata will be compelled to announce and carry out the toughest programmes," said the group.

Their demands also include monetary compensation ranging from Tk 5 lakh to Tk 20 lakh for those killed, injured and those who incurred material losses.

Govt plans to form paramilitary force

FROM PAGE 1

marshal, two group captains, two wing commanders, and one deputy secretary under the air vice marshal. Two posts would be reserved for civil service officials.

The group captains would manage the secretariat, budgets, and policy, while the wing commanders would oversee coordination, public relations, risk assessment, research, and investigation. The deputy secretary would handle internal security and legal affairs.

The force would be managed through three wings – two led by air commodores and one by an additional or joint secretary.

AGB would be phased in from 2026 to 2032.

In the first phase, 2,150 officers – half of the planned deployment – would be posted at Dhaka, Chattogram, and Sylhet airports. They would come from the air force, with retired personnel recruited on contract. This phase would require Tk 215 crore.

In 2028, deployment would rise to 75 percent at Dhaka, Chattogram, and Sylhet, while Rajshahi, Syedpur, Jashore, and Barishal airports would receive 50 percent of their planned personnel. This stage would cost Tk 253 crore.

By 2030, AGB members would be fully deployed at all airports, with Tk 303 crore required for the final phase.

Contacted, Home Ministry Senior Additional Secretary Ataur Rahman Khan said the formation of AGB is still at a preliminary stage and under feasibility review.

"At present, around 20 agencies are involved in managing civil aviation. The air force believes coordination would improve if a single body acted as the focal point," he said, adding that such an arrangement would improve coordination.

He also said the government will assess whether existing agencies can close the security gaps without creating a new force.

CAAB Chairperson Air Vice Marshal Md Mostafa Mahmood Siddiq declined to comment, saying that discussions on AGB are taking place at the ministry level.

Globally, most major airports – including those in Qatar, Singapore, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Dubai, and Hong Kong – are secured by a mix of civilian police, border control agencies, and third-party contractors. France is the only exception, with its Air Transport Gendarmerie having some overlap with the military.

GOVT AGENCIES AT ODDS

The home ministry formed an inter-ministerial body on August 31 with the aim of forming AGB, according to ministry documents.

The body includes the ministries of public administration, civil aviation, finance, defence, home, the Cabinet Division, police, and the armed forces.

It was tasked with recommending how to undertake the activities of forming AGB under the home ministry.

At its first meeting on September 19, the committee discussed AGB's viability but reached no decision.

Meanwhile, the civil aviation and tourism ministry has reviewed the proposal and prepared an internal report questioning the need for such a paramilitary force, sources said.

The report stated that AGB's mandate would overlap with that of agencies currently responsible for aviation security.

AGB is not the first such proposal.

On March 10 this year, CAAB's security department submitted a plan for a new security body called Bangladesh Airport Security Force.

It proposed a force of 10,632 personnel, 70 percent from the air force on deputation – similar to AGB's structure.

An air vice marshal or air commodore was supposed to lead the force, which was projected to cost Tk 397 crore.

CAAB staff protested the plan a week later, staging demonstrations across airports and forcing the then CAAB chairman Air Vice Marshal Md Monjur Kabir Bhuiyan to shelve the proposal.

Following the fall of the Awami League government on August 5 last year, tensions grew between APBn and the air force over who would control airfield security nationwide.

APBn was first posted to Hazrat

Shahjalal International Airport in April 2010 by the National Committee for Intelligence Coordination. It was tasked with overseeing security at Cox's Bazar airfield in June 2022 and posted to six more airports on February 1, 2024. A total of 2,500 members are currently deployed.

Air force personnel were deployed at Dhaka airport on February 7, 2016, to assist the civil administration for three months.

On August 5, 2024, APBn, like other police units, fell into disarray and abandoned its posts. The air force then stepped in to provide airport security.

After the interim government was formed, APBn attempted to resume duties but found its posts taken over.

Tensions peaked on October 28 when APBn alleged that air force-led aviation security forces trashed its control room at Dhaka airport. The next day, it filed a general diary with Airport Police Station.

The GD stated that equipment from APBn's Airstide Command and Control Center office was taken away, the office signboard was damaged, and its logo was replaced with one reading "BAF Task Force".

Close-circuit cameras owned by APBn were found masked with paper, allegedly under orders of the airport's executive director.

On February 16 this year, senior officials from CAAB, police headquarters, and AvSec intervened, leading APBn to withdraw the GD the following day.

But tensions reignited two days later when APBn personnel attempted to reclaim their posts but were reportedly barred from entering the airport.

On September 17, Chief Adviser's Special Envoy on International Affairs Lutfy Siddiqi chaired a meeting on airport security in an effort to resolve the impasse.

It was decided there that all agencies at the airport will function under CAAB, and APBn was asked to resume security duties at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

Civil Aviation Ministry Adviser SK Bashir Uddin, CAAB chairperson, and Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam were present at the meeting.