

## Trump drops key US climate rule

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump on Thursday revoked a landmark scientific finding underpinning US regulations to curb planet-warming pollution, marking his biggest rollback of climate policy to date.

The repeal of the Environmental Protection Agency's 2009 "endangerment finding" was paired with the immediate elimination of greenhouse gas standards on automobiles.

But it also places a host of other climate rules in jeopardy. Legal challenges are expected to follow swiftly.

"This determination had no basis in fact, had none whatsoever, and no basis in law," Trump said at a White House event.

He dismissed concerns that the repeal could cost lives by worsening climate change, reiterating his belief that human-caused global warming is a hoax.



University students and relatives of detainees march in Caracas, Venezuela, on Youth Day Thursday, calling for amnesty for political prisoners and underscoring ongoing demands for political reform.

PHOTO: AFP

## Shooting kills 2, wounds one at southern US university

AFP, Washington

Gunfire killed two people and wounded another in an apartment at a historically Black university in the southern United States on Thursday, officials said, marking at least the third shooting on the campus since October.

The US, where firearms are readily available, has a long history of gun violence that kills thousands of people every year.

The shooting at South Carolina State University's Hugine Suites student residential complex was reported around 9:15 pm Thursday (0215 GMT Friday), the college said in a statement.

The university had two shootings on its campus in October, including one at the same student housing complex, ABC News reported, adding that one person was killed and another wounded.

"University officials have not yet confirmed the victims' identities or the condition of the wounded person," the university said in a social media post early yesterday. "The campus remains on lockdown."

School officials did not say whether anyone was in custody in connection to the shooting, but they announced that Friday classes were cancelled.

## Russia strikes Ukraine energy, port sites

Six killed; peace talks set for Geneva on Feb 17-18

AFP, Kyiv

Six people died in Russian strikes across Ukraine overnight that targeted the southern port city of Odesa and energy infrastructure, officials announced yesterday.

Moscow has stepped up its attacks on Ukrainian critical infrastructure in recent weeks despite pressure by the United States to reach a peace deal with Kyiv.

Russia launched one missile and 154 drones overnight, the Ukrainian air force said, warning that some unmanned aerial vehicles were still in Ukrainian airspace as of yesterday morning.

Three men and one boy were killed late on Thursday evening in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk, local authorities said.

Meanwhile, Russia said yesterday that a new round of talks with US and Ukrainian officials seeking to broker an end to the four-year war would take place next week.

Two previous rounds of US-brokered talks in Abu Dhabi have failed to lead to a breakthrough, with Moscow and Kyiv remaining far apart on the key issue of territory.

Russian forces have been pushing towards the industrial hub -- one of the last remaining civilian centres under Ukrainian control in the Donetsk region.

Ukraine's rights ombudsman said yesterday the victims included

19-year-old twins and their eight-year-old brother.

"We are establishing the final consequences of Russian terror," the head of the city's military administration Oleksandr

DTEK, Ukraine's largest private energy company, said the attack had inflicted "extremely serious" damage to its energy facilities there.

"It will take a long time to repair the equipment and restore it to



Rescuers walk past damaged cars at the site of a Russian drone strike in Odesa, Ukraine, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Goncharenko, wrote on social media.

In the Zaporizhzhia region, which the Kremlin claims is part of Russia along with Donetsk, a 48-year-old man was killed in a drone attack, the emergency services said.

The worst damage was reported in the Odesa region, where authorities said one person died in a Russian strike on port infrastructure.

working order," the company said.

Some 300,000 people in the Black Sea city had been left without water following overnight attacks a day earlier.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday arrived in Munich to hold rounds of meetings with European and US officials, seeking support from allies ahead of the talks. He also toured a Ukrainian-German drone production facility.

## 150K Afghans returned from Pakistan, Iran this year: UN

AFP, Geneva

Nearly 150,000 Afghans have returned from Pakistan and Iran this year, with the speed and size of the migration pushing Afghanistan deeper into crisis, the UN refugee agency said yesterday.

After decades hosting Afghans fleeing crises at home, Pakistan and Iran have ramped up deportations and forced millions back across the border to a country struggling to provide for them.

"So far this year, nearly 150,000 Afghans have returned from Iran and Pakistan," Arafat Jamal, the UNHCR representative to Afghanistan, told a press briefing in Geneva.

"The high number of returns already this year is concerning given the severity of winter, with freezing temperatures and heavy snowfall," he said, speaking from Kabul.

"These arrivals come on top of already unprecedented returns -- 2.9 million people in 2025, bringing the total to some 5.4 million since October 2023." Whether arriving at the frontier surrounded by family or alone, Afghan returnees must establish a new life in a nation beset by poverty and environmental woes.

## Thai PM forms coalition with Thaksin party

AFP, Bangkok

Thai caretaker Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul's conservative party, which won a stunning election victory at the weekend, agreed to form a coalition with jailed ex-premier Thaksin Shinawatra's party, both announced yesterday.

Anutin's pro-military and pro-monarchy party had its best electoral performance in polls that took place after two rounds of deadly border clashes with Cambodia last year.

It campaigned on a nationalist platform, promising to build a wall on the frontier with Cambodia, keep all border crossings closed and recruit 100,000 volunteer soldiers.

Thaksin's Pheu Thai is Thailand's most successful party of the 21st century but had its worst election result on Sunday, raising questions about the future of the political machine built by the jailed billionaire. "Although the election results have not yet been officially confirmed, we have a consensus that Pheu Thai will support us in leading the coalition, as planned," Anutin told a news conference at his Bhumjaithai party's headquarters.

Prasert Chanruangthong, secretary-general of Pheu Thai, told reporters the party "is ready to support Bhumjaithai Party in forming the coalition. Other issues will be discussed further".

The latest incarnation of the organisation founded by the telecom billionaire, Pheu Thai came a distant third in Sunday's election, its vote share in the party-list section plunging by more than half.

## US OIL BLOCKADE UN 'extremely worried' by Cuba crisis

AFP, Geneva

The United Nations said yesterday it was deeply alarmed by the crisis unfolding in Cuba as the island nation struggles under what amounts to a US blockade of oil deliveries.

President Donald Trump has vowed to starve Cuba of oil after last month's US military ousting of Nicolas Maduro, the leader of Venezuela, which had been communist Cuba's main oil supplier.

"We are extremely worried about Cuba's deepening socio-economic crisis -- amid a decades-long financial and trade embargo, extreme weather events, and the recent US measures restricting oil shipments," UN human rights office spokeswoman Marta Hurtado told a media briefing in Geneva.

"This is having an increasingly severe impact on the human rights of people in Cuba.

UN rights chief Volker Turk "reiterates his call on all states to lift unilateral sectoral measures, given their broad and indiscriminate impact on the population. Policy goals cannot justify actions that in themselves violate human rights," the spokeswoman said.

Hurtado said that given the dependence of health, food, and water systems on imported fossil fuels, oil scarcity in Cuba had put the availability of essential services at risk.

More than 80 percent of water pumping equipment in Cuba depends on electricity, she added. Trump and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the Miami-born son of Cuban immigrants, have made no secret of their desire to bring about regime change in Havana.



## CIA releases new video appeal for spies in China

AFP, Beijing

Beijing will take "all necessary measures" against foreign espionage activities, the foreign ministry said yesterday, after the US spy agency issued a recruitment video targeting Chinese military personnel.

The CIA's Chinese-language video, published on the agency's YouTube channel on Thursday, appears to target disaffected officers and appeals for information on China's leaders and armed forces.

China's foreign ministry condemned what it called "anti-China forces" and vowed action to protect national security.

"China will take all necessary measures to resolutely combat infiltration and sabotage activities of foreign anti-China forces and resolutely safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests," foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a press conference when asked about the CIA video.

He did not provide any details on the measures Beijing could take.

The video depicts a fictional Chinese officer deciding to contact the US intelligence agency after concluding that "the only thing leaders are protecting is their own interest" and that "their power is based on countless lies".

It shows the officer at home with his family, then driving past a checkpoint in pouring rain before taking out a laptop in the car and typing on it as he says: "Picking this path is my way of fighting for my family and my country."



People carry bodies during a mass burial of unidentified Palestinians, released after being held in Israel during the war, in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Japan seizes Chinese fishing boat

REUTERS, Tokyo

Japanese authorities have seized a Chinese fishing boat and arrested its captain for allegedly fleeing inspection in its exclusive economic zone, an incident that could further inflame tensions between Asia's top two economies.

The captain, a 47-year-old Chinese national, is accused of ignoring orders to stop for an on-board inspection on Thursday in waters off southwest Nagasaki Prefecture, Japan's fisheries agency said.

There were a further 10 people on board at the time, the agency said.

While Japan has seized fishing vessels from South Korea and Taiwan in recent years, the incident is the first involving a vessel from China since 2022 and comes against the backdrop of a major diplomatic dispute between the countries.