

## U.N. Climate Negotiators Sweat over Detail and Divides

KATOWICE, Poland - Half-way through talks to breathe life into the Paris climate deal negotiators haggled over how to share the cost of curbing global warming and struggled to bridge deep political divides.

The two weeks of talks, which began at the start of the week, are billed as the most important U.N. conference since the Paris 2015 agreement on climate change.

The challenge is to meet a year-end deadline to agree a rule book to limit global warming, when the unity that underpinned the Paris talks has fragmented. U.S. President Donald Trump repeated his call to scrap the Paris climate pact.

By the end of Saturday, negotiators aim to have a simplified draft for high-level ministerial



debate starting on Monday.

"We still have a lot to do," Michal Kurtyka, the Polish president of the U.N. talks, told a news

conference. "It is very technical, very complex, very difficult." Delegates said a major issue was how to reassure developing countries that

richer nations would deliver on promises to help finance the cost of shifting to a lower carbon economy.

Environmental campaigners are concerned the Katowice talks will lack ambition, after the United States said this year it was withdrawing from the U.N. process. Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, in the talks on Saturday added a further challenge by blocking consensus on a major scientific report.

The U.N. report published in October said it was possible to limit the earth's temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius and prevent damaging levels of global warming provided radical changes in energy consumption and other steps were implemented. (Reuters)

### Bahrain Criticizes Qatar Emir for Not Attending Gulf Arab Summit

RIYADH - Bahrain's foreign minister criticized Qatar's emir on Sunday for not attending a Gulf Arab summit in Saudi Arabia, an absence that suggests a rift between Doha and three Gulf Arab states is unlikely to be resolved soon.

Qatar sent its state minister for foreign affairs to the annual one-day summit that is overshadowed by the economic and diplomatic boycott of Doha since mid-2017 by Riyadh, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt over allegations Doha supports ter-

rorism. Qatar denies the charges.

"Qatar's emir should have accepted the fair demands (of the boycotting states) and attended the summit," foreign minister Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa said in a tweet. In response, Ahmed bin Saeed AlRumaihi, director of the information office at Qatar's foreign ministry, said: "Qatar can make its own decisions and had attended (last year's) Kuwait summit while the leaders of the boycotting countries did not." (Reuters)

ROME/PADUA - Italy's deputy prime minister, Matteo Salvini, normally relishes confrontation, but now the firebrand populist is under attack from a place he calls home. Dissent is growing in his League party's political heartland, the industrial north, adding to pressure on Salvini and his coalition partner to reverse course on their 2019 budget.

"I always thought the League was able to help people who work - real people - and for

### Italy's League Leader Faces Friendly Fire over Budget

this I had put my trust in them at this historic moment," said industrialist Patrizio Dei Tos, who had high hopes when the League took power six months ago. Now, he and other northern entrepreneurs are not so sure. Since the League and the anti-establishment 5-Star party formed a government, the economy has gone into reverse and the new administration's big-spending budget plans have sent interest rates up and prompted fears



of another banking crisis.

In the regions of Lombardy and Veneto, which together account for a third of the national economy and are

### UAE Ambassador to Pakistan, Governor of Punjab Discuss Promoting Investments, Increasing Trade

LAHORE - Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al Zaabi, UAE Ambassador to Pakistan, and Mohamed Shodry Sarour, Governor of Punjab Province, discussed ways of developing partnerships, promoting investments and increasing trade between the UAE and Pakistan. During his visit to the province, Al Zaabi explained the economic opportunities available in the UAE, and Dubai's preparations for hosting Expo 2020.

Sarour highlighted his province's economic potential and current investment opportunities, while thanking the UAE for enhancing its economic relations with Pakistan, continuing to provide humanitarian

aid, and investing in energy, renewable energy and agriculture.

In another meeting, Al Zaabi and Serdar Othman Buzdar, Prime Minister of Punjab Province, discussed the current bilateral ties between the UAE and Pakistan, at the Government Palace in Lahore. During the meeting, Buzdar praised the historic ties between the UAE and Pakistan, which were established by the Founding Father, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

He said that Sheikh Zayed has a special place in the hearts of all Pakistanis, while highlighting the support he provided to Pakistan. (Agencies)

### Pakistan Issues Visas to 139 Indian Pilgrims to Visit Katas Raj Dham

NEW DELHI - The Pakistan High Commission today said it has issued visas to 139 Indian pilgrims to visit Katas Raj Dham, a lord Shiva temple, in the country's Punjab province.

Under the framework of a bilateral protocol on visits to religious shrines, Sikh and Hindu pilgrims from India visit Pakistan every year. Pakistani pilgrims also visit India every year under the protocol.

"Another group of Indian pilgrims, comprising 139 people, have been issued visas by the Pakistan High Commission to visit Shree Katas Raj Dham in Chakwal district from December 9-15," the Pakistan High Commission said.

Last month, Pakistan granted visas to more than 3,800 Sikh pilgrims to visit the country. Some of the pilgrims had attended the ground-breaking ceremony of the Kartarpur corridor on November 28 in Narawal.

The corridor will link the Darbar Sahib shrine in Kartarpur in Pakistan's Punjab province to Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur district in India.

Earlier this month, over 220 Indian pilgrims were granted visas to visit the famous Hindu temple, Shadani Darbar, in Sukkur.

Katas Raj is one of the holiest places for the Hindu community in Pakistan. (Agencies)

### China: Canada's Detention of Huawei Exec 'Vile in Nature'



BEIJING - China summoned the Canadian ambassador to protest the detention of a top executive of leading Chinese tech giant Huawei,

calling it "unreasonable, unconscionable, and vile in nature" and warning of "grave consequences" if she is not released. A report by the official

Xinhua News Agency carried on the Foreign Ministry's website said that Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng called in Ambassador John McCallum on Saturday over the holding of Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou, who is reportedly suspected of trying to evade U.S. trade curbs on Iran.

Huawei is the biggest global supplier of network gear for phone and internet companies and has been the target of deepening U.S. security concerns over its ties to the Chinese government. The U.S.

has pressured European countries and other allies to limit use of its technology, warning they could be opening themselves up to surveillance and theft of information.

Le told McCallum that Meng's detention at the request of the United States while transferring flights in Vancouver was a "severe violation" of her "legitimate rights and interests." "Such a move ignores the law and is unreasonable, unconscionable, and vile in nature," Le said in the statement. (AP)

### UK Cabinet Minister Floats 'Plan B' Before Key Vote on May's Brexit Deal

LONDON - A close ally of British Prime Minister Theresa May on Saturday became the first cabinet minister to float a possible Plan B if, as expected, parliament next week rejects her proposal to leave the European Union.

With her own future in the balance, May insists her deal, laboriously negotiated with the EU over many months, is the only one on the table and that the alternatives are a painful 'no-deal' exit from the EU or possibly no Brexit at all.

However, members of

parliament, including from May's own Conservative Party, look set to reject her deal, which envisages continued close ties with the EU, in a move that would pitch the world's fifth-largest economy into even deeper uncertainty.

While agreeing with May that her deal provides the best option for exiting the EU, Amber Rudd, the work and pensions minister, said a Norway-style relationship with the bloc might also offer a way out of the current deadlock. (Reuters)

### Brazil President Announces Intervention in Roraima State

RIO DE JANEIRO - Brazilian President Michel Temer has announced a federal intervention in a northern state which has received an influx of Venezuelan refugees and been wracked by a security crisis. Temer did not say what the "negotiated" intervention in Roraima state would entail.

The state has been the scene of an intense battle between criminal organizations for territory and influence. It has also been the major entry point into Brazil for Venezuelans fleeing political and economic turmoil in their homeland.

Earlier in the week, state police and prison officers protested a two-month delay in salary payments. (AP)

### Australia Urges Thailand to Release Refugee Bahrain Footballer

MELBOURNE - Australia's Foreign Minister Marise Payne has urged Thai authorities on Sunday to release a footballer who holds a refugee status in Australia and who has been detained in Bangkok since late November.

Hakeem AlAraibi, a former member of Bahrain's national soccer team who has been critical of the country's government, was arrested in Thailand on Nov. 27 based on an Interpol notice issued at Bahrain's request. AlAraibi was convicted of vandalizing a police station in Bahrain and sentenced to 10 years in prison in absentia. He has denied wrongdoing.

"Australia is concerned by the ongoing detention of Mr. Hakeem Ali AlAraibi and calls for his immediate return to Australia," Payne said in a statement published on the ministry's website. (Reuters)

### Armenians Vote in Election Testing Revolution's Power Shift

YEREVAN - Armenians began voting in an early parliamentary election as acting prime minister Nikol Pashinyan sought a stronger mandate, having been elected by lawmakers to the post in May following a peaceful revolution earlier this year.

Pashinyan came to power in the wake of weeks of mass protests against corruption and cronyism in the ex-Soviet republic. The former newspaper editor, who was jailed for fomenting unrest in 2008, represents a dramatic break from the cadre of rulers who have run Armenia since the late 1990s. He stepped down in October so parliament could be dissolved ready for the



early election. Poll stations opened at 8 am (0400 GMT) and voting was due to end at 8 pm (1600 GMT).

Former high-ranking officials were sacked and some were arrested following the power change. And a court of appeal ordered the detention of former President Robert Kocharyan again on

Friday on charges of attempting to overthrow the constitutional order. He was first arrested in July but freed the following month and the case was sent to the appeals court. Kocharyan was Armenia's second president, serving in the post from 1998 to 2008, when mass protests erupted over a disputed election. (Reuters)

### Russia's Most Famous Human Rights Activist Dies at 91

MOSCOW - Lyudmila Alexeyeva, a human rights pioneer and dissident who challenged the Soviet and Russian regimes for decades, demanding that they free political prisoners and establish democratic rights, died Saturday in a Moscow hospital, a Russian official said. She was 91.

"She remained a human rights activist to the very end," said Mikhail Fedotov, head of Russia's Human Rights Council. "This is a loss for the entire human

rights movement in Russia."

The gentle but courageous activist was born under dictator Josef Stalin's regime. She risked her own freedom to protest the plight of political prisoners in the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s and co-founded the Moscow Helsinki Group, Russia's oldest human rights organization, in 1976. Alexeyeva faced death threats throughout her career and was forced into exile by Soviet authorities in 1977. (AP)

### UAE Vice President Heads Delegation for 39th GCC Summit in Riyadh

DUBAI - Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum headed on Sunday a delegation at the 39th Summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held in the Saudi capital Riyadh, official WAM news agency reported.

Earlier in the day, UAE Foreign Minister Anwar Gargash expressed his hope for "a successful Gulf summit" under the leadership of Saudi Arabia, praising GCC fellow member state Kuwait for its efforts in bringing the council members together.

The GCC comprises Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar.

Notably, a delegation led by Qatari State Minister for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi arrived in Riyadh for the meeting despite the absence of the Qatari emir. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt have been imposing a diplomatic and economic boycott on Qatar since June 2017 over allegations that the tiny gas-rich Gulf country supports terrorism and interferes in their domestic affairs, which Doha has repeatedly denied. Qatar announced last week its decision to withdraw from the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) from Jan. 1, 2019, a move seen as a challenge to the Saudi-dominated oil cartel. (Xinhua)

### Iran President Warns West of 'Deluge of Drugs'

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hasan Rouhani warned Westerners that boycotting Iran undermines their ability to fight drugs and terrorism in their origins, adding that they will not be able to survive the deluge of drugs, refugees, attacks and assassina-

tion. In a televised speech, Rouhani cautioned that if Iran is weakened through sanctions, many people will not be safe, asserting that those "who do not believe what we say, better look at the map."

Drug trafficking poses a major challenge to Iran, who shares borders with Afghanistan,

world's largest opium producer, and Pakistan, a key transit route for drugs.

He reported that Iran spends \$800 billion annually in fighting drugs which guarantees better health for peoples from Eastern Europe to Western America and from Northern Africa to Western Asia.

"Think for a moment that if a hole shows up in this barrier, what a disaster will happen." A UN report published in 2014 showed that Iran accounted for two thirds of the world's opium seizures and one fourth of the world's heroin and morphine seizures in 2012. (Agencies)

### Iran Police Make 10 Arrests in Connection with Chabahar Terror Attack

TEHRAN - Iran's Police Chief Brigadier General Hossein Ashtari says 10 people have already been arrested in connection with the recent terrorist attack that took place in the southeastern port city of Chabahar.

Speaking on Sunday, Ashtari noted that the remaining perpetrators would soon be detained through cooperation with local residents.

"10 individuals have already been identified and arrested and more will soon be taken into custody," he said. The police chief further noted that the "bombing plot had been foiled in time thanks to the vigilance and courage

of Chabahar police forces." He explained that the vehicle had exploded before entering the targeted police station. On Thursday, a vehicle laden with explosives approached the police headquarters in Chabahar, in the southeastern province of Sistan-and-Baluchestan.

At least two police officers lost their lives and were killed and dozens of people sustained injuries in the explosion, which also killed the bomber.

The driver was seeking to force his way into the police headquarters, but failed to do so as local security forces quickly intervened. (Press TV)