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6 Trapped in forest, migrant regrets Belarus-EU crossing



13 Egypt film on poverty ruffles feathers, triggers backlash



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Saudi Arabia targets zero carbon emissions by 2060

Kuwait hails 'leap' in region's climate efforts • Aramco sets 2050 net zero target



RIYADH: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman delivers a speech during the opening ceremony of the Saudi Green Initiative forum yesterday in the Saudi capital. — AFP

RIYADH: Top crude exporter Saudi Arabia will aim to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2060, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said yesterday, days before the COP26 global climate summit. The kingdom said it would also join a global effort to cut methane emissions by 30 percent by 2030. The UN says more than 130 countries have set or are considering a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, an objective it says is "imperative" to safeguard a livable climate.

"I announce today Saudi Arabia's target to reach net zero emissions by 2060," Prince Mohammed told the "Saudi Green Initiative" forum. "I am pleased to launch initiatives in the energy sector that will reduce carbon emissions by 278 million tons annually by 2030, thus voluntarily more than doubling the target announced," he said. "We also announce the kingdom's accession to the Global Methane Pledge."

A statement said Saudi Arabia would "contribute to cutting global methane emissions by 30 percent by 2030, as part of its commitment to deliver a cleaner, greener future". The 2060 target would "enable us to have a smooth and viable transition, without risking economic or social impacts", Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said.

Kuwaiti Oil Minister Mohammad Al-Fares said yesterday that the Saudi and Middle East Green Initiatives represented a leap in the region's efforts

to combat the effects of climate change. "We will contribute and support our brothers in these initiatives and participate in any initiative that uses renewable power sources and hydrogen as a new technology," said Fares.

"We will also hold meetings with Saudi Minister of Energy Abdulaziz bin Salman to discuss these initiatives which we will have a role in, to support Saudi Arabia and to benefit from their experiences," he said. "Any Saudi triumph is a Kuwaiti triumph," he noted. Al-Fares expressed his appreciation to King Salman, Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman and to all the Saudi youth who partook in this initiative, "which will lead their future".

COP26 President Alok Sharma also welcomed the announcement. "I hope this landmark announcement... will galvanize ambition from others ahead of #COP26," Sharma tweeted, adding he was looking forward to seeing more details on the Saudi plan.

Shortly after, energy giant Saudi Aramco said it committed to being a net zero enterprise by 2050. "Saudi Aramco will achieve an ambition of being also a net zero from our operation by 2050," Aramco chief executive Amin Nasser said at the forum. "We understand that the road will be complex, the transition will have its challenges, but we are confident we can meet them and accelerate our efforts to a low emission future."

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News in brief

Turkey to expel 10 envoys

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday told his foreign minister to expel the ambassadors of 10 countries including Germany and the US who appealed for the release of a jailed civil society leader. "I have ordered our foreign minister to declare these 10 ambassadors as persona non grata as soon as possible," he said. — AFP

Russia reports record deaths, cases

MOSCOW: Russia yesterday reported a record 1,075 COVID deaths in 24 hours as Europe's hardest hit country with dramatically low vaccination rates braces for nationwide curbs from next week. According to fresh government figures, the country saw a record 37,678 new virus cases yesterday. This brings the official death toll to 229,528 - the highest on the continent. — AFP

UK probes Delta subvariant

LONDON: British health officials on Friday said they were formally looking into a subvariant of the Delta strain of the coronavirus, after it was seen in a growing number of cases. The UK Health Security Agency said AY.4.2, which was last week seen in six percent of cases, had been "designated as a variant under investigation" but not yet a "variant of concern". — AFP

Pfizer jab 90% effective in children

WASHINGTON: Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine is more than 90 percent effective in preventing symptomatic disease among children aged 5-11, the company said in a document released Friday. The vaccine was tested with a 10-microgram dose, while older age groups have received 30 micrograms. The doses were administered three weeks apart. — AFP

Baldwin shooting inquiry focuses on custody of gun

LOS ANGELES: The police investigation into a fatal shooting with a prop gun fired by actor Alec Baldwin on a film set was focusing yesterday on the specialist in charge of the weapon and the assistant director who handed it to Baldwin. Ukraine-born cinematographer Halyna Hutchins, 42, was struck in the chest and died shortly after the incident

Rising tide of new leaks threatens to inundate Facebook

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook held back from doing all it could to stop users from being radicalized and US election misinformation from flooding

Activists set sights on Lebanon polls

BEIRUT: Two years after a now-defunct protest movement shook Lebanon, opposition activists are hoping parliamentary polls will challenge the ruling elite's stranglehold on the country. Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese took to the streets from Oct 17, 2019 in an unprecedented countrywide and cross-sectarian uprising. Their demands were for basic services and the wholesale removal of

a political class they accused of mismanagement and corruption since the end of the 1975-1990 civil war. But as the country sank further into economic turmoil, made worse by the coronavirus pandemic, what demonstrators called their "revolution" petered out.

Many then saw a probe into the cataclysmic 2020 Beirut port blast as the best chance to bring down Lebanon's hereditary political barons, but even intense international pressure in the explosion's aftermath failed to make them change their ways. Last week, feuding parties turned Beirut into a war zone, with heavy exchanges of fire killing seven people in a flare-up sparked by a rally against the main investigating judge.

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Thursday in New Mexico, while director Joel Souza, 48, who was standing behind her, was wounded and hospitalized, then released. Police interviewed Baldwin, who willingly cooperated, but have pressed no charges.

The gun, which was supposed to be loaded with a blank charge, instead had a live round, according to the affidavit submitted by the sheriff's office to obtain a search warrant, local media reported. The affidavit said that Assistant Director Dave Halls, identified as the man who handed the gun to Baldwin, called out "cold gun" as he did so - industry talk to indicate the weapon had only a blank charge. Police are focusing intently on the exact sequence of events that allowed the live round to be introduced to the film set of 19th-century

the social network, according to media reports Friday. An array of US news outlets cited documents from former Facebook worker Frances Haugen, adding to a series of critical revelations already published based on information she provided.

Articles in the New York Times, Washington Post and elsewhere on Friday focused on how Facebook apparently intensified political division. Examples included an internal finding that 10 percent of political content viewed by US users in the days after the election perpetuated the falsehood that the vote



Alec Baldwin



Halyna Hutchins

Western "Rust". A 911 call to police immediately after the shooting conveyed the shock and anger felt on the set.

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had been rigged. What has come to be known as the "Big Lie" has been repeated relentlessly by former President Donald Trump and enraged his supporters, who stormed the US Capital in a deadly attack on Jan 6.

Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms banned Trump from their platforms for encouraging the violent effort to thwart the democratic process. Revelations published Friday indicated that Facebook could have anticipated such trouble.

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JAL AL-DIB, Lebanon: In this file photo taken on Oct 27, 2019, Lebanese protesters take part in a human chain as a symbol of unity during anti-government demonstrations. — AFP