

As talks linger, India draws red lines on coal use, methane emission

Negotiators Debate Over Fossil Fuels

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Dubai: The United Nations climate summit (COP28) went into extra time as the wait for its final text continued on Tuesday in absence of a common landing zone over the language on fossil fuels. India, too, has certain red lines, specifically on coal use and methane emission, which negotiators have already flagged formally to get the best deal for the country.

Differences could not be thrashed out despite talks rolling through the night after the draft text came from the



presidency on Monday evening. Negotiators continued to be in a huddle to find a way on either to have some strong language on fossil fuels, if not its 'phase-out', or on how to have at least some final outcome without touching the contentious issues.

Primarily, EU and small island nations have been insisting on 'phase out' language for fossil fuels. The opposition to it has been coming mainly from all oil producing nations. India and most of the developing countries have certain concerns over Para 39 that talks about "rapidly" phasing down unabated coal and "limitations on permitting new and unabated coal power generation", and "accelerating and substantially reducing non-CO2

12-yr-old Indian activist protests at COP28 event

A 12-year-old climate activist from India took centre stage at the global climate summit on Monday when Licypriya Kangujam from Manipur dashed on to the stage at the United Nations Climate Conference 2023 (COP28) in Dubai, reports **Surendra Singh**. Holding a sign above her head that read, 'End fossil fuels. Save our planet and our future', she loudly appealed to climate delegates from across the globe to 'act now'. About 60,000 delegates from 190 nations are part of this year's climate conference in Dubai.

Regarded as India's Greta Thunberg, Licypriya also made a short speech after rushing on the COP28 stage with a slogan, 'Our Leaders Lie, People Die' while protesting against the use of fossil fuels for which she received a round of applause from the audience before being escorted away.

emissions, including, in particular, methane emissions globally by 2030".

India will continue to use coal for its development needs and it would not opt for drastic methane emission cut as it has potential to impact its livestock sector and paddy cultivation. The country is, therefore, learnt to have suggested for "modulation" of the entire Para 39 to align it with the principles of the Paris Agreement where any climate action is required as per "national circumstances in a nationally determined manner".

MoD OKs 73k more US rifles for ₹840cr

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New Delhi: The defence ministry has finally cleared the Army's proposal for import of another 73,000 SiG Sauer assault rifles from the US, which will add to the 72,400 such guns bought earlier for frontline troops, amid the continuing delay in the manufacture of Russian AK-203 Kalashnikov rifles in India.

Approval for the additional 73,000 SiG-716 'Patrol' rifles, at a cost of around Rs 840 crore, was recently granted by the Rajnath Singh-led Defence Acquisitions Council, sources told **TOI** on Tuesday.

The move comes at a time

when military confrontation with China in eastern Ladakh has entered the fourth successive winter, and the much-awaited deliveries of the over six lakh AK-203 Kalashnikov rifles from the Korwa ordnance factory in Amethi district of UP are yet to begin.

FIREPOWER BOOST

The AK-203 project, through a joint venture called Indo-Russia Rifles Pvt Ltd, was first announced in 2018 but was hit by huge delays due to costing, royalty, technology transfer, indigenisation level and other issues, as was reported by **TOI** earlier.

The delay in the project had led to the import the first lot of 72,400 SiG-716 assault rifles under a Rs 647 crore contract with US firm SiG Sauer under the fast-track procurement route in February 2019.

Dismissing reports of glitches in US-origin guns, the Army contends the SiG-716 rifles, which are 7.62x51 mm calibre guns with an effective 'kill range' of 500-metre, have "longer effective range, more lethality and 'higher recoil' as compared to the indigenous INSAS (5.56x51 mm) or AK-47 (7.62x39 mm) rifles.

"The Army has been using ammunition manufactured by Indian ordnance

factories for the SiG-716 rifles. No deviations in the performance of the weapon have been found," an officer said.

"The rifles are fitted with Picatinny rails to facilitate mounting of various equipment and accessories, such as optical sights, UBGL (under-barrel grenade launchers), forehand grips, bipods and laser pointers, without any modifications," he added.

While the SiG-716 rifles will meet the immediate operational requirements of frontline troops, the AK-203 guns — with a range of 300-metre — will cater to the overall needs of the 12-lakh strong Army, as also the IAF and the Navy.

'4 IAF pilots chosen as astronaut-designates for 2024 Moon mission'

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Dec 12 (IANS)

AFTER the stellar success of its history-making Chandrayan-3 lunar mission, ISRO is going full throttle with its plans to send Indian astronauts for the first time on the moon by 2040, said Chairman S Somanath.

Four test pilots from the Indian Air Force have been selected as Astronaut-Designates for the mission.

"Looking ahead, ISRO aims to take the next step in space exploration with the Gaganyaan programme, planning to launch a crew of 2 to 3 Indian astronauts into Low

Earth Orbit (LEO) for up to three days before safely returning them to a predefined site in Indian waters," he divulged in an exclusive article for Manorama Yearbook 2024.

Currently, they are undergoing mission-specific training at Astronaut Training Facility (ATF) in Bengaluru.

The inaugural manned space mission Gaganyaan involves developing critical technologies, including a human-rated (capable of safely transporting humans) launch vehicle (HLVM3), an Orbital Module comprising a Crew Module (CM) and Service Module (SM), and life support systems.

Parlt passes 2 J&K bills

NEW DELHI, Dec 12 (PTI)

PARLIAMENT on Monday passed two bills related to Jammu and Kashmir as Rajya Sabha cleared them with a voice vote, with Home Minister Amit Shah assuring the country that the beginning of a "new and developed Kashmir" that will be free from terrorism has been made under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The two bills - J&K Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill and J&K Reservation (Amendment) Bill - seek to nominate two members from the Kashmiri migrant community and one representing the displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) to the Legislative Assembly, besides providing reservation to certain communities in Jammu and Kashmir.

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the delimitation exercise in Jammu and Kashmir to redraw Assembly and parliamentary constituencies, there will be 43 assembly seats in Jammu region -- up from present 37 - - and 47 in Kashmir Valley, up from 46. Shah said 24 seats have been reserved in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir. "I am saying this again Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir is ours and no one can take it from us..."

The two bills were passed by Lok Sabha last week.

The Home Minister said, the two bills related to Jammu and Kashmir brought by the

Government would give justice to those deprived of their rights for the last 75 years and asserted that reservation to the displaced people would give them a voice in the legislature.

He also alleged that Jammu and Kashmir suffered due to the "mistakes" of first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and listed decisions like the "untimely" ceasefire and taking the Kashmir issue to the United Nations among them.

The Opposition led by the Congress, however, walked out of the House midway during the Home Minister's reply.

Donald Tusk becomes Poland's PM; aims to tone up ties with EU

WARSAW, Dec 12 (AP)

DONALD Tusk, a leader of a Centrist party, returned as Poland's Prime Minister for the first time in nearly a decade after a vote in Parliament on Monday, paving the way for a new pro-European Union Government following eight years of stormy National Conservative rule.



Tusk, a former EU leader who served as European Council President from 2014-2019 and has strong connections in Brussels, is expected to improve Warsaw's standing in the bloc's capital. He was Poland's Prime Minister from 2007-2014.

Tusk's ascension to power came nearly two months after an election which was won by a coalition of parties ranging from Left-wing to moderate Conservative. The parties ran on separate tickets, but promised to work together under Tusk's leadership to restore democratic standards and improve ties with allies.

The change of power is felt as hugely consequential for the 38 million citizens of the Central European nation, where collective anger against the Law and Justice party produced a record-high turnout to replace a Government many believed was eroding democratic norms.

Jaishankar speaks to Israeli counterpart

NEW DELHI, Dec 12 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday spoke to his Israeli counterpart Eli Cohen and discussed the situation in Gaza, Lebanon and the safety of maritime traffic in the region.

The phone conversation came two days after Jaishankar spoke to Palestinian Prime Minister

Mohammad Shtayyeh.

“Just spoke to Israeli Foreign Minister @elicoh1. Discussed the Gaza situation, Lebanon and safety of maritime traffic in the region. Will continue to remain in touch,” the external affairs minister posted on X.

Israel has continued its military offensive in Gaza as part of its retaliation to the unprecedented attack

on Israeli cities by Hamas on October 7.

Hamas killed around 1,200 people in Israel and kidnapped more than 220 others some of whom were released during a brief ceasefire.

Around 17,000 people have been killed in Gaza in the Israeli offensive, according to the Hamas-run authorities in Gaza.

Bhajan Lal Sharma

1st time MLA becomes BJP's Chief Minister in Rajasthan

Oath taking ceremony likely on Dec 15

JAIPUR, Dec 12 (PTI)

THE BJP on Tuesday picked first-time MLA Bhajan Lal Sharma as Rajasthan's new Chief Minister, ending days of speculation that followed its victory in the Assembly polls.

The surprise choice was

Diya Kumari and Prem Chand Bairwa will be two Deputy Chief Ministers and Vasudev Devnani the Speaker of the State Assembly

announced after BJP MLAs met here and elected the 56-year-old legislator from Sanganer as the leader of its legislature party. He is at present a Rajasthan BJP General Secretary.

Diya Kumari and Prem Chand Bairwa will be the Deputy Chief Ministers and Vasudev Devnani the Speaker



New Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma (2nd R) with his deputies Diya Kumari (R) and Prem Chand Bairwa (extreme L), new State Assembly Speaker Vasudev Devnani (2nd L) and BJP State President CP Joshi (C) after BJP Legislature Party meet in Jaipur on Tuesday. (PTI)

of the State Assembly, said senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh, who led a team of three party central observers to oversee the meeting.

Following the meeting at the BJP office here, Chief Minister-designate Sharma met Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra and staked claim to form the next

Government in the State.

Party sources said the oath taking ceremony is likely to take place on December 15.

The BJP won 115 seats in the November 25 assembly elections, while the Congress got 69 seats. Polling was held on 199 of the 200 seats in the State. BJP state president CP Joshi presented a letter to the

Governor, informing that Sharma has been elected as the leader of the BJP legislature party in the state, according to a Raj Bhawan statement. Kumari is a member of the erstwhile Jaipur royal family and a Rajput, while Bairwa a Dalit leader and Sharma a Brahmin. Vasudev

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COP28 Climate talks enter last day

No agreement in sight on fossil fuels

DUBAI, Dec 12 (AP)

A STARK stand-off between countries that want a dramatic phase-out to fossil fuels causing damaging warming and those that don't crushed hopes for an on-time finish to a critical climate summit Tuesday.

The United Nations-led summit known as COP28 was scheduled to end around midday after nearly two weeks of speeches, demonstrations and negotiations. But the climate talks almost always run long, and Monday's release of a draft agreement angered countries that insist on a commitment for rapid phase-out of coal, oil and gas.

Instead, the draft called for countries to reduce "consumption and production of fossil fuels, in a just, orderly and equitable manner."

Majid al-Suwaidi, COP28 Director-General, said on Monday night's draft was meant to get countries to start talking and presenting what are deal-killers for them, which are called "red lines."

"The text we released was a starting point for discussions," he said at a news conference midday on Tuesday. "When we released it, we knew opinions were polarised, but what we didn't know was where each country's red lines were."

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