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TOP STORY • UKRAINE

US Envoys Leave Abu Dhabi With a Prisoner Deal and Head for Moscow

Russia and Ukraine agreed to a large exchange of prisoners but not to a ceasefire.

Written and fact-checked by AI · News Pebbles

The two Americans at the centre of the Ukraine peace talks have left Abu Dhabi with one result and a long list of unsolved problems. After two days of meetings that ended on Wednesday, Russia and Ukraine agreed in principle to a large exchange of prisoners of war. Envoy Jared Kushner called it "the biggest humanitarian release of prisoners."

That was the only firm outcome. The two countries did not agree to a ceasefire, and they remain far apart on territory. Russia demands that Ukraine pull out of the part of the eastern Donbas region it still holds. Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, says Ukraine cannot discuss abandoning it.

Because the two sides trust each other so little, the United States acts as the go-between. Kushner said Washington speaks daily with both leaders' teams. On Thursday he and fellow envoy Steve Witkoff were due in Moscow to meet President Vladimir Putin, then in Dublin, Ireland, to brief Zelenskyy. "We are pushing a boulder uphill," Kushner said.

The prisoner numbers were to be settled on Thursday; Zelenskyy said between 1,000 and 1,200 may be exchanged. Secretary of State Marco Rubio called the meeting "very productive" but said a breakthrough to end the war will take time. Russia's chief negotiator, Vladimir Medinsky, said more talks will be held.



After Abu Dhabi, the US envoys were due to meet Putin in Russia and Zelenskyy in Ireland.

WHY THIS MATTERS

American negotiators carry the messages between the two sides, so what Washington decides to push for will shape any peace in a war that has lasted nearly five years.

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WORLD • CLIMATE

Fossil Fuel Emissions Set to Dip in 2026: Down in the US, Up in India

Scientists say an oil shock explains part of the fall, so it may not last.

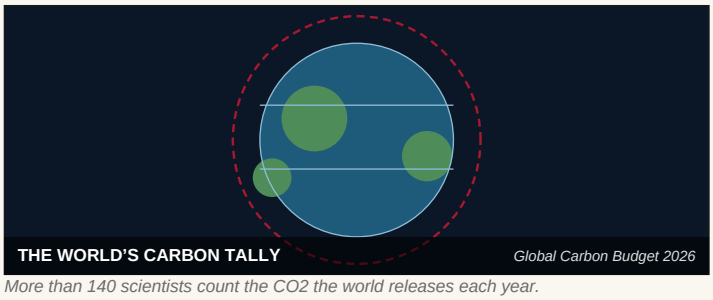
Every year a team of more than 140 scientists adds up the carbon dioxide, or CO2, that the world releases. Their latest tally, the Global Carbon Budget, was published on Tuesday at the COP31 climate summit in Antalya, Turkey, and it contains a small surprise.

The surprise is a fall. CO2 from burning oil, gas and coal is projected to drop 0.4% in 2026, to 38.2 billion tonnes. Oil emissions fall most, by 1.9%, which the scientists call a likely short-term response to the energy shock from the Iran conflict. Solar, wind and electric vehicles helped too: they now meet about two-thirds of rising energy demand.

The picture changes from country to country. Emissions are projected to fall 1.3% in the United States, mainly from lower coal use, and 0.9% in China. In India they are projected to rise 4.4%, faster than the country's average of 3.5% a year over the past decade. China matters most to the total: it produces 32% of the world's fossil emissions, and it accounts for half of the emissions avoided worldwide through renewables and electric vehicles.

Nor is the global dip the whole account. Add emissions from land, such as peat fires and damaged forests, and total CO2 rises to 43.3 billion tonnes, from 42.8 billion in 2025. Lead author Pierre Friedlingstein of the University of Exeter said a reduction driven partly by geopolitical shocks "is not a sustainable climate solution."

What would make it last? Glen Peters, of the research centre CICERO, said a one-year drop "is not a peak unless it is driven by structural change." Another author, Corinne Le Quéré of the University of East Anglia was more hopeful, saying a further acceleration of clean energy "could turn the tide on global emissions within a few years." Time is short, though. The report puts the remaining budget for holding warming to 1.5C at 150 billion tonnes, which would be used up in less than four years at the current rate. The air already holds 54% more CO2 than before the industrial age.



More than 140 scientists count the CO2 the world releases each year.

CONNECT THE DOTS

Economics: when the price of something rises, people use less of it. Costlier oil cut oil use this year, which is why scientists call the fall a likely short-term response rather than a lasting change.

INDIA • FARMING

Cabinet Raises Winter Fertiliser Subsidy 64% as World Prices Climb

The government will pay about Rs 62,370 crore so farmers' prices stay steady.

India's winter crops, including wheat, mustard and pulses, are sown in the Rabi season, and they depend on fertilisers that supply phosphate and potash. India relies heavily on imports for these fertilisers and their raw materials, so when world prices swing, the cost lands in India.

On Wednesday the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, decided the government would absorb that cost. It approved subsidy rates for the season from 1 October to 31 March, at an estimated Rs 62,370 crore. That is about 64% more than the Rs 37,952 crore needed last Rabi season.

The money is paid to fertiliser companies so they can sell 28 grades of fertiliser, including the widely used DAP, at lower prices. Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said farmers will not face any additional burden.

WHY THIS MATTERS

A subsidy moves a cost from farmers to the national budget. It keeps food cheaper to grow, but the money comes from taxpayers and cannot be spent elsewhere.

Also in India

• Metro: The Cabinet approved an 8.45 km extension of the Noida Metro's Aqua Line, costing Rs 2,390 crore.

• Museum: It approved Rs 3,230 crore for a national museum in New Delhi's historic North Block and South Block.

ONE-LINE BRIEFS

• COP31: About 40 leaders addressed the climate summit in Antalya on Wednesday; host Turkey wants electricity to supply 35% of the world's energy by 2035, up from 23%.

• Iran: Security chief Mohsen Rezaei said the Strait of Hormuz will stay closed until the US meets Tehran's seven conditions, and denied that talks were under way.

VOCABULARY BUILDER

Words that unlock today's news

Envoy
A person sent to represent a government in talks. Today: US envoys Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff mediated in Abu Dhabi.

Ceasefire
An agreement to stop fighting. Today: Russia and Ukraine agreed to exchange prisoners but not to a ceasefire.

Subsidy
Money a government pays to make something cheaper. Today: India approved a Rs 62,370 crore fertiliser subsidy.

Inflation
A general rise in prices over time. Today: US prices rose 0.4% in October, more than expected.

DID YOU KNOW?

All the new machines built to pull carbon dioxide out of the air offset less than 30 minutes of the world's yearly fossil fuel emissions, the Global Carbon Budget says.

UNITED STATES • ECONOMY

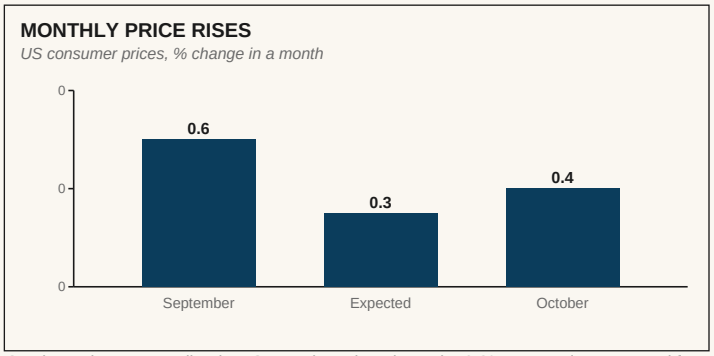
Prices Rise 0.4% in October, and a Fed Rate Increase Looks Likely

Food, housing and energy all cost more; stocks fell after the report.

The Consumer Price Index, or CPI, tracks the prices of things households buy. Tuesday's report showed it rose 0.4% in October from September. Economists had expected 0.3%. Food rose 0.5%, housing 0.3% and energy 0.7%, though energy had jumped 5.2% the month before.

A hotter-than-expected number matters because of what the Federal Reserve, the US central bank, may do next. The Fed fights inflation by raising interest rates, which makes borrowing dearer and cools spending. After the report, traders put an 84% chance on a quarter-point increase in December.

One Fed governor, Chris Waller, had said beforehand that an even larger half-point rise should be considered if October came in hot. "Inflation is too high," he said. Stocks slipped on the news: the S and P 500 index of large US companies fell 0.4%. Shares of homebuilders fell further, since higher rates make mortgages cost more.



October's rise was smaller than September's but above the 0.3% economists expected for October.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Interest rates touch mortgages, car loans and credit cards, so the Fed's December decision reaches most American households.

THINK LIKE AN ANALYST

Why might the Fed worry about raising rates too little? Who gains and who loses when borrowing costs more?

SPORTS CORNER

CRICKET: SRI LANKA FIGHT BACK IN RAWALPINDI

Dhananjaya de Silva (167 not out) and **Kusal Mendis (117)** added 249 runs without being separated as Sri Lanka reached 404 for 4 on day three of the first Test, 30 behind Pakistan's 434 for 9 declared.

WHAT TO WATCH NEXT

• Moscow and Dublin: what the US envoys hear from Putin and then tell Zelenskyy.

• Prisoner exchange: the final numbers, which Kushner said would be set on Thursday.

"A drop in emissions in one year is not a peak unless it is driven by structural change."
— Glen Peters, climate researcher

You are not just reading the news — you are learning to think about it. See you in two days.