

■ India warns of retaliatory action

# EU official to India: Carbon tax inevitable

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NEW DELHI, FEB. 3

Following meetings with both minister for aviation Ajit Singh and environment minister Jayanti Natarajan on the controversial carbon emissions levy that EU has introduced, Connie Hedegaard, European Union climate action commissioner, claimed the tax is inevitable "as aviation is increasing and emissions from aviation are also increasing."

India, along with the international community, led by International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), has fiercely opposed the tax introduced from January 1 with airlines accusing the EU of having taken an extra territorial decision.

India has made it clear that it would take retaliatory action against European carriers in case they go ahead with their proposals. Civil aviation sources said retaliatory measures could include a similar carbon emission tax on European carriers as well as tax on carriers flying over Indian airspace but India will take a final decision on this following a meeting with the US, Russia and China in Moscow later in February.

"It is not an extra-territorial decision, as claimed by the airlines," she said but also emphasised that no immediate action would take place against airlines disobeying the law before the spring of 2013.

We tried to go in for global regulation without success but with other sectors paying a carbon tax, this is only a continuation of the polluters pay principle, the

## JAYANTHI EMPHASISES 'EQUITY'

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NEW DELHI, FEB. 3

In the run-up to the Rio+20 Earth Summit, India continues to emphasise the principle of equity as forming the foundation for climate change negotiations.

"I would like to reiterate that the bottom line remains equity," said minister of environment Jayanti Natarajan addressing a special session on Biodiversity at the 12th Delhi Sustainable Development Summit. Ms Natarajan's statement came a day after Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had endorsed her stand at the UNFCCC meet at Durban conference

"With just 2.4 per cent of the land area, India accounts for nearly seven per cent of the recorded species even



**Jayanti Natarajan**

while supporting 18 per cent of both cattle and human population," she said.

"India needed to address the issue of biodiversity as more than 300 people were dependent on biodiversity for their livelihoods," she said.

Highlighting some key decisions taken in Durban, she said, "We ensured that a rule based multilateral system anchored in the convention remains the template of our actions."

EU commissioner said.

Ms Hedegaard claimed a paradigm shift had taken place at the UNFCCC talks in Durban where what has changed is that although parties have common but different capabilities, they will be legally bound to implement their pledges.

She remained evasive on the equity issue saying that "we need to discuss it further though no one can challenge India's right to grow."

She warned that at Durban parties had pledged only 60 per cent of the

required emission cuts by 2020 and what was important "is to figure out how we can add to this target," she said.

Another contentious area is that fossil fuels continue to receive \$400 billion in subsidies which is six to seven times the amount subsidies being given to renewables.

Ms Hedegaard wanted fossil fuel subsidies to be phased out by 2020 with the subsidies for the richer countries being removed first followed by those of the poorer nations.