

# Apple, Disney back lobby groups against US climate bill

The biggest companies in the US are backing business and lobby groups that are fighting landmark climate legislation

The biggest companies in the US are backing business groups that are fighting landmark climate legislation. Amazon, Disney, Apple and Microsoft are amongst some of the companies supporting these businesses despite their vows to fight climate change, reports the Guardian.

A proposed \$3.5 trillion budget bill put forward by the democrats aims to implement measures to put down planet-heating gases. However, corporate lobby groups and organisations have mobilized to oppose the bill being passed, while the Democratic leader in the Senate, Chuck Schumer, calls the bill "the most significant climate action in our country's history." Many large US corporations have announced their goals to cut greenhouse gases, like Jeff Bezos, one of the richest people, has declared the climate crisis to be "the biggest threat to our planet", while his company Amazon has created a pledge for businesses to cut down their emissions to net zero by 2040. Microsoft has also promised to be "carbon negative" and Disney aims to use only renewable-sourced electricity. However, these very groups are also playing the other side, by actively supporting lobby groups that are trying to sink the very same bill. Joe Biden's ambitious goals to tackle climate crisis is being threatened by one of the largest legislative efforts to solve the issue and save the planet from sinking into an unlivable state. President of watchdog group Accountable.US, Kyle Herrig says, "Major corporations love to tell us how committed they are to addressing the climate crisis and building a sustainable future, but behind closed doors, they are funding the very industry trade groups that are fighting tooth and nail to stop the biggest climate change bill ever"



would review their links their support to these groups. Herrig says that "Hiding behind these shady groups doesn't just put our environment at risk - it puts these companies' household names and reputations in serious jeopardy." Moreover the US Chamber of Commerce, comprising of executives from Microsoft, Intuit, United Airlines and Deloitte, have promised to "do everything we can to prevent this tax raising, job killing reconciliation bill from becoming law." These very companies have ironically, also expressed their concern over climate change and have made various promises in the past to cut down emissions. Business Roundtable, another group of big company executives including Apple's Tim Cook, Andy Jassy chief executive of Amazon, and Sundar Picharai head of Alphabet; has expressed its deep concern over the bill which will raise heavy taxes on the wealthy. The Pharmaceuticals Research and Manufacturers of America, a trade group comprising of Bayer and AstraZeneca has run adverts opposing the bill as well. Lobby groups with members from Disney, FedEx, Verizon, Johnson&Johnson, Dow and Goodyear, have been making keen efforts to kill of the bill.

The president, Joe Biden needs every Senate Democrat to approve the bill, in order to be passed, however, senate members like centrist Democrat from West Virginia, Joe Manchin, who receives a significant amount of donations from the fossil fuel industry has already declared the bill "makes no sense". The first major attempt at climate legislation seems to be close to a failure, wounding Biden politically and hindering attempts to prod other countries to take rapid action at the upcoming UN Climate Talks. —Agencies



## 5 facts to know about the rise of crypto art

- Non-fungible tokens are digital art pieces that are created and sold by artists online in return for one-of-a-kind trading card. These asset properties can be bought and resold, and is a kind of investment which can increase in value just as any art physical art piece. Crypto art is a niche genre of artwork that follow networks such as Bitcoin and Ethereum. World Economic Forum highlights 5 things you probably didn't know about Crypto arts.
- 1 Crypto art is unique, but it is mostly digital unlike physical art. It has a digital signature recorded on a NFT or non-fungible token. While everyone has access to view the artwork, only the buyer is the official owner.
  - 2 Crypto art is not a bubble as stated by a Sotheby's expert and is quite expensive. A set of cartoon apes was sold \$24.4 million on the internet. Christie's is aiming to host the world's first art auction where people can bid in Ether Crypto tokens.
  - 3 The art pays royalties to its creators through secondary sales in perpetuity, which is not the case for physical art when it resells or is auctioned. Lathabo Huma, an artist thinks that the creators are getting paid for their art in real time in their prime when they are still alive. She believes this art will last for generations.
  - 4 The more people discuss crypto art the more it is valued. Micah Johnson sold NFTs of his character "Aku", a boy who dreams of becoming an astronaut. He sold 1400 Akus, which the buyers see as an investment they can sell in a secondary market. The more engagement the art piece will get when people talk about it in real or social media, the more it will increase in its value and be worth more.
  - 5 Crypto art world is more accessible to black artists because they are no gatekeepers racially discriminating artists from displaying their work online for auction. Crypto art removes the blockchain and provides easy access to the black community to promote themselves and put their art out there. —AFP

## Samsung unveils new smartwatch interface

Samsung Electronics Co Ltd on Monday unveiled its new smartwatch interface at the Mobile World conference, for the operating system it co-developed with Alphabet Inc's Google. The One UI Watch interface will come with the new Galaxy Watch for a more seamless experience between the smartwatch and Android smartphones, the company said in a statement samsung-presents-new-watch-experience-with-a-sneak-peek-of-one-ui-watch. Samsung enters Europe with Vodafone 5G network deal in Britain Activities on the watch will be replicated on linked mobile devices. For example, if a user installs watch-compatible apps on a smartphone, they will be downloaded onto the smartwatch as well. In addition, Samsung will bring an improved watch face design tool, making it easier than ever for designers to create new watch faces. Later this year, Android developers will be able to unleash their creativity and release fun, new designs that will be added to Samsung's ever-growing collection of watch faces to give consumers even more options for customizing their smartwatches to suit their mood, activity and personality. Later this year, Samsung will introduce a new design tool to make it easier for designers to create new watch faces, it

## Top five wireless earphones

2021 has been the year of wireless earbuds, where the market has been crowded like never before with various brands offering the same product but with different features. While choosing the best earphones, you need to decide first what you need wireless earphones for. If it's for calls and meetings, you may need longer battery life and a good microphone, but if it's for music then you may need to focus on sound quality more. It may be confusing and daunting to choose the best earphones for you, so we have compiled a list of our own to help you shortlist the five best ones, as rated by consumers and tech websites.

**Sony wf-1000xm4:** These wireless earphones are the best at noise cancellation, after its redesign by the company two years from its release. Now the device is smaller and has an IPX4 water resistance rating. Its memory foam ear tips offer the best noise isolation when placed in, even before the noise cancellation begins. These earbuds can last up to 8 hours of continuous playback in comparison to 5 hours which is the case for most NC earphones. Moreover, its "speak to chat" feature turns down the volume and plays ambient music when its sensors detect loud audio conversations. Microphone performance is however weak and isn't recommended for making longer professional calls.

**Amazon Echo Buds 2:** The second-generation Amazon Echo Buds not only have the

exclusive Alexa hands-free feature, but this new model has a more comfortable fit, better noise cancellation, IPX4 water-resistant capabilities and more, for a much lower price. The Alexa app connection provides accessibility needs related to vision, hearing, mobility, and speech. Compatible with both IOS and Android, the earbuds have a battery life of only 4 hours of music playback on a single charge. The design is similar to that of AirPods Pro that prevents occlusion, and the ambient sound is described as being natural.

**Apple AirPods and AirPods Pro:** AirPods may not offer the best sound quality in comparison to other phones, but has good noise cancellation and aligns perfectly well with people who use Apple products so that they can hop between devices effortlessly. Spatial audio delivers immersive surround sound for streaming videos on iPad and iPhone and is excellent for audio calls as well. Their lengthy stems and reliable microphones deem them to be the best earbuds for making phone calls. The device supports features like audio sharing; spatial audio and private listening with an Apple TV, where instant-pairing is seamless and easy.

**Beats Powerbeats Pro:** These have been called the best fitness air buds since they were released in 2019. The earphones have an ear hook design so that they remain in place even through intense exercise, sweaty work-



outs, and 9 hour-long battery. The sound quality is fantastic, keeping you motivated and constantly moving. Since Beats is owned by Apple, the device allows audio-sharing, auto device switching, and a simple effortless pairing process.

**Samsung Galaxy Buds:** The long-lasting Samsung Buds can last up to 9 hours on a single battery charge. The lightweight design is a comfortable fit in the ear, while its sound quality has been rated as satisfactory. Their ANC level can be dialed up or down according to the level of noise cancellation you require but the feature is poor. The earbuds, however, can serve as a good alternative to Apple AirPods for Android users. The high functional 3 mic system and long battery life make it a good device for phone calls. —The Business Re-



## Grotesque!: Konami's 'eFootball' release mocked by fans

TOKYO: It was meant to "signal a new era of virtual football", but Konami's "eFootball 2022" appears to have missed the goal, with players mocking its graphics and gameplay. The new free-to-play title from the Japanese firm is the latest release in one of the best-selling video game franchises, eFootball, previously known as Pro Evolution Soccer.

The much-anticipated "eFootball 2022" came out Thursday on all platforms, from smartphones to next-generation consoles, in an attempt to reach a broad sweep of fans. But disappointed players quickly flooded social media with complaints and ridicule, in scenes reminiscent of the backlash against another hyped game "Cyberpunk 2077", which was pulled from PlayStation stores days after its release.

Some mocked what they saw as unflattering digital depictions of stars like Cristiano Ronaldo, who appeared cross-eyed in one screenshot posted on Twitter. "Konami you really shouldn't have released this in this state. This is bad... I mean really bad," wrote one gamer alongside a clip showing a character's arm jiggling into painful-looking positions as two players jostled on the pitch. Another bizarre video showed Barca striker Ansu Fati's character running towards the goal with his arms outstretched behind him.

Started in 1995, the hit football gaming series has sold more than 112 million copies, in addition to 400 million mobile game downloads as of April 2021, according to Konami. But so far, the revamped "eFootball 2022" is failing fans' expectations and racking up negative reviews, with only eight percent of the more than 10,400 ratings so far on gaming platform Steam positive. Serkan Toto, an analyst at Kantan Games in Tokyo, was scathing in his assessment of "eFootball 2022". "I tried

it and it's like a parody of a soccer game... the way it plays is so absurdly bad, so grotesquely bad, that I think everybody at Konami knew that this was not going to work," he told AFP.

- "Really bad start" - Toto said he thought the launch had been "rushed".

Konami "had to do something radical" to compete with the market-leading "FIFA" series, produced by US company Electronic Arts, which also released its latest title he said. "But if you want to go head-to-head against FIFA, you cannot push out a product like that. It's like offering a McDonald's menu and trying to compete with a Michelin star restaurant." However, David Gibson, a video-game analyst with Astris Advisory, told AFP that despite a "really bad start", the game could still be a success. "You can't say it's all over for this game. While obviously it's started badly and they've got a whole bunch of issues to fix, it is fixable," he said.

Konami will likely wait to assess feedback and player numbers, but then "some very tough decisions will need to be made" on whether to suspend the service, Gibson warned. Konami did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the criticism, which follows the disastrous launch of the Warsaw-based CD Projekt Red's "Cyberpunk 2077". The dystopian-themed game returned to PlayStation stores in June, six months after it was pulled over bugs and compatibility issues, but it now has a 76 percent positive rating on Steam. In promotional material, Konami had touted its new game's "overhauled graphics, animations and gameplay" which "signal a new era of virtual football". "Our ambition was to recreate the perfect football environment, from the grass on the pitch, to the players' movement, all the way to the crowds in the stadium," it said. —Reuters

