

US wildfires' smoke reaches Europe

UN says world lost 100m hectares of forests in two decades

AFP, Paris

Smoke from the fires devastating swathes of the US West Coast has reached as far as Europe, the European Union's climate monitoring service said yesterday in its assessment of the "unprecedented" blazes.

Satellite data from the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS) showed that the wildfires currently raging across California, Oregon and Washington State are "tens to hundreds of times more intense" than the recent average.

Thanks to strong pressure systems, the smoke from the fires was trapped along the western part of North America for days, making for potentially dangerous air quality in major cities such as Portland, Oregon and Vancouver and San Francisco.

But the weather shifted on Monday, carrying the smoke east along the jet stream. CAMS said that it had tracked the long-range transport of smoke particles from the fires as far as 8,000 kilometres to the east -- reaching northern Europe.

It estimated that the blazes have spewed out more than 30 million tonnes of carbon dioxide since mid-August.

The blazes have already burned nearly five million acres across the US West with fears the death toll of 35 may rise.

The disaster has brought the issue of global warming to the forefront of US political discourse a matter of weeks ahead of the presidential election.

Meanwhile, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on Tuesday reported that the world had lost nearly 100 million hectares of forests in two decades, marking a steady decline though at a slower pace than before.

The proportion of forest to total land area fell from 31.9 percent in 2000 to 31.2 percent in 2020, now some 4.1 billion hectares, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization.



(From left to right) Bahrain Foreign Minister Abdullatif al-Zayani, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, US President Donald Trump, and UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan hold up documents after participating in the signing of the Abraham Accords where the countries of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates recognize Israel, at the White House in Washington, DC, on Tuesday. The deals, denounced by the Palestinians, make them the third and fourth Arab states to take such steps toward normalizing relations since Israel signed peace treaties with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. PHOTO: AFP

Babri mosque demolition case verdict on Sept 30

Advani among 32 accused asked to be present

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

A special Indian court will deliver the judgment on September 30 in the Babri Masjid demolition case, ruling whether Bharatiya Janata Party veterans like L K Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi were involved in razing the mosque 28 years ago.

Special Judge S K Yadav in Lucknow, the capital city of India's most populous state Uttar Pradesh, yesterday directed all 32 accused to remain present in the court on the day of the judgment.

The razing of the mosque on December 6, 1992 had triggered riots across India.

The Central Bureau of Investigation, which investigated the case, has produced 351 witnesses and about 600 documents as evidence before the court. Charges were framed against 48 people, but 16 died during the course of the trial. The CBI argued that the accused conspired and instigated the "kar sevaks" to demolish the 15th century mosque.

But the accused pleaded that there is no evidence to prove their guilt and claimed they were falsely implicated in the case by the then Congress-led Indian government as political vendetta.

In a landmark judgment last year, the Indian Supreme Court allotted the disputed site in Ayodhya for the construction of a Ram temple, while calling the demolition of the mosque a violation of the rule of law.

An alternative five-acre site has been found in the city for building a mosque.

'This is the moment for Europe'

EU chief exec unveils blueprint to get the continent back on its feet

REUTERS, Brussels

The European Union's chief executive yesterday laid out ambitious goals to ensure that the bloc is more resilient and united to confront futures crises after the coronavirus pandemic, which has plunged Europe into its deepest recession in history.

In her annual State of the Union address, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen doubled down on the flagship goals she set out on taking office last December: urgent action to combat climate change and a digital revolution.

"This is the moment for Europe," von der Leyen told the European Parliament in a wide-ranging speech that ran for around 80 minutes. "The moment for Europe to lead the way from this fragility to a new vitality."

Von der Leyen, who wants Europe to become the world's first climate-neutral continent by mid-century, unveiled a plan to cut the EU's greenhouse gas



emissions by at least 55% from 1990 levels by 2030, up from an existing target of 40%.

The former German cabinet minister also called for greater investment in technology for Europe to compete more keenly with China and the United States, and said the EU would invest 20% of a 750 billion euro economic recovery fund in digital projects.

Turning to the troubled talks with London on the future relationship between the world's fifth-largest economy and biggest trading bloc, von der Leyen said every passing day reduces chances for sealing a new trade deal.

She stressed that the EU and Britain negotiated and ratified their Brexit divorce deal and warned London the agreement "cannot be unilaterally changed, disregarded or dis-applied".

Brexit talks were plunged into a new crisis this month after Prime Minister Boris Johnson put forward a new Internal Market Bill that would undercut Britain's Withdrawal Agreement.

Chiding EU countries for an ineffective foreign policy, she said the bloc must get better at responding to events unfolding around the world.

"When member states say Europe is too slow, I say to them 'be courageous and finally move to qualified majority voting,'" she said. "Be it in Hong Kong, Moscow or Minsk: Europe must take a clear and swift position."



Japan's new Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga receives a certificate from Emperor Naruhito (L) as outgoing prime minister Shinzo Abe (2nd L) looks on during an attestation ceremony of his premiership at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Yoshihide Suga named new Japanese PM

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pledged to pursue many of Abe's programmes, including his "Abenomics" economic strategy, and to forge ahead with structural reforms, including deregulation and shutting down bureaucratic turf battles.

Abe, Japan's longest-serving premier, resigned because of ill health after nearly eight years in office. Suga served under him in the pivotal post of chief cabinet secretary, acting as top government spokesman and coordinating policies.

Suga, who won a ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leadership race by a landslide on Monday, faces a plethora of challenges, including tackling Covid-19 while reviving a battered economy and dealing with a rapidly aging society.

Speaking in his first news conference as prime minister after being sworn in, Suga said he would implement policies to beef up Tokyo's alliance with the US, while hoping to establish stable relationships with China and Russia.

About half of the new cabinet are carryovers from Abe's administration. Only two are women and the average age, including Suga, is 60.

Among those retaining their jobs are key players such as Finance Minister Taro Aso and Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, along with Olympics Minister Seiko Hashimoto and Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, the youngest at 39.

"It's a 'Continuity with a capital C' cabinet," said Jesper Koll, senior adviser to asset manager WisdomTree Investments.

Abe's younger brother, Nobuo Kishi,

was handed the defence portfolio, while outgoing Defence Minister Taro Kono takes charge of administrative reform, a post he has held before.

Yasutoshi Nishimura, Abe's point man on Covid-19 response, remains economy minister, while Trade and Industry Minister Hiroshi Kajiyama, the son of a politician to whom Suga looked up as his mentor, also retains his post.

'CONGRATULATIONS'

US President Donald Trump welcomed Japan's new prime minister, the White House said in a statement, adding that the president looked forward to working with Yoshihide Suga and continuing to pursue "the vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific."

South Korean President Moon Jae-in has told Suga that he was willing to sit down anytime in a bid to improve ties strained by historical and economic disputes, Moon's office said yesterday.

British leader Boris Johnson congratulated Suga on his appointment as prime minister. "I hope your appointment and the historic Free Trade Agreement we secured last week take the already rock solid relationship between our countries to new heights," Johnson said on Twitter.

"Heartiest congratulations to Yoshihide Suga on the appointment as prime minister of Japan. I look forward to jointly taking our Special Strategic and Global Partnership to new heights," Indian PM Modi tweeted.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday extended her heartiest congratulations to Suga on his appointment as the prime minister of Japan, saying that she is

looking forward to working in a closer tie with the new Japanese premier, reports BSS.

ROUGH ROAD AHEAD?

Katsunobu Kato, outgoing health minister and a close Suga ally, takes on the challenging post of chief cabinet secretary. He announced the cabinet lineup.

Tomoya Masanao, head of investment firm PIMCO Japan, said Suga's goal of a more digitalised society could widen the gap between rich and poor and would require political capital.

"Abe's administration built political capital for itself with loose monetary and fiscal policies, a balanced and skillful diplomacy with the United States and China, and implementation of flexible domestic politic," he said. "The new administration, on the other hand, faces a rough road ahead."

In a move that resonates with voters, Suga has criticised Japan's top three mobile phone carriers, NTT Docomo Inc, KDDI Corp and SoftBank Corp, saying they should return more money to the public and face more competition.

He has said Japan may eventually need to raise its 10% sales tax to pay for social security, but not for the next decade, reports Reuters.

Clues as to whether and how Suga will push ahead with reforms could come from the lineup of government advisory panels such as the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy, Koll said.

"The ambition of Mr. Suga to speed up and reinvigorate the process (of reform) is absolutely clear, but the next layer of personnel will be interesting," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Biden leads Trump by 9 points

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden leads Republican President Donald Trump nationally among likely US voters by 9 percentage points, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll that showed Trump's "law and order" message falling short with its target audience of suburban voters. The Sept 11-15 opinion poll, released yesterday, found that 50% of likely voters said they were casting their ballots for Biden while 41% were doing the same for Trump. Another 3% said they would support a third-party candidate and the rest were undecided.

International travel arrivals plunged 65% in the first half of 2020 compared to last year, data from the World Tourism Organization showed, translating into an estimated \$460 billion loss in export revenues. Just over half of destinations eased travel restrictions by early September but a return to 2019 levels of tourism could take between two to four years, according to the Madrid-based United Nations' tourism body. A total of 440 million international arrivals were lost between January and June this year, with Asia and the Pacific the hardest-hit region at 72% less tourists than last year. Europe saw a 66% drop in arrivals, compared to a 57% decline in Africa and the Middle East and 55% in the Americas.

US city to pay \$12m settlement over Breonna Taylor's death

The city of Louisville, Kentucky, will pay \$12 million to the family of Breonna Taylor, a Black woman shot dead by police in a botched raid on her apartment in March, to settle a wrongful-death lawsuit, Mayor Greg Fischer said on Tuesday. The settlement appears to be one of the largest of its kind in the United States, where police departments are often shielded from having to pay damages for deaths in their custody. No police officer has been criminally charged over Taylor's death. Taylor's death, alongside that of George Floyd, a Black man killed in May by a white Minneapolis cop who knelt on his neck, gave rise to one of the largest protest movements in US history, with daily demonstrations in cities ever since.

Barbados to remove Queen Elizabeth as head of state

Barbados wants to remove Britain's Queen Elizabeth as its head of state and become a republic, the Caribbean nation's government has said. A former British colony that gained independence in 1966, Barbados has maintained a formal link with the British monarchy as have some other countries that were once part of the British empire. "The time has come to fully leave our colonial past behind," said Barbados Governor General Sandra Mason, delivering a speech on behalf of the country's PM Mia Mottley. "Barbadians want a Barbadian Head of State. Hence, Barbados will take the next logical step toward full sovereignty and become a Republic by the time we celebrate our 55th Anniversary of Independence." That anniversary will come in November of next year.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIB MEDICAL UNIVERSITY
DHAKA, BANGLADESH.

EMPLOYMENT ANNOUNCEMENT FOR FOREIGN EXPERTS

Applications are invited from foreign experts for appointment in the Paediatric Cardiac Surgery Programme in the Department of Cardiac Surgery, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), Shahbag, Dhaka, Bangladesh in the following posts with the mentioned prerequisites.

Sl	Name of the post	Qualifications	Experience	Salary & Allowances
1.	Consultant (Paediatric Cardiac Surgery) - 01(One)	MS/ FRCS/ FCPS/ MCh or equivalent degree in Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgery	10 years of active service in Paediatric Cardiac Surgery.	Consolidated & negotiable.
2.	Consultant (Paediatric Cardiac Anaesthesia) - 01(One)	MD/ DM/ FCPS/ FFA/ DNB/ FNB/ Diploma/ Fellowship or equivalent degree in relevant field	5 years of active service in Paediatric Cardiac Anaesthesia.	Consolidated & negotiable.
3.	Consultant (Paediatric Cardiac Surgical ICU) - 01(One)	MD/DM/FCPS/ MRCP/ DNB/ FNB/ Diploma/ Fellowship or equivalent degree in relevant field	5 years of active service in Paediatric Cardiac Surgical ICU.	Consolidated & negotiable.
4.	Paediatric Cardiac Perfusionist - 01(One)	BSc or equivalent degree in Cardio Pulmonary and Perfusion Care Technology.	Minimum 2 years of active service in Cardio Pulmonary and Perfusion Care.	Consolidated & negotiable.
5.	Nurse (Paediatric Cardiac Surgery) - 04(Four)	Degree or diploma in relevant field	Minimum 2 years of active service in Paediatric Cardiac surgical ICU.	Consolidated & negotiable.

Interested candidates are requested to apply along with their biodata, scan copy of passport, passport size recent coloured photograph and copy of certificates of all academic qualifications & experiences and certificate of Medical/ Nursing council of the respective country (duly attested by the foreign ministry of respective country and endorsed by Bangladesh embassy / High-commission of that country). In addition to hard copy by guaranteed post / mail, candidates are requested to send the application along with scan copy of necessary documents to the following email address: provc_rnd@bsmmu.edu.bd or z.hussain71@yahoo.com.

Applications along with pre-requisite documents must reach the office of the undersigned on or before 15th November 2020, 2pm (Bangladesh Standard Time, GMT+6.00 hrs.).

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Prof. Mohd. Zahid Hussain 16/09/2020
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