

ANNUAL UN REPORT ON EMISSIONS GAP Shortfall in climate action 'catastrophic'

There is a "catastrophic" gap between national pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the actions needed to cap global warming below two degrees Celsius, the UN's environment chief warned yesterday, days ahead of global climate talks in Bonn.

Even if fulfilled, these pledges -- inscribed along with the 2 C target in the 2015 Paris climate pact -- would see the world heat up 3 C (5.6 F), unleashing deadly heatwaves, superstorms and rising seas, UN Environment said in its annual Emissions Gap Report, the bleakest ever.

Record-setting extreme weather in 2017 -- including monsoon flooding, raging fires and deadly hurricanes -- likely bears the fingerprint of global warming, it noted.

One year after the Paris Agreement entered into force, we still find ourselves in a situation where we are not doing nearly enough to save hundreds of millions of people from a miserable future," said Eric Solheim, head of the UN Agency.

"Governments, the private sector and civil society must bridge this catastrophic climate gap."

Compiled by more than 200 climate scientists and experts, the annual, 100-page analysis tracks progress toward the Paris goal of checking the rise in global temperatures at 'well below' 2 C.

Current commitments for slashing pollution take us only a third of the way toward the 2 C target, and would cut up 80 percent of humanity's "carbon budget" -- the amount of CO2 we can spew into the atmosphere without crossing that threshold -- by 2030, the report said. It doesn't help that the United States, the world's second largest emitter, has abandoned its greenhouse gas goals under Donald Trump.



Alghan policemen carry an injured after a blast in Kabul, Afghanistan, yesterday. A suicide bomber blowing that militants as young as 12 struck Kabul's heavily fortified diplomatic quarter yesterday and killed at least five people, showing that militants can still hit the heart of the city despite tighter security.

Passports of ousted Thai PM revoked

Thailand has revoked the passports of ousted premier Yingluck Shinawatra, who has yet to be seen in public since she slipped out of the country before her conviction in her negligence trial, officials said yesterday.

The former prime minister, whose elected government was toppled in a 2014 coup, has not been seen or heard from since she stunned the kingdom by failing to turn up for the Supreme Court verdict in late August.

She was later sentenced to five years in prison in absentia for failing to stop graft in a government rice policy, a case lambasted by her supporters as part of a broader junta effort to drive the ex-premier's family out of politics, reported AFP.

All of Yingluck's passports have been revoked now, Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai told reporters yesterday.

Yingluck had four Thai passports, two personal and

Prepare for a 'long road' Ousted Catalan leader, in Brussels, vows to continue independence struggle, but says he will accept Dec 21 election's result

Catalonia's ousted leader Carles Puigdemont yesterday accepted the snap election called by Spain's central government when it took control of the region to block its push for independence.

Puigdemont, speaking at a news conference in Brussels, also said he was not seeking asylum in Belgium after Spain's state prosecutor recommended charges of rebellion and sedition be brought against him. He would return to Catalonia when given "guarantees" by the Spanish government, he said.

Puigdemont's announcement that he would accept the regional election on Dec 21 signalled that the Madrid government had for now at least gained the upper hand in the protracted struggle over Catalonia, a wealthy northeastern region that already had considerable autonomy.

Resistance to Madrid's imposition of direct control on Catalonia failed to materialise at the start of the week and



showed up after dropping out of sight over the weekend.

The Spanish government has said Puigdemont was welcome to take his chances and stand in the election, called by Rajoy as a way to resolve the stand-off.

The Supreme Court also began suppressing rebellion charges against Catalan parliament speaker Carme

N Korea nuke site collapse kills 200 after latest test Says report; China, S Korea agree to warm frosty ties

More than 200 people are feared to have died when a tunnel caved in at North Korea's nuclear test site after its latest detonation, a Japanese news report said yesterday.

A tunnel collapsed at Punggye-ri in early September, days after North Korea conducted its sixth and largest underground nuclear test on September 3, TV Asahi said, quoting unnamed North Korean sources.

Some 100 workers were involved in an initial collapse. Another cave-in occurred during rescue operations, leaving at least 200 people feared dead in total, the Japanese broadcaster said.

The accident was triggered by the test, TV Asahi added.

Experts have warned that the underground tests could cause the mountain to collapse and leak radiation into the atmosphere near China's border, reported AFP.

The latest test -- the sixth at the site since 2006 -- triggered landslides in the detention area and beyond, according to satellite



two diplomatic, according to authorities.

Yingluck's elder brother Thaksin, who was ousted as prime minister in a 2006 coup, has been living in self-imposed exile to avoid a graft conviction.

Meanwhile, Thailand's military government yesterday said it will not yet lift a general election ban, reported Reuters.

Prayuth Chan-ocha cited persistent political divisions and mud-slinging as reasons why the ban should stay.

Terror attack plan foiled in Germany

German police yesterday arrested a Syrian man suspected of preparing a terror attack using powerful explosives, prosecutors said, almost one year after a deadly jihadist truck rampage at a Berlin Christmas Market.

The man, identified only as Yamen A., 19, was held at dawn by special forces in the northeastern town of Schwerin, close to Berlin.

The man is suspected of having "planned and already concretely prepared an Islamist-motivated attack in Germany using very powerful explosives," the statement said.

"A serious attack has been prevented," German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere said in a statement.



Syrian man mourns over the body of a child at a makeshift hospital following a reported government shelling in the rebel-held besieged town of Jisreen, east of the capital Damascus, yesterday. The regime shelling killed four schoolchildren and a man, The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

NO PLAN TO DIVERT WATERS: CHINA

China yesterday rejected as "false and untrue" a media report that it was planning to build a 1,000-km-long tunnel to divert water from the Brahmaputra river in Tibet close to Arunachal Pradesh to the parched Xinjiang region.

Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post yesterday said that Chinese engineers were testing techniques that could be used to build the tunnel, the world's longest.

This is untrue. This is a false report," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told a media briefing when asked about the report.

China will continue to attach great importance to cross-border river cooperation, she said.

According to the report, the proposed tunnel, which would drop down from the world's highest plateau in multiple sections connected by waterfalls, would provide water in China's largest administrative division, comprising vast swathes of deserts and dry grasslands.

The water would be diverted from the Yarlung Tsangpo River in southern Tibet, which turns into the river Brahmaputra once it enters India, to the Taklamakan desert in Xinjiang, the report had said.

India as riparian state has already flagged its concerns to China about various dams being built by it on the Brahmaputra river, which is known in China as Yarlung Tsangpo.

Tension rises in Gaza 7 militants killed after Israel blows up Hamas tunnel; 'Palestinian attacker' shot dead in West Bank

Conflict with the enemy and how to get revenge and strike at the time and place that hurt the enemy," Hayasa said, according to a statement.

Hamas and Israel have fought three wars since 2008 and the last conflict in 2014 was waged in part over tunnels from Gaza that were used to carry out attacks.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces opened fire on a "suspect" vehicle in the occupied West Bank yesterday, killing one Palestinian and wounding another, Israel's army said in a statement.

The Palestinian health ministry said an army statement said a vehicle approached Israeli soldiers in a suspicious manner near the Jewish settlement of Halhamish and the Palestinian village of Nabi Saleh.

"The soldiers perceived the vehicle as a threat and consequently fired towards it in order to stop it," it said.



They were buried yesterday in their respective neighbourhoods in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas leader Ismail Haniya appeared at a funeral in Gaza attended by a few thousand people witnesses said, while senior Hamas figure Khalil al-Hayya spoke at one in the southern part of the strip.

"(Hamas) knows how to manage the con-

NEW CONGRESSIONAL WAR AUTHORISATION MOVE Trump admin opposes limit US snatches, charges suspect in 2012 Benghazi raid

Republican and Democratic members of Congress have argued for years that Congress ceded too much authority over the military to the White House after the Sept 11, 2001, attacks. But divisions over how much control authority to declare war.

Concerns intensified this month after four US soldiers were killed in Niger, and previously over Trump's talk about the possibility of an attack on North Korea and an April attack on an airliner in Syria.

Congress has not passed an AUMF since the 2002 measure authorising the Iraq War. But the legal justification for most military action for the past 16 years is the older authorization for the 2001 Sept 11 attacks.

Meanwhile, Trump said Monday that US special forces had captured a man linked to the 2012 attack on the American mission in the Libyan city of Benghazi.

"Yesterday, on my orders, United States forces captured Mustafa al-Ismail in Libya," Trump said in a statement, which came as the White House was rocked by the indictment of three campaign aides.



They should exert over the Pentagon have assumed repeated efforts to pass a new AUMF.

Republican Senator Jeff Flake, who proposed an authorization with Democratic Senator Tim Kaine, said Congress should "buy in" to military conflicts by exerting its constitutional

NEWSIN brief

Nine headless bodies found in Tokyo flat
AFP, Japan
Japanese police have found nine mutilated bodies hidden in containers with their heads cut off and flesh stripped in a suburban Tokyo flat, media reported yesterday. Tokyo police have arrested 27-year-old Takahiro Shiraishi who reportedly confessed to hacking the flesh off the bodies and throwing it out with the trash, then sprinkling cat litter over the remains in an effort to cover up the evidence.

Iraq takes control of Turkey border post
AFP, Istanbul
Iraqi government forces yesterday took control of the key border crossing with Turkey in the Iraqi Kurdistan region after weeks of tensions between Baghdad and Arbil, the Turkish prime minister said. The Ibrahim Al Khalil border crossing was closed while the handover was being carried out, leading to long queues, a report said. There were no reports of any clashes.

Pak wife 'kills' 13 with poisoned lassi
AFP, Malhan
A Pakistani woman who gave her husband poisoned milk ended up killing him and 12 of his family when the tainted liquid was turned into a yoghurt drink and served to him and his relatives, police said. The woman, who was forcing him by her family into an arranged marriage in September, has been arrested and charged with murder along with her alleged lover.