

Global resource consumption tops 100b tonnes for first time

AFP, PARIS

The world is using up more than 100 billion tonnes of natural resources per year for the first time ever while global recycling of raw materials has fallen, according to a report released yesterday.

The share of minerals, fossil fuels, metals and biomass feeding into the global economy that is reused declined in two years from an already paltry 9.1 percent to 8.6 today, the Circularity Gap Report 2020 found.

“No country is meeting the basic needs of its citizens while also operating within the physical boundaries of our planet,” said Marc de Wit, a director at the non-profit Circle Economy and lead author of the report.

The resources fuelling the world economy increased more than eight percent in just two years from 93 billion tonnes in 2015 to 100.6 billion in 2017, the last year for which data is available.

Since 1970, the human population has doubled, the global economy has grown fourfold, and trade has expanded tenfold, a trajectory that -- in the absence of widespread recycling --

relentlessly pushes up the demand for energy and resources.

Global use of materials is projected to balloon to 170-184 billion tonnes by mid-century, the report said.

To improve living standards -- especially in low-income countries -- while also protecting ecosystems that provide clear water, air and soil, the world must vastly boost the share of recycled natural resources, the authors said.

Wealthy nations, the authors note, consume 10 times more resources per person than in the developing world, and produce far more waste.

Rich countries must “take responsibility for the impact of their imports and exports,” the report said, noting that much of what they consume comes from less developed nations, while much of their waste is exported.

The report also noted that recycling rates are high in poorer countries, as waste can “provide a valuable source of revenue for informal workers.”

“China, for instance, has pioneered eco-industrial parks where the waste of one business becomes the feedstock for another.”



Members of Mexico's National Guard hold their shields to block migrants, part of a caravan travelling to the US, near the border between Guatemala and Mexico, in Ciudad Hidalgo, Mexico, on Monday. Forces fired tear gas at rock-hurling Central American migrants who waded across a river into Mexico, in a chaotic scramble that saw mothers separated from their young children.

PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWSIN brief

Pak journo detained for Facebook posts

AFP, Islamabad

A Pakistani journalist critical of the government and the army has been detained for five days for having published “anti-state” comments online, his lawyer told AFP yesterday, in a new illustration of shrinking freedoms in Pakistan. Azhar-ul Haq Wahid made several comments about the Pakistani establishment on his Facebook account. Wahid was arrested last Thursday in the eastern city of Lahore, and has been in custody since.

Seoul to send vessel to Strait of Hormuz

AFP, Seoul

South Korea will send a naval destroyer and 300 troops to the Strait of Hormuz, its defence ministry said yesterday, after pressure from its ally the US in the face of tensions between Washington and Tehran. Seoul has had diplomatic relations with Tehran since the early 1960s and until last year Iran was one of the resource-poor South's key oil suppliers.

UK PM tastes first defeat

AFP, London

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Monday suffered his first parliamentary defeat since the election when peers voted to give EU citizens physical proof of their right to stay after Brexit. Members of the unelected upper House of Lords voted by 270 to 229 to amend the EU Withdrawal Agreement Bill, which ratifies the terms of Britain's exit from the EU on January 31.

‘Heirs of foolish fortune tellers’

Trump rejects ‘prophets of doom’ as Thunberg warns Davos over climate inaction

AFP, DAVOS

US President Donald Trump yesterday assailed environmental “prophets of doom”, delivering an uncompromising message in Davos after Swedish teenage campaigner Greta Thunberg slammed government inaction on the climate crisis.

Thunberg was in the audience in the Swiss Alps to hear a typically bullish speech by Trump, delivered just before the start of his Senate impeachment trial in Washington.

The 50th meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) got under way in the ski resort with an avowed focus on climate change but with starkly different visions over global warming laid bare.

“We must reject the perennial prophets of doom and their predictions of the apocalypse,” said Trump, growling that “they want to see us do badly”.

He claimed that “alarmists” had been wrong on previous occasions by predicting population crisis, mass starvation and the end of oil.

Trump branded those warning of out-of-control global warming and other environmental disasters “the heirs of yesterday's foolish fortune tellers”. Trump told reporters later that his Davos trip was devoted to meeting “the most important



“We must reject the perennial prophets of doom and their predictions of the apocalypse.” -Donald Trump

“... Basically nothing has been done. It will require much more than this.” -Greta Thunberg



people in the world and we're bringing back tremendous business”.

“The other's just a hoax,” he said of the “disgraceful” impeachment trial.

Before Trump's appearance, Thunberg underlined the message that has inspired millions around the world, saying “basically nothing has been done” to fight climate change.

“It will require much more than this. This is just the very beginning,” the 17-year-old said.

Speaking calmly and with a wry smile,



People wearing protective masks arrive at Beijing railway station to head home for the Lunar New Year, yesterday. Inset, Workers from a cleaning service spray disinfectant at the customs, immigration and quarantine area at Incheon international airport, west of Seoul. China has confirmed human-to-human transmission in the outbreak of a new SARS-like virus as the number of cases soared and the World Health Organization said it would consider declaring an international public health emergency.

PHOTO: AFP



Prince Harry starts new life in Canada

AFP, Vancouver

Prince Harry was spending the first full day of his new life in Canada yesterday after jetting in from Britain to join his wife Meghan, 38, following their shock exit from their royal roles.

Harry, 35, landed at Vancouver International Airport on a British Airways flight from London Heathrow shortly after 7:00 pm on Monday (0300 GMT Tuesday).

He then took a connecting flight to Victoria on Vancouver Island, where he and Meghan have temporarily set up a home, having spent six weeks on the Pacific west coast over Christmas with their baby son Archie.

According to local reports, the couple are looking to buy a beachside house in Vancouver, or possibly in Toronto, where US former television actress Meghan spent several years while acting in the legal drama series “Suits”.

Like Britain, Canada is a Commonwealth realm, meaning Harry's grandmother Queen Elizabeth II is the head of state.

Harry and Meghan are bowing out entirely from representing the monarchy, in a crisis that has shaken the centuries-old institution.



The Duke and Duchess of Sussex openly said they have struggled in the spotlight since their wedding in May 2018, and were seeking to step back as frontline royals.

Harry said Sunday that they did not want to quit their royal duties but reluctantly accepted there was “no other option” if they wanted to cut loose from public funding and seek their own income in pursuit of a more independent life.

Under their new arrangement, the Sussexes are free to earn their own commercial income -- but can no longer represent Queen Elizabeth or be referred to as their royal highnesses, and must repay taxpayers' money

spent on their UK home.

They will no longer receive public money -- though 95 percent of their annual funding comes from his father Prince Charles' hereditary estate for the heir to the throne. To what extent that will continue, and who will cover their security bill -- currently met by the British police -- remains to be seen.

The couple intend to raise their own income streams. They have launched their new Sussex Royal website and trademarked the name. However, Queen Elizabeth's senior advisor on heraldry suggested they should not be allowed to use the royal moniker, having relinquished their public duties.

Protester killed as Iraq struggles to stem unrest

REUTERS, Baghdad

Iraqi police fought running street battles with anti-government demonstrators yesterday, firing tear and rubber bullets to try to disperse stone-throwing youths pressing for an overhaul of a political system they see as deeply corrupt.

One protester was killed in Baghdad while another succumbed to a bullet wound sustained on Monday in Baquba city, medical sources said, adding at least 50 demonstrators were wounded.

Violent clashes erupted for a third straight day in Baghdad's Tayaran Square and in other southern cities including Basra and the holy Shi'ite cities of Kerbala and Najaf, with protesters hurling stones and petrol bombs at police who responded with tear gas and rubber bullets.

“Our protests is peaceful. We call for the resignation of the government and an independent prime minister who does not belong to any party,” said a hooded protester in Baghdad, who declined to give his name.

Anti-government unrest has crippled Iraq since Oct 1, with protesters demanding an end to what they say is deeply-rooted corruption and a ruling elite that has controlled Iraq since the US-led invasion in 2003. More than 450 people have been killed.

Yesterday's unrest followed violent gatherings on Monday that killed six Iraqis, including two police officers, and wounded scores across the country.

THREE ROCKETS HIT NEAR US EMBASSY

Three rockets hit near the US embassy in the Iraqi capital's high-security Green Zone early yesterday, security sources told AFP, with no immediate reports of casualties. The US has blamed Iran-backed paramilitary groups for a spate of similar attacks in recent months on the Green Zone, but there has never been a claim of responsibility.

New Islamic State group leader identified: report

Intelligence services have identified the new leader of the Islamic State (IS) group as Amir Mohammed Abdul Rahman al-Mawli al-Salbi, British newspaper The Guardian reported on Monday. The paper, citing officials from two unnamed spy services, described him as one of the terrorist group's founding members and said he had led the enslavement of the Yazidi minority in Iraq. It said he also oversaw operations around the world. The organisation had named Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Quraishi as its new head just days after its previous leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, was killed in a raid by US special forces in October. However, Some analysts have suggested the group was caught off guard by Baghdad's killing and that the true identity of its new leader remained uncertain.

Iran MP offers \$3m reward for “whoever kills Trump”

An Iranian lawmaker offered a \$3 million reward to anyone who killed US President Donald Trump and said Iran could avoid threats if it had nuclear arms, ISNA news agency reported yesterday amid Tehran's latest standoff with Washington. “On behalf of the people of Kerman province, we will pay a \$3 million reward in cash to whoever kills Trump,” lawmaker Ahmad Hamzeh told the 290-seat parliament, ISNA reported. He did not say if the idea of a reward had any official backing from Iran's clerical rulers. The city of Kerman, in the province south of the capital, is the hometown of Qassem Soleimani, a prominent Iranian commander whose killing in a drone strike ordered by Trump on Jan 3 in Baghdad prompted Iran to fire missiles at US targets in Iraq.

Indian PM Modi bats for neighbours first policy



“Neighbourhood first” is the main policy of Modi government and improving cross-border connectivity is an important aspect of it, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said. He made the statement while inaugurating an Integrated Check Post (ICP) at Jogbani-Biratnagar border yesterday. Modi and his Nepal counterpart KP Sharma Oli jointly inaugurated the ICP through a video conference, our New Delhi correspondent reports. The check post was built with India's assistance in a bid to facilitate trade and people's movement between the two countries. This is the second ICP on the Nepal border. The first was built at the Raxaul-Birgunj border in 2018.

SOURCE: AFP