

WORLD SHUDDERS AT UN CLIMATE REPORT



"Today's report makes for sobering reading, and it is clear that the next decade is going to be pivotal to securing the future of our planet."

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON

"As the IPCC makes plain, the impacts of the climate crisis, from extreme heat to wildfires to intense rainfall and flooding, will only continue to intensify unless we choose another course..."



EU'S VP IN CHARGE OF CLIMATE ACTION FRANS TIMMERMANS

US SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL ENVOY FOR CLIMATE JOHN KERRY



"It's not too late to stem the tide and prevent runaway climate change, but only if we act decisively now and all act together."

"Our people are dying in vulnerable developing countries because of the fossil fuel burning for consumption and economic growth in rich countries..."



MOHAMED NASHEED, ENVOY FOR CVF OF 48 COUNTRIES



"Major emitters must take account for the damages inflicted by the fossil fuel industry, knowing that... will have a negative impact."

DIANN BLACK-LAYNE, LEAD CLIMATE NEGOTIATOR FOR THE ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES



A local resident gestures as he holds an empty water hose during an attempt to extinguish forest fires approaching the village of Pefki on Evia (Euboea) island, Greece's second largest island yesterday. Hundreds of Greek firefighters fought desperately to control wildfires on the island of Evia that have charred vast areas of pine forest, destroyed homes and forced tourists and locals to flee. Greece and Turkey have been battling devastating fires for nearly two weeks as the region suffered its worst heatwave in decades, which experts have linked to climate change.

PHOTO: AFP

KEY IPCC FINDINGS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

No good news here

GOODBYE 1.5C, HELLO OVERSHOOT

Earth's average surface temperature is projected to hit 1.5 or 1.6 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels around 2030 in all five of the greenhouse gas emissions scenarios -- ranging from highly optimistic to reckless -- considered by the report. That's a full decade earlier than the IPCC predicted just three years ago. By mid-century, the 1.5C threshold will have been breached across the board, by a tenth of a degree along the most ambitious pathway, and by nearly a full degree at the opposite extreme.

NATURAL CLIMATE ALLIES WEAKENING

Since about 1960, forests, soil and oceans have absorbed 56 percent of all the CO2 humanity has chucked into the atmosphere -- even as those emissions have increased by half. Without nature's help, Earth would already be a much hotter and less hospitable place. But these allies in our fight against global heating -- known in this role as carbon sinks -- are showing signs of becoming saturated, and the percentage of human-induced carbon they soak up is likely to decline as the century unfolds.

YES, CLIMATE CHANGE IS TO BLAME

The report highlights the stunning progress of a new field, attribution science, in quantifying the extent to which human-induced global



heating increases the intensity and/or likelihood of a specific extreme weather event such as a heatwave, a hurricane or a wildfire. Within weeks, for example, scientists established that the record-shattering heatwave that devastated British Columbia in June would have been "virtually impossible" without the influence of climate change.

SEA RISING HIGHER, MORE QUICKLY

Global oceans have risen about 20 centimetres (eight inches) since 1900, and the rate of increase has nearly tripled in the last decade. Crumbling and melting ice sheets atop Antarctica and especially Greenland have replaced glacier melt as the main driver. If global warming is capped at 2C, the ocean watermark will go up about half

a metre over the 21st century. It will continue rising to nearly two metres by 2300 -- twice the amount predicted by the IPCC in 2019.

DIRE WARNINGS FROM THE DEEP PAST

Major advances in palaeoclimatology -- the science of natural climate in Earth's past -- have delivered sobering warnings. For example, the last time the planet's atmosphere was as warm as today, about 125,000 years ago, global sea levels were likely 5-10 metres higher -- a level that would put many major coastal cities under water.

METHANE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The report includes more data than ever before on methane (CH4), the second most important greenhouse gas after CO2, and warns that failure to curb emissions could undermine Paris Agreement goals.

TIPPING POINTS = ABRUPT CHANGE

The IPCC warns against abrupt, "low likelihood, high impact" shifts in the climate system that, when irreversible, are called tipping points. Disintegrating ice sheets holding enough water to raise sea a dozen metres; the melting of permafrost laden with billions of tons of carbon; the transition of the Amazon from tropical forest to savannah -- are all examples.

SOURCE: AFP

'Massive public pressure' needed to galvanize climate fight

REUTERS, Brussels

Calling for "massive" pressure to fight climate change after yesterday's dire report by a UN science panel, activist Greta Thunberg said she plans to go to this year's global climate conference in Glasgow, Scotland, after all.

The major UN conference will test countries' ambition to limit global warming, which a landmark scientific report yesterday warned was dangerously close to escalating beyond the limits countries agreed on.

"I hope that this can be a wake up call, in every possible way," Thunberg said of the report, in an interview with Reuters.

"When these extreme weather events are happening, many say, what will it take for people in power to start acting? What are they waiting for? And it will take many things,



but especially, it will take massive pressure from the public and massive pressure from the media," she said.

The U.N. report landed just three months before the Glasgow conference in November.

Thunberg, who has rallied youth to protest for climate action worldwide, had initially said she would skip the event out of concern that the uneven rollout of COVID-19 vaccines across the world would leave some countries unable to attend safely.

But Britain's offer in June to vaccinate delegates assuaged some of that concern, the 18-year-old Swedish campaigner said.

"I've said before that I wasn't going to go if it wasn't fair," Thunberg said. "But now they say that they will vaccinate all the delegates that are going there. If that's considered fair and safe, then I will hopefully attend."



Doves fly over the Peace Statue in Nagasaki Peace Park during a ceremony commemorating the 76th anniversary of the bombing of the city, in Nagasaki, Japan yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Nuclear talks must guarantee Iran's 'rights'

New President Raisi tells Macron

AFP, Tehran

Iran's new President Ebrahim Raisi yesterday told his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron that negotiations with world powers to revive the 2015 nuclear deal must guarantee Tehran's "rights".

"In any negotiation, the rights of the Iranian people must be upheld and the interests of our nation ensured," Raisi said in an hour-long phone call, according to the Iranian presidency's website.

This is Raisi's first reported call with a Western leader since taking office last week.

Raisi took over from Hassan Rouhani, a moderate whose landmark achievement during his two-term presidency was the 2015 nuclear agreement, which provided international sanctions relief in exchange for limitations on Tehran's nuclear programme.

Former US president Donald Trump torpedoed the deal three years later by unilaterally withdrawing Washington from it and reimposing crushing sanctions. Six rounds of nuclear talks between Iran and world powers were held in Vienna between April and June in an attempt to revive the accord. The last round concluded on June 20, with no date set for another.

Iranian officials have said negotiations will not resume before the new government takes over, while an EU official said at the weekend that meetings could resume in Vienna from early September. The accord's remaining parties are Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia.

"The Americans clearly violated their obligations by imposing new sanctions," Raisi told Macron, while also stressing the "failure" of European members of the deal to help Iran circumvent US sanctions.

Taliban press on with northern offensive

Capture sixth Afghan provincial capital; insurgents kidnap journo in Helmand

AGENCIES

The Taliban seized a sixth Afghan provincial capital yesterday following a weekend blitz across the north that saw urban centres fall in quick succession and the government struggle to keep the militants at bay.

Insurgents entered Aibak without a fight after community elders pleaded with officials to spare the city from more violence following weeks of clashes on the outskirts, said Sefatullah Samangani, deputy governor of Samangan province.

"The governor accepted and withdrew all the forces from the city," Samangani added, saying the Taliban were now in "full control".

A Taliban spokesman confirmed the city had been taken. The insurgents have overrun five provincial capitals across the north, sparking fears the government is rapidly losing control of the region.

They have also taken Zaranj, capital of



Nimroz province, in the southwest.

Earlier yesterday, the Taliban said they were moving in on Mazar-i-Sharif -- the largest city in the north and a linchpin for the government's control of the region -- after capturing Sheberghan to its west, and Kunduz and Taloqan to its east.

A spokesman said Taliban fighters had entered the city, but officials -- and residents contacted by phone -- said the group

was exaggerating, with clashes confined to surrounding districts. "The enemy is trying to distort public opinion and create anxiety for the civilian population by their propaganda," said a statement from the provincial police force in Balkh, where Mazar-i-Sharif is the capital.

In Kabul, Taliban fighters killed an Afghan radio station manager and kidnapped a journalist in southern Helmand province, local government officials said yesterday, reporting the latest in a long line of attacks targeting media workers.

Gunmen shot Toofan Omar, the station manager of Paktia Ghag radio and an officer for NAI, a rights group supporting independent media in Afghanistan, in a targeted killing in the capital on Sunday, reports Reuters.

"Omari was killed by unidentified gunmen...he was liberal man...we are being targeted for working independently," said Mujeeb Khelwatgar, the head of NAI.

NEPAL'S CONSERVATION POLICIES

Indigenous peoples 'abused': rights groups

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's indigenous peoples have been subjected to human rights violations including torture and unlawful killings under the country's conservation policies, Amnesty International and a local activist group said yesterday.

Nearly a quarter of the Himalayan nation's land has been declared protected, while the government's conservation efforts -- particularly for tigers and rhinos -- are hailed as a success internationally. But the policies have seen indigenous peoples "forcibly evicted" from their ancestral lands, said the report, released by Amnesty and the Community Self-Reliance Centre on the International Day of Indigenous Peoples. "That success has come at a high price for the country's indigenous peoples, who had lived in and depended on these protected areas for generations," Amnesty's Deputy South Asia Director Dinushika Dissanayake said in a statement. A spokesman for Nepal's Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation said the agency had yet to read the report.

NEWS IN brief

Threat to human rights 'highest in police stations': India's CJ

The threat to human rights and bodily integrity are the "highest in police stations", Chief Justice of India Justice N V Ramana said at a function on Sunday, expressing concern about custodial torture, reports NDTV online. Calling human rights and dignity "sacrosanct", he said, "custodial torture and other police atrocities are problems which still prevail in our society". "In spite of constitutional declarations and guarantees, lack of effective legal representation at the police stations is a huge detriment to arrested/detained persons. The decisions taken in these early hours will later determine the ability of the accused to defend himself," he added in his address at an event organized by NALSA at Delhi's Vigyan Bhawan. Going by the recent reports, even the privileged are not spared third-degree treatment, the Chief Justice said.

India's CPI(M) to hoist nat'l flag 'for the first time'

More than seven decades after the Indian communists gave the slogan of "ye azadi jhootha hai", the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has decided to mark the country's independence day with fanfare on August 15 and will hoist the national flag in all its party offices. The decision to mark the day was made at an online meeting of the central committee of the CPI(M), which became the principal Left party in India after the split in the undivided CPI in 1964, reports our New Delhi correspondent. "It has been decided that the national tricolour would be hoisted at every party office on the occasion of 75th Independence day," CPI(M) Central Committee member Sujan Chakraborty told the media.

California wildfire now second-worst in state history

The monstrous Dixie Fire in northern California has grown to become the second-largest wildfire in state history, authorities said Sunday, with three more people reported missing and thousands fleeing the advancing flames. As of Sunday, the fire had destroyed 463,477 acres (187,562 hectares), up from the previous day's 447,723 acres. It now covers an area larger than Los Angeles. The Dixie blaze is the largest active wildfire in the United States, but one of only 11 major wildfires in California. Over the weekend, it surpassed the 2018 Mendocino Complex Fire to make it the second-worst fire in state history.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS