

Few willing to change lifestyle to save the planet

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

Citizens are alarmed by the climate crisis, but most believe they are already doing more to preserve the planet than anyone else, including their government, and few are willing to make significant lifestyle changes, an international survey has found.

“The widespread awareness of the importance of the climate crisis illustrated in this study has yet to be coupled with a proportionate willingness to act,” the survey of 10 countries including the US, UK, France and Germany, observed.

Emmanuel Rivière, director of international polling at Kantar Public, said the survey, carried out in late September and published to coincide with the Cop26 climate conference in Glasgow, contained “a double lesson for governments”.

They have, first, “to measure up to people’s expectations,” Rivière said. “But they also have to persuade people not of

the reality of the climate crisis – that’s done – but of what the solutions are, and of how we can fairly share responsibility for them.”

The survey found that 62% of people surveyed saw the climate crisis as the main environmental challenge the world was now facing, ahead of air pollution (39%), the impact of waste (38%) and new diseases (36%).

But when asked to rate their individual action against others’ such as governments, business and the media, people generally saw themselves as much more committed to the environment than others in their local community.

About 36% rated themselves “highly committed” to preserving the planet, while only 21% felt the same was true of the media and 19% of local government. A mere 18% felt their local community was equally committed, with national governments (17%) and big corporations (13%) seen as even less engaged.

CLIMATE SURVEY



Extinction Rebellion Red Rebel Brigade members perform at a “die-in” protest, during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), in Glasgow, Scotland, Britain yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Quote of the day



“I have been shaped by my experience growing up in Hawaii. We have to act now to help with adaptation and resilience.”

FORMER US PRESIDENT **BARACK OBAMA** CALLS ON DELEGATES AT COP26

SURGE IN COVID CASES

French school children mask up again

AFP, Paris

Schoolchildren in large parts of France were ordered yesterday to again wear face masks in class, less than a month after being allowed to remove them, as the country tries to tamp down a surge in Covid cases.

Primary schools in 40 of France’s 101 departments or administrative areas, which had been mask-free for weeks, are affected by the order, which comes a day before President Emmanuel Macron addresses the nation about the health crisis.

Under the government’s Covid protocol, primary school pupils have to wear masks when the incidence rate rises above 50 new infections per 100,000 inhabitants over five consecutive days.

With nearly 75 percent of the population inoculated against the coronavirus, France is one of Europe’s vaccine leaders.

But the pace of new vaccinations has slowed since the summer, when millions rushed to get shots after the introduction of a Covid pass to enter bars, restaurants, gyms and other entertainment and sporting venues.

The latest government edict brings to 61 the number of departments where schoolchildren have to cover their noses and mouths.

They include the areas surrounding Paris as well as the southern city of Marseille. In secondary schools, masks remain compulsory irrespective of the number of Covid cases.

Macron will address the nation this evening about the health crisis for the first time since July 12.

He is expected to discuss the booster shot campaign currently underway among over-65s and those with underlying health conditions.

Climate on track to devastate world’s poorest economies

AFP, Glasgow

The 65 most vulnerable nations will see GDP drop 20 percent on average by 2050 and 64 percent by 2100 if the world heats up 2.9 degrees Celsius, according to a report released yesterday at the COP26 climate talks in Glasgow.

Even if global temperature rises are capped at 1.5C, in keeping with the most ambitious Paris Agreement goal, the same countries would take a GDP hit of 13 percent by 2050 and 33 percent by the end of the century, the study commissioned by Christian Aid said.

To date, Earth’s average surface temperature has risen 1.1C compared to late 19th-century levels.

The findings from Christian Aid show that more than a third of the world’s nations urgently need help to build up resilience if their economies are to withstand the onslaught of heatwaves, drought, floods and storms made more intense and

deadly by global warming.

“The ability of countries in the Global South to sustainably develop is seriously jeopardised,” said lead author Marina Andrijevic from Humboldt University in Berlin.

COP26 CLIMATE SUMMIT

Some 65 nations will see their GDP drop about 20pc by 2050

Eight of the top 10 most affected nations are in Africa

“Policy choices that we make right now are crucial for preventing further damage.”

Eight of the top 10 most affected countries are in Africa, with two in South America.

All 10 face GDP damage of more than 70 percent by 2100 under our current climate policy trajectory, and 40 percent even if global warming is

capped at 1.5C.

The country facing the worst GDP loss is Sudan, which in September was left reeling from heavy rains and flash floods affecting more than 300,000 people.

The country would see a GDP reduction of 32 percent by 2050, and 84 percent by 2100 compared with if there was no climate change.

The countries covered by the report make up two key negotiating blocs at the UN climate talks, which run through Friday: the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

Small island states are especially vulnerable to storm surges made worse by rising seas. The study does not take into account adaptation measures, which could potentially alleviate some of the damage.

To date, rich governments have committed only modest sums to help poor countries adapt to climate impacts.

MORE NEWS

Pakistan lifts ban on radical anti-France party

Pakistan has lifted a ban on a radical party that staged massive anti-France protests, after reaching a deal with the group that ended the latest round of deadly unrest. In a notification published late Sunday, the government said the move was in the “national interest”, coming after seven police officers were killed in clashes during a rally that began last month. Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) was protesting the detention of its leader, arrested in April when the group was outlawed by authorities, and demanding the expulsion of the French ambassador.



Communist leaders begin top meet expected to boost Xi

The top leaders of China’s ruling Communist Party yesterday started a pivotal meeting expected to further firm President Xi Jinping’s grip on power. Some 400 members of the party’s powerful Central Committee gathered in Beijing for the four-day plenary, which -- like all meetings of China’s secretive leadership -- is being held behind closed doors. State news agency Xinhua said Xi opened the meeting with a work report and “explanations on a draft resolution on the major achievements and historical experience” for the party through its 100-year history.

Kuwaiti govt resigns

Kuwait’s government yesterday submitted its resignation to the ruling emir, state news agency KUNA reported, a move that could help end a standoff with opposition lawmakers that has hindered fiscal reform. It was the second time a government headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Khalid al-Sabah has resigned this year in a feud with the elected parliament. KUNA said the emir received Sheikh Sabah who handed him the written resignation of his cabinet. It was not immediately clear if Emir Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmed al-Sabah, who has final say in state matters, would accept the resignation of the government, which was formed in March after the previous cabinet stepped down. Several opposition MPs have insisted on questioning the premier on various issues, including the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and corruption.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Migrants ride on a pickup truck while traveling in a caravan heading to Mexico City, in Arriaga near the border with Oaxaca state, Mexico yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Six Palestinian activists hacked by Israeli spyware

REUTERS, Jerusalem

The mobile phones of six Palestinian rights workers in the Israeli-occupied West Bank were hacked using Israeli technology firm NSO Group’s Pegasus spyware, Amnesty International and internet security watchdog Citizen Lab said yesterday.

The new findings followed NSO’s blacklisting last week by the US Commerce Department amid allegations its spyware targeted journalists, rights activists and government officials in several countries.

NSO, which voiced dismay at the US move, exports its products under licences from Israel’s Defence Ministry and says it only sells to law enforcement and intelligence agencies and that it takes steps to curb abuse.

London-based Amnesty and Toronto’s Citizen Lab said they had independently confirmed that Pegasus had been used to hack the Palestinian activists’ phones, after Front Line Defenders, an international rights group, began collecting data in October about the suspected hacking.

Three of the six people work for Palestinian rights groups that Israel designated as terrorist organisations last month, saying they had funnelled donor aid to militants. The groups named by Israel have denied the allegations.

Asked about the new findings, NSO said: “As we stated in the past, NSO Group does not operate the products itself ... and we are not privy to the details of individuals monitored.”

“We call on the United Nations to launch an investigation to disclose the party that stood behind using this programme on the phones of human rights activists, a move that put their lives at risk,” Tahseen Elayyan, of Al-Haq Organization for Human Rights, said in Ramallah.

ZIKA OUTBREAK India sees surge of 89 cases

REUTERS, Lucknow

At least 89 people, including 17 children, have tested positive for the Zika virus in a surge of cases in the Indian city of Kanpur, its health department said yesterday.

First discovered in 1947, the mosquito-borne virus Zika virus reached epidemic proportions in Brazil in 2015, when thousands of babies were born with microcephaly, a disorder that causes babies to be born with abnormally small heads and underdeveloped brains.

“There has been a surge in cases of the Zika virus and the health department has formed several teams to contain the spread,” Dr Nepal Singh, chief medical officer of Kanpur district in India’s most populous state of Uttar Pradesh, told Reuters.

“There is one woman who is pregnant and we are paying special attention towards her.”

Taliban appoint members as 44 governors, police chiefs

WHO, Unicef launch Afghan polio vaccine campaign

REUTERS, Kabul

The Taliban appointed 44 of its members to key roles including provincial governors and police chiefs on Sunday, a key step in shoring up its governance as the country grapples with growing security and economic problems.

It is first large-scale round of appointments announced since the cabinet was formed in September.

The Taliban released the list of its members’ new roles, including Qari Baryal to serve as governor of Kabul and Wali Jan Hamza as the city’s police chief.

The previous commander in charge of Kabul’s security, Mawlawi Hamdullah Mukhlis, was killed this month in an attack on Afghanistan’s largest military hospital in downtown Kabul.

The Taliban took over the country on August 15 but have faced an uphill battle in their promise to restore order and security after decades of war. Islamic State have carried out a spate of attacks around the country, while the economy has been plunged into crisis.

There have been international calls for the group to negotiate with other political players to form an inclusive government including minorities and women, although substantive progress on that has so far not materialised.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations children’s agency kicked off a

polio vaccination campaign in Afghanistan yesterday, the first nationwide campaign to fight the disease in three years.

Naikwali Shah Momim, the National Emergency Operations Coordinator for the polio programme at Afghanistan’s health ministry, told Reuters the campaign had started in various parts of the country yesterday, but added there were several hurdles around a shortage of trained staff.

The campaign, which is aimed at reaching over 3 million children, had received Taliban backing, which would allow teams to reach children in previously inaccessible parts of the country, the WHO said.

“The urgency with which the Taliban leadership wants the polio campaign to proceed demonstrates a joint commitment to maintain the health system and restart essential immunizations to avert further outbreaks of preventable diseases,” said Ahmed Al Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, in a statement.

However, Momim said that more training was needed for teams in remote areas, so the programme would initially start in places such as Kabul.

Afghanistan and neighbouring Pakistan are the last countries in the world with endemic polio, an incurable and highly infectious disease transmitted through sewage that can cause crippling paralysis in young children.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



NOVEMBER 09

1938 - Nazi-inspired anti-Jewish riots took place across Germany after the murder of a German official in Paris. Jewish businesses were ransacked, synagogues torched and many Jews sent to concentration camps. The night became known as “Kristallnacht” (Crystal Night).

1989 - East Germans on foot and in cars began arriving in West Germany and West Berlin only hours after the East German government threw open its border to the West.

2005 - Three suicide bombers blew themselves up at three international hotels in Jordan’s capital Amman, killing 60.

SOURCE: REUTERS