

'It's poisoning our planet'

WHO report details tobacco industry's devastating environmental impact

AFP, Geneva The tobacco industry is a far greater threat than many realise as it is one of the world's biggest polluters, from leaving mountains of waste to driving global warming, the WHO said yesterday.

In its report released on World No Tobacco Day, the UN agency called for the tobacco industry to be held to account and foot the bill for the cleanup.

The report, "Tobacco: poisoning our planet", looks at the impacts of the whole cycle, from the growth of plants to the manufacturing of tobacco products, to consumption and waste.

While tobacco's health impacts have been well documented for decades - with smoking still causing more than eight million deaths worldwide every year - the report focuses on its broader environmental consequences.

The findings are "quite devastating," Ruediger Krech, WHO director of health promotion, told AFP, charging that the industry is "one of the biggest polluters that we know of."

"Tobacco is not only poisoning people, it's poisoning our planet," he added.

The industry is responsible for the loss of some 600 million trees each year - or five percent of global deforestation - while tobacco growing and production uses 200,000 hectares of land and 22 billion tonnes of water annually, the report found. It also emits around 84 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, it said.

In addition, "tobacco products are the most littered item on the planet, containing over 7,000 toxic chemicals, which leech into our environment when discarded," Krech said.

He pointed out that each one of the estimated 4.5 trillion cigarette butts that end up in the oceans, rivers, sidewalks and beaches every year can pollute 100 litres of water.

At the same time the processing and transportation of tobacco account for a significant share of global greenhouse gas emissions - with the equivalent of one-fifth of the global airline industry's carbon footprint.

In addition, products like cigarettes, smokeless tobacco and e-cigarettes also contribute significantly to the global build-up of plastic pollution, WHO warned.

Stressing that there is no evidence filters provide any proven health benefits over smoking non-filtered cigarettes, the UN urged policy makers worldwide to consider banning them.



Relatives of victims of the crashed Tara Air passenger plane cry as they wait for the bodies of their loved ones at a morgue in Kathmandu, Nepal, yesterday. Nepali rescuers have retrieved all 22 bodies from the plane that crashed in the Himalayas, authorities said yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

RUSSIA'S DONBAS OFFENSIVE

What's next for Ukraine?

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

The recent Russian advances in the Donbas lead to an inevitable question: whether the indiscriminate tactics the Kremlin deployed there will be a template for future offensives.

With reports of large numbers of troops, artillery and rocket launchers mustering across the border near the Russian city of Kursk - in an area that borders Ukraine's Sumy province - it is an urgent issue.

While other parts of the 300-mile frontline in Ukraine's east lack some of the same vulnerabilities that existed around Severodonetsk - which sat in the midst of a Ukrainian salient that Russia exploited - in any future offensive the Kremlin is likely to offer Kyiv the same hard choices, attempting to stretch its ability to respond.

Perhaps the first and most pressing issue - if and when Russian forces fully take Severodonetsk - is whether they then attempt to cross the Siverskiy Donets River.

Whether or not Russian forces attempt to cross the Siverskiy Donets River - a natural barrier - at Severodonetsk or elsewhere within Ukraine, Russian forces appear to be preparing for a fresh push farther

north amid evidence that they are regrouping near the Ukrainian town of Izium to renew their stalled efforts against Slovyansk, rebuilding a railway bridge near Kupiansk to facilitate the movement of troops and equipment to the area.

What is more difficult to assess is the level of attrition inflicted on both sides, and what impact that will have on further offensives and Ukraine's ability to defend and counterattack.

While the UK's Ministry of Defence has made much of Russian losses throughout the war, Russian gains in the Donbas appear to tell a different story, for now at least. Increasing anecdotal evidence suggests that Ukraine has suffered heavy casualties during recent fighting in the east, largely from shrapnel, and there are reports of equipment and supply issues.

What may well be true is that despite evidence of fresh Russian preparations, the difficulty of the fighting and heavy losses may limit Russia's ambitions beyond controlling the Donbas, the south and its key coastline.

But only time will tell if Moscow is looking beyond Donbas. But most analysts say despite a shift in momentum, the war will be a long one.



Everyone has sacrificed a lot. This day has been hard-won, and we need to cherish and protect it, and welcome back the Shanghai we are familiar with and missed.

Shanghai govt spokeswoman Yin Xin after lifting of Covid restrictions

One killed, 9 hurt in Yangon blast

AFP, Yangon

A bomb blast killed one person and injured nine others in a busy district of central Yangon yesterday, a Myanmar police source told AFP.

The blast occurred around 3:20 pm local time (0850 GMT) near a bus stop, the police source said, requesting anonymity. "One man died in hospital and nine others are injured."

A bomb squad team was working to determine if the blast came from a grenade or mine, the police source said.

Pictures published by local media showed several bodies lying on the ground in the bustling Downtown district and what appeared to be blood on the pavement. Security forces later found an unexploded grenade near the site of the blast, the police source said.

No group has claimed responsibility. Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military coup that ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's civilian government, with fighting flaring in ethnic rebel border areas and the economy in chaos.

Self-declared civilian "people's defence forces" have also sprung up to fight the junta and dissidents have targeted officials or organisations perceived to be working with the military.

Across the country, there are almost daily killings of low-level junta officials or alleged informers, with details murky and reprisals from the military often following quickly.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Executive Engineer PWD Division, Noakhali. Tender Notice for e-Tender. Includes details of work packages and tendering process.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার. উন্নয়ন দপত্র আহবান বিজ্ঞপ্তি. Details of a public works tender for various construction and maintenance projects.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Executive Engineer Education Engineering Department Chattogram. Invitation for e-Tender(OTM). Details of tendering for educational building construction.