

METHANE EMISSIONS
Offshore leak spotted from space for the first times

AFP, Paris
Scientists have for the first time used satellite data to detect a major offshore leak of the potent greenhouse gas methane, according to peer-reviewed research.
The findings add a crucial tool to an expanding space-based arsenal for pinpointing previously invisible methane plumes from the oil and gas industry.
Fossil fuel operations globally emitted about 120 million tonnes of the planet-warming gas in 2020, nearly one-third of all methane emissions from human activity, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA).
The new study in the journal Environmental Science and Technology Letters identified a plume from an oil and gas production platform in the Gulf of Mexico that spewed some 40,000 tonnes over a 17-day period in December.
The platform, near Campeche in southern Mexico, is in one of the country's biggest oil producing fields.
Satellite-based methods for spotting methane leaks over land have developed rapidly in



People march across the Brooklyn Bridge to protest against gun violence in the March for Our Lives march and rally in New York City, on Saturday. Across the country in various cities, thousands gathered to demand meaningful gun laws following the recent shootings from Uvalde, Texas, to Buffalo, New York.

PHOTO: AFP



the last few years, training an uncomfortable spotlight on regulators and industry. But equivalent techniques have been lacking for leaks from offshore oil and gas operations, which account for about 30 percent of global production.
Methane is responsible for roughly 30 percent of the global rise in temperatures to date. While far less abundant in the atmosphere than CO2, it is about 28 times more powerful as a greenhouse gas on a century-long timescale. Over a 20-year time frame, it is 80 times more potent.
Methane lingers in the atmosphere for only a decade, compared to hundreds or thousands of years for CO2.
This means a sharp reduction in emissions could shave several tenths of a degree Celsius off of projected global warming by mid-century, helping keep alive the Paris Agreement goal of capping Earth's average temperature increase to 1.5C, according to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

SHANGRI-LA DIALOGUE SECURITY SUMMIT
'Will fight to the end'

Says Beijing on Taiwan, asks US to 'stop containing China'

AFP, Singapore
China will "fight to the very end" to stop Taiwanese independence, the country's defence minister vowed yesterday, stoking already soaring tensions with the United States over the island.
The superpowers are locked in an escalating war of words over the self-ruled, democratic island, which Beijing views as part of its territory awaiting reunification.
Frequent Chinese aircraft incursions near Taiwan have raised the diplomatic temperature, and on Saturday US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin accused Beijing of "destabilising" military activity, in a speech to the Shangri-La Dialogue security summit.
Defence Minister Wei Fenghe hit back in a fiery address at the same event, saying Beijing had "no choice" but to fight if attempts are made to separate Taiwan from China.
"We will fight at all cost, and we



will fight to the very end," he told the summit, which brings together defence ministers from Asia and around the world.
"No one should ever underestimate the resolve and ability of the Chinese armed forces to safeguard its territorial integrity."
"Those who pursue Taiwanese independence in an attempt to split China will definitely come to no good end," he added.
Wei urged Washington to "stop smearing and containing China... stop interfering in China's internal affairs and stop harming China's interests".
But he also struck a more

conciliatory tone at points, calling for a "stable" China-US relationship, which he said was "vital for global peace".
During his address, Austin stressed the importance of "fully open lines of communication with China's defence leaders" in avoiding miscalculations.
President Joe Biden, during a visit to Japan last month, appeared to break decades of US policy when, in response to a question, he said Washington would defend Taiwan militarily if it was attacked by China.
The White House has since insisted its policy of "strategic ambiguity" over whether or not it would intervene had not changed.
Despite the heightened tensions, analysts said the fact Austin and Wei were willing to meet in person offered a small sign of hope.
The dispute is just the latest between Washington and Beijing, who have clashed over everything from the South China Sea to human rights and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

ANTI-ISLAM REMARKS IN INDIA
More arrests made

AFP, Srinagar, Kolkata
Police in India's Kashmir arrested a youth for posting a video threatening to behead a former spokesperson of India's ruling party who had made derogatory remarks about Islam's religious leader Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), officials said yesterday. Muslims have taken to the streets to protest against anti-Islamic comments made by two members of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in recent week. The BJP has suspended both the party members and police cases have been filed against them. The remarks also angered several Muslim countries, causing a massive diplomatic challenge for the Modi government. Two teenagers were killed when protesters clashed with police in the eastern city of Ranchi last week. Sporadic riots in northern Uttar Pradesh state forced police to arrest over 300 people. In West Bengal, authorities enforced an emergency law prohibiting public gatherings in the industrial district of Howrah until June 16. At least 70 people were arrested on charges of rioting and disturbing public order.

Sonia hospitalised

REUTERS, New Delhi
The leader of India's main opposition party, Sonia Gandhi, has been admitted to hospital in New Delhi with health issues related to Covid-19, her Congress party said. The party tweeted the announcement but gave no other details.
Italian-born Gandhi, widow of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, is the longest-serving president of the Congress party, which ruled India for decades after its founders led the country to independence from British colonial rule in 1947.



KILLINGS IN INDIA'S NAGALAND
30 soldiers charged

REUTERS, Guwahati
Police in India's northeastern state of Nagaland said 30 army soldiers were charged for killing tribal labourers mistaken for militants during an anti-insurgency operation last year. Investigations revealed that the operation team had not followed the standard operating procedure and the rules of engagement. The police probe was launched after 13 members of the region's predominantly Konyak tribe and one security trooper were killed in December last year after defence forces stationed in the border state mistook the group of labourers for militants entering from Myanmar and opened fire.

Focus on climate, not war
Says Fiji at Asia's top security meeting

REUTERS, Singapore
Fiji's defence minister yesterday said that climate change posed the biggest security threat in the Asia-Pacific region, a shift in tone at a defence summit that has been dominated by the war in Ukraine and disputes between China and the United States.
The low-lying Pacific islands, which include Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, are some of the most vulnerable countries in the world to the extreme weather events caused by climate change.
Fiji has been battered by a series of tropical cyclones in recent years, causing devastating flooding that has displaced thousands from their homes and hobbled the island's

economy.
"In our blue Pacific continent, machine guns, fighter jets, grey ships and green battalions are not our primary security concern," Inia Seruiratu, Fiji's Minister for Defence, said at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Asia's top security meeting.
"The single greatest threat to our very existence is climate change. It threatens our very hopes and dreams of prosperity."
The Pacific islands became a focus of regional tensions this year after China signed a security pact with the Solomon Islands in

April, alarming the United States, Australia and New Zealand, who fear a stepped-up military presence by Beijing in the Pacific.
Beijing has said that it is not establishing a military base in the Solomon Islands and that its goal is to strengthen security cooperation with Pacific island nations.
China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi conducted a tour of the Pacific islands last month in the hope of securing a sweeping regional trade and security pact, but the island nations were unable to reach a consensus on a deal.



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