

UN REPORT
Half the world unprepared for disasters

AFP, Geneva

Even as extreme weather and climate disasters are multiplying, half of countries lack the advanced early warning systems needed to save lives, the United Nations warned yesterday.

In a fresh report, the UN agencies for weather and for disaster risk reduction found countries with poor early warning systems on average see eight times greater mortality from disasters than countries with strong measures.

Proper early warning systems for floods, droughts, heatwaves, storms or other disasters allow for planning to minimise adverse impacts.



'Extreme weather events will happen. But they do not need to become deadly disasters,' UN chief Antonio Guterres said.

As the threats rise, early warning systems have meanwhile contributed towards significantly reducing disaster-related mortality.

The UN wants all countries to put in place early warning systems within five years, and is due to present an action plan during November's COP27 climate summit in Egypt.

'Those who have done the least to cause the climate crisis are paying the highest price,' Guterres said.

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

US singles out China as the sole global rival

AFP, Washington

President Joe Biden's administration said it would prioritize winning over China, seeing it as the only global rival to the United States, even as it also works to constrain a 'dangerous' Russia.

'The post-Cold War era is over, and the competition is underway between the major powers to shape what comes next,' Biden's national security advisor, Jake Sullivan, said in a speech at Georgetown University to unveil the national security strategy.

The strategy said the 2020s would be a 'decisive decade for America and the world' - for reducing conflict, promoting democracy over authoritarianism and confronting the key shared threat of climate change.

'We will prioritize maintaining an enduring competitive edge over the PRC while constraining a still profoundly



dangerous Russia,' the strategy said, referring to the People's Republic of China.

Vladimir Putin's Russia 'poses an immediate threat to the free and open international system, recklessly flouting the basic laws of the international order today, as its brutal war of aggression against Ukraine has shown,' the strategy added.

China, 'by contrast, is the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly,

the economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to advance that objective.'

The strategy said the United States was willing to work even with competitors on shared interests, amid the Biden team's talks with top carbon emitter China on climate change, described as 'the existential challenge of our time.'

Despite Beijing's repeated denials, it is seeking hegemony, the strategy said China 'has ambitions to create an enhanced sphere of influence in the Indo-Pacific and to become the world's leading power,' using the favored US term for the broader Asia region.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning yesterday said at a press conference that China and the US 'shoulder responsibilities for maintaining world peace and stability and promoting economic prosperity and development.'

India axes rule on J&K voting rights

REUTERS, Srinagar

India yesterday scrapped a rule granting voting rights to new residents of its Jammu and Kashmir region after widespread anger among political parties, who labelled it a bid to change the demographics of the country's only Muslim-majority region.

In 2019, India stripped its part of the region of its remaining measure of autonomy, reorganising Jammu and Kashmir state into two federally-controlled territories and changing the constitution to let non-Kashmiris vote and own land there.

It had allowed Indians who have lived in Kashmir for a year or more to register as voters, replacing a rule that limited the franchise only to those who had lived there in 1947 - the year that India gained independence - or their descendants.

The measure of October 11 'is withdrawn and to be treated as void', an electoral officer in the Jammu region, Avny Lavasa, told Reuters, without giving a reason for the withdrawal.

In August, the government said it expected to add 2.5 million voters to Kashmir's rolls, which would swell the electorate by more than a third from 7.6 million now.

WORLD WILDLIFE FUND REPORT
Global wildlife populations have sunk 69pc since 1970

REUTERS, London

The world's wildlife populations have declined by more than two-thirds since 1970 as forests have been cleared and oceans polluted, according to an assessment released yesterday.

This 'serious drop ... tells us that nature is unraveling and the natural world is emptying,' said Andrew Terry, director of conservation and policy at the Zoological Society of London (ZSL).

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) report, which used 2018 data from ZSL on the status of 32,000 wildlife populations covering more than 5,000 species, found that population sizes had declined by 69 percent on average. Deforestation, human exploitation, pollution, and

climate change were the biggest drivers of the loss.

Wildlife populations in Latin America and the Caribbean were hit especially hard, experiencing a 94% drop in just five decades. One population of pink river dolphins in the Brazilian Amazon plummeted by 65% between 1994 and 2016, the report said.

Its findings were broadly similar to those in WWF's last assessment in 2020, with wildlife population sizes continuing to decline at a rate of about 2.5% per year, Terry said.

'Nature was in dire straits and it is still in dire straits,' said Mark Wright, director of science at WWF-UK. 'The war is definitely being lost.'



NEPAL FLOODS, LANDSLIDES

Death toll hits 48

AFP, Kathmandu

Major flooding and landslides caused by monsoon rains in Nepal have killed 48 people in the past two weeks, with 13 others missing after being swept away by a river, officials said yesterday. 'There was heavy rainfall during the end of the monsoon which caused landslides and flooding in western parts of the country,' disaster management official Pradip Kumar Koirala told AFP. 'We are currently carrying out rescue and relief-distribution operations in those areas by mobilising security forces and other agencies as the weather situation has improved there.'

N Korea deploys 'tactical nukes'

AFP, Seoul

Kim Jong Un supervised the launch of two long-range cruise missiles on Wednesday, state media KCNA said yesterday, adding that the weapons had already been deployed to 'tactical nuke' units of the North Korean army. Kim has overseen a blitz of ballistic missile launches in recent weeks, which Pyongyang has described as tactical nuclear drills that simulated taking out airports and military facilities across South Korea. The cruise missiles - which travel at lower altitudes than ballistic missiles, making them harder to detect and intercept - flew 2,000 kilometres (1,240 miles) over the sea before hitting their targets, the Korean Central News Agency said. Kim made acquiring tactical nukes - smaller, lighter weapons designed for battlefield use - a top priority at a key party congress in January 2021.

India SC panel divided over school hijab ban

REUTERS, New Delhi

An Indian Supreme Court panel yesterday said it was divided over a ban on hijabs in schools, and referred the matter to the chief justice, effectively leaving in place a state's ruling against the women's headgear that has sparked uproar. Karnataka in southwestern India in February became the only state to ban the garment in schools, triggering protests by Muslim students and their parents. The chief justice would set up a larger bench to consider the case. Supreme Court decisions apply nationwide.

Table with 2 columns: 'বিভিন্ন স্থলবন্দরের নিরাপত্তা সেবার জন্য ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (OTM)' and 'সৌপরিবেশন মন্ত্রণালয়'. It lists various tender items for security services at different ports and airports.

Advertisement for 'নোয়াখালী বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়' (Noakhali Science and Technology University). It includes the university logo, contact information, and details about an admission test for the 2021-22 academic year. It lists various departments like Computer Science, Electronics, and Mechanical Engineering.