

A third face life in climate hotspots

Scientists tell COP27

THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION, Sharm El Sheikh

About 1.6 billion people now live in climate change “vulnerability hotspots”, a number that could double by 2050 if fossil fuels continue being used at the rate they are today, scientists warned at the COP27 UN climate talks in Egypt.

That would put a third of the world’s population at risk of weather disasters, water and food shortages, displacement and other threats that could spur social instability, said Johan Rockström, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany.

Limiting global temperature rise as a result of climate change to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) - the more ambitious target of the 2015 Paris Agreement - “is not a goal, it is



a physical limit”, he warned at a press conference.

“Go beyond it and we are likely to trigger tipping points,” such as irreversible melting of Greenland ice that could set in motion 7 metres (23 feet) of sea level rise over time, enough to swamp key coastal cities, he said.

Scientists, who have been issuing a drumbeat of increasingly frank reports and warnings about growing climate risks, are hoping to inject that urgency into UN climate negotiations that started this week in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el Sheikh.

With fossil fuel emissions still rising, despite a need for them to fall by 45 percent within eight years to keep the 1.5C goal alive, scientists are thinking about how to better grab attention to enact change.

“How we can deliver this message and try to attract more action?” said Mercedes Bustamante, an ecologist at the University of Brasilia.



Climate activists stage a protest during the COP27 climate conference in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, yesterday.

Global food import costs rise to record in 2022: FAO

REUTERS, London

Food imports costs across the world are on course to hit a near \$2 trillion record in 2022, piling pressure on the globe’s poorest countries who likely shipped in considerably less volumes of food, the UN Food Agency said yesterday.

World food prices soared to record levels in March after Russia invaded Ukraine, a key grains and oilseeds producer, and while they have since retreated somewhat, they remain above last year’s lofty levels.

The increase is disproportionately affecting economically vulnerable countries, and is expected to

continue doing so next year even as the overall agricultural supply situation is set to improve a bit.

“These are alarming signs from a food security perspective,” the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said its twice-yearly Food Outlook report.

The world’s food import bill is projected to reach \$1.94 trillion this year, up 10 percent year-on-year and higher than previously expected, the FAO said.

It noted that low income countries’ food import volumes are seen shrinking 10 percent as their food import bill for the year remains almost unchanged, pointing to

growing accessibility issues.

“Importers are finding it difficult to finance rising international costs, potentially heralding an end of their resilience to higher international prices,” the FAO said.

In terms of agricultural inputs like fertilisers, which require a lot of energy to produce, the FAO said global import costs are set to rise nearly 50 percent this year to \$424 billion, forcing some countries to buy and use less.

This will inevitably lead to lower productivity, lower domestic food availability and “negative repercussions for global agricultural output and food security” in 2023, it said.

METHANE TRACING UN unveils satellite-based system

AFP, Sharm el Sheikh

The UN yesterday unveiled a satellite based system to detect methane emissions as part of efforts to cut down on the major contributor to global warming.

The Methane Alert and Response System (MARS) was announced by the UN Environment Programme during the COP27 climate summit. MARS will use data from global mapping satellites to detect methane “hot spots” and large plumes of the gas, and identify its source, the UNEP said in a statement.

BIDEN-XI MEET China warns US on Taiwan briefing

REUTERS, Beijing

China yesterday condemned a White House plan to brief Taiwan on the results of a much-anticipated meeting between President Joe Biden and his counterpart, Xi Jinping, next week on the sidelines of a G20 gathering in Indonesia. The two leaders will meet on Monday, the White House said, for their first face-to-face meeting since Biden became president, amid low expectations for significant breakthroughs. China confirmed the planned meeting but did not give a date. White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan announced the plan to brief Taiwan about the talks on Thursday, telling reporters the United States aimed to make Taiwan feel “secure and comfortable” about US support. But Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said any such briefing by the United States for Taiwan would violate a US promise to maintain only non-official contacts with the island. Several analysts have said that both sides may use the talks to seek clarification on each other’s “red lines”, identifying areas for cooperation and to stabilise relations, but significant progress is unlikely. “I don’t think we can expect any breakthrough,” Collin Koh, a research fellow at Singapore’s S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies told Reuters.

MYANMAR CRISIS Asean agrees to talk to opposition

AFP, Phnom Penh

Southeast Asian leaders yesterday agreed to engage Myanmar opposition groups as they seek ways to quell the country’s escalating bloodshed which has seen thousands killed in clashes since last year’s coup. The Myanmar crisis dominated the first day of a gathering of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) regional bloc in Phnom Penh that US President Joe Biden will join today. Myanmar has spiralled into bloody conflict since the military ousted Aung San Suu Kyi’s civilian government in February last year. Asean agreed upon a “five-point consensus” peace plan with Myanmar in April last year but the junta has so far ignored it and the bloc has struggled for months to come up with ways to enforce it. Frustrated by generals’ foot-dragging, leaders yesterday tasked their foreign ministers with drawing up “an implementation plan that outlines concrete indicators with specific timeline”.

Drone taxi takes

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only passengers aboard, but admits that a lot of work was still needed in terms of infrastructure, airspace integration and public acceptance.

Test pilot Paul Stone said that the craft’s digital fly-by-wire system and multiple rotors make it much easier to fly than a traditional helicopter.

“In a helicopter, when you move one control, three things happen, and it’s like patting your head and rubbing your tummy - it’s a coordination exercise. In this aircraft, they take away all that difficulty, and it’s very simple controls in each axis, that’s what makes it easier to fly,” he said.

Valérie Pecresse, president of the Ile-de-France region around Paris, said the region had provided financial support for the initiative as she wants the first passenger flight in a vertical takeoff and landing aircraft to take place here.

“The development of low-altitude aviation for urban air mobility is an adventure full of promises,” she said in a statement.

USA first team

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of players were on a Qatar Airways jet from New York that was among the first flights to use a new part of Hamad international airport that opened Thursday, an AFP photographer at the airport said.

Many in the 26-man squad, including captain Christian Pulisic, are based in Europe and still have domestic league games to play this weekend.

Team USA start Group B against Wales on November 21, followed by England on November 25 and then a crunch match against Iran, which has become one of the hot tickets in Doha because of the political rivalries between the two countries.

India SC frees

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Gandhi became India’s youngest prime minister after his mother and predecessor Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards in 1984.

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Rising crime posing regional

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According to UN Office of Drugs and Crimes, an estimated 240 casinos have been built in 120 special economic zones in the Mekong subregion and some of these areas have become hubs of serious criminal activities.

USIP report says the victims of crimes tell more or less the similar stories: A Kenyan national responded to a Facebook ad for a high-paying job in Thailand and was tricked into illegally crossing the border to a scam zone in Myanmar.

Then, a Malaysian man began a romantic relationship through social media and, after a single meeting, wound up trafficked into Myanmar.

“Once in the zones, the victims are given three choices: staff online

Lighterage workers

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Beach area for the last one and a half years.

As workers were facing problems for a lack of ghat, CPA constructed a ghat in Charpara area to be used by the lighter vessel workers to go to their vessels by boats. CPA also leased out the jetty to a firm in September last year.

Since then the staff of the leasing firm and the lighter workers have been at loggerheads.

According to workers’ leaders, the former CPA chairman ensured them that the ghat would not be leased to anybody and only to be used by the lighter vessel workers but the incumbent port chairman leased it out.

Nabi Alam said staffers of the leasing firm very often harass the

Ukrainian troops

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proves that whatever Russia says or does, Ukraine will win,” Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba wrote on social media.

He posted an amateur video showing Ukrainians removing a billboard near Kherson that proclaimed: “Russia is here forever”.

Ukraine’s parliament published pictures of people with Ukrainian flags in the city centre.

Kherson was the first major urban hub to fall to Russian troops after President Vladimir Putin announced Moscow’s “special military operation” in Ukraine, and it was the only regional capital his forces seized.

Its full recapture by Kyiv would

scams, pay ransom or face physical and psychological torture,” USIP report said.

Between February and March 2022, construction of new enclaves exploded along a 40-km stretch of the Moei River. USIP has so far identified 15 distinct criminal zones in the area.

“For the Myanmar army, revenue from organised crime via corrupt border guard forces has become a key pillar of its survival strategy.”

So long as the current regime in Myanmar holds power, organised crime will spread to new parts of the country and increasingly pose a global security threat.

“Failure to address these growing challenges to global security will only encourage their unchecked spread and mutation into even more sinister forms.”

workers and in a recent case, they assaulted eight to nine workers on November 3.

He alleged that immediately they went to Patenga Police Station but the police did not lodge any complaint regarding the assault.

In protest, the workers on November 6 shifted all the lighter vessels near the Parky Beach area in Anwara upazila and started using the Chinese Ghat near Shah Amanat Airport Road but CPA evicted that ghat on Wednesday.

Alam said many workers who came to the coast for groceries could not reach the vessels as CPA did not allow boats at Chinese Ghat forcing many workers on board the vessels to starve that night that forced the general workers to go on strike.

be a political and symbolic blow to Putin and open a gateway for Ukraine’s forces to the entire Kherson region, with access to both the Black Sea in the west and Sea of Azov in the east.

Meanwhile, UN officials were holding talks with Russian officials yesterday on the Black Sea agreements on exporting grain and fertilisers, eight days before one of the deals is set to expire.

UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths and Rebeca Grynspar, head of UN trade and development agency UNCTAD, were meeting a high-level delegation from Moscow, led by Russian deputy foreign minister Sergei Vershinin.

‘Life of the planet’

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“It’s a duty and responsibility of global leadership. Countries that are in a position to help should be supporting developing countries so they can make decisive climate decisions -- facilitating their energy transitions, building a path to prosperity compatible with our climate imperative,” Biden told the audience.

Prior to his arrival, Biden’s administration sought to set the stage by unveiling a domestic plan to crack down hard on the US oil and gas industry’s emissions of methane, one of the most powerful greenhouse gases, in a move that defied months of lobbying by drillers.

Washington and the EU were also planning to issue a joint declaration yesterday pledging more action on oil industry methane, building on an international deal launched last year and since signed by 119 nations to cut economy-wide emissions 30 percent this decade.

The announcements come under a cloud of skepticism that world governments are doing enough to address warming.

A United Nations report released last week showed global emissions on track to rise 10.6 percent by 2030 compared with 2010 levels, even as devastating storms, droughts, wildfires and floods are already inflicting billions of dollars in damage worldwide.

Scientists say emissions must instead drop 43 percent by that time to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial temperatures as targeted by the Paris Agreement of 2015 — the threshold above which climate change risks start spinning out of control.

Many countries, including the United States and members of the European Union, are also calling for increased supply of fossil fuels in the near-term to help bring down consumer energy prices that have spiked since Russia’s war on Ukraine.

Meanwhile, UN organizers have been criticized by human rights activists for holding the COP27 in Egypt, whose government has been accused of abuses since a 2013 military overthrow of its first democratically elected president.

Upon arrival, Egypt’s President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi told US President Joe Biden that Egypt has launched a national strategy for human rights and is keen to develop in that regard.

4 Bangladeshi origin

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On the other hand, Republican candidate Aboul won the post of New Hampshire House of Representatives for the fifth time in a row.

Nabilah tweeted, “We won with 53 percent of the vote in a challenging year. Our margin of victory is a testament to our brilliant team & hard-working volunteers. We ran a strong campaign & fought hard. My sincerest thank you to the voters who put their trust in me to be their voice in the state senate.”

Raised in Gwinnett County, Nabilah describes herself as a lifelong fighter, organiser, and community advocate dedicated to advancing Democratic causes and values, according to information available on her website.

She graduated from Gwinnett County Public Schools and put herself through college at Georgia State University by working at a luggage store in Peachtree Corners.

Australia blames Russian hackers for medical data theft

AFP, Sydney

Russian hackers carried out a cyberattack on a major Australian healthcare company that breached the data of 9.7 million people, including the country’s prime minister, police said yesterday.

The hackers started leaking the data this week after Medibank, the country’s largest health insurer, refused to pay a \$9.7 million (Aus\$15 million) ransom.

Australian Federal Police commissioner Reece Kershaw blamed the attack on Russia-based “cyber criminals”.

“We believe those responsible for the breach are in Russia,” he told reporters.

“Our intelligence points to a group of loosely affiliated cyber criminals who are likely responsible for past significant breaches across the world.”

The hackers have been drip-feeding the stolen data to a dark web forum.

The first leaks appeared to have been selected to cause maximum harm: targeting those who received treatment related to drug abuse, sexually transmitted infections, or pregnancy terminations.

Kershaw said the hackers also appeared to be supported by people living outside Russia.

“These cyber criminals are operating like a business with

affiliates and associates who are supporting the business.

“We also believe that some affiliates may be in other countries.”

He added that Australian police would be working with Interpol and seeking the cooperation of their counterparts in Russia.

“We’ll be holding talks with Russian law enforcement about these individuals,” he said.

“Russia benefits from the intelligence sharing and data shared through Interpol and with that comes responsibilities and accountability.”

Australia has repeatedly condemned Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and has provided Kyiv with hundreds of millions of dollars in aid and military equipment.

Australia’s foreign intelligence agency in April warned that backing Ukraine could open the country up to reprisals from Russian hackers.

Pro-BNP

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is a neighbour of Tanu, he said, adding that Farid is wanted in five cases for various crimes, including murder.

Contacted, Tanu’s sister Lopa said, “My brother left home around 9:00pm. I heard four gunshots soon afterwards.”

She alleged that Tanu’s rivals killed him.