

NEW RESEARCH

G20 per capita coal emissions growing

AFP, Bangkok

G20 per capita coal emissions continue to rise despite climate pledges and transition efforts by some members of the group of major economies, new research showed yesterday.

The group, whose leaders meet in New Delhi this weekend, accounts for 80 percent of global power sector emissions.

But in talks in July, it failed to agree that global emissions should peak by 2025 or to massively ramp up renewable energy use.

Between 2015 and 2022, per capita G20 coal emissions rose nine percent, according to the research published yesterday by Ember, an energy think tank that pushes for renewable power.

Twelve G20 members were able to significantly decrease per capita emissions.

INDIA'S KASHMIR
Top judges to consider direct rule

AFP, New Delhi

India's Supreme Court yesterday concluded its hearing on a challenge to New Delhi's 2019 imposition of direct rule in Jammu and Kashmir, a snap decision that led to protests and mass arrests.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government suspended Article 370 of the constitution that guarantees limited autonomy to the disputed region.

The five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud will now retire to consider if the move was legal despite lacking the endorsement from parliament usually required for constitutional change. No timeline has been given for their decision.

The Supreme Court in New Delhi heard arguments over 16 days from government lawyers, constitutional experts representing Kashmir's pro-India political parties, and others challenging the move.

India has for decades stationed more than half a million soldiers on its side of divided Kashmir, which is also claimed by Pakistan.

The rivals have fought three wars over control of the region.

AFRICA CLIMATE TALKS
Billions pledged for green development

AFP, Nairobi

The UAE pledged \$4.5 billion in clean energy investments in Africa yesterday at a landmark climate summit aimed to showcase the continent's potential as a green powerhouse.

Kenyan President William Ruto has sought to use the Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi to shift the narrative on the region, presenting the clean energy transition as a unique opportunity for Africa – if it can attract the financing to realise its potential.

And yesterday, the conference saw its most significant pledge so far, with \$4.5 billion announced by the United Arab Emirates, which will also host the COP28 summit in Dubai in November-December.

Sultan Al Jaber, who heads the UAE's national oil company ADNOC and government-owned renewable energy company Masdar, said the investment would “jumpstart a pipeline of bankable clean energy projects in this very important continent”.

Jaber, who is also president of the COP28 climate summit, said a consortium including Masdar would help develop 15 gigawatts of clean power by 2030.

Africa's renewable generation capacity was 56 GW in 2022, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency.

The three-day Nairobi summit, which began Monday, has attracted heads of state, government and industry, including leaders from Mozambique and Tanzania, as well as United Nations head Antonio Guterres, EU chief Ursula von der Leyen and US climate envoy John Kerry.



From left to right, Cook Islands PM Mark Brown, Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin, Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., Singapore PM Lee Hsien Loong, Thailand Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sarun Charoensuwan, Vietnam's PM Pham Minh Chinh, Indonesian President Joko Widodo, Laotian PM Sonexay Siphandone, Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Cambodia's PM Hun Manet, Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim and East Timor's PM Xanana Gusmao hold hands as they pose for a family photo during the opening ceremony of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit in Jakarta, Indonesia yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Russia downs Ukrainian drones targeting Moscow

Almost 50 flights disrupted; Kyiv says its troops regain more territory on eastern front

REUTERS

Russia shot down at least three Ukraine-launched drones early yesterday that were targeting the country's capital, the Russian defence ministry said.

The ministry said that its air defence systems destroyed two drones over the Kaluga and Tver regions, which border the Moscow region, as well as one closer to the capital, over the Istra district of the Moscow region.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said that the drones “were trying to carry out an attack on Moscow” and that a consumer services facility was damaged in the Istra district, which is located some 65 km (40 miles) northwest of the Kremlin.

There was no damage or casualties elsewhere, the mayor defence ministry said.

Sobyanin said that drone debris in the Tver region fell in the Zavidovo village. According to RIA state news agency, Zavidodvo is home to “Rus”, an official residence palace of the Russian president.

President Vladimir Putin's main residences are the Novo-Ogaryovo residence in the Moscow region as well as the Grand Kremlin Palace – where official events are held.

Russian news agencies reported that almost 50 flights were cancelled or postponed early yesterday from the four major airports around the capital – Vnukovo, Domodedovo,



Sheremeteyev and Zhukovsky.

Meanwhile, Ukraine said its troops had regained more territory on the eastern front and were advancing south in their counteroffensive against Russian forces while President Zelensky visited two front-line areas.

Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar said Kyiv's forces had retaken about 3 square km (1.16 square miles) of land in the past week around the eastern city of Bakhmut, which was captured by Russian troops in May after months of heavy fighting.

However, Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu yesterday described Ukraine's counteroffensive as completely unsuccessful, but said the situation in part of the southern Zaporizhzhia region which Russia

controls was tense.

At least 916 people were killed or injured by cluster munitions in Ukraine last year amid broad Russian use of the widely-banned weapons, propelling global casualty figures to record levels, a report showed yesterday.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February last year, it has “extensively” used stocks of old cluster munitions and newly developed ones, the Cluster Munition Coalition said in an annual report.

In a separate development, Cuba has uncovered a human trafficking ring that has coerced its citizens to fight for Russia in the war in Ukraine, its foreign ministry said, adding that Cuban authorities were working to “neutralize and dismantle” the network.

Iran arrests Mahsa Amini uncle ahead of death anniversary

AFP, Paris

Iranian authorities yesterday arrested an uncle of Mahsa Amini, the young Iranian Kurdish woman who died in custody sparking months of protests, just ahead of the first anniversary of her death, reports said yesterday.

Safa Aeli, 30, was arrested by security forces in the family's hometown of Sazez in western Iran and taken to an unknown location, the Kurdish-focused Hengaw rights group, France-based Kurdistan Human Rights Network and the 1500tasvir protest monitor said in separate statements.

Hengaw said Iranian authorities deployed a convoy of five vehicles filled with members of the security forces to forcibly enter Aeli's residence, without presenting any legal documentation.

Media based outside Iran said Sazez is under particular scrutiny, with hotels told not to accept outsiders and new security cameras being set up including around Amini's grave.

The arrest comes as activists accuse the Iranian government of stepping up a crackdown ahead of September 16 anniversary of the death of Amini, 22.

Myanmar junta 'likely' to hold polls in 2025

Say party officials; source says ex-leader Suu Kyi ailing

AGENCIES

Myanmar's junta will likely hold elections in 2025, party officials told AFP yesterday, even as the military struggles to crush resistance to its rule. The military justified its February 2021 putsch with unsubstantiated claims of widespread fraud in 2020 elections won resoundingly by Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD). Meanwhile, a source familiar with the shadow government said yesterday Suu Kyi is ailing and a request for an outside physician to see her has been denied by the country's military rulers. The 78-year-old Nobel laureate instead has been treated by a prisons department doctor, reports Reuters. “She was suffering swelling in her gums and could not eat well and is feeling light-headed along with vomiting,” said the source, who declined to be identified due to fear of arrest. A senior member of the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party told AFP: “Elections are likely to be held in 2025.” “We have a census-taking process in 2024. Because of the situation and that nationwide census process, next year is impossible,” they said. Thirty-six political parties have been granted permission to take part in any future polls, the junta-stacked election commission said yesterday.

REPORT INTO VIOLENCE
Manipur charges four journalists
The Editors Guild urges the govt to drop the cases

REUTERS, Guwahati

Indian police in Manipur state have filed criminal charges against four journalists, accusing them of misrepresenting facts in a report about the violent clashes between ethnic groups earlier this year. The four were senior journalists working on a report, which was released this month, for the Editors Guild of India that was seeking to assess how coverage of violence in the state was being conducted. The report stated that there “are clear indications that the leadership of the state became partisan during the conflict”. Manipur's chief minister N. Biren Singh on Monday accused the journalists of trying to “provoke clashes” with the coverage. In a statement, the Editors Guild urged the government to drop the cases, saying it was shocked by the chief minister's comments.

The journalists – Seema Mustafa, who is president of the Editors Guild, Seema Guha, Bharat Bhushan and Sanjay Kapoor – could not be immediately reached for comment. The New Delhi-based Press Club of India also demanded that the charges be withdrawn.

At least 180 people have been killed in Manipur after deadly ethnic violence broke out in May between members of the majority Meitei ethnic group and minority Kuki community over the sharing of economic benefits and quotas. An internet shutdown ordered in the state governed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) contributed to biased reporting by local media aligned with warring ethnic groups, the journalists' report said.



Afghan teachers appear for a competitive examination held by Herat's Education department under Afghanistan's Ministry of Education for the purpose of their recruitment in various schools in Herat yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

6b tonnes of sand extracted from oceans each year: UN

AFP, Geneva

Some six billion tonnes of sand and other sediment is extracted from the world's seas and oceans every year, the UN said yesterday, warning of the devastating toll on biodiversity and coastal communities.

Launching the first ever global data platform on sediment extraction in marine environments, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), warned that the scale of dredging was growing, with dire consequences.

“The scale of environmental impacts of shallow sea mining activities and dredging is alarming,” said Pascal Peduzzi, who heads UNEP's analytics centre GRID-Geneva.

He pointed to the effects on biodiversity, as well as on water turbidity, and noise impacts on marine mammals.