

Environment News Futures

Vanuatu's Big Plea Does Little to Arrest Climate Change

R.R. Rashmi—November 4, 2022—The Hindu

Having a universal Non Proliferation Treaty banning the use of fossil fuels globally would do very little to arrest the problem of climate change

There is a strong belief in some quarters that the next climate conference, just days away in Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt this year (COP27) may not discuss climate change mitigation largely on account of the ongoing energy stress in Europe.

India Will Insist on Action, Clear Framework at COP27

Jacob Koshy—November 3, 2022—The Hindu

Environment Minister says that clarity will be sought on climate finance and technology transfer from developed countries, while more support would be offered to developing countries

Punjab Refused to Use Biodecomposer to Control Stubble Burning: Union Environment Minister

The Hindu Bureau—November 4, 2022

Punjab had committed to using the biodecomposer in only 5,000 acres, while the total area under paddy cultivation in the State is almost 75 lakh acres

With air quality in the National Capital Region (NCR) expected to deteriorate to “severe” conditions, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said that Punjab had fallen short of its commitments to curb stubble burning by “officially refusing” to use the biodecomposer spray that reportedly helps farmers to manage their paddy straw (*See Snapshot 1*).

Curious Collage Shows Rhino horns are Shrinking Due to the Impact of Hunting

Rahul Kharmarkar—Gauhati—November 3, 2022

The horns of rhinoceroses may have become smaller over time due to the impact of hunting, according to a recent study which used an interesting research approach—analysing artwork and photographs of the animal spanning more than five centuries. The study, published in the latest edition of *People and Nature* by the British Ecological Society, relied on a repository of images maintained by the Netherlands-based Rhino Research Center (RRC) (*See Snapshot 2*).

“We found evidence for declining horn length over time across species, perhaps related to selective pressure of hunting, and indicating a utility for image-based approaches in understanding societal perceptions of large vertebrates and trait evolution,” said the study, authored by scientists from the Universities of Helsinki and Cambridge, as well as the RRC.

Rhinos have long been hunted for their horns, which are highly valued in some cultures. The five surviving rhino species are still threatened by habitat loss and hunting. The study found that the rate of decline in horn length was highest in the critically-endangered Sumatran rhino and lowest in the white rhino of Africa, which is the most commonly found species both in the wild and in captivity. This observation follows patterns seen in other animals, such as tusk size in elephants and horn length in wild sheep, which have been driven down by directional selection due to trophy hunting, the study said.

The RRC’s repository, curated by experts, holds a collection of more than 4,000 rhino images, including artistic portrayals from as early as 1481 as well as photographs, of which the earliest was taken in 1862.

The scientists used this repository for two separate research approaches. They studied 3,158 images to assess the changes in representations of rhinos and human interactions with the animal over the last 500 years. They also identified 80 images, including all five rhino species, to analyse changes in horn length over time, extracting morphological data from photographs.

Heat Waves Cost Poor Countries the Most, Exacerbating Inequality

AFP—October 29, 2022

Periods of extreme heat cost the global economy about \$16 trillion dollars between 1992 and 2013

Heat waves, intensified by climate change, have cost the global economy trillions of dollars in the last 30 years, a study published Friday found, with poor countries paying the steepest price.

And those lopsided economic effects contribute to widening inequalities around the world, according to the research.

Climate Change: Kilimanjaro's and Africa's Last Glaciers to go by 2050, Says UN

By Patrick Hughes—BBC News Climate and Science

Glaciers across the globe—including the last ones in Africa—will be unavoidably lost by 2050 due to climate change, the UN says in a report.

Glaciers in a third of UN World Heritage sites will melt within three decades, a UNESCO report found.

Mount Kilimanjaro's last glaciers will vanish as will glaciers in the Alps and Yosemite National Park in the US.

They will melt regardless of the world's actions to combat climate change, the authors say.

Why the Sun was 'Smiling' in an Image Shared by NASA

A phenomenon called "coronal holes" was spotted on the sun. How does it occur and does it have any impact on life on earth? We explain.

NASA has said coronal holes are important for understanding the space environment around the earth through which technology and astronauts travel. (Photo via [Twitter.com/NASASun](https://twitter.com/NASASun))

Recently, the @NASASun Twitter handle shared an image of the sun seemingly 'smiling'. Captured by the NASA Solar Dynamics Observatory, the image has dark patches on the sun's surface resembling eyes and a smile. NASA explained that the patches are called coronal holes, which can be seen in ultraviolet light but are typically invisible to our eyes (*See Snapshot 3*).

Congo Peat: The 'Lungs of Humanity' which are Under Threat

Congo peatlands dried out 5,000 years ago—researchers

Ed Habershon

BBC News

New research into the world's largest tropical peatlands, in the Congo basin, has revealed that climate change 5,000 years ago led to them drying out, releasing damaging amounts of carbon dioxide, a phenomenon that is threatening to repeat itself today.

The peatlands today store huge amounts of carbon, up to 30 billion tonnes, that if released, would be the equivalent of three years' global carbon emissions.

A team of scientists from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the UK carried out the study in the area this year, and the results will be published in Nature magazine.

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