

1 million species at risk of extinction: UN

Industrial farming, fishing are factors that threaten to end existence of many species, says report

REUTERS
PARIS

Relentless pursuit of economic growth, twinned with the impact of climate change, has put an “unprecedented” one million species at risk of extinction, scientists said on Monday in a landmark report on the damage done by modern civilisation to the natural world.

Only a wide-ranging transformation of the global economic and financial system could pull ecosystems that are vital to the future of human communities world-wide back from the brink of collapse, concluded the report, which was endorsed by 130 countries, including the U.S., Russia and China.

“The essential, interconnected web of life on Earth is getting smaller and increasingly frayed,” said Professor Josef Settele, who co-chaired the study, launched in Paris on Monday by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). “This loss is a direct result of human activity and constitutes a direct threat to human well-being in all regions of the world.”

145 authors, 50 countries

Compiled by 145 expert authors from 50 countries, the study is a cornerstone of an emerging body of research that suggests the world may need to embrace a new “post-growth” form of economics if it is to avert the existential risks posed by the mutually-reinforcing consequences of pollution, habitat destruction and carbon emissions.

Known as the Global Assessment, the report found that up to one million of Earth’s estimated eight million plant, insect and animal species is at risk of extinction, many within decades.

ELSEWHERE



Thai King makes first public address

BANGKOK
Thailand’s newly-crowned King Maha Vajiralongkorn praised the show of “unity” at his first public address on the final day of an elaborate coronation on Monday, speaking to supporters and witnessed by the head of the junta that has led the country since 2014. **AFP**

Re-poll ordered for Istanbul election

ISTANBUL
Turkey’s top election body on Monday ordered a re-run of the Istanbul mayoral election after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s party complained about its shock defeat, the state news agency reported. The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) narrowly lost in the March 31 local election for Mayor. **AFP**

Question of survival

A 1,800-page Global Assessment Report, compiled by a UN agency from more than 1,500 academic papers, says that the world’s life support systems are in trouble. Here are the report’s key findings:

<p>Extinction 1 million species face the risk of extinction – many within decades 5,00,000 plants and animals currently have “insufficient habitat for long-term survival” 40% of amphibian species are threatened with extinction, along with 33% of reef-forming corals and 33% of marine mammals ▪ Loss of pollinators caused by intensive farming is putting \$235-\$577 billion worth of annual crop output at risk</p>	<p>Consumption 1/3rd of all land is used to make food ▪ Food cultivation uses 75% of all fresh water on Earth 25% of man-made emissions come from agriculture, the vast majority of them from meat production 50% of all new agricultural land is taken from forests 93% of marine fish stocks are either overfished or fished to the limit of sustainability One-third of all fishing is said to be illegal or unreported</p>	<p>Pollution ▪ Humans dump up to 400 million tonnes of heavy metals, toxic sludge and other waste into oceans and rivers each year 75% of land, 40% of oceans and 50% of rivers “manifest severe impacts of degradation” from human activity ▪ Plastic production has increased 10-fold since 1990 ▪ Pollution from fertilizers has led to the formation of 400 low-oxygen ‘dead zones’ in coastal waters, covering more than 2,45,000 sq km</p>	<p>Climate 5% of Earth’s species are at risk of extinction if the temperature rises just 2°Celsius – still within the targets of the Paris climate deal ▪ Business as usual is predicted to warm Earth 4.3°Celsius by 2100. Were that to happen, one-sixth of all species could be wiped out ▪ Many of the policies that scientists hope could limit temperature rise by 2100 to 1.5°Celsius would also help human beings to preserve biodiversity</p>
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Source: AFP, Reuters

The authors identified industrial farming and fishing as major drivers with the current rate of species extinction, tens to hundreds of times higher than the average over the last 10 million years. Climate change caused by burning the coal, oil and gas produced by the fossil fuel industry is exacerbating the losses, the report found. Robert Watson, a British environmental scientist

who chairs the IPBES, said it would be possible to start conserving, restoring and using nature sustainably only if societies were prepared to confront “vested interests” committed to preserving the *status quo*.

“The report also tells us that it is not too late to make a difference, but only if we start now at every level from local to global,” Mr. Watson said in a statement. “By

transformative change, we mean a fundamental, system-wide reorganisation across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values.”

The report’s blunt language echoed the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which said in October that profound economic and social changes would be need-

ed to curb greenhouse gases quickly enough to avert the most devastating consequences of a warming world.

The findings will also add to pressure for countries to agree bold action to protect wildlife at a major conference on biodiversity due to take place in China towards the end of next year.

Three-year review

The Global Assessment contained a litany of estimates made after a three-year review of some 15,000 scientific papers that showed the profound impact of the rise of a globalised industrial society on the planet over the past half century.

Combining wide-ranging disciplines to measure how the loss of the natural world affects human societies, the report identified a range of risks, from the disappearance of insects vital for pollinating food crops, to the destruction of coral reefs that support fish populations that sustain coastal communities, or the loss of medicinal plants. The report found that the average abundance of native species in most major land-based habitats has fallen by at least 20%, mostly since 1900.

The threatened list includes more than 40% of amphibian species, almost 33% of reef-forming corals, and more than a third of all marine mammals. The picture was less clear for insect species, but a tentative estimate suggests 10% are at risk of extinction. “We have been running from one frontier to another frontier trying to find cheap nature (to exploit) in every corner of the planet,” said Eduardo Brondizio, a professor of anthropology at Indiana University in the United States who co-chaired the Global Assessment. “The key message: business as usual has to end.”

Lightning caused emergency landing of Sukhoi plane: pilot

Says full fuel tanks could have caused the aircraft to catch fire

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MOSCOW

The pilot of a Russian passenger plane that erupted in a ball of fire on the runway of Moscow’s busiest airport, killing 41 people, said lightning led to the emergency landing.

Investigators were on Monday working to understand the causes of the blaze after the Sukhoi Superjet-100 had to return to Sheremetyevo Airport shortly after take-off Sunday evening.

Communication lost

Pilot Denis Yevdokimov told Russian media that the aircraft lost communication and needed to switch to emergency control mode “because of lightning” on the Aeroflot flight to the Arctic city of Murmansk. He did not specify if the plane was struck directly.

“We managed to restore communication through the emergency frequency on our radio connection. But the link was only for a short time and kept cutting out... it was possible to say only a few words,” he told the *Kom-*



The Sukhoi Superjet-100 after it made an emergency landing in Sheremetyevo Airport in Moscow, Russia, on Sunday. **AP**

somolskaya Pravda newspaper.

Videos on social media showed the plane crash-landing and then speeding along the runway with flames pouring from its fuselage. People could be seen leaping onto an inflatable slide at the front and running from the blazing plane as columns of black smoke billowed into the sky.

Another video shot inside the cabin showed roaring flames outside the window and passengers crying out in panic. Mr. Yevdokimov said he believed the plane burst into flames on landing, most likely because of full fuel tanks.

Aside from the dead, nine

people were in hospital, three of them seriously injured, authorities said. The jet – carrying 73 passengers and five crew members – took off from Sheremetyevo at 6.02 p.m. (1502 GMT) and the crew issued a distress signal shortly afterwards, officials said.

Flight tracking site Flight-radar24 showed the plane circling near the capital before landing.

The aircraft’s black boxes have been found and handed over to investigators, a source in the Russian emergency services told news agencies. Transport Minister Yevgeny Dietrich said there were no plans to ground the Superjet-100 model.

Ceasefire takes hold along Gaza

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GAZA CITY

Palestinian leaders in Gaza announced a ceasefire with Israel on Monday to end a deadly two-day escalation in violence that threatened to widen into a fourth war between them since 2008.

An Israeli military spokeswoman declined to comment on the deal, but there appeared to have been no rocket fire or Israeli strikes in the hours after it was due

to take effect, an AFP correspondent in Gaza said. Israel also lifted restrictions on civilian movements in communities around the Gaza border on Monday morning.

Egypt brokered the agreement to cease hostilities from 4.30 a.m., said an official from the strip’s Islamist rulers Hamas and another from its allied group Islamic Jihad. An Egyptian official also confirmed the deal.

The escalation began on

Saturday with massive rocket fire from Gaza, drawing waves of Israeli retaliatory strikes. At least 25 Palestinians were killed. Four Israelis were also killed.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not address the ceasefire in a Monday statement, but said: “We’ve forcefully struck Hamas and Islamic Jihad.” “The battle is not over and demands patience and discretion,” he said.

Boeing 737 MAX engineers spotted a glitch in 2017

But the management was unaware

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Boeing engineers identified a fault with a pilot warning system on its 737 MAX aircraft in 2017, a year before the Lion Air crash, the company said on Sunday. Boeing said that management was unaware of the issue until the crash in Indonesia, which killed 189 people.

According to Boeing, a supposedly standard piece of equipment that tells pilot about disagreements between angle of attack (AOA) indicators – which measure the plane’s angle vis-a-vis the on-coming air to warn of impending stalls – did not in fact activate unless an additional optional indicator was purchased by airlines.

That left airlines that did not buy the optional indicator – including both Lion



A Boeing 737 MAX aeroplane. **AP**

Air and Ethiopian Airlines – without the safety feature.

Faulty angle of attack indicator information may have played a role in both of the deadly crashes, causing the 737 MAX anti-stall system to unnecessarily activate and push the nose down toward the ground even as pilots fought to maintain altitude.

May looking at second vote if talks fail

REUTERS
LONDON

British Prime Minister Theresa May has carried out “scenario planning” for a second Brexit referendum in case she is forced by Parliament to hold one, *The Daily Telegraph* newspaper reported on Monday.

Ms. May is hoping to find a way to get Parliament to approve a Brexit plan without another public vote, but talks with the Opposition Labour Party on a compromise exit strategy have yet to reach an agreement.

The Telegraph reported that Ms. May had discussions with officials and Ministers about holding a referendum that would give voters the choice between leaving the European Union (EU) with a deal, leaving without a deal, or not leaving at all.

Money, assets of Sri Lanka bombers recovered

CID has discovered assets worth over LKR 7 billion belonging to the attackers

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka’s Criminal Investigations Department (CID) has chanced upon LKR 140 million in cash and assets worth over LKR 7 billion that belonged to the suicide bomber squad believed to have carried out the Easter attacks, police said on Monday. Police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekara said the CID had confiscated part of the cash, while the remaining is in bank accounts maintained by suspects. The discovery comes as part of the ongoing investigation into the serial explosions, in which over 250 people died.

A fortnight after the coordinated blasts, security forces continued search operations and raids to eliminate any potential threat.

Meanwhile, in the first instance of violence reported



Cautious return: Students having their bags checked as schools reopened in Batticaloa on Monday. **GETTY IMAGES**

since the blasts, a mob late on Sunday attacked homes and vehicles owed by Muslims in Negombo, some 40 km north of Colombo. The coastal town, among the targets on April 21, lost over a 100 people in the blast at its St. Sebastian’s church.

Following clashes on Sunday night, a police curfew was abruptly imposed as authorities feared overnight

Christians, Buddhists and Muslims to be patient, show restraint and ensure the peace we maintained after the Easter bombings,” he said. Many schools, which were closed following the Easter bombings, reopened on Monday, “to near-empty” classrooms, Reuters reported. Amid enhanced security checks at schools and persisting fear of possible repeat attacks, parents decided not to send their children to school. Heavy military presence was visible in the capital and across the island as Sri Lanka’s Muslims geared up for Ramzan.

Further, the Mahanayake Theras, chief prelates representing four influential Buddhist temples, have urged the public to avoid huge gatherings or festivities around Vesak, a key Buddhist festival later this month.