



Week ending Friday, April 23, 2021

Whitest White

Painting rooftops with a new type of super-reflective white paint could help reduce the effects of global heating in buildings and curb the need for air conditioning. Researchers at Purdue University say the paint they made with barium sulphate pigment rather than conventional titanium dioxide does not absorb any UV light and reflects 98% of all sunlight. Roofs have been painted white for centuries, but traditional paint reflects only about 80-90% of sunlight and still absorbs the warming UV light. While further tests for durability are needed, the developers say the super-white paint could be on the market within two years at a price comparable to conventional products.

Earthquakes

Quake-prone Taiwan was rocked by an unusually strong and prolonged swarm of tremors, centered near Hualien.

- Earth movements were also felt in northeastern Japan, the Indian state of Sikkim, southwestern Iran and the Greek island of Santorini.

Carbon Surge

The International Energy Agency warns that there is likely to be a major surge in greenhouse gas emissions from energy generation this year as the world's economy continues to recover from the pandemic. The Paris-based independent intergovernmental agency predicts in its annual Global Energy Review that CO2 emissions will increase by almost five percent to 36 billion tons by the end of 2021. The IEA believes there will be a four-point-five percent jump in coal demand, exceeding that of 2019 and rivaling the all-time peak from 2014. The agency says this will be the greatest contributor to the predicted surge in CO2 emissions.

Melted Giant

A massive iceberg that broke away from Antarctica in 2017 and threatened the British Overseas Territory of South Georgia earlier this year is no more. Satellite images of what was known as iceberg A68 reveal it is now broken up into so many small fragments that scientists say they are no longer worth tracking. A68 once covered an area of nearly 2,300 square miles but was eventually unable to survive the warm waters and higher air temperatures of the South Atlantic. "Death by hydrofracture, 'slush puppies,'" expert Ted Scambos of the University of Colorado, Boulder, said.

Tropical Cyclones

Super Typhoon Surigae broke several records, including as the earliest tropical cyclone to reach 190 mph in the Northern Hemisphere and for undergoing one of the most rapid typhoon intensifications ever observed. Surigae passed well east of the Philippines but battered the coast with storm surge, high surf and downpours.

- Tropical Storm Jobo threatened the Comoros and coastal Tanzania late in the week. No Indian Ocean cyclones have taken such a path in memory.

Core Discovery

Scientists say they have found evidence of a new, deeper inner core of the planet, which they say could point to an unknown and dramatic event in Earth's geologic history. "Traditionally, we've been taught the Earth has four main layers: the crust, the mantle, the outer core and the inner core," Australian National University geophysicist and lead researcher Joanne Stephenson said. The newly discovered "innermost inner core" was revealed by using a search algorithm to examine decades of seismic data on how different levels of the Earth cause sound waves to slow down.

Volcanic Crisis

St. Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves pleaded with the U.N. to help with the unfolding humanitarian crisis as his country's La Soufrière volcano continued to spew massive amounts of ash. He described the impact of the ash as "apocalyptic." Satellite images show that some of the ash was carried halfway around the world to India by jet stream winds.

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