



Week ending Friday, November 19, 2021

Dangerously Hot

Exposure to extreme heat has tripled among the world's population since 1983, according to an analysis of population and temperature data from Columbia University. The Associated Press analysis looked at the period from 1983 to 2016 and found that the more extreme heat now affects about a quarter of the world's population. Instead of using the more common heat index, the study looked at what is known as the wet-bulb globe temperature, which takes into account temperature, humidity, wind speed, sun angle and cloud cover. This more accurately measures the amount of stress created for workers and others who must endure the hotter conditions outside. South Asia is seeing the most added heat stress, with the Bangladeshi capital of Dhaka suffering 50 more dangerously hot days each year than in 1983. But nearly half of urban centres around the world are also experiencing an increasing amount of heat exposure, the analysis found.

Eruption Survivors

While several beehives on La Palma in the Canary Islands have been lost to lava flows and ash from the eruption of the Cumbre Vieja volcano since September, thousands of bees were rescued from the ash still alive after 50 days of being trapped. Beekeepers dug out six hives from beneath about 1 metre of ash and found that five had survived. The thousands of bees rescued had sealed themselves in with a resinous material they can produce, and survived on their honey food reserves. Cumbre Vieja continues to erupt with vast amounts of lava, but with less force than in previous weeks. The eruption's first human victim was a 70-year-old man who died when his ash-covered roof collapsed.

Indian Cyclone

An unnamed tropical storm brought locally heavy rain to southern India's Tamil Nadu state. • A weaker disturbance drenched the same region six days later.

Earthquakes

Residents just east of Istanbul rushed into the streets as a moderate quake rocked the Turkish province of Duzce. • Earth movements were also felt in southern Iran, western Scotland, Iceland, southeastern Spain, western Australia, southern Sumatra, southeastern Missouri, and the San Francisco Bay Area .

Stinging Attacks

Scorpions forced into people's homes by heavy rain and flooding around Aswan, Egypt, stung about 450 residents, with three reportedly dying from the venom. Those stung suffered severe pain, fever, sweating, vomiting, diarrhoea and muscle tremors. The Arabian fat-tailed scorpions that inhabit the region are among the most dangerous scorpions in the world. Their venom can kill an adult within an hour of being stung.

Arboreal Deaths

Drying soils from climate change are causing trees to die at an increasing rate in forests across Europe. A new study led by Jan-Peter George and colleagues at the Tartu Observatory in Estonia used millions of ground observations rather than satellite data to exclude tree losses from felling, disease, and pests. They found that the Norway spruce has been the hardest hit, with mortality rates 60 percent higher on average between 2010 and 2020 than between 1995 and 2009. But they say all species in every European region are seeing higher mortalities since 2012, mainly due to unusually low soil moisture. The tree deaths increase wildfire risks and cut down on the amount of carbon dioxide soaked up by forests.

Volcanic Blasts

The Philippines' restive Taal Volcano produced three blasts that sent vapor and ash into the sky, 45 km south of Manila. The steam explosions were caused by groundwater coming in contact with magma beneath the surface.

