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BUSINESS MIRROR

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By: Samuel P. Medenilla

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CNN

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By: Ivana Kottasová

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EURO NEWS

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REUTERS

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By: Aftab Ahmed and Shivangi Acharya

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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THE WASHINGTON POST

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By: Alan Yuhas

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

Marcos signs controversial Maharlika Investment Fund (MIF) Act

By: Samuel P. Medenilla

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. on Tuesday signed the controversial Maharlika Investment Fund (MIF) Act to help draw more investors to the country.

The signing ceremony was held at the Kalayaan Hall in Malacañang last Tuesday despite criticisms from some groups that it will expose government funds to possible misappropriation.

In his speech during the event, the President said the MIF will allow the government to “leverage a small fraction of the considerable, but under utilized investable fund of the government” to stimulate the economy without the disadvantage of adding additional fiscal and debt burden.

“The MIF is a bold step towards our country’s meaningful transformation just as we are recovering from the adverse effect of the pandemic. We are now ready to enter a new age of sustainable progress, robust stability and broad-based empowerment,” Marcos said.

The fund, which serves as the country’s first-ever sovereign fund, aims to allow the government to invest its surplus revenues in financial and real assets in its priority sectors namely agriculture, energy, digitalization, and climate change mitigation.

Its capitalization will mainly come from state-run Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) and the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP).

The fund will be managed by the Maharlika Investment Corporation (MIC).

Government agencies and government-owned or controlled corporations (GOCC) providing for the social security and public health insurance of government employees, private sector workers and employees, and other sectors and subsectors such as the Social Security System (SSS) and the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) are prohibited from investing in the MIF.

CNN

[Fake Twitter profiles, Wikipedia editing and PR battles: Inside the push to greenwash the COP28 climate summit](#)

By: Ivana Kottasová

The optics of a major oil-producing country organizing the world's most important climate conference, and appointing an oil company CEO to lead it, are not lost on anyone – including, it seems, the hosts: the United Arab Emirates.

The country has embarked on a major PR campaign to boost its green credentials ahead of the COP28 UN climate summit in Dubai later this year, prompting heavy criticism from climate groups and some politicians.

At the same time, researchers are raising red flags over allegations of more covert influence campaigns, as members of the COP28 team were found by the Centre for Climate Reporting and the Guardian to have been editing Wikipedia pages about the conference's chief, and an army of fake social media accounts has appeared, promoting the country's climate record.

The UAE insists it is “ideally suited” to host COP28, but some climate researchers are concerned these campaigns point to a lack of genuine ambition for the crucial summit, which comes as the world experiences record-breaking heat, deadly rain and flooding, and devastating storms.

It “raises a lot of alarm bells about how much these kinds of influence operations are going to ramp up and become more sophisticated and complex as we get nearer to the time,” said Jennie King, the head of climate research and policy at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD).

The controversial road to COP

The climate summit takes place at a different location each year, with responsibility for hosting rotating among five regional groups.

Other COP summits have also been mired in controversy – and most ended up in deals described, at best, as underwhelming. The 2018 conference took place in Katowice, a town in the middle of Poland's coal country. The UK, which hosted the 2021 summit in Glasgow, is a major oil and gas producer.

But the UAE stands out because of the way it chose to intertwine the summit with its oil business.

In January, the UAE announced Sultan Al Jaber would be the summit president, to the horror of many climate groups. Al Jaber is the UAE's climate envoy and the founder of a renewable energy company, but he is also CEO of the state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC).

The COP28 team told CNN Al Jaber "has a single-minded focus on delivering a transformational COP that unites the world around tangible climate action." But for critics, it is a clear conflict of interest to have the head of a huge fossil fuel company presiding over a climate conference.

And it wasn't just climate organizations that objected. In May, more than 100 members of the US Congress and the European Parliament called for him to step down, claiming his appointment risked undermining the negotiations.

Al Jaber's subsequent comments have done little to calm their concerns. He was criticized in May when he called for a phase out of "fossil fuel emissions," rather than the fossil fuels themselves, which seemed to leave the door open for continued use of oil, coal and gas while relying on technology to deal with the planet-heating pollution they produce.

But Al Jaber has also received some important endorsements. US climate envoy John Kerry told Associated Press that he was "a terrific choice," citing his commitment to expanding renewable energy. The EU climate chief Frans Timmermans said he had "confidence" in Al Jaber, highlighting his track record as someone who "started with sustainability policies long before anyone else in the oil and gas sector."

Al Jaber has recently made more ambitious statements – saying the world must "phase down" fossil fuels themselves – but has so far avoided calling for the complete phase-out of oil, coal and gas that scientific organizations such as Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) say is essential to tackle the climate crisis.

It's not just what's being said in speeches that is concerning some climate groups; it's also what's unfolding online.

In May, members of the COP28 team were accused of attempting to "greenwash" Al Jaber's image through edits to his Wikipedia page, as first reported by the Centre for Climate Reporting and the Guardian.

The log of edits shows that one user, whose identity is unknown but disclosed being paid by ADNOC, requested references to a major oil deal struck by Al Jaber be removed and that references to critical media coverage be deleted.

An admin rejected the edits, saying “well sourced material that includes pertinent information... would always be retained.” The COP28 team did not respond to CNN’s specific questions about the Wikipedia allegations.

Then, in June, researchers started drawing attention to certain Twitter activity.

Climate Action Against Disinformation Project published research last month flagging more than two dozen Twitter accounts that displayed “unusual quote-tweeting behavior” on tweets from either the UAE’s main COP28 Twitter account or other accounts posting about COP28. “These accounts all quote-tweeted many of the same tweets, using similar (but not identical) language, often adding hashtags associated with sustainability or net zero,” the research said.

The same month, disinformation expert Marc Owen Jones, an associate professor at Hamad bin Khalifa University in Qatar, uncovered a large number of fake Twitter accounts promoting the UAE’s environmental record and tweeting in support of Al Jaber. In a Substack post describing the operation, Jones showed how many of these accounts used stock images, AI-generated images or those found online as profile pictures, and have detailed bios that make them appear legitimate.

King said that while it’s impossible to definitively say the accounts are affiliated to the UAE or funded by anybody involved in the COP summit, “they do seem to align uncannily with the key messages that are coming out of petrochemical states and in particular, the UAE.”

Data from Twitter on the number of accounts by country that the company blocked last year due to state-backed influence operations shows the UAE very near the top of the list.

While the UAE COP28 presidency team did not answer specific questions about the Twitter accounts, in June, a COP28 spokesperson told the Guardian the accounts were “generated by outside actors unconnected to Cop28 and are clearly designed to discredit Cop28 and the climate process.”

A fossil fuel state

The UAE rejects criticism that it is not up to the job of hosting the world’s biggest climate summit.

It was the first in the Middle East to ratify the Paris Agreement on climate and also the first in the region to set 2030 and 2050 emission reduction targets, the COP28 team told CNN. The country upped its climate target this week, pledging to cut planet-heating

pollution by 40% below a “business as usual” scenario by 2030 – up from a previous target of 31%. It has committed to reaching net zero by 2050.

UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment told CNN in a statement that the new target showed “the UAE is prepared to ‘walk the talk’ on climate action.

Climate Action Tracker, a watchdog that assesses national climate plans, said the UAE’s new target was “an improvement on its 2022 submission.” However, it stressed that the country’s current policies were “likely not enough to reach its target” because they include expanding, rather than reducing or oil and gas production.

Fossil fuels remain a key source of wealth for the UAE, with the oil and gas industry responsible for 30% of the country’s GDP, according to official government data. While the country is investing heavily in renewable energy, it is also planning to expand its oil and gas production.

ADNOC, the state-owned company headed by Al Jaber, has announced a major five-year \$150 billion expansion plan, which will see an increase in its oil-producing capacity to five million barrels per day by 2025, up from 4 million in 2020 and planning major expansion of its biggest field, the Upper Zakum oil field.

The UAE, however, has been spending lots of money to emphasize how green it is.

Filings with the US Justice Department show that the government and various state-run companies have hired some of the world’s biggest PR companies to boost the country’s climate image.

While it is usual for COP hosts to engage PR services, some experts say the UAE has been particularly ambitious in its push.

he UAE is among the most active countries when it comes to image-boosting campaigns, said Kat Ainger, an editor at the Corporate Europe Observatory, a group that researches lobbying. “Where there are figures published, for example in the US, you can see that the UAE is one of the very top spenders globally and when you [consider] its population, it’s really disproportionate compared to countries like China or India,” she told CNN.

A UAE government official told CNN in an email that the large amount of money the country spends on lobbying and PR campaigns in the US is not unusual, given the close relationship between the US and UAE. The official said UAE has built an “enduring partnership” with the US on a number of issues, including regional security, generate economic prosperity, climate change, food security, and multilateral action.

A crucial summit

One of the reasons that many climate groups are so concerned is that this summit will be crucial for the future of the planet.

Not only does it come at a time where the world is seeing climate chaos firsthand, but this summit is seen as particularly important because it will include a “global stocktake,” where countries will assess how far they have come on cutting planet-heating pollution and ensuring global temperatures don’t rise beyond a critical tipping point.

Eight years after striking a landmark climate agreement in Paris, progress has been far from sufficient, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which means negotiators in Dubai must come up with a plan to slash emissions more quickly.

The IPCC is clear on what needs to happen: The world must stop burning fossil fuels, which produce around 75% of human-caused planet-heating pollution.

Climate groups say serious concerns remain about whether the UAE can provide the level of ambition needed.

“The country responsible not only for physically hosting people and setting the tenor and the tone of the event, but also for coordinating the agenda and setting out what the key articles of negotiation and focus are going to be over the next six to eight months, is very clearly working against its own economic business model in hosting the event,” King told CNN.

The UAE does not agree. The country is “ideally suited to host” the summit, a spokesperson for the COP28 presidency told CNN.

Zubiri wants Marcos to bare Maharlika-funded projects in SONA

By: Vince Ferreras

Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri is hoping President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. will have the chance to bare all the projects that will be funded by the Maharlika Investment Fund (MIF) during his second State of the Nation Address.

"Yes. I asked the president kanina...Kung may magagandang mga flagship projects, pwede na niyang banggitin para makita ng tao na maganda pala ang itong bill na ito," Zubiri told reporters on Tuesday.

[Translation: Yes. I asked the president earlier...If there are flagship projects, he can mention them so people will know that this is a nice bill after all.]

Marcos already signed into law the bill creating the MIF, which will be tapped for possible investments in agriculture, energy, digitalization, and the fight against climate change, among others.

It is patterned after the sovereign wealth funds of other nations like Singapore, China, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Malaysia.

Zubiri also suggested that the Bataan-Cavite Interlink Bridge Project could be a good investment project using the MIF, noting that income could be generated through tollways.

"My humble suggestion, iyong ating Cavite-Bataan bridge, 'yong toll bridge, maganda po 'yan dahil alam mo, maka-cut off 'yong travel time from three or four hours," he said.

[Translation: My humble suggestion is the Cavite-Bataan bridge, the toll bridge. It will cut off travel time from three or four hours.]

Under the law, the initial capital will come from the investible funds of the Land Bank of the Philippines, the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), declared dividends of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, and other sources.

But the Senate president admitted that the impact of the country's own sovereign wealth fund would only be felt in the next administration as projects will take years to complete.

"Unless it's other projects na mas mababa ang [that has a shorter] shelf life or construction time. But definitely, the next admin will be benefiting from the Maharlika Investment Fund," Zubiri in a separate press briefing. "So ang tingin ng president dito ay long term, for the next generation."

[Translation: The president sees this as a long-term investment, for the next generation.]

Risks

The law has received backlash from various sectors warning of possible risk to the country's economy.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel III called the MIF "a bad idea, a bad decision, a bad act."

"Without the required surplus, in the face of our current ₱14.1 trillion outstanding debt, the signing into law of the MIF Act could significantly exacerbate our national debt," he said.

Senator Risa Hontiveros also expressed concern on the enactment of MIF.

"With Maharlika that will be headed by the Finance Secretary is merely moving public funds around – from urgently need expenditures to risky gambles; and from fund disbursements scrutinized and authorized regularly by Congress, to investments beyond the reach of elected representatives," she said.

However, Zubiri said there's always a risk in any investment.

"Like any fund, the most important thing is piliin natin yung tamang tao na mamumuno nitong fund na ito," he said.

[Translation: Like any fund, the most important thing is to choose the right people who will manage this fund.]

The Maharlika Investment Corp. board will be chaired by the finance secretary and will be joined by the presidents of the Landbank and DBP, two regular directors, and three independent directors, as members.

EURO NEWS

[Climate change takes its toll in Serbia as crops suffer after extreme heat follows flooding](#)

Serbian farmers are feeling the effects of climate change on this year's crops as extreme heat follows flooding.

Temperatures are soaring across Europe, and Serbia is no exception. Spurred on by climate change, temperatures shot up above 40 degrees Celsius last week and are expected to stay high throughout this week.

The heat is creating a desperate situation for farmers who, just two months earlier, were dealing with major flooding.

The country has experienced "absolute extremes in terms of both drought and the amount of water that we've had," Serbian farmer Dejan Ivanišević tells Euronews. "Believe me, I absolutely do not understand what is happening."

Last month, heavy rains created a lake on parts of Ivanišević's land where he used to plant corn and soybeans. Now the rising temperatures have made the situation worse, souring a profession that Ivanišević loves.

"I'm absolutely starting to lose my will," he adds. "I primarily worked the land because I enjoy it, I love it... It's very nice to produce with your own hands... to feed at least your village or your family."

Experts warn extreme weather - including sizzling temperatures - will continue for years to come as people add more planet-warming gases into the atmosphere.

According to Euronews meteorologist Milena Lazarevic, over the past decade, there were on average around three heatwaves every year.

"Now we have already had five. Then the amount of rain of 50 litres per square metre, which used to be what we'd see for the whole of June or July, now falls on average in 12 hours."

Because of this new climate, Dejan expects to make just enough money this season to invest in more seeds for the next harvest, hoping that it will be more successful than this year.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

LPA likely to develop into tropical cyclone within 24 hours

By: Ma. Cristina Arayata

The low pressure area that the weather bureau has been monitoring will possibly develop into a tropical cyclone within 24 hours.

"Currently, it has no direct effect, but the LPA's trough will bring scattered rain showers Caraga and Davao Region," Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) weather specialist Grace Castañeda said.

She added that the LPA, last tracked 810 kilometers east of northeastern Mindanao, may head towards Northern Luzon area in the next few days.

Castañeda, however, clarified that the forecast track may still change.

Meanwhile, the southwest monsoon or habagat will cause scattered rain showers and thunderstorms over Zambales and Bataan.

PAGASA said flash floods or landslides are possible due to moderate to at times heavy rains.

The rest of the country will experience isolated rain showers caused by localized thunderstorms. Severe thunderstorms may also result in flash floods or landslides.

Moderate to strong winds and moderate to rough seas will prevail over Luzon and the western section of the Visayas.

Rough to very rough seas are forecast over the western seaboard of Luzon. Fishing boats and other small sea vessels are advised not to venture into the sea, and larger sea vessels are alerted against big waves.

Elsewhere, winds will be light to moderate with slight to moderate seas, PAGASA said.

RAPPLER

[Extreme heat radiates around the globe, as US, China enter climate talks](#)

Asia, Europe, and the United States baked under extreme heat on Monday, July 17, as global temperatures soared toward alarming highs and US leaders sought to reignite climate diplomacy with China.

The United States was scorched by record-setting heat in the West and South, lashed with flood-triggering rain in the Northeast, and choked by wildfire smoke in the Midwest.

A heat dome parked over the western United States pushed the temperature in California's Death Valley desert to 128 degrees Fahrenheit (53 degrees Celsius) on Sunday, among the highest temperatures recorded on Earth in the past 90 years.

Phoenix hit 114F (45.5C) on Monday, matching a historic record of 18 straight days over 110F with the forecast showing the record likely to extend for at least another week.

The US heatwave coincided with extreme temperatures elsewhere throughout the Northern Hemisphere.

A remote town in China's arid northwest, Sanbao, registered a national record of 52.2C (126F). Wildfires in Europe raged ahead of a second heat wave in two weeks that was set to send temperatures as high as 48C (118F), while authorities in Italy and France issued heat-related health warnings.

Even in Phoenix, accustomed to hot weather, the prolonged bout of extreme heat is testing people and worrying officials. The international charitable organization Salvation Army has opened 11 cooling centers and sent out a mobile unit to deliver relief to homeless people who have difficulty reaching the sites.

"Extreme heat is Arizona's natural disaster. So for the Salvation Army, this is a disaster response," said Scott Johnson, a spokesperson for the organization in the U.S. Southwest.

The heat killed 425 people in the Phoenix-area's Maricopa County last year, so the Salvation Army mobile unit distributes urgently needed cold water, hats, sunscreen and hygiene kits to those in need.

"It feels like you're inside of a dryer, the dryer at the laundromat. And it's suffocating," said Cristina Hill, an unhoused woman who benefited from the outreach on Monday and said she suffered a heat stroke last year. "I cry all the time. I yell at the heat."

Another unhoused woman, Maritza Villegas, said she has gotten shaky and jittery from the heat, which provoked dry heaves.

“This means a whole lot – the world – because without water I’d be in the hospital right now,” Villegas said of the assistance.

Scientists have long warned that climate change, caused by CO2 emissions from burning fossil fuels, will make heatwaves more frequent, severe and deadly. They say governments need to take drastic actions to reduce omissions to prevent climate catastrophe.

The European Union’s Copernicus Climate Change Service says 2022 and 2021 were the continent’s hottest summers on record.

US, China in climate talks

The extreme global temperatures underscored the urgency in talks that resumed between China and the United States on climate change, especially as scientists say the target of keeping global warming within 1.5 degrees Celsius of pre-industrial levels is moving beyond reach.

US climate envoy John Kerry met Chinese counterpart Xie Zhenhua in Beijing, urging joint action to cut methane emissions and coal-fired power.

“In the next three days, we hope we can begin taking some big steps that will send a signal to the world about the serious purpose of China and the United States to address a common risk, threat, challenge to all of humanity created by humans themselves,” Kerry said.

“It is toxic for both Chinese and for Americans and for people in every country on the planet.”

Prolonged high temperatures in China are threatening power grids and crops and raising concerns about a repeat of last year’s drought, the most severe in 60 years.

Typhoon Talim was gaining strength and due to make land at night along China’s southern coast, forcing the cancellation of flights and trains in the regions of Guangdong and Hainan.

In South Korea, torrential rains left 40 people dead as river levees collapsed causing flash floods. They followed the heaviest recorded rain in the capital Seoul last year.

European heat wave unrelenting

An unrelenting heatwave continued in Europe as well.

Italy's health ministry on Monday issued red weather alerts – signaling a possible health threat for anyone exposed to the heat – for 20 of the country's 27 main cities on Tuesday, with the number expected to rise to 23 on Wednesday.

France's public health agency said the current stretch of hot weather would probably hospitalize or kill “many” people, as heat waves have done almost every summer since 2015. The World Meteorological Organization said the extreme heat and rainfall was expected to extend into August.

“In many parts of the world, today is predicted to be the hottest day on record,” tweeted Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of the World Health Organisation.

“The #ClimateCrisis is not a warning. It's happening. I urge world leaders to ACT now.”

As many as 61,000 people may have died in Europe during heatwaves last summer, with a repetition feared this season.

“My worry is really health – the health of vulnerable people who live just below the rooftops of houses which are not prepared for such high temperatures,” said Robert Vautard, a climate scientist and director of France's Pierre-Simon Laplace Institute. “That could create a lot of deaths.”

REUTERS

[Multilateral lenders need reform to meet poverty, climate change challenges - G20 panel](#)

By: Aftab Ahmed and Shivangi Acharya

Multilateral development banks must create a new funding mechanism and triple sustainable lending by 2030 to eliminate poverty and achieve climate goals, a G20 panel said in a report on Tuesday that called for big changes in the way MDBs operate.

The independent panel, headed by economists Lawrence Summers and N.K. Singh, was commissioned by the Group of 20 nations to propose reforms for MDBs.

"Individually and collectively, MDBs must become effective agents in all developing countries for integrating the development and climate change agendas," said the report, which was tabled during the G20 finance meeting in India's western state of Gujarat.

Excluding China, which has sufficient domestic resources to finance its transition to clean energy, the panel estimated that developing countries would need to spend an additional \$3 trillion annually by 2030 to cover investments in climate action and meet their development goals.

Of this, the report said around \$1.8 trillion should go towards sustainable infrastructure, a four-fold increase since 2019, while \$1.2 trillion would be needed to achieve other goals, including a 75% increase in spending on health and education.

"The international development finance system should be designed to support this spending by providing \$500 billion in additional annual official external financing by 2030, of which one-third (should be) in concessional and non-debt creating financing and two-thirds in the form of non-concessional official lending," the report said.

MDBs, like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, must work with governments and the private sector to reduce, share and manage risks and thus bring down the cost of capital, it said.

It also said that MDBs should provide an incremental \$260 billion of additional annual official financing, of which \$200 billion should be in non-concessional lending, and help mobilise and catalyse private finance.

The G20 will continue to work towards resolving differences in helping low-income countries manage their debt burdens and free up funding for climate financing.

Countries like Zambia and Ghana have been waiting for big creditors to make progress in providing debt relief under the so called "Common Framework", which is led by the G20.

Global creditors, debtor nations and international financial institutions agreed in April to galvanise the Common Framework - a platform supposed to speed up and simplify the process of getting financially ailing economies back on their feet.

Zambia, locked in default for almost three years, struck a deal last month to restructure \$6.3 billion in debt owed to governments abroad including China, but many challenges remain.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Kerry says climate change requires 'new definition' of China-US cooperation](#)

Global warming poses a threat to all humankind and requires a new kind of cooperation between China and the United States, US climate envoy John Kerry told Chinese officials on Tuesday.

Kerry has called for "urgent action" by Beijing and Washington to tackle the threat of climate change as the world's two largest polluters revive stalled diplomacy on reducing planet-warming emissions.

Speaking at Beijing's Great Hall of the People with China's top diplomat Wang Yi, Kerry underlined the need for "global leadership" on the issue.

His visit to China came as the Northern Hemisphere endured record-setting summer heat waves, which scientists have said are being exacerbated by climate change.

"Climate, as you know, is a global issue, not a bilateral issue. It's a threat to all of humankind," Kerry told Wang.

"This is a matter of global leadership," he stressed, adding that the world "really hopes for that and needs it".

"Our hope is now that this can be the beginning of a new definition of cooperation and of capacity to resolve the differences between us," he added, noting that "we both know there are real differences".

"But we also know from experience that if we work at it, we can find the path ahead and ways that resolve these challenges."

Wang, in response, underlined the need "for a healthy, stable, and sustainable Sino-US relationship".

"Cooperation on climate change is advancing under the overall climate of China and the United States, so we need the joint support of the people of China and the United States," Wang told Kerry, who he described as an "old friend".

Climate talks between the two biggest greenhouse gas emitters came to a halt last year after Nancy Pelosi, then speaker of the US House of Representatives, enraged Beijing by visiting self-ruled Taiwan, which China considers to be part of its territory.

Kerry, a former secretary of state, has enjoyed comparatively cordial and consistent relations with China despite Washington and Beijing locking horns over Taiwan and other issues.

Kerry also met Tuesday with Chinese premier Li Qiang, who told the US envoy climate change posed a "daunting challenge".

"It is incumbent on China, the United States and indeed all countries in the world to strengthen coordination, build consensus and speed up actions," Li said.

Calls for 'urgent action'

Kerry met his Chinese counterpart Xie Zhenhua in Beijing on Monday, with the two men speaking for around four hours, state broadcaster CCTV said.

Both countries "must take urgent action on a number of fronts, especially the challenges of coal and methane pollution", Kerry wrote in a tweet after the talks.

Beijing said after the talks that "climate change is a common challenge faced by all mankind".

Kerry's trip follows two other high-profile visits by US officials—Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen—that were aimed at stabilising US-China ties.

China on Monday said the mercury hit 52.2 degrees Celsius (126 degrees Fahrenheit) in the northwest of the country over the weekend, setting a record for mid-July.

Xin Xin, an analyst working for the China Meteorological Administration, said in a post on his verified Weibo account that 52.2C was the "highest measured temperature at a regional station in our country that I have ever seen".

The US has said Kerry will on his trip press Beijing not to slow-roll efforts to cut emissions.

"Every country, including China, has a responsibility to reduce emissions," US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told CNN on Sunday.

THE WASHINGTON POST

[Heat Waves Grip 3 Continents as Climate Change Warms Earth](#)

By: Alan Yuhas

Punishing heat waves gripped three continents on Tuesday, breaking records in cities around the Northern Hemisphere less than two weeks after the Earth recorded what scientists said were likely its hottest days in modern history.

Firefighters in Greece scrambled to put out wildfires, as parched conditions raised the risk of more blazes throughout Europe. Beijing logged another day of 95-degree heat, and people in Hangzhou, another Chinese city, compared the choking conditions to a sauna. From the Middle East to the American Southwest, delivery drivers, airport workers and construction crews labored under blistering skies. Those who could stay indoors did.

The temperatures, afflicting so much of the world all at once, were a withering reminder that climate change is a global crisis, driven by human-made forces: the emissions of heat-trapping gases, mainly caused by the burning of fossil fuels.

John Kerry, the U.S. special envoy for climate change, sought to coordinate some of the global response with the Chinese premier in Beijing, as a heat wave clutched a huge swath of China.

“The world really is looking to us for that leadership, particularly on the climate issue,” Mr. Kerry told Chinese officials. “Climate, as you know, is a global issue, not a bilateral issue. It’s a threat to all of humankind.”

The planet has warmed about 2 degrees Fahrenheit since the 19th century and will continue to grow hotter until humans essentially stop burning coal, oil and gas, scientists say. The warmer temperatures contribute to extreme weather events and help make periods of extreme heat more frequent, longer and more intense.

Also affecting this year’s conditions is the return of El Niño, a cyclical weather pattern that, depending on the sea surface temperature and the pressure of the air above it, can originate in the Pacific and have wide-ranging effects on weather around the world.

For hundreds of millions of people on Tuesday, the heat was hard to escape. In the United States, Phoenix broke a nearly half-century-old record on Tuesday, with the city’s 19th consecutive day of temperatures above 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43.3

Celsius). Elsewhere around the country, hot and humid conditions were expected to worsen along the Gulf Coast and throughout the Southeast.

Wildfires raged on for yet another week in Canada, having burned a staggering 25 million acres so far this year, an area roughly the size of Kentucky. With more than a month of peak fire season to go, 2023 has already eclipsed Canada's annual record, from 1989.

Fires also forced evacuations in villages south, west and north of Athens, burning an estimated 7,400 acres of forest in Greece despite aerial water bombardments to bring the blazes under control.

"We've had fires, we have them now and we'll have them in the future, and this is one of the consequences of the climate crisis that we are living with ever greater intensity," Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said in a statement.

Mr. Mitsotakis cut short a trip to meet European leaders in Brussels in order to oversee the firefighting. The Greek authorities, who opened air-conditioned venues in Athens to offer some relief, are also expected to restrict access to the Acropolis to cooler morning and afternoon hours, as they did last weekend after a tourist collapsed.

In many European cities, officials have introduced cooling stations. And mindful of the danger — more than 61,000 people died in last summer's heat waves in Europe, according to a recent study — they have urged visitors and residents alike to stay indoors during the day's hottest hours.

In Rome, where the temperatures surpassed 100 Fahrenheit (37.8 Celsius) on Tuesday, officials mobilized a task force to hand out water and help people suffering from heat stress at sites like the Colosseum and outdoor markets.

The Japanese authorities, similarly, have rushed to help people suffering from the heat: At a festival in Kyoto on Monday, nine people, ranging in age from 8 to more than 80, were taken to a hospital as temperatures neared 100 degrees Fahrenheit. In Toyota City in Aichi Prefecture, where the temperature hit more than 102 degrees Fahrenheit, the regional board of education urged 415 elementary and middle schools to cancel gym classes and outdoor activities.

And in China, where a series of heat waves have seared the country since late June, Beijing and other cities have recorded day after day of heat over 90 degrees.

Power stations, in turn, have broken records for generating electricity, according to the official China Energy News — burning more coal to meet demand for cooling. China uses considerable solar, wind and hydro power, but still relies on coal for three-fifths of its electricity. Some internet users in two provinces, Guangdong and Sichuan, reported scattered blackouts this week; state media, which tends to be slow to acknowledge power problems, has been silent about blackouts.

A remote town in northwestern China on Sunday reported the highest temperature ever recorded in that country — 52.2 Celsius, or 126 Fahrenheit.

For millions of people in South and Southeast Asia, the stifling heat began long before the summer. India recorded the hottest February in its history, then endured high temperatures in April, when 11 people died of heat stroke on a single day, and again in May and June. Monsoon rains cooled temperatures across the country only in recent weeks.

Even regions where high heat is normal — and where those who can afford to barely venture outside in the summer — have been experiencing extremes.

At Persian Gulf International Airport on Iran's southwestern coast, the heat index — which measures how hot it really feels outside based on both temperature and humidity — hit an extraordinary high of 152 degrees Fahrenheit (66.7 Celsius) at 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, according to weather data. The combination of 104-degree heat and soaked air, with 65 percent humidity, pushed conditions at the airport beyond what scientists have said humans can normally withstand.

In Death Valley National Park in California, the thermometer read just over 128 degrees (53 Celsius) on Sunday.

It was in Death Valley, the 3,000-square-mile stretch of the Mojave Desert along the California-Nevada border, where the highest temperature was ever recorded on earth, according to the World Meteorological Organization. In 1913 in Furnace Creek, Calif., the temperature reached 134 degrees Fahrenheit, or 56.6 Celsius.

In recent years, thermometers there have come close, hitting 130 degrees Fahrenheit in 2020 and 2021, and forecasters warned it could near the mark again this summer. But this week at least, the National Weather Service forecast that temperatures in the national park should ease, relatively speaking, to 122 to 125 degrees Fahrenheit.

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