12 news

Ray

[Institutional Affiliation(s)]

Author Note

12 News 171

AFP. (2019, June 2). *Donald Trump urges Britain to go for no-deal Brexit*. Retrieved June 6, 2019, from The Economic Times: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/donald-trump-urges-britain-to-go-for-no-deal-brexit/articleshow/69620726.cms

In the news report, Donald Trump recent advice to UK officials regarding Brexit is covered wherein he supported the view that the UK should simply walk away without paying any outstanding liabilities in case their negotiations with the EU do not prove fruitful. Although, the UK has agreed to pay nearly $50 billion, it has failed to find sufficient domestic political support for the divorce agreement, which in turn has caused multiple delays in the process.

The Brexit deal involved the UK parting ways with the EU following a public referendum in which a majority voted to leave. Since the EU and Britain have been close trading partners, Prime Minister Theresa tried to largely avoid an exit without a deal. Political parties as well as the public stand divided into the issue, however, the U.S. under President Trump has offered to extend their own trading relationship to make Brexit a success. These political developments are of serious concern to environmental stakeholders as negotiations between the EU, the UK, and the U.S., center heavily on competitive deregulation of various industries. It is possible for the UK to lower its environmental standards when enhancing trade with non-EU partners, under lower regulation levels.

ANI. (2019, June 7). *India's forest cover increased by 1% in the last 5 years: Javadekar*. Retrieved June 11, 2019, from The Economic Times: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/environment/the-good-earth/indias-forest-cover-increased-by-1-in-the-last-5-years-javadekar/articleshow/69693261.cms

The news report discusses India's success with increasing its overall forest cover by 1% within the last 5 years. A key factor in the success is reported to be public participation wherein every single person was asked to contribute to planting at least 10 trees to protect the environment. In this regard, a ‘Selfie with Sapling’ initiative is being launched by the local government which encourages people to post their pictures on social media while planting a sapling.

The move is significant because globally high deforestation levels require increased efforts by communities to undertake practical measures to sustain and protect their land resources and forests. Community structures are highly valuable and useful channels for natural resource management of the lands they derive social and economic benefits from. The view that sees these resources as common property will inculcate a sense of shared responsibility to rehabilitate areas which are environmentally degraded and efficiently manage the use of sources. For this purpose, local community initiatives can significantly drive improvements and relieve pressures on governments.

Friedman, L. (2019, June 8). *White House Tried to Stop Climate Science Testimony, Documents Show*. Retrieved June 11, 2019, from The New York Times: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/08/climate/rod-schoonover-testimony.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fclimate

In the news report, the White House’s move to block an Intelligence analyst from giving congressional testimony is discussed. The official was expected to discuss climate science that the reporter mentions was blocked because it contradicted the administration's policy and views about Climate Change. The view was that years of independent scientific data pointed to a long-term global warming trend.

The environment and climate policy of any nation significantly depends on their administration. The current U.S. administration already announced its plans to roll back some of the major environmental policy initiatives undertaken by the previous administration to reduce emissions. In such cases, economic considerations continue to mar efforts to prevent the planet's temperature from rising over the next few decades as a result of fossil fuel emissions. The results of these emissions would be substantially felt by 2040, and thus any attempt to politicize science by current and future administrations could lead to serious consequences.

Guardian Editorial. (2019, May 21). *The Guardian view on Greens in Europe: hopeful signs*. Retrieved from The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/21/the-guardian-view-on-greens-in-europe-hopeful-signs

 The Guardian in its recent editorial argues that the victory of pro-environment political parties in recent European elections could lead to significant positive developments in terms of environmental reforms. The green party's representation in the legislature has increased further which also demonstrates that a considerably large bloc of voters stands in recognition of the global environmental existential crises. The EU is known to be a major player in the global struggle for environmental progress, and the rising electoral strength of the Green party could further guide the EU towards an anti-carbon direction.

 In many countries, certain political parties have a visibly greater commitment towards environment preservation and climate change compared to others. The success of Democrats in U.S. mid-term elections in the U.S. has led to a removal of fossil fuel subsidies and greater investment in pro-environment measures. Yet, as many quarters take the carbon-dependence issue seriously, many emerging economies such as India and Brazil have hardly any environmental agenda in their local politics.

Henley, J. (2019, May 28). *European elections: triumphant Greens demand more radical climate action*. Retrieved June 11, 2019, from The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/may/28/greens-eu-election-mandate-leverage-climate-policy

 The Guardian article also reports on the Green Party's success in creating better leverage in European parliaments to further push an agenda of social justice and climate action.

The success of the party indicates the deep concerns shared by a younger generation of voters regarding the climate crises. Moreover, the shrinking electoral power enjoyed by center-left and center-right groups now provides a way for the Green party to push for serious climate action.

 In many western countries, green economics generally prioritizes ecological health as a key indicator of human well-being. Green policies generally exhibit a lack of trust in traditional capitalism which they see as a system which values economic growth and profit over environmental concerns and ecological health. Capitalism led economic growth ignores and often promotes damage to the Earth's biosphere, something that green politics seek to reverse. The view is supported by the rationale that any economic growth which promises an increase of material but lowers ecological health, in fact, reduce the overall quality of human life. The view aligns with several environmental theories, and the success of the Green party in Europe indicates a greater legitimacy of these claims in public opinion.

NOAA. (2019, June 4). *Carbon dioxide levels in atmosphere hit record high in May*. Retrieved June 10, 2019, from Science Daily: https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/06/190604140109.htm

 The article discusses the rising carbon dioxide content in the Earth’s atmosphere in the current year. In May the CO2 levels reached 414. ppm, a consecutive increase since several years. The sustained rise of CO2 levels in these long-term measurements is an accurate indicator of the effects of fossil fuel emissions in altering the climate. Moreover, environmentalists and researchers use these measurements to make and verify their climate model projections.

 Currently, there is conclusive and abundant evidence to indicate that carbon emissions are behind climate change. However, the consumption and production taking place in the global economy are directly connected to energy, of which fossil fuels are a primary source. Any economic activity is therefore expected to create a rise in global emissions. For instance, electric power generation and the automobile industry are directly associated with many country's economic development and growth, yet remain the source of potentially harmful gases targeting the atmosphere. The rising CO2 levels each month should be a matter of genuine concern for governments and drive sustainable policies and innovations. The success of political parties that put the environment at the front of their agenda is an indicator that the indicators, mentioned in reports like these, are rapidly becoming a cause for concern among voters.

University of York. (2019, May 27). *Antibiotics found in some of the world's rivers exceed 'safe' levels, global study finds*. Retrieved June 11, 2019, from Science Daily: https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/05/190527094120.htm

 The article discusses findings of a recent study which discovered the presence of antibiotics at alarmingly high levels in over 65% of the sites monitored in 72 countries. In countries such as Bangladesh, the antibiotic concentration has risen up to 300 times the safe levels. Traces of common antibiotics such as Ciproflaxin had been found in over 51 places at unsafe levels.

 Studies such as this reveal the risks of inadequate wastewater treatment systems and the adverse effects of sewage or waste dumps. The antimicrobial resistance issue is an increasingly concerning matter for policymakers and scientists, and such data indicates that contaminated rivers could be one major contributor towards the problem. Substantial investments have to be directed at wastewater treatment and management infrastructure and alongside stricter regulations to prevent contaminations. The presence of antibiotic elements within river systems could promote the development of resistance among bacteria populations that current life-saving antimicrobial medicines may not be able to treat. Such a situation warrants urgent improvements towards the management of hygiene and health services especially in lower-income nations to prevent antimicrobial resistance from developing, and in turn, creating illness.