

## World News Roundup

## Climate

## 'Clean energy'

Dems plan spending  
trns to fight warming

WASHINGTON, Sept 4, (AP): Democratic presidential candidates are releasing their plans to address climate change ahead of a series of town halls on the issue as the party's base increasingly demands aggressive action.

California Sen Kamala Harris unveiled her plans on Wednesday. New Jersey Sen Cory Booker, Massachusetts Sen Elizabeth Warren and former Obama Cabinet member Julián Castro laid out theirs on Tuesday. Minnesota Sen Amy Klobuchar released hers over the weekend.

The release of the competing plans comes as issues of climate and the environment have become a central focus of the Democratic primary. On Wednesday, 10 Democrats seeking the White House will participate



Booker

in back-to-back climate town halls hosted by CNN in New York. A second set of climate-focused town halls will be televised by MSNBC later in the month. Liberals had demanded that the Democratic Party focus at least one debate on climate change, but a climate debate resolution was defeated at the Democratic National Committee's summer meeting last month.

The issue is so urgent among Democratic voters that Washington Gov Jay Inslee made action to limit the worst extremes of climate change the core of his presidential bid. But Inslee dropped out of the presidential race in August after failing to earn a spot in the September primary debate. Warren says Inslee's ideas "should remain at the center of the agenda," and she met with him in Seattle when she visited the state for a rally before Labor Day, according to two people familiar with the meeting who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a private meeting.

## Builds

Warren's clean energy proposal builds on Inslee's 10-year clean energy plan in seeking to implement 100% clean energy standards in three key sectors of the American economy. Warren says she will increase her planned spending on research and investment to cut carbon emissions to \$3 trillion. She embraces tough deadlines for sharply cutting or eliminating the use of fossil fuels by the US electrical grid, highways and air transit systems, and by cities and towns. That includes making sure that new cars, buses and many trucks run on clean energy — instead of gasoline or diesel — by 2030 and that all the country's electricity comes from solar, wind and other renewable, carbon-free sources by 2035.

Harris' \$10 trillion plan includes proposals supported by her Democratic rivals. She calls on the United States to achieve a clean economy by 2045 and to reach the goal of 100% carbon-neutral electricity by 2030. She says she will end fossil fuel production on public lands and end federal subsidies for fossil fuels.

Harris says she supports a "climate pollution fee," designed to drive down pollution while increasing government revenue.

Harris also calls for the passage of the Climate Equity Act, a bill she introduced with New York Rep Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, which would require Congress to measure how potential environmental legislation would impact poorer communities.

Booker's \$3 trillion plan includes nearly a dozen executive actions to reverse Trump administration moves. He says that by no later than 2045, he wants to get the US economy to carbon neutral — a point at which carbon emissions are supposedly canceled out by carbon-cutting measures, such as planting new forests to suck up carbon from the atmosphere. Booker also urges massive restoration of forests and coastal wetlands as carbon sponges and as buffers against rising seas. He sets a 2030 deadline for getting natural gas and coal out of the electrical grid. He would get there partly by scrapping all subsidies for fossil fuels, banning new oil and gas leases, phasing out fracking and introducing a carbon fee.

If elected, Booker says, he will propose legislation creating a "United States Environmental Justice Fund", which, among its areas of focus, will replace all home, school and day care drinking water lines by the end of his second term.

## Achieve

Castro's \$10 trillion plan aims to have all electricity in the United States be clean and renewable by 2035. He wants to achieve net-zero emissions by 2045 and at least a 50% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. And, like Booker, he focuses on environmental racism, in which people of color are disproportionately affected by environmental hazards. Castro says that within the first 100 days of his presidency he would propose new legislation to address the impact of environmental discrimination.

Among Democrats seeking the presidency, there is little disagreement that climate change is a building disaster. Candidates' primary differences are over how aggressively the US should move now to cut fossil fuel emissions to stave off the worst of the coming climate extremes.

Last month, Vermont Sen Bernie Sanders toured a California mobile home park ravaged by wildfires as he introduced his \$16 trillion plan to fight global warming, the costliest among the Democratic field. His plan declares climate change a national emergency, calls for the United States to eliminate fossil fuel use by 2050 and commits \$200 billion to help poorer nations reckon with climate change.

Former vice-president Joe Biden has proposed \$1.7 trillion in spending over 10 years, on clean energy and other initiatives with the goal of eliminating the country's net carbon emissions by 2050. Biden has been less absolute than some other Democratic candidates on stamping out consumption of oil, natural gas and coal, calling for eliminating subsidies for the fossil fuels rather than pledging to eliminate all use of them.

The relatively minor differences among Democrats on climate change come in sharp contrast to President Donald Trump, who has dismissed and mocked the science of climate change and has reversed course on US climate policy. Trump made pulling the country out of the Paris climate accord one of his administration's first priorities, and his wholehearted support of the petroleum and coal industries has been one of the enduring themes of his presidency.

Nationally, 72% of Democratic midterm voters said they were very concerned about the effects of climate change, and 20% were somewhat concerned. That's according to AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 115,000 midterm voters nationwide.



In this July 24, 2019 photo, the sun beats down on block 500 of North Rose St in the McElderry Park neighborhood of Baltimore. (AP)

## Climate

## 'We are ... in an emergency'

## Urban poor hit hard as planet sears

BALTIMORE, Sept 4, (AP): Heat radiates from the asphalt and concrete that cover the streets, the sidewalks, the alleys, even the tiny yards behind the homes in the East Baltimore neighborhood of McElderry Park. Trees are scarce. And air doesn't move much when it comes up against block after block of rowhouses.

So as a dangerous 11-day heat wave tormented the city in July, the hottest month ever recorded on the planet, fewer and fewer residents were going outside.

"Can't even put your head out the door," said Tammy Jackson, 48, on a day when the temperature outside hit 100°F and 92°F in her home. "This is too much. Oh Lord, this is too much."

But it is going to get worse. In McElderry Park and around the world, in communities rich and poor, downtown and in the suburbs, weather disasters loom. And experts are using language ever more dire.

Average annual temperatures in Baltimore have gone up more than 3 degrees over the last century, nearly twice as much as the rest of the country.

More and more people, including Del. Robby Lewis, who represents parts of East Baltimore, are replacing the words "climate change" with stronger language. "We are," she said, "in an emergency."

Cities, crowded and paved-over, already feel the impact, with poorer air quality and streets, highways and bridges damaged by storms. But certain neighborhoods will continue to feel the effects of extreme temperatures more than others.

Researchers at Portland State University in Oregon and the Science Museum of Virginia have mapped these areas, called urban heat islands, and data shows that temperatures here and in surrounding neighborhoods can run 8 degrees

hotter than in communities that have more trees and less pavement. McElderry Park, which despite its lyrical name offers little green space, is one of these.

Residents in the hottest areas have higher rates of chronic illnesses affected by heat, including asthma and COPD. In hot weather, emergency medical calls for some chronic conditions increase. The rate of emergency medical calls for cardiac arrest and congestive heart failure, for example, nearly double when the heat index hits 103 degrees. Households in the city's hottest areas have lower incomes, which means the residents don't have the resources to move out.

This is true across the country. In a majority of the country's most populous cities, people with lower incomes typically lived in the hottest areas, an investigation by journalists from NPR and the University of Maryland found.

## Vulnerable

Sacoby Wilson, a professor at the University of Maryland School of Public Health, says people in low-income neighborhoods walk more, ride more buses and drive fewer cars, so they contribute less to climate change. And yet they are more vulnerable to dying in extreme heat. "Environmental justice and climate change," Wilson said, "are inextricably linked."

Rowhouses, Baltimore's signature architecture, trap heat and stay hot even when the heat eases on summer nights. Crime rates are higher, so many people won't put an air-conditioning unit in a first-floor window for fear of break-ins.

The problems are not new. Many stem from historical segregationist zoning and lending policies that for decades limited where black citizens could live.

During an 11-day July heat wave, Baltimore's health department put out press releases advising citizens to drink water, cut back on outdoor activities and find

relief in designated air-conditioned cooling centers. Inside the rowhouses, even those with an air-conditioning window unit, the heat simmered.

Reporters from the University of Maryland's Howard Center for Investigative Journalism and Capital News Service placed sensors that record heat and humidity inside several homes in McElderry Park and nearby neighborhoods. Those sensors recorded temperatures that reached as high as 97 degrees and heat index values of 119 degrees.

In some homes, those readings showed that it was hotter inside than outside. At 7 pm Friday, the heat index in Baltimore hit 103 degrees. Inside the bedroom Stephanie Pingley's niece shares with one of Pingley's three sons, it was 13 degrees hotter, with a heat index of 116 degrees. All of her boys have asthma.

By Saturday, the heat index inside the second-floor apartment of Michael Thomas and Alberta Wilkerson hit 112 degrees. A fan pushed hot air around. Thomas, 61, has emphysema. Wilkerson, 49, has had a heart attack.

"Just living through it," Thomas said. On Sunday, Solomon Simmons, who is retired from a job at the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, went to Hope Community Church, where he is a deacon. "We had trouble getting the church cool," he said.

Simmons, 71, will not put an air-conditioning unit in a first floor window facing the street "because of security." But especially for children, older residents and people coping with chronic diseases, air conditioning is the answer.

Tammy Jackson, who has asthma, said she had to stop cooking dinner one July evening when the heat made it hard for her to breathe. The next day, she told her husband, "Baby, I can't cook until I get AC."

measure global wind speeds and directions, thereby improving weather forecasts.

The incident highlighted the need to improve coordination among satellite operators as Earth's orbit becomes increasingly crowded despite an absence of traffic rules, said Klaus Merz of ESA's space debris office.

The agency said it was alerted some time ago by the US Department of Defense

about a possible collision risk between Aeolus and Starlink 44, leading it to reach out to SpaceX. ESA said it "was informed that no maneuver was planned for the Starlink satellite before the close approach."

"There was no indication it could not maneuver," Merz said. ESA engineers on Monday lifted Aeolus into a higher orbit, a maneuver that would have been necessary anyway at some point to counteract the pull

of Earth's gravity, meaning little additional fuel was expended.

While the risk of collision was only about one in a thousand, ESA didn't want to take any risks, said Merz. A crash could have sprayed thousands of pieces of debris across a wide area, greatly increasing the chances of further collisions between satellites and clouds of space junk, he said.

While satellites have to dodge each other from time to time, "it is really the first time that we had to do it with one of these big constellations," said Merz.

Starlink 44, which was launched in May, is part of a so-called mega constellation of thousands of satellites with which SpaceX plans to provide internet services around the globe. (AP)

**Firms sign pact:** Major fashion companies from around the world has said they had signed a pact which they would present at this week's G7 summit to help protect the environment.

The pact has been signed by 32 companies including the likes of Adidas, Burberry, Kering, Hermes, Nike, Prada and Puma.

Protecting the environment will be a leading issue at the G7, with French President Emmanuel Macron and United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres having expressed concern this week over wildfires raging through the Amazon.

The companies, whose representatives were meeting French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday, said they would aim to use methods that would protect forests and cut down on the use of plastic. (AP)



A Brazilian soldier puts out fires at the Nova Fronteira region in Novo Progresso, Brazil on Sept 3. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro sent the military to help extinguish some fires. (AP)



Ratajczczak



Merz

## Discovery

**'Import restrictions':** The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife is reminding hunters who travel outside the state about restrictions on the importation of deer and elk carcasses.

The restrictions are designed to stop the spread of chronic wasting disease. They are of particular importance for hunters traveling to Quebec because the always-fatal brain disease was discovered in the Canadian province last year.

The disease of the brain and nervous system is caused by abnormal prion proteins that produce lesions in the brain that cause disorientation, emaciation and other abnormal behaviors.

Hunters are also reminded that it is illegal to use deer urine lures in Vermont because they have the potential to bring the abnormal proteins to the state.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife website has the details of the restrictions. (AP)

**Hornbill chick delights staff:** A rare Palawan Hornbill chick has left its nest and is exploring its outdoor enclosure at Wrocław Zoo in western Poland, delighting staff and members of the public.

The bird, identifiable by its distinctive beak and black and white plumage, hatched in May 2019 and is the fourth chick to be born in the zoo.

Palawan Hornbills are notoriously difficult to breed, the chairman of the zoo's board, Radosław Ratajczczak, said, adding that they need to have the right food and the right conditions.

Wrocław Zoo's six Palawan Hornbills now represent almost 90% of the world's population living in captivity, according to information on its website.

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species classifies the birds, native to the island of Palawan in the Philippines, as 'vulnerable'. (RTRS)

**ESA blinks:** A European space probe has performed an evasive maneuver to avoid a possible collision with another satellite after its operator, private firm SpaceX, said it wouldn't budge.

Officials at the European Space Agency said Tuesday that the maneuver didn't affect operations of the Aeolus satellite, which was launched in August 2018 to



A monarch butterfly is buzzed by a bumblebee as it sips nectar on a Joe Pye weed on Aug 28, 2019 in Freeport, Maine. The populations of both insect species have declined sharply in recent years. Rapid development and climate change are escalating the rates of species loss, according to a May United Nations report. (AP)