



Week ending Friday, March 5, 2021

Waning Stream

The Gulf Stream is at its weakest in more than 1,000 years, which scientists say could curb its climate-moderating effects for Europe and disrupt the overall North Atlantic Ocean circulation. Several studies have linked the slowdown to climate change brought on by human activity. Writing in the journal *Nature Geoscience*, a research team says it found the slowdown began about 1850, but has undergone a dramatic decline since the 1960s. “If we continue to drive global warming, the Gulf Stream System will weaken further — by 34 percent to 45 percent by 2100, according to the latest generation of climate models,” team member Stefan Rahmstorf said.

Sumatran Eruption

Far western Indonesia’s Sinabung volcano erupted with 13 separate blasts within a single day, spewing ash thousands of feet into the sky of North Sumatra province. Nearby residents were forced to remain indoors to avoid the falling debris.

Antarctic Split

An iceberg more than 20 times the size of Manhattan and nearly 500 feet thick has broken off from Antarctica's Brunt Ice Shelf. The British Antarctic Survey said it was the largest calving there since 1917, but cannot be directly linked to climate change.

Warning signs of the split began last November when a chasm in the ice appeared and ripped toward another major crack 21 miles away. In January, the chasm began to expand in that direction at about a half-mile a day until the separation occurred. While it is a huge chunk of ice, scientists say it is dwarfed by Iceberg A68a, which broke off from the Larsen C Ice Shelf in 2017 and recently threatened to collide with South Georgia Island.

Earthquakes

Iceland's Met Office says a swarm of tremors jolting the island's Reykjanes peninsula probably means magma is building up there beneath a mountain just to the southwest of the capital, Reykjavik.

- A strong tremor in central Greece caused scattered damage and was felt in neighboring Balkan countries.

- Earth movements were also felt in southern Oman, Taiwan, south-central Alaska, California's Simi Valley and western North Carolina.

Saharan Fallout

As a huge plume of Saharan dust cast a pall over parts of Spain and France in early March, a leading expert warned that the desert particles can still contain residual radioactivity from the 1960s French nuclear tests in southern Algeria. Radiation protection expert Pierre Barbey of France's University of Caen Normandy says he analyzed Saharan dust that fell on his car in the Alps during a recent episode and found it contained minute amounts of cesium-137 created by the blasts. While the radiation is now too weak to harm humans, Barbey says the finding "does

say a lot about the persistence of radioactive pollution.”

Carbon “Red Alert”

Leading climate scientists warn that the promised moves to greener technologies to supply the world’s energy needs will not happen fast enough to stave off the climate catastrophes predicted if the world warms more than 2 degrees Celsius. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change says nations must cut their carbon emissions in half within the next 10 years to keep global heating within the 1.5-degree “safe” threshold. U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres called the warning a red alert for our planet, adding that “it shows governments are nowhere close to the level of ambition needed to limit climate change.”

Tropical Cyclones

Cyclone Niran spun up off the coast of Queensland, then quickly strengthened to Category-4 force. It was predicted to weaken and skirt New Caledonia as a Category-2 storm.

- Cyclone Marian churned the open waters of the eastern Indian Ocean.

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