



G8 May Spend \$10b To Cut CO₂



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The Group of Eight wealthy nations are looking at investing more than \$10 billion a year to support new technologies to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, including carbon dioxide capture and storage (CCS).

A draft statement on economic issues is being considered for release at the July 7-9 summit of G8 leaders in Hokkaido, northern Japan, the business daily Nikkei said, Reuters reported.

G8 countries plan to fund research to develop CCS projects, which bury emissions from power plants, as a measure to help meet a global target to halve greenhouse gases by 2050, Nikkei said.

The draft statement also includes an agreement to set national interim goals to reduce emissions by 2020-2030, a step environmentalists and the EU say is vital, the Nikkei said, adding that no figures were included.

The G8 nations are expected to formalize a goal of halving the world's greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, after agreeing last year in Germany to seriously consider the target.

But doubts persist about whether and how far the leaders will be able to go beyond last year's agreement. Britain's climate envoy said last week that a breakthrough is unlikely in talks on global warming at the summit.

Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda said in June that the G8 nations

would not be setting a medium-term target for cutting CO₂ emissions by 2020 or 2030, seen as necessary by environmentalists as a way to achieving the long-term goal.

Appeal for Africa

Meanwhile, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged the Group of Eight rich nations to stick with a three-year old pledge to raise African aid levels to \$25 billion a year, after a report the leaders may be about to backtrack.

"I would like to urge and emphasize that leaders of G8 should implement their commitment which was made at the G8 summit meeting," Ban said, referring to the G8's 2005 summit meeting in Scotland.

At that summit in 2005, G8 nations pledged to raise annual aid levels by \$50 billion by 2010, \$25 billion of which was for Africa. This was reiterated at last year's summit in Germany.

Experts have expressed concerns about the pledge, saying donor countries may fail to meet their promises, which are not legally binding and are hard to track in actual spending. African development, as well as the food crisis and climate change, will be on the agenda for next week's G8 summit.

Eight other major economies, including China and India, will also meet on July 9 on the sidelines of the G8 summit to discuss climate change.

British Adults Poor Role Models

Children are not acquiring basic moral values because today's generation of adults are such poor role models, a leading British charity said.

Research by the Children's Society suggests that two thirds of British adults believe that the moral values of young people have declined considerably since the time when they were young, the Times reported.

The charity, which questioned 1,176 people, said that consumerism, the rise of the celebrity culture and weakening family bonds were un-

dermining traditional moral values among young people.

But it also blamed adults for failing to engage with children and being too eager to criticize their behavior rather than intervening and helping them to navigate the challenges of modern life.

The society is conducting a two-year project into modern childhood in Britain. Its latest findings are in a paper focusing on values.

Bob Reitemeier, chief executive of the society, said that adults needed to take more responsibility

for the young people around them. "We reap what we sow when it comes to teaching children values."

Every adult plays a vital role, which we should nurture as much as we can. Unfortunately, it is easier to criticize children than to invest in them, and it is the children most in need of positive role models who are becoming disconnected from their communities and wider society."

The society will publish its final report and recommendations in 2009.

Fireflies Face Threat

Japanese poets compose haiku about them, children keep them as pets and they were once believed to be the souls of dead kamikaze pilots.

Now Japan's beloved fireflies, the tiny insects whose flickering light is a symbol of the transience of life, are under threat--not from birds or insecticide, but from human poachers.

Firefly rustlers have been snatching the creatures from a famous insect-viewing ground in Fussa, west of Tokyo, the Times reported.

The creatures, whose numbers have declined over the years because of pollution and creeping urbanization, are sought by dealers who sell them to hotels and restaurants for summer firefly displays.

Warning signs denouncing insect thieves have been erected and teams of volunteers have been mounting nightly patrols to ward them away from Fussa's Firefly Park, where tens of thousands of people converge every summer for the firefly festival.

In one night alone, 80 percent of the resident fireflies disappeared after a section of fence was removed from the protective dome where the insects are raised.

A display of 250 fireflies was reduced to 50 the following evening, prompting



the local police to threaten criminal charges against anyone caught red-handed.

The earliest records of firefly watching date back to Japan's Heian Period in the 9th century, and since then they have been a much loved ingredient of the long hot Japanese summer. Thirty species of firefly are found in the country, but the most sought after is the Genji Firefly or Luciola cruciata.

Collecting insects is one of the traditional summer pastimes for Japanese children, but the scale of the losses at Fussa suggests an organized commercial smuggling operation. Although pollution of lakes and streams has caused the firefly population to shrink, there has been a consistent demand for the insects from restaurants and hotels which offer firefly-viewing menus during the summer months.

A mature firefly sells on the internet for 300 yen (£1.40) and larvae, or glow worms, can fetch as much as 400 yen. This is believed to have motivated the thefts.

Last year environmentalists in Turkey gave warning that a species of local stag beetle was being pushed towards extinction because of a craze among collectors in Japan.

News in Brief



20,000 Foreign Theology Students Graduate From Iran

Close to 20,000 foreign students have graduated from the theological schools in the holy Iranian city of Qom, considered the cradle of Shiite Islam.

Mohammad Kabiri, a representative at the Mostafa al Alamieh University in Qom released the figures last week and said the students represented 104 different ethnic groups.

"Currently, we are hosting 10,000 students who are not Iranian, including 2,000 women, who are studying theology in Qom," said Kabiri, Fars News Agency reported.

The Mostafa Al-Alamieh University manages 13 theological schools for young foreign students. One of these schools, known as Bent Al Hoda, accepts only women students from overseas.



Tourism Helps Islamic Unity

Tourism industry can play a crucial role in promoting Islamic unity, an Iranian tourism official said.

Director general of planning and foreign tourism development department at the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization Mohammad Ali Pak-Seresht told a news conference during the Sixth Summit of Islamic Conference Organization's Tourism Ministers in Damascus that through unity Muslims can thwart conspiracies of the arrogant powers, IRNA reported.

"Cooperation among Islamic countries in different fields including tourism is one the most important arenas to enhance ties," he said.

Stating that the Iranian delegation at the event will call for holding the next such meeting in Tehran, he said, "Our participation at such forums aims to help develop people to people relations among Islamic states."



World Seems Happier

Denmark, with its democracy, social equality and peaceful atmosphere, is the happiest country in the world, researchers said.

Zimbabwe, torn by political and social strife, is the least happy, while the world's richest nation, the United States, ranks 16th.

Overall, the world is getting happier, according to the US government-funded World Values Survey, done regularly by a global network of social scientists, AFP reported.

It found increased happiness from 1981 to 2007 in 45 of 52 countries analyzed. "I strongly suspect that there is a strong correlation between peace and happiness," said Ronald Inglehart, a political scientist at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, who directed the study.

And, said Inglehart, there is a strong correlation between happiness and democracy.

Puerto Rico and Colombia also rank highly, along with Northern Ireland, Iceland, Switzerland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Canada and Sweden. The survey, first done in 1981, has kept to two simple questions:

"Taking all things together, would you say you are very happy, rather happy, not very happy, not at all happy?" And, "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?"

Writing in the journal Perspectives on Psychological Science, Inglehart's team said they have surveyed 350,000 people.



WHO Pushing For Smoking Ban

Smoking bans are an effective way of preventing heart disease, getting cigarette users to quit and protecting children from second-hand smoke, a World Health Organization (WHO) report issued said.

The report by scientists at the WHO's International Agency for Cancer Research urged more countries to adopt smoking bans in public and at the workplace, saying there was enough evidence to prove they work, without hurting businesses such as restaurants and bars, Reuters reported.

"Implementation of such policies can have a broader population effect of increasing smoke-free environments," the researchers wrote in the Lancet Oncology special report.

"Not only do these policies achieve their aim of protecting the health of non-smokers by decreasing exposure to second-hand smoke, they also have many effects on smoking behavior, which compound the health benefits."

Many local and national governments, mainly in western nations, have enacted varying types of smoking bans in recent years to protect people from second-hand smoke.

The WHO says smoking kills about four million people each year, causing a quarter of deaths related to heart disease.



Keep Calm During Pregnancy

Hormones, anxiety, emotions and all the changes that come along with pregnancy and expectant parenthood can make any mother-to-be experience mood swings.

According to HealthDay News, the American Pregnancy Association offers these suggestions to help keep mood swings under control:

Get enough quality sleep. Take a few quick breaks each day to just relax and unwind, or sneak in a quick nap. Get daily exercise and eat a healthy, balanced diet.

Talk to your doctor about what's appropriate. Spend time relaxing with your partner. Do something fun with a friend. Get a massage, or take a pregnancy yoga class.

Take it easy. Try not to get too stressed or overwhelmed with worry.