

POINTS OF PROGRESS

Pakistan sees sanitation gains

Better access to toilets and clean water improves quality of life

In Pakistan, lack of access to sanitary facilities and clean water can hinder even the simplest of daily tasks. In particular, low-income women say they often run the risk of being sexually harassed when fetching water or when they are forced to openly defecate.

For Allah Wasai, a woman living in a makeshift settlement of tents in the southern area of the city of Peshawar, harassment was a daily occurrence when she did household work. “I used to fetch water for washing, cooking, and drinking from a canal. The harassers used to annoy me along the way,” she says. To avoid them, she adopted an erratic schedule for her chores. Robina Bibi, another woman from the tent settlement, says she was grabbed by men swimming in the canal when she went to collect water.

Ms. Wasai’s and Ms. Bibi’s situations are not uncommon in Pakistan. In 2018, the nonprofit WaterAid reported that approximately 20 percent of the country’s poorest citizens do not have access to clean water close to their homes.

Meanwhile, when third-grader Nasra Ilyas went to primary school each day, she often found the toilets there were clogged and overflowing. The situation meant a humiliating and dangerous experience any time she needed to relieve herself. “Because of the dysfunctional toilets, I answered the call of the nature in the open,” she says. “A young boy passing through the street made vulgar comments.” After the experience, she says she stopped eating or drinking before school so that it would never happen again.

Lack of toilets in schools is a widespread global issue. In 2018, WaterAid reported that 1 in 5 primary schools and 1 in 8 secondary schools worldwide do not have any toilets. It’s a problem that disproportionately affects developing African and Asian countries with booming

44.3 MILLION PAKISTANIS HAVE RECENTLY GAINED ACCESS TO CLEAN SOURCES OF WATER.

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RODRIGO GARRIDO/REUTERS

CHILE
The country is going all-in on electric transit.

Chile’s government announced plans to make 100 percent of the country’s public transportation reliant on electric vehicles; the first shipment of electric buses has already arrived. While Chile does not have much infrastructure for charging vehicles, it is one of the world’s top producers of minerals used in battery production – a unique advantage for the country as it works to achieve its goal.

NBC

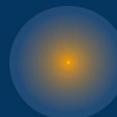
GULF OF MEXICO

Abandoned oil rigs are being turned into reefs. Offshore oil rigs are usually built on massive underwater supports made of steel and concrete, designed for durability. Two researchers say that once companies are done extracting oil, the structures are perfect for creating artificial reefs. Though some argue that leaving behind these structures allows oil companies to escape the costs of rig deconstruction, a study has shown that some of the richest ocean ecosystems grow up around these artificial reefs. There are currently 532 in the Gulf of Mexico, with others scattered worldwide.

NEWS DEEPLY

KEY: Regions

Specific countries



A WEEKLY GLOBAL ROUNDUP

Compiled by Anna Tarnow / Staff

FRANCE

Schools are teaching children how to recognize misinformation online. Internet literacy programs have existed in the country since at least 2015, but funding and interest in the projects have recently picked up as internet misinformation campaigns have gained intensity. Class subjects include discussions on how to check facts and think critically. And partnership programs with journalists help students understand how writers gather information for articles in a bid to combat the spread of conspiracy theories.

THE NEW YORK TIMES



SOUTH AFRICA

A species of tiny frogs has been saved from extinction. When the population of Pickersgill's reed frogs (pictured) dropped to 20 after their habitat was destroyed by development, conservationists were able to intervene and save the amphibians by starting a

captive breeding program. More than 200 were recently released back into their remaining natural habitat, where scientists hope they will continue to flourish, helped along by other conservation efforts.

THE GUARDIAN



DENIS FARRELL/AP

THAILAND

The country will enforce plain tobacco packaging to cut down on smoking. Smoking rates in Thailand are high, and the country has committed to reducing them; stripping out logos and brand images on tobacco packaging is one proven method. Thailand already requires health warnings on more than 85 percent of cigarette packaging. The plain-packaging law will go into effect in September. Thailand will be the first Asian country and the first low- to middle-income country to enact such legislation.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

