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Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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## China must raise air quality standards as smog persists, task force says

SHANGHAI, April 23 (Reuters) - China should raise air quality standards as persistent smog continues to have a severe public health impact despite recent improvements, a state-funded task force said.

After a campaign launched in 2013 to tackle smog, air pollution in China has improved markedly. Average concentrations of small, hazardous airborne particles known as PM2.5 fell by about half from 2015 levels to 30 micrograms per cubic metre last year, official data shows.

But while China met its interim target of 35 micrograms, it remains far above the 5-microgram limit recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). Some parts of the industrial north still have smog levels close to 200 micrograms, especially in the winter.

Beijing needs to revise national air pollution standards and improve legal protections for human health, the task force commissioned by China's national pollution research programme said on Friday.

"The acute health risk of ambient PM2.5 pollution usually means that short-term exposure to PM2.5... may cause acute damage to the body, trigger the onset of symptoms or diseases (mainly cardiovascular or respiratory disease) and lead to premature death and a series of adverse health effects," it said in a report.

Recent studies show that each 10-microgram increase was associated with a 0.34% increase in the risk of hospitalisation for respiratory diseases, the report said.

It urged the government to further promote clean energy, upgrade industries and control transportation pollution, adding that China's goal of carbon neutrality was a crucial part of its efforts to meet WHO recommendations.

It called for improvements in data and a more systematic study of the health effects of air pollution, including the impact of "key toxic components" on human biomarkers.

Air pollution in China caused about 1.4 million premature deaths in 2019, according to the Global Burden of Disease Study, a programme run by the University of Washington.



### Shanghai's economy slows as COVID deals blow to industry, retail

BEIJING, April 23 (Reuters) - The economy of Shanghai, China's most populous city, slowed in the first quarter from the end of 2021, hurt by rare declines in industrial output and retail sales that were hammered by the country's most serious COVID outbreak.

Shanghai's gross domestic product (GDP) grew 3.1% in the first quarter from a year earlier, the local statistics bureau said on Saturday, significantly less than the 4.8% growth in the national GDP during the same period announced earlier. In 2021, Shanghai's GDP rose 8.1%.

"In January-February, the city's economic operation was stable, but due to the impact of the COVID outbreak in March, the first quarter was marked by stability followed by a decline," the city's statistics bureau said in a statement.

Shanghai started reporting COVID cases in the latest outbreak in early March, with authorities declaring a lockdown of the entire city of 25 million

people in early April when infections escalated. [read more](#)

The economic slowdown in Shanghai, which did not publish GDP data for the fourth quarter of 2021, is widely expected to have worsened in April. Its GDP contracted 6.7% in January-March 2020 when the new coronavirus first emerged.

Output of Shanghai's vast industrial sector plunged 7.5% year-on-year in March after stringent lockdown measures halted some production, a city official said on Friday.

COVID-19 outbreak in Shanghai Workers dress up in protective suits amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak in Shanghai, China April 23, 2022. REUTERS/Brenda Goh For January-March, industrial production grew 4.8% from a year earlier, the Saturday data showed. Shanghai's first-quarter retail sales, a key gauge of consumption, fell 3.8% year-on-year, swinging from 3.7% growth in the first two months.

In March alone, retail sales nosedived by 18.9%.

In the first quarter, the city's consumer prices rose 1.8% from a year earlier, with prices in January-February up 1.6% year-on-year and accelerating in March to a 2.2% clip.

The higher consumer inflation came as Shanghai residents complained about food and basic supplies during the lockdown, with some saying prices of vegetables had gone up by five to 10 times of levels before the outbreak.

Job creation also slowed, with Shanghai reporting 192,600 new jobs in the first quarter, a drop of 26,200 from the year-earlier quarter.

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# Wall St Week Ahead Stakes are high as megacap companies highlight big earnings week

NEW YORK, April 22 (Reuters) - Investors are hoping a flood of U.S. quarterly reports next week, including those from megacap growth titans, will confirm a solid profit outlook for corporate America and bolster the case for stocks after a rocky start to the year.

Nearly 180 companies in the S&P 500, worth roughly half of the benchmark index's market value, are due to report results next week. They include the four biggest U.S. companies by market capitalization: Apple (AAPL.O), Microsoft (MSFT.O), Amazon (AMZN.O) and Google parent Alphabet (GOOGL.O).

The latest round of earnings comes amid a backdrop of hawkishness from the Federal Reserve and a rapid rise in bond yields that has sparked unease about whether policymakers will damage the economy as they fight the worst inflation in nearly four decades. The S&P 500 has moved lower in April and was down 10.4% so far this year after a sharp selloff on Friday. [read more](#)

With monetary policy weighing on stocks, bullish investors are counting on a solid corporate outlook to support markets, ratcheting up pressure on companies to report solid bottom-line results and forecasts. S&P 500 companies are estimated to increase earnings by 9% this year, according to Refinitiv IBES. "It's probably the strongest argument you can make for owning stocks at this point, that corporate profits are still very robust," said Charlie Ryan, portfolio manager at Evercore Wealth Management. "Any degradation in corporate profit growth and the cadence of that would spook the market."

So far, investors have been quick to punish shares of companies with disappointing results, particularly those that carry expensive valuations. One recent casualty has been Netflix (NFLX.O), whose shares tumbled around 35% in a single session after the streaming giant reported its first drop in subscribers in a decade.

Though stocks have declined year-to-date, the S&P 500 still has been trading at about 19 times forward earnings estimates, above its long-term average of 15.5 times.

"We are in a show-me type of environment. I think next week is critical for tech and high growth names, especially the higher valuation stocks," said



Anthony Saglimbene, global market strategist at Ameriprise. "They better prove that they deserve these multiples right now."

Investors will zero in on results from Apple, Microsoft, Amazon and Alphabet, which combined have a market value of about \$8 trillion and make up one-fifth of the weight of the S&P 500. All of those megacap stocks have declined this year, with Apple down about 9%, Amazon off 13.4%, Alphabet down 17.4% and Microsoft falling 18.5%. Earnings expectations for these companies are subdued for the quarter ended in March. Microsoft is expected to have increased adjusted earnings per share by 12% from the year-earlier period, Apple by 2%, while Alphabet is seen

posting a 0.7% dip and Amazon reporting a 49% drop, according to Refinitiv data. S&P 500 companies overall are expected to increase quarterly earnings by 7.3%.

"Expectations are low, but that doesn't mean it's not important," said James Ragan, director of wealth management research at D.A. Davidson. "If we are going to hit that 9% (earnings growth) for the year or even better than that, it's hard to imagine we are going to do that without having better-than-expected earnings from the megacap companies."

Aside from the top four firms, results are due next week from a range of companies including Facebook owner Meta Platforms (FB.O), payment companies Visa (V.N) and Mastercard (MA.N), oil majors Chevron (CVX.N) and Exxon Mobil (XOM.N), and consumer companies Coca-Cola (KO.N) and PepsiCo (PEP.O).

## Editor's Choice



A man walks through a garden on an autumn day in Srinagar, Indian-administered Kashmir, November 2016. REUTERS/Danish Ismail



Elvis Presley impersonator Ross Mancini chats with fellow enthusiasts while boarding a train at Sydney Central Railway Station before departing for the Parkes Elvis Festival, as the event returns following the coronavirus pandemic, in Sydney, Australia, April 21, 2022. REUTERS/Loren Elliott



A jogger runs beside ice-covered trees near Albispass mountain pass, Switzerland January 2020. REUTERS/Arnd Wiegmann



A whirlwind is seen as elephant and zebras walk through the Amboseli National Park, Kenya, August 2018. REUTERS/Baz Ratner



A hand-written sign attached to the door warns customers shopping for a home test that the kits are out of stock at a CVS store in Somerville, Massachusetts, December 22. REUTERS/Brian Snyder



Barbara Garramone of Rome, Italy, is embraced by her son Pietro and daughter Giulia as they wait in line for a coronavirus test in Manhattan, New York City, December 22. REUTERS/Andrew Kelly



# BUSINESS

## 5G Internet Has Become A Policy Minefield For Cities While Health Concerns, Aesthetics And FCC Bullying Pose New Challenges

### Cities Are Saying No To 5G



Overview

The next generation of wireless internet needs lots of new equipment in public spaces. The federal government just limited what cities can do about that, and mayors say they’re prepared to fight back.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

In October of last year, four U.S. cities got their first taste of the next generation of wireless internet. Verizon began rolling out its 5G residential service in Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, and Sacramento, bringing this superfast wireless broadband to customers for the first time. But it arrived just as local governments found their hands tied at governing how these networks—and all the equipment they require—will fit into their communities. That’s because, about the same time, the Federal Communications Commission restricted cities’ ability to regulate 5G infrastructure. Under the new rules, local governments face tight deadlines to approve or reject the installation of this new cellular equipment. The rules also put limits on how much money cities can charge wireless firms for the privilege of putting hardware in public rights of way. This is no small move. The 5G buildout will require massive amounts of new gear, and the installation and approval

process has already proven contentious in many places. The U.S. Conference of Mayors was quick to criticize the FCC’s move as a breach of local authority and suggest it will turn to the courts for resolution.



“The [FCC] has embarked on an unprecedented federal intrusion into local (and state) government property rights that will have substantial and continuing adverse impacts on cities and their taxpayers,” U.S. Conference of Mayors CEO Tom Cochran said in statement. “The Conference and its members now look to the federal courts to review and rectify this unlawful taking of local property.”

The dispute comes down to the “small cell” equipment required for much of 5G and who gets to say where it goes. Small cell sites can be as compact as a pizza box and are typically installed on utility poles or buildings. 5G technology, in turn, delivers wireless internet access at least five times faster and more responsive than today’s 4G networks—but 5G’s best performance limits it to the shortest range. While a 4G cell site might cover a dozen city blocks, 5G’s fastest, millimeter-wave frequencies might need one site for each block.



An Accenture study commissioned by the wireless trade group CTIA estimated in March that there would be 769,000 small-cell deployments in the U.S. from 2018 to 2026. In a separate report, CTIA estimated that the U.S. had 323,448 cell sites in service at the end of 2017. “What we have is a lot of small cells getting deployed in numbers that localities have never seen before,” Wireless Infrastructure Association president and CEO Jonathan Adelstein said. For an example of a more amicable approach to 5G, look to Sacramento. Early on, the city formed a public-private partnership to help Verizon build a network that would support its own smart-city services. (Courtesy <https://www.citylab.com> )

#### Health Issues – Does 5G Pose Health Risks?

So what are the health concerns of 5G, and is there any evidence to back them up?



diation all the time - from television and radio signals, as well as from a whole range of technologies, including mobile phones, and from natural sources such as sunlight.

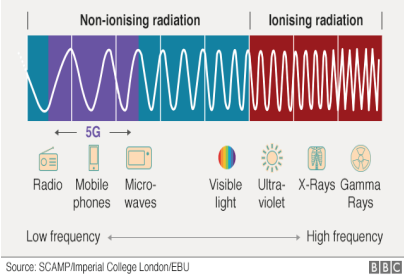
#### What’s different about 5G?

5G uses higher frequency waves than earlier mobile networks, allowing more devices to have access to the internet at the same time and at faster speeds. These waves travel shorter distances through urban spaces, so 5G networks require more transmitter masts than previous technologies, positioned closer to ground level.

#### What are the concerns?

The electromagnetic radiation used by all mobile phone technologies has led some people to worry about increased health risks, including developing certain types of cancer.

#### Where 5G fits in the electromagnetic spectrum



Cities and towns throughout Northern California are issuing ordinances that would exclude new 5G cell sites from residential areas, citing supposed health concerns. Residents of Portland, Ore., and Whitefish, Mont., have also cited these beliefs while lobbying for restrictions. Legislators in four states including New Hampshire have proposed bills that would mandate further study of health effects or else urge Congress to do so, and Congressman Thomas Suozzi (D., N.Y.) wrote to the FCC echoing these concerns.

In 2014 the World Health Organization (WHO) said that “no adverse health effects have been established as being caused by mobile phone use”. However, the WHO together with the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has classified all radio frequency radiation (of which mobile

signals are a part) as “possibly carcinogenic”.

It has been put in this category because “there is evidence that falls short of being conclusive that exposure may cause cancer in humans”.



Eating pickled vegetables and using talcum powder are classed as having the same level of risk.

Alcoholic drinks and processed meat are classed as higher risk.

A toxicology report released in 2018 by the US Department of Health, and pointed to by those expressing safety concerns, found that male rats exposed to high doses of radio frequency radiation developed a type of cancerous tumour in the heart.

For this study, rats’ whole bodies were exposed to radiation from mobile phones for nine hours a day every day for two years, starting before they were born. No cancer link was found for the female rats or the mice studied. It was also found that rats exposed to the radiation lived longer than those in the control group. The WHO says electromagnetic frequency exposures below the limits recommended in the ICNIRP guidelines do not appear to have any known consequence on health.(Courtesy [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com))

# COMMUNITY

## Worldwide Losses At ‘Unprecedented’ Rate

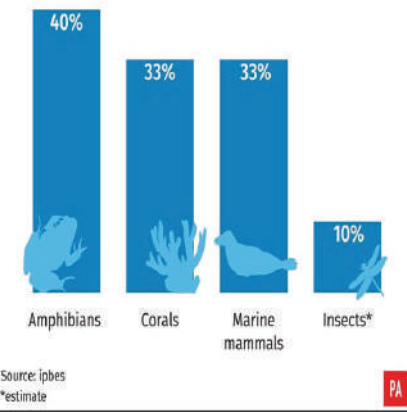
### UN Study Warns:Nature In Decline



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Wildlife and habitats are declining at an “unprecedented” rate worldwide which directly threatens human beings, a major new study has warned. Up to a million species of plants and animals are at risk of extinction, a greater number than ever before in human history.

#### Species threatened with extinction



Many could vanish within decades, the UN-backed global assessment reveals. Scientists warn that the natural world is deteriorating faster than ever as a direct result of human activity, eroding “the very foundations” of economies, livelihoods, food, health and quality of life worldwide. A huge transformation is needed across the economy and society to protect and restore nature, which provides people with food, medicines and other materials, crop pollination, fresh water, and quality of life. Without such “transformational change”, the damage will continue or worsen up to 2050 and beyond, posing a direct threat to human well-being around the world, the study said.

It will also undermine existing global efforts to tackle poverty and hunger, improve health and curb climate change. The experts warned that “vested interests” would oppose changes to the status quo, from which they benefit through things such as subsidies or a lack of regulation, but this opposition could be overcome for the public good. The three-year global assessment on the state of nature from the Intergovernmental

Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has involved more than 450 experts from 50 countries.



#### Loss of pollinators such as bees is putting billions of pounds of crops at risk (Owen Humphreys/PA)

It looked at changes to the natural world over the past five decades, during which time the human population has doubled and demand for energy and materials has increased significantly, and sets out scenarios for the future.

Habitats, wild animals and plants and even domesticated breeds are in decline or vanishing as a direct result of human activity, and the rate at which species are becoming extinct is accelerating.

The biggest cause of wildlife losses is change to the way land or marine environments are used, followed by direct exploitation of animals and plants, climate change, pollution and invasive species.

Three-quarters of the world’s land has been “significantly altered” by human activity, with forests cut down and grassland ploughed up for crops or livestock and the spread of cities, industry and infrastructure such as roads.



#### Habitat is being destroyed by human activity (Emily Beament/PA)

The study, which drew on thousands of pieces of evidence, also found that rising global temperatures were already having an impact on nature and the effects would increase in the coming decades. Habitat is being destroyed by human activity (Emily Beament/PA)

The study, which drew on thousands of pieces of evidence, also found that rising global temperatures were already having an impact on nature and the effects would increase in the coming decades. The assessment outlines a series of scenarios for the future, and found that major changes are required to protect nature and benefit people.

These include a shift away from concentrating on economic growth, bringing in wildlife-friendly farming, restoring habitats such as native forests, cutting food waste, creating marine protected areas and effective quotas for fishing, reducing

pollution and creating more green space in cities.

It is hoped the evidence in the report will help form policies and action and provide the basis for new global targets to protect nature which will be negotiated at a UN meeting in China in 2020. (Courtesy <https://www.irishexaminer.com/>)