



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay cautioned military and protesters alike in Thailand to show restraint and negotiate an end to their standoff. Five days of violence have claimed at least 28 lives and caused hundreds of injuries in the capital. Thai authorities are continuing to fire on protesters who occupy certain areas of Bangkok.

CLIMATE CHANGE - An international deal to battle climate change remains within reach but developed and developing countries need to build more trust around financial and technological aspects, says Christiana Figueres, the United Nations new climate chief. Figueres indicated agreement on a binding international treaty in 2010 is unlikely.

ENVIRONMENT - Recycling rates for metals integral to the production of renewable energy tools such as wind turbines and solar panels but rare in nature are not nearly high enough to create a sustainable green economy, the United Nations Environmental Programme says in a new report. Immediate efforts to dramatically increase recycling of lithium, neodymium and gallium will leave the metals unavailable for use, UN Environmental Programme warns.

HEALTH - The vaccine used to successfully eradicate smallpox worldwide may provide some protection against HIV/AIDS. Researchers hypothesize that the vaccine promotes long-term changes to the immune system that increase resistance to both diseases, and the end of its use as the smallpox virus waned may have contributed to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

■AFRICA

Africa region - The world's second largest lake on the border between Tanzania and Democratic Republic of the Congo is now warmer than at any time for the last 1,500 years, according to scientists. The study points out that the change coincides with an increase in human emissions of greenhouse gases in the past century, claiming it reinforces current theories that global warming is being caused by men. The researchers said that algae volumes have dropped in the lake and that fish and wildlife are also threatened by the change in temperature. Around ten million people live around lake Tanganyika and depend on it for food and water.

MALAWI - Despite some remaining pockets of food insecurity and fears that a prolonged dry spell would set back Malawi's maize production in 2010, the country looks set to realize another surplus year.

■ASIA

SRI LANKA - Heavy flooding across parts of western and southern Sri Lanka has affected almost 200,000 people, the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) says.

TAJIKISTAN / UZBEKISTAN - Mass vaccinations campaigns are under way in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in an effort to stem the spread of a polio outbreak in Tajikistan that has resulted in more than 100 confirmed cases thus far, the World Health Organization says. Worldwide efforts to eradicate the disease are struggling to overcome budget shortfalls and security issues that prevent access.

■MIDDLE EAST

OPT - With a failing economy, rising unemployment and deteriorating power, sanitation and health facilities, the health of Gaza's population continues to worsen, according to a recent World Health Organization (WHO) report.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

HAITI - The dangers of rapid and chaotic urbanization were made obvious in the aftermath of the 12 January earthquake in Haiti as the population of the densely populated capital city was left vulnerable to the disaster's consequences.

WFWO's Communications Team