2024 Global elections & climate trends monitor

18 April 2024

Hi,

Welcome to the first edition of the 2024 global elections and climate trends monitor!

Delving into the intersection of climate concerns and electoral landscapes worldwide, our newsletter offers a concise summary of media coverage over the past month. We spotlight key elections amidst a backdrop of climate change, exploring discussions on energy, living expenses, and environmental impacts, with insights from local experts and international English-language outlets.

This first edition aligns with the start of the general elections in India tomorrow, where we'll offer some insights into what role climate has played in the race. In addition, we take a brief look at the results of the recently concluded parliamentary elections in South Korea. Join us and follow the pace of elections and climate trends around the globe!

Don't hesitate to share this newsletter with anyone who might be interested, and feel free to reach out in case of any queries.

Best,

Filipe Ferreira
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New to the newsletter? Subscribe here!

This month's top stories

1 | **Biden races to commit billions to climate action as election looms** (The Guardian)

USA

2 | **[UK Prime Minister] Sunak resists call to set election date amid leadership threat** (Bloomberg)

UK

EU

3 | **Belgium to investigate suspected Russian interference in EU elections** (CNN)

South Korea

7 | **South Korea opposition wins landslide midterm vote in resounding blow to President Yoon** (CNN)

Senegal

4 | **Bassirou Diomaye Faye sworn in as Senegal's youngest president** (The Guardian)

India

5 | **The Lok Sabha elections will take place over seven phases, commencing on April 19** (The Hindustan Times)

South Africa

6 | **Jacob Zuma will run again in South Africa's presidential election** (The New York Times)

Links: **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7**

Climate perspectives

- **UN climate chief calls on citizens to 'raise their voices' ahead of elections** (Financial Times)
  "The head of the UN's climate change arm has urged citizens to "raise their voices" over global warming as more than half of the world goes to the polls in the months ahead."

- **Election of Donald Trump 'could put world's climate goals at risk'** (The Guardian)
  "Former UN climate chief warns of global impact of a possible regression in US green policies."

- **Over half of European voters think climate action is a priority, exclusive Euronews poll reveals** (Euronews)
  "Less than a third of voters think the EU has had a positive impact on environmental protection."

- **India's top court expands right to life to include 'adverse effects of climate change' in landmark ruling** (The Independent)
  "Supreme Court says right to life and equality can't be fully realized without clean environment."

- **Strasbourg court's Swiss climate ruling could have global impact, say experts** (The Guardian)
  "Decision by European court of human rights around vulnerability of older women to heatwaves marks significant shift."

Cost of living crisis

- **Climate change could cut global income by 19% in 25 years, finds study** (The Hindu)
  "The global economy is expected to lose about 19% income in the next 25 years due to climate change, with countries least responsible for the problem and having minimum resources to adapt to impacts suffering the most."

- **Climate change could turn up the heat on inflation, according to report** (Euronews)
  "Rising temperatures and extreme weather events are expected to have a global impact on agriculture."

- [Climate change is fuelling the US insurance problem](#) (BBC)
  "Extreme weather events are making it hard to insure homes in certain parts of the US."

- [Senegal's opposition voters: 'It was social injustice that made us vote for Bassirou Diomaye Faye'](#) (Le Monde)
  "From fishermen to students, many of the country's young people took to the polls to express their rejection of Macky Sall's liberal policies, which they felt ignored their needs."

Country spotlight: India
Election start date: **19 April 2024**

Country stats

- Political stability (2022): [-0.6](#)
- Free elections score (2022): [0.53](#)
- Envi Performance Index (2022): [18.90](#)
- Net zero target: [In policy](#)
- RE capacity (2022): [308.1 GW](#)
- CO2 emissions (tons p/capita) (2020): [1.6](#)

Top election stories

- [Lok Sabha election 2024 live](#) (The Hindustan Times)
  "The Lok Sabha elections will take place over seven phases, commencing on April 19. Vote counting is slated for June 4."

- [Lok Sabha 2024: Water crisis in Bihar's Gaya remains major concern for voters](#) (The Hindu)
  "Residents are tired of the claims of a speedy resolution, made in the past and for the present election, by candidates contesting for the Gaya Lok Sabha seat."

- [Bengaluru housing society to boycott elections amid water crisis, but is that a solution?](#) (The Times of India)
  "The residents of Royal Lakefront Residency, a housing society approved by the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) in J P Nagar 8th Phase, have decided not to vote in the upcoming Lok Sabah elections due to a critical water scarcity in the region."

- [Indian voters want jobs and lower prices, survey shows](#) (The Telegraph)
  "The findings illustrate that benefits of India's world beating growth are not evenly spread for its 1.4 billion people as the creation of jobs, despite Modi's domestic manufacturing push over the last 10 years, is still a challenge."

Regional analysis

The largest-ever elections in history will be held in India this year, starting from 19 April till June 1. Approximately 970 million people will vote, electing 543 members of the Lok Sabha (Lower House of the Parliament) in seven phases between April 19 and June 1.

The two leading political parties – Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and India's primary opposition party the Indian National Congress (INC) – released their manifestos this month.

Among other things, the BJP has promised to make India energy independent by 2047, reducing petroleum imports through electric mobility, including charging stations, renewable energy production and improved energy efficiency, according to the [Economic Times](#). India's vision to take a leading position as a voice of the Global South features in the ruling party's [manifesto](#). So does a reference to the household liquified gas scheme as an example of women empowerment. Meanwhile, the Congress party has promised a new green deal, focusing investment on renewable energy, sustainable infrastructure and the creation of green jobs to support municipalities to be energy self-sufficient. The party has further [proposed](#) cracking down on air

and water pollution, creating an independent environmental protection agency, improving management of water and land resources and creating a transition fund.

Energy has featured prominently in election discourse, with specific mentions on accelerating renewables, deploying subsidised household solar systems, scaling green hydrogen, establishing smart grids and positioning the country as a global manufacturing hub. However, some analysts have noted that climate has not been a central election issue for many candidates, with campaign narratives largely focused on livelihood and governance issues. Voter perception on climate is somewhat mixed. According to a survey of first-time voters by CSDS-Lokniti in which two-thirds of respondents said they would vote for the BJP, unemployment, inflation and communal harmony feature as top priorities. However, another survey of first-time voters across three metropolitan cities - Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai - found climate was the third-largest concern (79%), following unemployment (87%) and the economy (86%).

While not campaigning on climate, the government is preparing to manage the impacts of extreme weather events on the vote itself. News reports have questioned the resilience and preparedness for the seven-phase voting in the world's largest democracy. Prime Minister Modi is reviewing the heat preparedness during polls. Climate may not be the central theme of the elections, but clearly the impacts are being realised.

Country spotlight: South Korea

Country stats

- Political stability (2022): 0.6
- Free elections score (2022): 0.95
- Envi Performance Index (2022): 46.9
- Net zero target: In law
- RE capacity (2022): 37.6 GW
- CO2 emissions (tons p/capita) (2020): 11.0

Top election stories

- **South Korea opposition wins landslide midterm vote in resounding blow to President Yoon** (CNN)
  "The Democratic Party (DP) was projected to take more than 170 of the 300 seats in the new legislature."

- **How South Korea election may reshape Yoon's policy agenda** (Reuters)
  "South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol pledged to renew his administration after his party suffered a big defeat in legislative elections, with the result increasing the risk that more of his policy priorities might be blown off course."

- **Climate is the new 'must-have' in South Korean election gameplan** (Bloomberg)
  "South Korea's deeply divided political parties have shown rare alignment leading up to next week's election for parliament, with both backing candidates and policies advancing a green agenda."

Regional analysis

South Korea's general election delivered a landslide victory for the main opposition party the Democratic Party of Korea (DPK). With opposition parties securing 192 of 300 National Assembly seats, President Yoon Suk Yeol's ruling People Power Party will struggle to achieve its agenda. Indeed, the vote is widely seen as a midterm referendum on President Yoon, who is expected to become a lame duck for his remaining three years in office.

Low approval ratings of just 30-40% have dogged President Yoon since taking office. He has attracted criticism for mismanaging the economy; failing to seek opposition cooperation on policy priorities; filling key posts with his aides; and refusing to acknowledge his wife's corruption scandals. Little seems to have changed in defeat: the president's commitments to replace his prime minister and chief of staff and to [improve communication with voters have come under immediate questioning](#). In fact, Yoon is thought to be seeking personnel from his usual circle and is determined to keep pursuing his favoured policies.

Local civic groups worked hard [to make climate a key campaign issue of the 2024 election](#), urging parties and candidates to include ambitious climate pledges. Early on, it looked like deeply divided parties were pushing for green agendas - ranking climate change among their top 10 policy pledges and recruiting parliamentary candidates with climate expertise. But amid heated negative campaigning, [parties failed to offer specifics](#).

President Yoon's government has slowed decarbonisation efforts, scaling back the previous government's climate and energy policies. Specifically, the ruling party is promoting nuclear power at the expense of renewable energy, and is not expected to change this stance. However, the president may now face stronger opposition to controversial policies, starting with the upcoming [11th Basic Plan for Electricity Supply and Demand](#). It remains to be seen whether the Yoon administration's [pro-nuclear initiative](#) can gain further momentum; if renewable energy expansion targets can be increased; and if the government can enhance its [NDC](#) for 2035.

Climate impacts

- [India's Bengaluru is fast running out of water, and a long, scorching summer still looms](#) (AP News)
  "Bengaluru in southern India is witnessing an unusually hot February and March, and in the last few years, it has received little rainfall in part due to human-caused climate change."

- [Privatisation, extreme weather and politics: How Britain's waterways became an 'open sewer'](#) (Euronews)
  "A combination of agricultural runoff and sewage spills now mean the UK is ranked among some of the worst countries in Europe for bathing water quality."

- [Pollution burdens nearly half of New York and communities of color most harmed](#) (The Guardian)
  "Publication by mayor's office of environmental justice is first comprehensive survey of environmental inequalities."

- [U.N. climate chief says two years to save the planet](#) (Reuters)
  "Governments, business leaders and development banks have two years to take action to avert far worse climate change, the U.N.'s climate chief said in a speech that warned global warming is slipping down politicians' agendas."

Energy and transport

- [Two countries in Europe are powered by 100% renewable energy as wind capacity soars](#) (Euronews)
  "Last year was the best year on record for new wind energy installation. The world installed 116 gigawatts of new wind power capacity in 2023, according to the latest Global Wind Report from industry trade association the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC)."

- [Oil and gas companies must pay more to drill on federal lands under new Biden administration rule](#) (ABC News)
  "Oil and gas companies will have to pay more to drill on federal lands and satisfy stronger requirements to clean up old or abandoned wells under a final rule from the Biden administration."

- [India invokes emergency rules to run gas power plants for summer](#) (Bloomberg)
  "Government order to boost gas power output during May-June. India maximum power demand seen rising to record this summer."

- **EU moves toward hitting China with tariffs on electric vehicles** (Bloomberg)
  "The bloc found 'sufficient evidence' indicating subsidies. EU could impose duties on Chinese imports as soon as July."

- **US aiming to 'crack the code' on deploying geothermal energy at scale** (The Guardian)
  "Recent $74m investment made alongside assessment that 10% of electricity could be generated by geothermal by 2050."

- **Growth in oil use slows, IEA says, as prices hit $90 a barrel** (Financial Times)
  "The IEA now predicts that oil demand will increase by 1.2mn barrels per day (b/d) this year, a 130,000 b/d reduction on its previous monthly forecast."

Climate movement

- **The pensioners and babies behind a new era of climate lawsuits** (Financial Times)
  "Leading courts around the world are recognising for the first time that governments have legally binding obligations on emissions"

- **'We were hopeful': Climate activists reflect on EU climate action amid a green backlash** (Euronews)
  "The 2019 European elections were marked by the so-called Green Wave that saw climate action put firmly on the political agenda, but with fresh elections looming what do climate activists think about the last 5 years?"

Disinformation alarm

This month's spotlight falls on "**How to spot five of the fossil fuel industry's biggest disinformation tactics**," an article by Amy Westervelt and Kyle Pope featured in The Guardian, which analyses the impact of climate disinformation on journalism and public perception.

Emphasising the urgent need for accurate climate information, especially in light of the upcoming elections that could shape global responses to the climate crisis, the authors describe five key narratives propagated by the fossil fuel industry to manipulate public opinion:

1. Energy security: Despite known risks, the industry asserts its role in national security.
2. Economy vs. environment: Arguing that environmental protection negatively impacts the economy.
3. 'We make your life work': Fossil fuel companies claim their products are indispensable.
4. 'We're part of the solution': Advocating for voluntary measures to sidestep regulation.
5. 'The world's greatest neighbor': Investments in communities to bolster public image and deflect criticism.

Don't miss out on reading it!

Make sure to also check the following ⚠️

- **YouTube approved ads promoting disinformation on India's election** (Time)
  "YouTube approved dozens of ads promoting voter suppression and incitement to violence ahead of the upcoming election in India, according to a new investigation by the rights groups Global Witness and Access Now, shared exclusively with TIME."

- **Lessons from Taiwan's resistance to an election disinformation wave** (Global Investigative Journalism Network)
  "As dozens of countries brace for an onslaught of local and foreign digital disinformation campaigns in their elections in 2024, Taiwan's recent experience offers useful lessons for journalists and democracy defenders elsewhere — as well as some much-needed hope."

Commentary

- **[Poll campaigns in India must reflect climate issues](#)** | **By Shekhar Mande (The Hindu)**
  "In this election season, the "State of the Global Climate" report by World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) should result in an awakening not only for all of humanity, but also, specifically, for all political parties. The anxiety over climate change expressed by the WMO, the UN and scientific fraternity should motivate parties across the political spectrum to make their action plans clear."

- **[The UK needs a climate election](#)** | **By Caroline Lucas (Bloomberg)**
  "Parties seeking power should be vying to literally promise voters the earth this year. With a May general election now off the table, there is no telling when the government will finally stop clinging to power and let the British public have their say."

- **[Good news: Democracy won in Senegal. Here's why it matters](#)** | **By Ellen Ioanes (Vox)**
  "2024 is the biggest global election year in history and the future of democracy is on every ballot. But amid an international backsliding in democratic norms, including in countries with a longer history of democracy like India, Senegal's election last week was a major win for democracy."

Live monitoring dashboard

Our Talkwalker dashboard offers the latest articles and insights on democratic elections around the world, along with emerging climate narratives.

Check our dashboard!

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