



Water surrounds the coast of Cabo da Roca near Lisbon, Portugal, Friday, April 14, 2023. (AP Photo/Michael Probst)

by The Associated Press

[View Author Profile](#)

[Join the Conversation](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

April 24, 2023

[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

Charred, drained or swamped, built up, dug out or taken apart, blue or green or turned to dust: this is the Earth as seen from above.

As the world commemorated Earth Day on Saturday, the footprints of human activity were visible across the planet's surface. The relationship between people and the natural world will have consequences for years to come.

In Iraq, lakes shrivel and dry up as rain fails to fall, weather patterns altered by human-made climate change. In Florida, the opposite problem: too much water clogs roads and neighborhoods, trapping cars and stranding people, with the burning of fossil fuels again partially to blame for erratic conditions.

In megacities, like the rapidly growing Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, skyscrapers shoot upwards while in Guyana excavators dig deep into the earth for deposits of gold.

In California, surfers straddle waves in the ocean. In New Jersey, solar panels float in ponds, and in India, fishing nets sink into the lakes. Residents of neighborhoods in Utah meanwhile, find water where it shouldn't be — coursing through their streets and homes.

Advertisement

On land, farmers are at the whims of the weather, with patterns being altered by climate change. In Argentina, parched lands turn crops to gray. Just outside Barcelona, new cracked, thirsty water beds appear after months of little to no rain.

Earth Day first began in 1970, heralded as the birth of an environmental movement that encouraged people worldwide to protect the natural world. Today, it also urges action to combat climate change, which has accelerated in recent decades.

Each year, scientists have warned that the burning of fossil fuels is heating the planet and bringing us closer to breaching internationally agreed upon limits of warming, which would have major effects, such as more extreme weather events.

Around the world, activists of all ages are keeping the pressure on governments and companies to do more to protect the environment and combat climate change.



A dried Sawa Lake is surrounded by a dry bed in Iraq, Monday, April 10, 2023.
(AP Photo/Anmar Khalil)



A pair of waterlogged cars sit abandoned in the road as floodwaters recede in the Sailboat Bend neighborhood of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Thursday, April 13, 2023. (AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell)



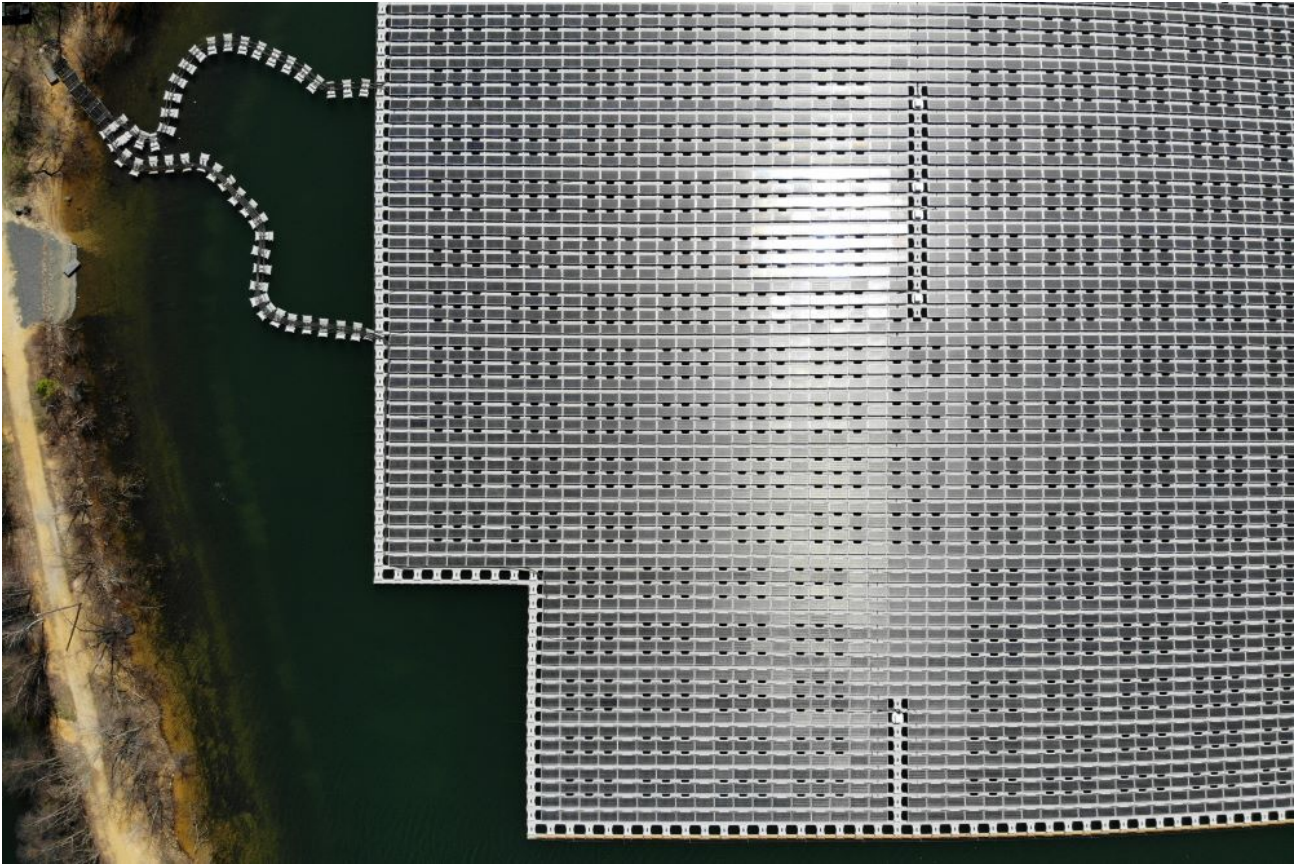
The sun rises over downtown Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on April 11, 2023. (AP Photo/Vincent Thian)



The Tassawini Gold Mines are visible amid trees in Chinese Landing, Guyana, Monday, April 17, 2023. (AP Photo/Matias Delacroix)



Two surfers waded through water in Huntington Beach, Calif., Monday, April 17, 2023. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)



• An array of solar panels float on top of a water storage pond in Sayreville, N.J., Monday, April 10, 2023. (AP Photo/Seth Wenig)



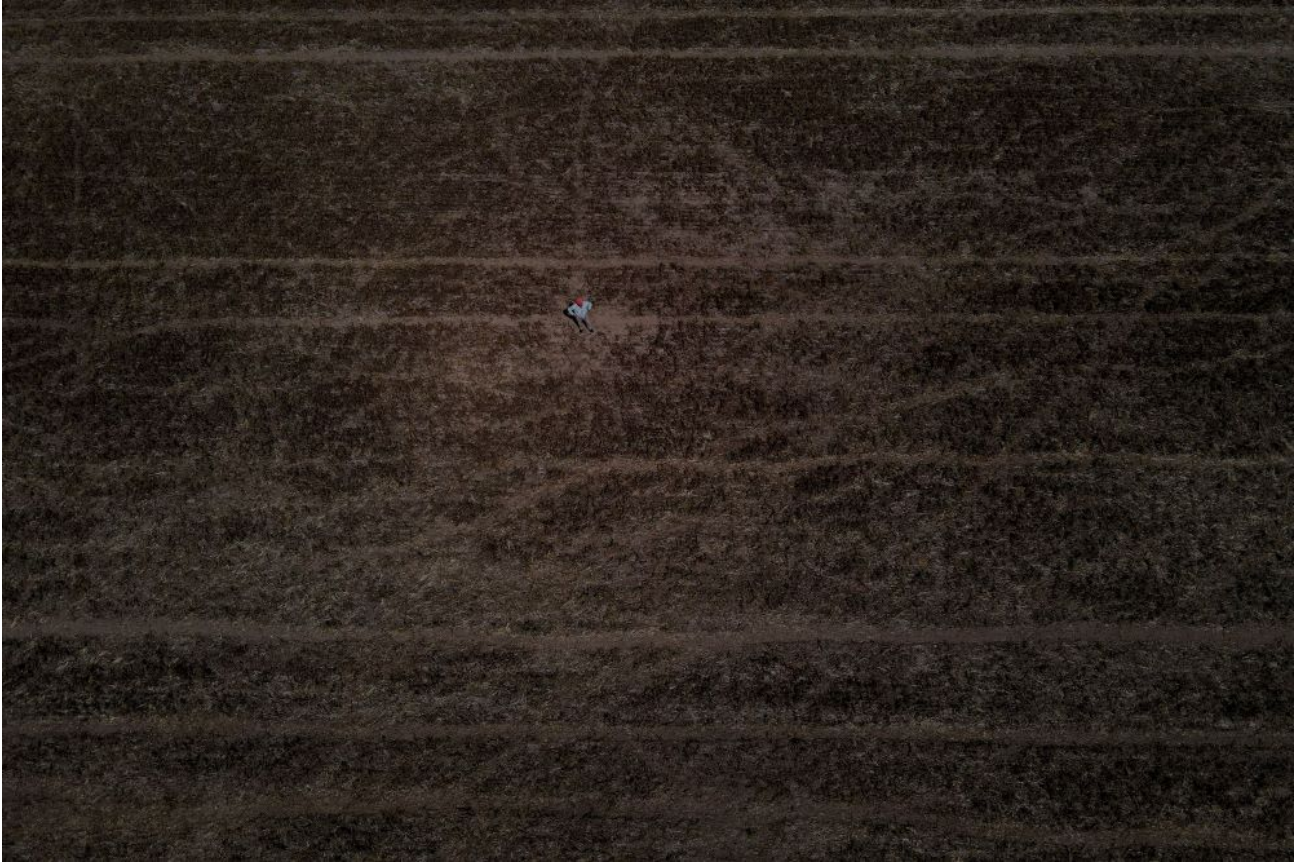
A farmer spreads his net to catch fish in a lake on the outskirts of Guwahati, India, Monday, April 10, 2023. (AP Photo/Anupam Nath)



Local officials issued evacuation orders for at least 20 homes as temperatures spiked and snowmelt coursed through the streets on Wednesday, April 12, 2023, in Kaysville, Utah. (AP Photo/Rick Bowmer)



A car drives down a road near farmland in Lobos, Argentina, Friday, April 14, 2023. Huge amount of the harvest of soybean and corn has been lost in Argentina due to drought. (AP Photo/Natacha Pisarenko)



Martin Sturla stands on his soybean field during a drought in San Antonio de Areco, Argentina, Monday, March 20, 2023. Sturla says he lost 85 percent of his harvest of soybean and corn due to the drought. (AP Photo/Natacha Pisarenko)



Dry, cracked land is visible around at the Sau reservoir, about 100 km (62 miles) north of Barcelona, Spain, Tuesday, April 18, 2023. (AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti)



An old boat is photographed half-buried after the water level has dropped at the Sau reservoir, about 100 km (62 miles) north of Barcelona, Spain, Tuesday, April 18, 2023. (AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti)



Boat docks are visible where ice has thawed at Wayzata Bay in Lake Minnetonka, Thursday, April 13, 2023, in Wayzata, Minn. (AP Photo/Abbie Parr)



•
Clouds hover over the Woipan Tepuy on Pemón Indigenous territory at the Gran Sabana, Bolívar state, Venezuela, Wednesday, April 5, 2023. (AP Photo/Matias Delacroix)

[Read this next: Ahead of Earth Day, 31 faith organizations divest from fossil fuels](#)