

Turmoil in Sri Lanka, Europe burns and cleaning up sea freight

Less than 10 years ago, Sri Lanka was spoken of glowingly by global economists as the next “Asian Tiger”. Such forecasts seemed otherworldly this week as MPs elected a new president, in response to street protests that had forced the previous incumbent, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, to flee the country and resign (in that order).

Against a backdrop of economic ruin brought about by disastrous mismanagement and corruption, our south Asia correspondent Hannah Ellis-Petersen examines how a popular uprising brought down a president - and if the protesters will now get their wish of lasting structural change in Sri Lanka, or simply more of the same.

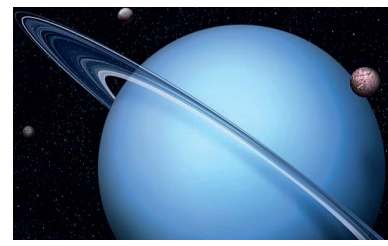
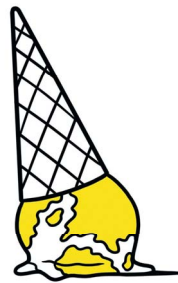
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The climate crisis visited western and northern Europe with a vengeance this week, as temperatures reached around 40C in many parts of Britain, France and Belgium. At the same time, wildfires raging in France, Portugal and Spain have caused chaos. We examine the impact of the latest extreme heatwave, while Oliver Wainwright explores cooling strategies for cities where heat poses a growing threat.

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Global sea freight is a dirty business, relying on huge, high-polluting container vessels. What if a cleaner way could be found to move goods by sea? That’s the dream of a pair of French boating enthusiasts who want to revive the tradition of sail-powered cargo for the modern day. Wendell Steavenson travelled to Brittany to learn about their plans.

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On the covers

For readers of our European edition this week, the cover focuses on the heatwave and wildfires that have been ravaging the continent. Elsewhere, the spotlight shines on Sri Lanka’s popular protest movement and the expected election of a new president.
Photographs (wildfires): EPA/SDIS 33; (Sri Lanka): Arun Sankar/Getty