

AFRICA ACTION SHEET



Easter 2018

Why might Christ's thorn jujube tree become a sign of hope, not pain?

The "crown of thorns" tree, immortalised as the bush used in the crucifixion of Jesus, could help to mitigate the effects of climate change, Israeli researchers say.

While pilgrims prepare to converge on the city this weekend to commemorate Easter, scientists are at work in the surrounding hills studying *Ziziphus spina-christi*, an evergreen commonly known as Christ's thorn jujube.

Dr Shabtai Cohen, of Israel's Volcani Agricultural Research Centre, believes it is a "pioneer" in the fight against desertification because its hardiness makes it resilient to rising temperatures and aridity. It draws water from deep below ground and retains the ability to photosynthesise even when exposed to high temperatures and solar radiation.

Just as that crown is associated with suffering and death followed by resurrection, the researchers hope the tree, which provides sustenance to bees and insects, could help to support life in areas threatened by deadly heat. "Studying its attributes and its traits is going to help us to breed species we want in future," said Dr Cohen.

www.pressreader.com/uk/i-newspaper/2018 03 30/



Shifting sands of the Sahara alarm climate scientists 30 Mar 2018

The Sahara Desert has expanded by 10 per cent over the past century and is now the same size as the US.

Researchers said they were alarmed to discover that the world's biggest desert had grown significantly since 1920, largely because of rising temperatures and lower rainfall caused by **climate change**. The finding suggests that other major deserts will also have grown substantially, raising concerns about the world's ability to produce enough food in the future.

"The study's results have far reaching implications for the future of the Sahara, as well as for other subtropical deserts around the world," said Professor Sumant Nigam, of the University of Maryland. "As the world's population continues to grow, reduction in arable land with adequate rainfall to support crops could have devastating consequences."

Deserts typically receive annual rainfall of less than five inches (127mm), but many are getting less and less rain each year because of global warming.

"The trends in Africa of hot summers getting hotter and rainy seasons drying out are linked with factors such as increasing greenhouse gases and aerosols in the atmosphere," said Professor Nigam. "These trends have a devastating effect on the lives of African people, who depend on agriculture-based economies."

The American findings are published in the Journal of Climate.

A separate study in January warned that if temperatures rose by 2°C, more than a quarter of the planet's surface would become significantly drier, with much of the affected areas turning to desert. Read more at

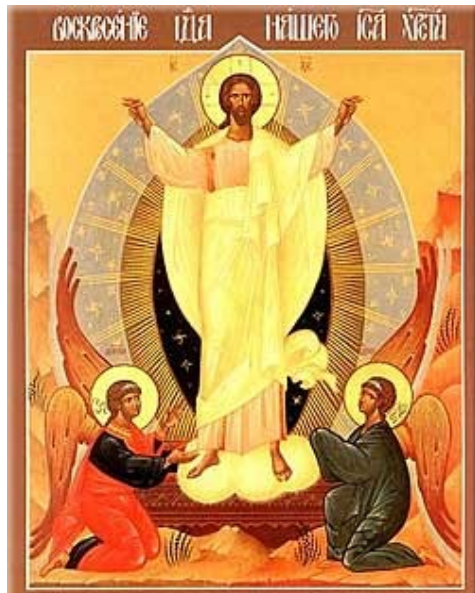
www.pressreader.com/uk/

Solar Power pay-as-you-go projects in Africa getting major funding

There's long been an expectation by both analysts and casual observers that solar power would play an important role in filling the huge deficit in Africa's power generation capacity. One challenge has always been how to deliver a consumer proposition that would be affordable for some of the poorest people in developing countries, particularly in rural areas.

Services that allow customers to pay for solar equipment and service in small instalments have picked up momentum in the last couple of years, particularly in East Africa. Two firms that supply solar power products with **pay-as-you-go** products have recently raised a total of \$75 million in financing to back up that long-held vision.

Read more: Quartz website: <https://qz.com/1186227/solar-projects-in-africa-are-picking-up-momentum/>



The Africa Action Sheet is produced by the

**AFRICA-EUROPE FAITH & JUSTICE
NETWORK-UK**

2 Park Place Devizes Wilts SN10 1PJ

0778 707 8833

aefjnuk@yahoo.co.uk

www.aefjn.org.uk

Halve our consumption of meat by 2050 to save the planet

Greenpeace has launched a campaign to drastically cut meat and dairy production and consumption to avoid dangerous climate change

A new report projects that agriculture will produce 52% of global greenhouse gas emissions in the coming decades, 70% of which will come from meat and dairy. Livestock production now occupies 26% of the land on Earth



The Report also addresses the detrimental effect of a meat and dairy diet on our health. Diets with high amounts of red meat have been linked to cancer, heart disease, obesity and diabetes.

Something is rotten in our food system. Governments continue to support massive meat and dairy operations, leading to more and more meat consumption while putting our health, our children's health, and the health of our planet at risk. Instead, they should be supporting the increasing numbers of farmers shifting towards ecological production of healthy foods, and helping people access healthy plant-based foods."

Greenpeace are now campaigning for meat and dairy production to be reduced by 50% across the world by 2050. Pete Smith, Former Convening Lead Author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), believes we need a radical change to our diets: "Producing the same mix of foods as we consume now, even if we were to do so more sustainably, cannot deliver the reduction in environmental impacts we need to protect the planet for our children and their children."

Greenpeace is calling on governments to end policies that support industrial meat and dairy production, and instead help farmers shift towards ecological methods of growing crops. Greenpeace also urges governments to make healthy, plant-based foods more available, and calls on people around the world to join the movement for less meat and dairy and a healthier planet

Read more: [//www.sustainweb.org/news/mar18_greenpeace_meat_dairy/](http://www.sustainweb.org/news/mar18_greenpeace_meat_dairy/)

Sustainable agriculture in rural Kenya

In rural Siaya, Kenya, water erosion combined with the intensive usage of inorganic fertilisers has resulted in overall poor soil fertility.



This has led to low crop productivity and farm yields, especially of maize and other food crops. Farmers in Siaya are therefore often caught in a vicious cycle of decreasing soil fertility which necessitates the buying of expensive chemical fertiliser to improve crop yields, but which, in the long run will degrade their soil ever further. Low crop yields directly result in lack of food and undernourishment for subsistent farming households.

In order to reverse the impact of detrimental farming practices Ace Africa has implemented a number of Community Livelihoods Programmes which, not only improve nutrition and income, but also have a positive impact on the environment.

These sustainable farming techniques, improve environmental quality and the ability of communities to utilise and live in harmony with the land for generations to come and mitigate the effects of climate change.

www.ace-africa.org/sustainable-agriculture-

OFFSHORE SECRECY

Tax Haven Mauritius' rise comes at the rest of Africa's expense

Companies are rushing to the island nation to benefit from secrecy and tax benefits.

Files from Appleby's Mauritius office, an elite law firm with offices in tax havens around the globe, reveal complex schemes and shell companies

Managers of Angola's sovereign wealth fund used Mauritius and other havens to move millions of dollars in fees and dividends

Controversial tax agreements signed between Mauritius and countries in Africa can help companies slash tax rates. Some of the most important ways of stripping profits from African countries are done through offshore jurisdictions, including Mauritius.

Research shows that companies are more likely to use questionable tax avoidance manoeuvres when operating in developing countries than in wealthier countries where tax enforcement is stronger.

African countries are vulnerable to tax avoidance and evasion because corporate taxes contribute more to Africa's overall tax revenue, on a relative basis, than such taxes do for other countries.

For more information on tax avoidance and tax evasion see the **Tax Justice Network** website

www.icij.org/investigations/paradise-papers/tax-haven-mauritius-africa/