

KEMENTERIAN TENAGA, SAINS, TEKNOLOGI, ALAM SEKITAR DAN PERUBAHAN IKLIM

Bil	Berita	Media	Capaian Berita Penuh
1.	<u>'Kerajaan perlu lebih tegas terhadap Lynas'</u>	Sinar Harian	Klik pada tajuk berita
2.	<u>The return of the Lynas bogeyman</u>	Malaysiakini	Klik pada tajuk berita
3.	<u>Lynas supporters and protesters gather outside Parliament</u>	News Strait Times	Klik pada tajuk berita
4.	<u>Rival Lynas demonstrations outside Parliament</u>	Malaymail	Klik pada tajuk berita
5.	<u>Cypark sees double-digit revenue growth</u>	The Edge Markets	Klik pada tajuk berita
6.	<u>Perak arah kegiatan balak di Sungai Rui, hulu daerah Hulu Perak beku, henti serta-merta</u>	Berita Harian	Klik pada tajuk berita
7.	<u>A step to late</u>	News Strait Times	Rujuk Lampiran 1
8.	<u>Perak Govt halts logging at Sq Rui</u>	News Strait Times	Rujuk Lampiran 2
9.	<u>Kronologi dan Keahlian Khas Pencemaran Sq Rui</u>	Sinar Harian	Rujuk Lampiran 3

TEMPATAN

Bil	Berita	Media	Capaian Berita Penuh
10.	<u>Sahut cabaran Earth Hour luar daripada kebiasaan</u>	Astro Awani	Klik pada tajuk berita
11.	<u>SESB compensates 273 Kota Belud folks</u>	Daily Express	Klik pada tajuk berita
12.	<u>Perlu kajian menyeluruh kenal pasti pencemaran makanan laut bercangkerang</u>	Berita Harian	Klik pada tajuk berita
13.	<u>Plastic bags, straws banned in UMS cafeteria</u>	The Borneo Post	Klik pada tajuk berita
14.	<u>Chemical Recycling of Plastic: Waste No More?</u>	Sustainable Brands	Klik pada tajuk berita
15.	<u>Pro-and anti-Lynas groups hold demos</u>	The Star	Rujuk Lampiran 4
16.	<u>Hantar balik sisa nadir bumi</u>	Sinar Harian	Rujuk Lampiran 5
17.	<u>Pencemaran tak serius</u>	Sinar Harian	Rujuk Lampiran 6

ANTARABANGSA

Bil	Berita	Media	Capaian Berita Penuh
18.	<u>Student finds 19-year-old plastic noodle wrapper on Java beach</u>	The Star	Klik pada tajuk berita
19.	<u>Clues emerge in 'missing' ocean plastics conundrum</u>	The Straits Times	Klik pada tajuk berita
20.	<u>WATER DISGRACE Shocking images reveal the devastating impact of plastic pollution in our oceans with masses of floating rubbish and beaches covered in trash</u>	The Sun	Klik pada tajuk berita
21.	<u>Flight shame causes rethink of Air Travel</u>	News Straits Times	Rujuk Lampiran 7

LAMPIRAN 1
NEWS STRAITS TIMES (OPINION): MUKA SURAT 66
TARIKH: 11 APRIL 2019 (KHAMIS)

A STEP TOO LATE

Authorities must give primary consideration to environmental integrity and sustainability very early on in approval of projects, writes
DR A. ALDRIE AMIR

MANGROVES are identified as habitats of global importance. Although they occur only along the coastlines of tropical and subtropical belts, mangroves are recognised at a planetary scale as the earth's most efficient ecosystems to sequester atmospheric carbon.

Replacing mangrove forests causes unparalleled damage not only on the aesthetics, but also amplifies effects of exposing the carbon in the sediment and releasing them back into the atmosphere.

Therefore, many mangrove forests around the globe are listed as Ramsar sites and protected through various Unesco conservation programmes.

In February and March, the World Wetlands Day (Feb 2), World Wildlife Day (March 3), World Forest Day (March 21) and World Water Day (March 22), were celebrated gloriously around the globe.

At the same time in Malaysia, programmes and activities were organised and attended by people to commemorate and mark their appreciation of these precious habitats and resources.

Among the many events held were mangrove planting and replanting in the country, either as a corporate social responsibility project by private organisations, or as part of a continuous exercise carried out by government agencies and non-governmental organisations.

While many efforts on conservation and protection of mangroves were taking place, some contrasting situations occurred simultaneously in other coastal edges of Malaysia.

Many of these reported cases have shocked the country by the extent of their negative environmental and social impacts.

The recent environmental calamities concerning mangroves include: the revocation (and later the regazettement) of the Johor National Park status of the Pulau Kukup Ramsar site; the grand-scale golf course and resort development near the Sungai Pulai Mangrove Forest Reserve Ramsar site in Johor; the clearance of a firefly habitat in Kampung Dew in Perak; a controversial proposed road development near the mangroves of Balik Pulau in Penang; a controversial proposed mega aquaculture pond development in Penaga, Penang; the dumping of mining residue in the mangroves of Balok in Pahang; and the dumping of toxic chemical waste into Sungai Kim Kim in Johor, affecting the health of the river, mangroves and their surrounding communities.

It seems that we have neither learned enough from our past mistakes, nor have we remembered the impact from disastrous natural events that have devastated many coastal communities around our region.

Possibly we did, considering the very recent announcement and affirmation by the **energy, science, technology, environment and climate change minister** on the disapproval of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for future developments in Ramsar sites.

One critical point to raise here is why limit the ultimatum only to Ramsar sites when many other legally binding gazetted mangrove forest reserves and environmentally sensitive areas are at risk of either being cleared and developed, or have been eyed for various developments and degazettement.

The instruction to carry out an EIA for any development in these sites is actually one step

too late.

From the way things are going now, it is seen as a provisional approval regardless of the results.

To make matters worse, land clearing or earthwork for some projects had begun even prior to the application and approval.

The EIA is used as the strongest legal tool to curb or to minimise environmental damage from the development of prescribed activities; unfortunately it is not powerful enough to halt the development on mangroves and reverse the loss of these habitats.

In other words, the development is allowed to happen with the promise that all mitigation measures and actions will be fulfilled and carried out accordingly, as proposed by the environmental consultants — hired and paid by the developers.

This counter-intuitive process has been going on for such a long time. It is now definitely the time to be bold, prudent and smart to amend it for the better.

The state authorities as the custodians of the land according to our Constitution, must give primary consideration to environmental integrity and sustainability early in any approval.

Let us grow and develop as a country sustainably with our own needs, way and design, taking into account our rich biodiversity and heritage.

Our mangroves and coastal wetlands must be protected for their multiple ecological, economic and cultural roles and benefits.

Otherwise, there will only be murky cloudy anoxic drains and channels flowing before us, with no fish and other life forms as these most precious habitats have gone, flushed by our egotistical pride as humans.

The writer is senior lecturer and research fellow at Institute for Environment and Development (Lestari), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and coordinator for the Malaysian Mangrove Research Alliance and Network (MyMangrove)

LAMPIRAN 2
NEWS STRAITS TIMES (NATION): MUKA SURAT 11
TARIKH: 11 APRIL 2019 (KHAMIS)

PERAK GOVT HALTS LOGGING AT SG RUI

Mining to be carried out under stringent restrictions, say MB

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THE state government has instructed all logging along Sungai Rui in Grik to be temporarily stopped, while mining activities need to be carried out under stringent restrictions.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu said these moves would be taken until the state government received a conclusive report from the special task force ordered to study and identify the source of pollution in Sungai Rui.

He said, based on research, elements of arsenic naturally existed in Hulu Perak district.



Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu speaking at a press conference to address the Sungai Rui issue, in Ipoh yesterday. PIC BY ABDULLAH YUSOF

Therefore, he said, the increased level of arsenic in the water was possibly due to land exploration, such as mining, soil erosion and farming, which had been ongoing for more

than 100 years.

"We have been informed that there are about 2,000 licences issued for tin mining (but there are also) some who do it illegally in Sungai Pahit... the latter cat-

egory sometimes use chemical for the tin purification process and this could have caused the pollution in Sungai Hitam and Sungai Rui.

"The state government will carry out in-depth research and study to identify the real cause of the pollution. We are committed to taking further action to control and restore the affected rivers.

"This includes stopping all activities that have been conclusively found to have contributed to the pollution," he said at a press conference to address the Sungai Rui issue.

Last week, state Education, Technology, Science and Environmental Committee chairman Dr Abdul Aziz Bari had said based on recent tests by the Mineral and Geoscience Department, the contamination of the river was believed to be due to high arsenic content.

Following this, Faizal had or-

dered the department to monitor the water quality, with water samples taken and analysed twice a day.

He also ordered that the reports be submitted to him every month.

On complaints of health issues from the contaminated water, Faizal said the state Health Department had conducted checks on residents of Kampung Air Ganda, who claimed to be affected by skin diseases.

"A total of 300 hair samples were collected and to be tested for possible skin infection.

"These samples were sent to the Malaysian Medical Research Institute and we should have the results by May or June.

"(However), water samples taken at the Air Ganda Water Treatment Plant showed low levels of arsenic, below the standard that is set by the World Health Organisation, which is less than 0.01mg. This shows that the treated water supplied by the Perak Water Board is safe for use," he said.

Faizal said the state government viewed the matter seriously even though the contamination level was considered low and did not pose a risk to residents.

"A task force has been formed and I am the chairman. We are planning to come up with measures to overcome this matter. This incident is different from the Sungai Kim Kim incident in Johor," he said.

Among the members of the task force are representatives from the National Safety Council, Department of Environment, Perak Water Board, Health Department, Geoscience and Mineral Department, Forestry Department, Drainage and Irrigation Department and state Economic Planning Unit.

LAMPIRAN 3

SINAR HARIAN (SETEMPAT): MUKA SURAT 37

TARIKH: 11 APRIL 2019 (KHAMIS)

Kronologi respon kerajaan negeri kepada penemuan pencemaran dalam sampel yang diambil dari Sungai Rui

18 MAC 2019

Majlis Keselamatan Negara (MKN) Perak dan Jabatan Alam Sekitar telah mengadakan pembentangan mengenai pencemaran Sungai Rui kepada Setiausaha Kerajaan Negeri Perak, Zainal Azman Abu Seman.

19 MAC 2019

MKN Perak telah mengadakan satu Mesyuarat Khas Jawatankuasa Kerja Keselamatan Negeri (JKKN) yang dipengerusikan oleh Menteri Besar bersama ahli-ahli JKKN bagi mendengar taklimat dari pihak Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri, **Jabatan Akam Sekitar**, Jabatan Mineral dan Geosains dan Lembaga Air Perak berkenaan isu pencemaran Sungai Rui. Didapati kadar pH berada pada tahap yang tinggi. Kadar pH yang tinggi ini menunjukkan kehadiran logam berat, termasuk bilangan kecil arsenik. Penemuan ini adalah susulan daripada pemantauan berterusan oleh jabatan - jabatan berkaitan sejak tahun 2016, berikutan aduan mengenai keadaan sungai yang keruh dan berkeladak.

20 MAC 2019

Isu penemuan sisa arsenik dalam sampel air Sungai Rui telah dibincangkan dalam Mesyuarat Majlis Kerajaan Negeri (MMK) dan mesyuarat telah memutuskan untuk menubuhkan sebuah Jawatankuasa Khas bagi mengenalpasti punca pencemaran dan mengambil langkah - langkah segera bagi mengawal pencemaran.

25 MAC 2019

Mesyuarat pertama Jawatankuasa Khas berlangsung dan MKN Perak telah memanjangkan keputusan penting kepada Menteri Besar.

1 APRIL 2019

Setiausaha Kerajaan Negeri telah mempengerusikan mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Khas bagi pihak Menteri Besar untuk mendapatkan perkembangan terkini dan membincangkan gerak kerja seterusnya.

9 APRIL 2019

Menteri Besar mempengerusikan mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Khas bagi mendapatkan maklum balas terkini dari semua agensi terlibat.

Keahlian Jawatankuasa Khas Pencemaran Sungai Rui

- **Pengerusi:** Menteri Besar Perak, Datuk Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu
- **Timbalan Pengerusi:** Setiausaha Kerajaan Negeri Perak, Zainal Azman Abu Seman
- **Ahli-ahli:**
 - Majlis Keselamatan Negara
 - **Jabatan Alam Sekitar**
 - Lembaga Air Perak
 - Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri
 - Jabatan Mineral dan Geosains Perak
 - Jabatan Perhutanan Negeri Perak
 - Jabatan Parit dan Saliran
 - Unit Perancang Ekonomi Negeri
 - Pejabat Pengarah Tanah dan Galian Negeri Perak
 - Perbadanan Pembangunan Pertanian Negeri Perak
 - Perbadanan Menteri Besar

LAMPIRAN 4
THE STAR (NATION): MUKA SURAT 16
TARIKH: 11 APRIL 2019 (KHAMIS)



Having their say: The pro-Lynas group (left) and those against the rare earth mining company protesting from opposite sides of the road leading to Parliament House.

Pro- and anti-Lynas groups hold demos

TWO groups – one supporting and another opposing Lynas' rare earth processing plants in Malaysia – held peaceful demonstrations on opposite sides of the road in front of Parliament yesterday.

The demonstration against Lynas' operations, which saw the participation of 61 NGOs, was led by Selamatkan Malaysia dan Hentikan Lynas (SMHL).

SMHL chairman Tan Bun Tee said that the operating licences of the Australian company should be suspended in order to stop environmental pollution.

"We regret what has happened. The Pakatan Harapan government

should have kept its promises and not allowed a dangerous factory like Lynas to operate in the country.

"We don't want Lynas to be in Kuantan. Why must Kuantan accept a factory like this? The Pakatan government should listen to the people. Please shut down this factory!"

He also took a shot at the Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Redzuan Yusof for supporting the operations of Lynas.

During the demonstration, cries of "save Malaysia" and "stop Lynas from polluting our environment" by participants from the group against Lynas were heard.

They gathered at 9am and left around 11am.

The pro-Lynas group, on the other hand, was led by Lynas' Radiation Safety, Regulations and Compliance general manager Prof Dr Ismail Bahari.

Ismail, who led a group of Lynas workers, stressed that the company had conducted its operations safely for six years.

"We Lynas workers can confirm that our qualifications and experience in handling this factory have always prioritised the safety of ourselves, colleagues, community and environment," he added.

The pro-Lynas group left around

10.15am.

It has been reported that Lynas is considering initial ore processing close to its Australian mine, after the government mounted pressure against the rare earth mining company.

Last Friday, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said companies interested in acquiring Lynas had pledged to remove low-level radioactivity before shipping raw materials to the country.

Watch the video
thestartv.com



LAMPIRAN 5
SINER HARIAN (SENTRAL): MUKA SURAT 18
TARIKH: 11 APRIL 2019 (KHAMIS)

Hantar balik sisa nadir bumi

Tindakan itu perlu dilakukan untuk kesihatan rakyat Kuantan

NORAWAZNI YUSOF

KUANTAN

Kerajaan perlu mendesak Lynas Corporation Ltd (Lynas) menghantar balik sisa buangan nadir bumi itu ke Australia, seperti yang diputuskan sebelum ini.

Pengerusi Save Malaysia Stop Lynas (SMSL), Tan Bun Teet berkata, penghantaran sisa buangan itu perlu dilakukan segera bagi memastikan warga Kuantan bebas dari sebarang ancaman kesihatan.

Menurutnya, jika kerajaan bertindak lebih tegas terhadap



Bun Teet (kiri) menyerahkan memorandum kepada Fuziah di pekarangan Bangunan Parlimen semalam.

Lynas, penghantaran sisa buangan nadir bumi itu pasti akan dipatuhi syarikat berkenaan.

"Hari ini (semalam) saya bersama lebih 60 NGO anti-Lynas menyerahkan satu memorandum bagi mengingatkan kerajaan su-

paya berpendirian tegas ke atas Lynas dalam menunaikan janji mereka.

"Kami sememangnya berdiri teguh di belakang Ahli Parlimen Kuantan, Fuziah Salleh dan beberapa Ahli Parlimen dalam me-

mastikan perkara berkenaan dipatuhi Lynas.

"Jika mereka (Lynas) masih berkeras kita akan terus mendesak," katanya ketika dihubungi *Sinar Harian* semalam.

Seramai 250 ahli daripada 60 NGO anti-Lynas hadir di pekarangan Bangunan Parlimen di ibu negara bagi menyerahkan memorandum terbabit kepada Fuziah sebagai wakil kerajaan.

Antara NGO yang terlibat ialah, Himpunan Hijau, Greenpeace Malaysia, Pertubuhan Pelindung Khazanah Alam Malaysia, Persatuan Aktivis Sahabat Alam (KUASA), Pertubuhan Alam Sekitar Sejahtera Malaysia (GRASS Malaysia), Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM), Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang (CAP), North South Initiative, Center for Orang Asli Concerns (COAC), SMSL Segamat, Stop Lynas Coalition dan Gelombang Hijau.

Beliau berkata, SMSL juga mahu kerajaan memastikan sebarang pemprosesan nadir bumi

info

Seramai 250 ahli daripada 60 NGO anti-Lynas hadir di pekarangan Bangunan Parlimen di ibu negara

yang dilakukan, di sini perlu diproses terlebih dahulu sebelum dibawa masuk ke Malaysia.

Katanya, pihaknya tidak mahu nadir bumi belum diproses dibawa masuk ke sini sehingga boleh menyebabkan lambakan sisa buangan bahan terbabit.

"Kami minta kerajaan segera bertindak selepas memorandum ini kami serahkan kepada wakil kerajaan," katanya.

Sebelum itu, Menteri Pembangunan Usahawan, Redzuan Md Yusof dilaporkan berkata, Putrajaya belum membuat keputusan muktamad berhubung penghantaran balik sisa radioaktif Lynas ke Australia.

LAMPIRAN 6
SINER HARIAN (SETEMPAT): MUKA SURAT 37
TARIKH: 11 APRIL 2019 (KHAMIS)

Pencemaran tak serius

Kerajaan Perak harap orang ramai tidak panik

SAIFULLAH AHMAD

IPOH

Tahap pencemaran arsenik di Sungai Rui, Gerik disahkan rendah dan tidak mengancam keselamatan orang ramai berdasarkan standard piawaian yang ditetapkan oleh Organisasi Kesihatan Dunia (WHO).

Menteri Besar Perak, Datuk Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu berkata, orang ramai khususnya penduduk di daerah Hulu Perak dan sekitar Sungai Rui tidak perlu panik atau bimbang dengan keadaan tersebut.

Katanya, berikutan keadaan itu juga Kerajaan Perak telah mewujudkan Jawatankuasa Khas dianggotai 11 agensi bagi mengatasi isu tersebut.

"Penubuhan Jawatankuasa Khas atau *task force* ini adalah berdasarkan arahan nombor satu Pengurusan Keselamatan Negara susulan penemuan awal kehadiran elemen arsenik dalam sumber air oleh jabatan-jabatan berkaitan," katanya dalam sidang media khas mengenai isu pencemaran Sungai Rui, di Bangunan Perak Darul Ridzuan, di sini, semalam.

Ahmad Faizal berkata, peningkatan kandungan arsenik di dalam air sungai berkemungkinan berpunca daripada aktiviti penerokaan tanah seperti per-



Ahmad Faizal menjelaskan situasi sebenar pencemaran Sungai Rui pada sidang media di Bangunan Perak Darul Ridzuan, semalam.

ombongan bijih, hakisan tanah dan perladangan yang telah berlangsung selama lebih 100 tahun.

Sementara itu, menurutnya Jabatan Kesihatan Perak telah menjalankan pemeriksaan ke atas penduduk di Kampung Air Ganda di daerah Hulu Perak yang dijangkiti penyakit kulit.

Jelas beliau, kes-kes yang mempunyai tanda dan gejala penyakit dirujuk ke fasiliti kesihatan berhampiran di daerah Hulu Perak untuk pemeriksaan, rawatan dan susulan.

"Buat masa ini Jabatan Kesihatan negeri merumuskan hasil kajian termasuk pemerhatian dan pemeriksaan fizikal ke atas penduduk adalah masih awal dan belum lagi dapat dikaitkan dengan pendedahan terhadap arsenik.

"Hasil ujian contoh air ke atas sampel air di Loji Air Ganda terkini menun-

jukkan paras arsenik adalah rendah dan di bawah piawaian yang telah ditetapkan WHO iaitu kurang daripada 0.01 miligram untuk setiap liter. Ini bermakna, air terawat yang dibekalkan oleh Lembaga Air Perak adalah selamat untuk digunakan penduduk di kawasan berkenaan," katanya.

Dalam pada itu, Ahmad Faizal mewakili kerajaan negeri turut memohon maaf atas kekhilafan kenyataan awal yang dibuat Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Pendidikan, Teknologi, Sains dan Alam Sekitar negeri, Dr Abdul Aziz Bari sebelum ini berhubung isu itu.

Pada 4 April lalu, Abdul Aziz mengadakan sidang media di pejabatnya mendedahkan Sungai Rui tercemar dengan kehadiran logam berat arsenik serta memberi kesan kepada penduduk setempat.

LAMPIRAN 7
NEWS STRAITS TIMES (WORLD): MUKA SURAT 70
TARIKH: 11 APRIL 2019 (KHAMIS)

FLIGHT SHAME CAUSES RETHINK OF AIR TRAVEL

Many young swedes,
women opting to
travel by land to
reduce carbon
emission

STOCKHOLM

SADDLED with long dark winters at home, Swedes have for decades been frequent-flyers seeking out sunnier climes, but a growing number are changing their ways because of air travel's impact on the climate.

Flygskam, or flight shame, has become a buzz word referring to feeling guilt over the environmental effects of flying, contributing to a trend that has more and more Swedes, mainly young, opting to travel by train to ease their conscience.

Spearheading the movement for trains-over-planes is Sweden's own Greta Thunberg, 16, the climate school striker who refuses to fly, travelling by rail to the World Economic Forum in Davos and the climate summit in Katowice, Poland.

A growing number of public figures have vowed to #stayontheground, including television skiing commentator Bjorn Ferry, who said last year he would only travel to competitions by train.

And 250 people working in the film industry signed a recent article in the country's biggest daily, *Dagens Nyheter*, calling for Swedish film producers to limit shoots abroad.

A Swedish Instagram account created in December has been shaming social media influencers for promoting trips to far-flung destinations, racking up more than 60,000 followers.

"I'm certainly affected by my surroundings and (flight shame) has affected how I view flying," said Viktoria Hellstrom, 27, political science student here.

Last summer, she took the train to Italy, even though her friends went by plane.

"The only way I could justify going there was if I took the train," she said.

The Scandinavian country's lo-



An airplane taking off as the sun sets in Stockholm airport in 2017. A growing number of young Swedes are changing their ways because of air travel's impact on the climate. AFP PIC

cation far north — it is 4,000km from the northernmost town of Kiruna to France's Cote d'Azur — as well as its robust standard of living, the popularity of charter trips and the rise of low-cost airlines have all contributed to making Swedes big flyers.

Researchers at Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg last year found that Swedes' per capita emissions from flying between 1990 and 2017 were five times the global average. Emissions from Swedes' international air travel have soared 61 per cent since 1990, the study said.

Swedes' concerns rely on solid data: the Swedish Meteorological Institute said last week that the average annual temperature was rising twice as fast in the country as the global average.

In March, the World Wildlife Foundation published a survey indicating that nearly one in five Swedes had chosen to travel by rail rather than air to minimise their environmental impact.

The trend was most noticeable among women and young people, it said.

So far, the "flight shame" trend hasn't had the same traction among Sweden's neighbours, although Finland has spawned its

own version of the expression, calling it *lentohapea*.

Other parts of the developed world may not have a word that's quite as catchy — making do with #flyingless or #stopflying — but average CO2 emissions of 285g per air kilometre, compared with 158g for cars and 14g for trains, have given many pause.

Fausta Gabola, a French-Italian student in Paris, is no longer sure that she should take up an offer to study in Australia.

"It's my dream to go there. I applied without thinking too much about it and now I have a dilemma. I would feel like a hypocrite if I went."

Back in Sweden, some experts say that changing travel patterns are not always a direct result of "flight shame".

Frida Hylander, a Swedish psychologist, said shame, and the fear of being shamed, was a powerful motivator, but she cautioned against overstating its importance.

A new flight tax introduced in April 2018 may have played a role, she said, as well as the bankruptcy of regional airline NextJet, which led to the closure of a number of domestic flight routes for several months. **AFP**