

Bolsonaro calls surging Amazon fires a 'lie'



Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro takes a ride his motorcycle

Reuters | Brasilia

Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro angrily denied the existence of fires in the Amazon rainforest, calling it a "lie," despite data produced by his own government showing that thousands of fires are surging across the region.

Bolsonaro last year similarly denied a spike in fires that provoked a global outcry, with the right-wing populist trading barbs with French President Emmanuel Macron and other world leaders.

The president's comments on Tuesday come even as Reuters witnesses in the remote Amazon town of Apui observed smoke blanketing the horizon in all directions during the day and large fires setting the sky aglow at night.

Fires in Brazil's Amazon for the month of August hit a nine-year high in 2019 and this month so far looks even worse. More than 10,000 fires have been recorded in the first 10 days of August, up 17 per cent from the same period a year ago, according to data from the country's national space research agency Inpe.

But in a speech to other South American leaders on Tuesday, Bolsonaro challenged foreign representatives to fly

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JAIR BOLSONARO

over the Amazon saying that traveling by air from the far flung cities of Boa Vista to Manaus, you would not see a single flame.

“They won't find any spot of fire, nor a quarter of a hectare deforested,” the former army captain told a meeting of members of the Leticia Pact, an agreement between Amazon countries to protect the rainforest.

“This story that the Amazon is going up in flames is a lie and we must combat it with true numbers,” he said.

Bolsonaro interfered in Inpe after it released unfavourable data on Amazon deforestation last year, firing the agency's head Ricardo Galvao who defended his agency's numbers that showed rising destruction.

New Trump book to reveal letters with Kim Jong Un

Bob Woodward obtains letters between Trump and Kim Jong-un for new book

● Publisher announces details of successor to bestseller *Fear*

● North Korean leader describes bond out of a 'fantasy film'

AFP | Washington

Kim Jong Un said his relationship with Donald Trump was like a “fantasy film”, according to the publishers of a new book on the US president set to unveil 25 private letters exchanged between the two leaders.

The relationship between the pair has been a key driver of recent diplomacy between Washington and Pyongyang, veering from mutual insults and threats of war to a declaration of love from Trump.

Investigative journalist Bob Woodward obtained messages between the two leaders “that have not been public before” for his upcoming book, according to Simon & Schuster.

In the letters, “Kim describes the bond between the two leaders as out of a ‘fantasy film’, as the two leaders engage in an extraordinary diplomatic minuet”, the publisher revealed on the book's Amazon page.

The book, titled “Rage” and a follow-up to 2018's “Fear”, is due out on September 15.

Trump and Kim have met three times, beginning with



Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump pose for photos during Hanoi Summit (file photo)

their landmark summit in Singapore in June 2018, but little progress has been made on efforts to denuclearise the North.

A few months after Singapore, Trump told a rally of his supporters that the two men had fallen in love.

“No, really, he wrote me beautiful letters, and they're great letters. We fell in love,” he said.

Negotiations have been deadlocked since the collapse of a second summit in Hanoi in February last year.

But even with diplomacy at a standstill, Trump has frequently boasted of receiving “very beautiful” and “excellent” letters from Kim.

25

private letters exchanged between Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump will be unveiled in the book

Woodward, a Washington Post reporter, made his name with his coverage of the Watergate scandal and the role it played in the Richard Nixon's resignation from the presidency in 1974.

Trump has sought to discredit

several of the claims made in “Fear”, which offered an inside glimpse into his chaotic White House and sold 1.1 million copies in its first week.

Trump -- who was not interviewed by Woodward for “Fear” -- has called that book a “joke” and “a scam”.

But in January this year, Trump said he had sat down with Woodward for the upcoming work.

“I was interviewed by a very, very good writer, reporter,” Trump said on Fox News.

“I can say Bob Woodward. He said he's been doing something and this time I said, ‘Maybe I'll sit down.’”

North Korea nuclear reactor site threatened by recent flooding, US think-tank says

● US think-tank 38 North says recent images show vulnerability of country's main nuclear facility to weather disruption

Reuters | Seoul

Satellite imagery suggests recent flooding in North Korea may have damaged pump houses connected to the country's main nuclear facility, a US-based think-tank said yesterday.

Analysts at 38 North, a website that monitors North Korea, said commercial satellite imagery from August 6-11 showed how vulnerable the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center's nuclear reactor cooling systems are to extreme weather events.

The Korean peninsula has been hammered by one of the longest rainy spells in recent history, with floods and landslides causing damage and deaths in both North and South Korea.

Located on the bank of the Kuryong River about 100 km (60 miles) north of North Korea's



A general view of North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear complex (file photo)

capital, Pyongyang, Yongbyon is home to nuclear reactors, fuel re-processing plants and uranium enrichment facilities that are thought to be used in the country's nuclear weapons programme.

The five-megawatt reactor - believed to be used to produce weapons-grade plutonium - does not appear to have been operating for some time, and an Experimental Light Water Reactor (ELWR) has not yet come online, but such flooding in the future would likely force a shutdown, the 38 North report said.

“Damage to the pumps and piping within the pump houses presents the biggest vulnerability to the reactors,” the report said. “If the reactors were operating, for instance, the inability to cool them would require them to be shut down.”

While there was further flooding downstream, it did not appear to reach the Yongbyon facility's Uranium Enrichment Plant and by August 11 the waters appear to have somewhat receded, 38 North said.

North Korea's state media has not mentioned any dam-

age to Yongbyon, but reported this week that senior leaders had been touring flood-stricken areas, delivering aid and providing guidance on how to prevent the high waters from damaging crops.

South Korea's Ministry of Defence declined to comment on the 38 North report, but said it is always monitoring developments related to North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes and maintaining close cooperation with the US government.



Yongbyon is home to several N Korean nuclear reactors, fuel reprocessing plants and uranium enrichment facilities thought to be used in the country's nuclear weapons programme

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's Canadian PM Justin Trudeau



Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau attends a news conference in Ottawa (file photo)

AFP | Toronto

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is set to have his life story turned into a comic book, as TidalWave Productions adds the “media sensation” to its “Political Power” graphic novel series.

The glossy publication that has profiled politicians from around the globe for over 11 years details both Trudeau's personal and professional milestones, as well as his hardships.

From growing up in the spotlight while his father, Pierre Trudeau, was 15th Prime Minister of Canada, to the death of his brother in an avalanche

accident, the series also highlights his role as a teacher, before he became Canada's 23rd prime minister.

The 24-page comic book, set to be released on Sept. 16, takes a look at the global media frenzy surrounding Trudeau's “camera-ready looks” and “easygoing nature” that erupted after he delivered the eulogy for his father.

A special hardcover of the comic book, which the company describes as a “non-partisan profile of the political figure,” will also be available.

Trudeau, born in Ottawa on Dec. 25, 1971, was sworn in as Canada's prime minister in 2015.