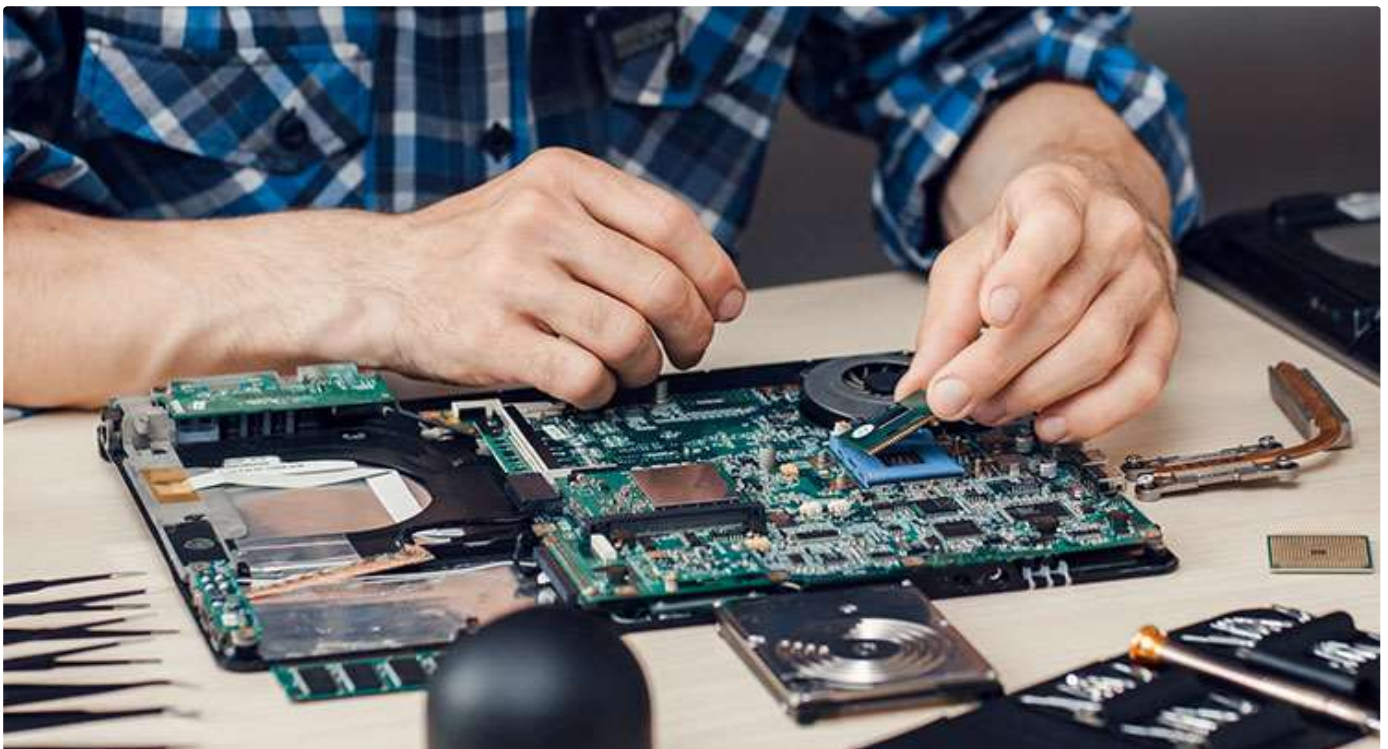




Monica Yanakiew from Al Jazeera, Rio de Janeiro, reported that the new data is particularly worrying as Brazil is currently in its rainy season



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Brazil's first three months of 2022 saw a new record in Amazon deforestation, compared to a year ago, according to government data. This has prompted concern from environmentalists and warnings from them.

Data from Inpe, a national space agency, showed that deforestation in Brazil's Amazon increased 64 percent between January and March from a year earlier to 941sqkm (363sq mi)

This area is larger than New York City and has the highest amount of forest cover that was lost since 2015, when the data series started.

Since President Jair Bolsonaro assumed office in 2019, the destruction of the largest rainforest in the world has increased. He also weakened environmental protections, saying that they prevent economic development that could lower poverty in the Amazon region.

Monica Yanakiew from Al Jazeera, Rio de Janeiro, reported that the new data is particularly worrying as Brazil is currently in its rainy season. This means that loggers don't usually cut down trees or farmers don't burn them to clear the ground.

Yanakiew stated, "So there should be less activity, and there should be more deforestation."

She said that the figures were obtained because representatives of 100 Indigenous Tribes were in Brasilia to demand greater protection for the lands they occupy and to denounce any proposed laws that would allow government to continue to exploit the rainforest.

"They are protesting to ensure that Congress does not approve any bills that the government has pushed to make it easier for the Amazon Rainforest to be exploited commercially. This is President Jair Bolsonaro's attempt to make sure that this happens before he runs for reelection in October.

The Environment Ministry and the president's office did not immediately reply to requests from Reuters for comment on Friday's data regarding deforestation.

The data showed that deforestation had slowed by 15% in March, following two months of record-setting highs.

Brazil is the largest exporter of beef in the world and soy, and this is driving most of its destruction. About 60 percent of Amazon rainforest is located in Brazil.

Raoni Rajao is a professor of environment management at Federal University of Minas Gerais. He said that the situation in Amazon is "quite grim".

Rajao stated that deforestation and climate change have had a “substantial effect” on Amazonia, even in places far from human activity. Rajao stated that even in areas far from the agricultural frontier, the forest is drying up and becoming more susceptible to fires.

“This is extremely concerning as it suggests that we may be approaching a tipping point, where the damage to the forests might become irreversible.”

A Monday report by the United Nations Climate Panel warned governments are not doing enough in controlling greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the worst effects of global climate change.

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