



In this file photo taken on May 26, 2019, a man evacuates a young bombing casualty after a reported air strike by regime forces and their allies in the jihadist-held Syrian town of Maaret Al-Noman in the southern Idlib province.

has focused on extreme weather and its ill effects. We are not winning the race to reduce greenhouse gas emissions - and the temperature is rising. The international community managed to reach the landmark Paris accord in 2015, but the commitments made were not enough, and the United States is withdrawing from the plan.

Protection of the environment is front and center in many countries. But a simpler question - how men and women relate to each other - also took center stage during the 2010s. The #MeToo movement, which went viral in the wake of a litany of allegations against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, has encouraged women to confront their abusers, and led to the downfall of a number of powerful men. The question of gender and identity also rose to the fore this decade, with many redefining what it is to be a man or a woman - or neither. "They" - the pronoun preferred by many who identify as non-binary - was Merriam-Webster's word of the year in 2019.

**Humanity: Connected**

From schoolkids fighting for the planet, to women calling out their abusers, to citizens pushing for democracy - or militants advocating terror, all had one thing in common: An ever-growing reliance on social media. 2.4 billion is a giant, difficult to grasp number, but it is the number of regular monthly users on Facebook, the world's largest social network. In 2011, that figure was a little more than 500 million.

Technology is radically changing how we live. Dating, friendship, news, politics, music, banking and shopping are all now handled in cyberspace, and we spend more and more time staring at screens. Facebook is not the only boldface name in the sector dominated by US firms. Google, Twitter, Amazon, Apple

and WhatsApp are some of the other brands that have transformed our lives.

They are making billions of dollars - and sparking their share of controversies. These companies have access to our personal data, and the threat to privacy is considerable. They facilitate free speech, but the risk of harassment - or worse - is real. They are making content more accessible to more people, but artists and news outlets are not always being paid for their work. And in the end, Facebook was found to have been one of the principal weapons for a Russian campaign to interfere in the US presidential election in 2016.

**US, China lock horns**

On the back of skyrocketing growth, China became the world's number two economy in 2010, surpassing Japan and only trailing the United States. The world's workshop has brandished its military ambitions and is positioning itself as a strategic rival to Washington. In the middle of the decade, China staked a claim in the technology sector, working to become a world leader in robotics, information tech and clean energy.

Beijing is trying to change gears - it no longer is satisfied with being home to the factories that produce the world's consumer goods. America has sensed that its supremacy could be contested. And under Trump, that concern erupted in the open. The Republican leader launched a trade war with China, accusing it of rampant intellectual property theft. "Trade wars are good and easy to win," Trump boasted in 2018. He has unleashed stiff tariffs on Chinese goods, but Beijing did not blink. And even if the two countries just signed a "phase one" trade deal, their arm wrestling is sure to define the next decade. — AFP



In this file photo taken on March 23, 2017 US President Donald Trump sits in the driver's seat of a semi-truck as he welcomes truckers and CEOs to the White House in Washington to discuss healthcare.



In this file photo taken on Dec 11, 2019, Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg speaks during a high-level event on climate emergency hosted by the Chilean presidency during the UN Climate Change Conference COP25 in Madrid.



In this file photo taken on Jan 10, 2011, a Tunisian demonstrator prepares to throw a tear-gas canister during clashes with security forces in Regueb, near Sidi Bouzid.