

# INDIA WILL SEE MORE DROUGHTS, HEATWAVES AND CYCLONES: IPCC

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Sizzling temperatures, droughts and intense cyclones are likely to be commonplace in India because of climate change, a report by a UN body said, warning that the world is running out of time to prevent the worst of the climate crisis

**NEW DELHI** : Flash floods such as the one that killed a dozen people in Himachal Pradesh last month, sizzling temperatures, droughts and intense cyclones are likely to be commonplace in India because of climate change, a report by a UN body said, warning that the world is running out of time to prevent the worst of the climate crisis.

Melting of glaciers in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas, the consequent rising of the sea level and regular and more intense tropical cyclones in South Asia may devastate parts of the region unless drastic measures to cut carbon emissions are put in place, the report released by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on Monday said.

The extreme weather events will impact lives, livelihoods and businesses in India and South Asia, experts and climate scientists said, calling for immediate steps to mitigate climate change.

The Indian Ocean and the western equatorial Pacific Ocean have "warmed faster than the global average", the report said. "Heat extremes have increased while cold extremes have decreased, and these trends will continue over the coming decades."

The threat of more droughts and cyclones is real, said Roxy Mathew Koll, a climate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology.

"The report indicates that these are irreversible changes, and we all must take it seriously in devising mitigating measures. The Indian Ocean is warming faster, and it surrounds three sides of India; and on the north, we have the Himalayas where the impact of climate change is visible, too. So our geographic location makes us prone to extreme weather conditions," said Koll.

The South Asian monsoon has weakened in the second half of the 20th century, mainly on account of human activity, the IPCC report said.

Koll said the recent tropical cyclones arising from the Arabian Sea on India's western coast and glacier bursts are giving enough hint of the crisis at hand.

"In India, we have a double burden now. We have to build resilience in our economy, infrastructure and social systems to deal with the increasing impact of extreme weather events. At the same time, we have to act on mitigation measures. The IPCC report is a warning for us," said Chandra Bhushan, president and chief executive of the International Forum for Environment, Sustainability and Technology.

"Things that were predicted to happen far ahead in the future are now expected to happen much sooner, including intense heatwave, monsoon disruptions, cloudbursts, extreme rain, etc. The situation will only worsen if we do not act fast and decisively," said Bhushan, a former deputy director at the non-profit Centre for Science and Environment.

Climate change may lead to compound weather events in India; for example, heatwave and drought may come together; similarly, sea-level rise, cyclones and coastal flooding may happen at the same time, Koll said.

Some regions are already seeing the effects of climate change, such as the drop in property prices in coastal areas because of frequent flooding. "While IPCC has given us a broad picture, India must devise its own mitigation strategy in a more regional and sub-regional level, beyond the effort to evacuate and save lives," Koll said.

The report is the first in seven years and was prepared by more than 230 authors from 65 countries, taking into account more than 1,400 scientific studies.

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