

ON THE CLIMATE, A NEW WARNING

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Degradation - GHGs, Ozone Depletion and Climate Change

Dec 05, 2020-Saturday

-°C

Humidity

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Wind

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[Delhi](#), [Mumbai](#), [Chennai](#), [Kolkata](#)

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2020 is on track to be the second warmest year on record globally since temperature record-keeping began in 1850, says the World Meteorological Organization (WMO)'s *State of the Global Climate 2020* report released on Wednesday. It is preceded by 2016 and followed by 2019. Despite a global halt in economic activities due to Covid-19 and the cooling effect of La Nina, the global mean temperature for January to October 2020 was around 1.2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, dangerously close to breaching the 1.5-degree threshold above which scientists warn of catastrophic impacts of the climate crisis. The results of high global mean temperature have been evident across the world. These 10 months were dominated by extreme climate events, including excessive heat, wildfires and floods.

For India, high temperatures have had a devastating impact on communities, the economy, and biodiversity. According to the *Lancet Countdown On Health And Climate Change* report, released on Thursday, the country recorded the highest loss in work hours (118.3 billion work hours) or productivity because of extreme heat in 2019 — the year saw a record number of above-baseline days of heat wave exposure affecting its elderly population. June's super cyclone, Amphan, led to an economic loss amounting to about \$14 billion, says the WMO report.

The two reports serve as yet another round of warning and reminder that the defining task for the 21st century for the world and India will be to use the recovery from the pandemic as an opportunity to build a climate-resilient future. That the Centre has formed a panel to implement India's targets under the Paris Climate Agreement, which completes five years this month, is good news. While India is on target to achieve its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution — efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impact of the climate crisis — it needs to be more proactive in moving away from coal and stop investing in projects that erode its natural resource base; invest in climate-resilient infrastructure, green mobility, renewable energy; and ensure that planning, implementing and monitoring process is climate-resilient. For all of this, India needs global support for green technology and resources up to \$2.5 trillion in the 15-year period till 2030 for climate action. Building a climate-resilient future is not just a policy test; for every country, it's now a moral test as well.

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