

WARMING WARNING: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION PROJECTIONS FOR TEMPERATURE TRENDS

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The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has [issued its annual update](#) on its [projections for temperature trends in the next decade](#). The prognosis, expectedly, is worrying. The annual mean global near-surface temperature for each year between 2023 and 2027 is likely to be 1.1°-1.8°C higher than the average from 1850-1900. There is a 66% chance that the global near-surface temperature will exceed 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, in at least one year before 2027 though it is unlikely that the five-year mean will exceed this threshold. The 1.5°C threshold, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has repeatedly said, is one that is best left unbreached to avoid the disastrous consequences of global warming. While world leaders at climate summits are in agreement, few of their actions are consistent with keeping temperature-rise within this rubicon, with current climate policies poised to heat the globe beyond 2°C by the end of the century.

At least one of the years, the WMO adds, from 2023 to 2027 will be the hottest on record — exceeding the 14.84°C reported in 2016 (it was about 0.07°C warmer than the previous record set in 2015). The five-year mean for 2023-2027 was very likely to be higher than that in the last five years (2018-2022). The oceans too are on fire. The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is likely to be positive in December to February 2023-24, meaning that the Central Equatorial Pacific Ocean is likely to be at least half a degree, more likely over a degree above what is normal. India is bracing for this El Niño during the monsoon, with the India Meteorological Department already indicating that monsoon rainfall will be on the lower side of 'normal'. The El Niño "will combine with human-induced climate change to push global temperatures into uncharted territory", WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said in a press statement in the context of the update. Hotter oceans also mean stronger cyclones. Cyclone Mocha, which barrelled through Myanmar this week and claimed at least 60 lives and wrought severe damage, ended up being stronger than what was initially estimated. The WMO update does not have specific inputs for India; however, the overall trend in indicators suggests that India, dependent as it is on rain-fed agriculture and with its long coastline, will be severely tested due to changes in the global climate. India's abilities at forecasting cyclones and weather anomalies have improved but developing resilience is far more challenging. Greater investments in bolstering disaster-related infrastructure are the need of the hour.

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