

## Climate change taking a toll on global health: Lancet

Uphill task: A cyclist wears a mask as protection against air pollution in New Delhi. | Photo Credit: [Sushil Kumar Verma](#)

New research published by *The Lancet* medical journal states that on an average there has been a 5.3% fall in productivity for rural labour estimated globally since 2000, as a result of rising temperatures around the world. In 2016, this took more than 9,20,000 people globally out of the workforce, with 4,18,000 of them in India alone.

The *Lancet* report talks of the various ways climate change has started affecting the health of people across the planet. Doctors, academics and policy makers have contributed to the analysis and jointly authored the first report of "The Lancet Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change". Partners behind the research include the World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO), University College London and Tsinghua University.

A statement issued the group said, "The findings show that climate change is affecting the health of all populations, today. These impacts are disproportionately felt by communities least responsible for climate change and those who are the most vulnerable in society."

China, Bangladesh, India and Indonesia are the countries that have registered the highest number of deaths linked to air pollution.

Anthony Costello, co-chair of the Lancet Countdown and a director at WHO, said, "The outlook is challenging, but we still have an opportunity to turn a looming medical emergency into the most significant advance for public health this century. We need urgent action to cut greenhouse gas emissions. The health and economic benefits on offer are huge. The cost of inaction will be counted in preventable loss of life, on a large scale."

### Anthropogenic effect

The research builds on the work of the 2015 Lancet Commission on Health and Climate Change, which concluded that anthropogenic climate change threatens to undermine the last 50 years of gains in public health.

The report said that over one billion people globally will be faced with a need to migrate within 90 years, due to a rise in sea level caused by ice shelf collapse, unless action is taken.

The research found that 87% of a random sample of global cities are in breach of WHO air pollution guidelines.

The world has seen a 46% global increase in weather related disasters since 2000, the reported pointed out. The total value of economic losses resulting from climate-related extreme weather events was estimated at \$129 billion in 2016.

Christiana Figueres, chair of the Lancet Countdown's high-level advisory board and former executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, said, "The report lays bare the impact that climate change is having on our health today. It also shows that tackling climate change directly, unequivocally and immediately improves global health. It's as simple as that."

Jaggi Vasudev's Rally for Rivers claims they will, but this is not based on the most nuanced

science

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