

# INDIA LOST \$87 BN LAST YEAR DUE TO NATURAL CALAMITIES: WMO

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Disaster and disaster management

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Natural disasters, such as cyclones, floods and droughts, have cost India around \$87 billion in 2020, according to a report by World Meteorological Organization (WMO) released on Tuesday.

India was the second most affected nation from the impact of global warming on lives and property after China, which lost \$238 billion, the weather agency of the United Nations said in its State of the Climate in Asia report, citing estimates by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Losses in Japan was marginally less at \$85 billion.

Droughts caused the maximum damage, it said, adding that 2020 was the warmest year on record for Asia, with a mean temperature at 1.39 degrees Celsius above the average of the 1981-2010 period.

The report highlighted the extent of the global climate crisis, days ahead of the global summit in Glasgow later this week.

Extreme heat was recorded at several places, with Verkhoyansk in Russia recording the highest known temperature within the Arctic Circle at 38 degrees Celsius.

According to the report, the East and South Asian summer monsoon were unusually active. Frequent cyclones, floods and landslides, led to the loss of life and caused widespread displacement across nations.

Cyclone Amphan, one of the strongest storms ever, hit the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest straddling India and Bangladesh, in May 2020, displacing 2.4 million and 2.5 million people, respectively, the report said.

The Indian Ocean is also warming up rapidly, along with the Pacific and the Arctic, with record surface temperatures. Sea surface temperatures around Asia were increasing three times faster than the global average, particularly in the Arabian sea. Warmer sea surfaces increase the probability of severe storms.

Progress on food security and nutrition has also been slowing globally, it said. Last year, 48.8 million people in South-East Asia, 305.7 million in South Asia and 42.3 million in West Asia were undernourished. "The true impacts of covid-19 on food security and nutrition are yet to be established," it added.

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