Enviro Monitor
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Climate change

India seventh on index of countries impacted by climate change in 2019. India ranks seventh among countries most affected in 2019 by climate change, according to the Global Climate Risk Index, 2021, released by Germanwatch — an NGO based in Bonn, Germany.In 2019, monsoon continued for a month longer than normal in India. From June to the end of September 2019, 110% of the long-period average was recorded. Flooding caused by heavy rain was responsible for 1,800 deaths across 14 states and led to the displacement of 1.8 million people, the report said. There were eight tropical cyclones in India. Six of them intensified to become "very severe." 'Extremely severe' cyclone Fani affected 28 million people, killing 90 people in India and Bangladesh, and causing economic loss to the tune of US$8.1 billion, the report added. The report said that between 2000 and 2019, over 4,75,000 people lost their lives as a direct result of more than 11,000 extreme weather events globally, and economic losses amounted to around US $2.56 trillion (in purchasing power parities). Globally, 11.8 million people were affected by intense monsoon with the economic damage estimated to be US $10 billion.

Global temperatures in 2020 among highest on record: WMO report. Global temperatures in 2020 were among the highest on record and rivaled 2016 as the hottest year ever, according to international data compiled by the World Meteorological Organization. The heat came even as a global economic slowdown from the Covid-19 pandemic cut deeply into emissions from fossil fuels, adding evidence that carbon dioxide concentrations already in the atmosphere have set the planet on a warming track.

The WMO report included data from the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the UK Met Office, both of which ranked 2020 as the second-warmest year on record, as a cooling trend called La Niña failed to tame global temperatures. NASA, whose data was also included, said 2020 tied with 2016 as the warmest year on record.

World's oceans continue to warm, despite reduced carbon emissions. Despite reductions in global carbon emissions due to the Covid-19 lockdown, the world's oceans in 2020 were the warmest in recorded history, according to a new study. Published in the journal Advances in Atmospheric Sciences earlier, the study was conducted by 20 scientists from 13 institutes in China, the US and Italy, Xinhua news agency reported. Compared with 2019, the upper 2,000 metres of the Earth's oceans have absorbed a greater amount of heat, enough to boil 1.3 billion kettles, each containing 1.5 liters of water. The increase in heat within the oceans is responsible for the increasing trend of record-breaking global ocean temperatures, said the study. Cheng Lijing, lead author of the study and researcher at the Institute of Atmospheric Physics (IAP) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said ocean heating is a key indicator for quantifying climate change, since more than 90 per cent of global heat ends up in the oceans.

A changed climate: US rejoin Paris Pact. President Biden recommitted the US to the Paris Climate Pact, the international accord designed to avert catastrophic global warming, and ordered federal agencies to start reviewing and reinstating dozens of environmental regulations that had been weakened or rolled back by ex-President Trump. The moves represent a first step in healing one of the deepest rifts between the US and the rest of the world Trump rejected the Paris pact and seemed relish his administration's push to weaken or undo every major domestic climate policy.

BBMP commits to Paris Agreement on climate change. Bengaluru has now given its commitment to the Paris Agreement to keep rise in global average temperatures within 2°C of pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit temperature rises even further to only 1.50 degrees Celsius. The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. The Agreement aims to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with unavoidable impacts of climate change through adaptation. This is set in the context of sustainable development and on the basis of inclusivity for all communities.

Climate litigations spiked in recent years, says United Nations body. Climate litigation cases have spiked in recent years, making the courtroom increasingly relevant to efforts to address climate change

around the world, an UN Environment Programme (UNEP) report. It finds that climate cases have nearly doubled over the last three years and are increasingly compelling governments and corporate actors to implement their climate commitments, as well as pursue more ambitious climate change mitigation and adaptation goals. The report, published by the UNEP in cooperation with the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University, shows climate litigation has become more common and more successful worldwide. In 2017, 884 cases were brought in 24 countries; as of 2020, cases had nearly doubled, with at least 1,550 climate change cases filed in 38 countries (39 including the European Union courts).

Hindustan Times, January 15, 2021 | Business Standard, January 16, 2021 | New Indian Express, January 22, 2021 | Indian Express, January 26, 2021 | Business Standard, January 26, 2021

Air Quality

Air pollution linked to increased risk of irreversible vision loss: Study. Air pollution is associated with an increased risk of progressive and irreversible sight loss, known as age related macular degeneration (AMD), according to a long-term study that could pave the way for new treatment options for the disorder. The researchers, including those from the University College London, UK, noted that AMD is the leading cause of irreversible blindness among the over 50s in high-income countries, with the numbers of those affected projected to reach 300 million by 2040. The researchers drew on data from 115,954 UK Biobank (UKBB) study participants aged 40-69 with no eye problems at the start of this study in 2006. Measures of ambient air pollution included those for particulate matter (PM2.5), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), and nitrogen oxides (NOx). Of the total number of study participants, 1,286 were diagnosed with AMD, according to the researchers.

Air quality panel ropes in agencies to develop tool to read nature of emissions. The Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and adjoining areas (CAQM) has commissioned several agencies to develop a 'Decision Support System' tool to capture the nature and source of emissions in the region, to focus interventions to curb emissions.

The panel has entrusted the work of developing the system to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology in Pune, to forecast air quality using its weather models; The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) to develop a fine resolution emission inventory; the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi and National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) to develop short and long-term control interventions and to identify hot spots. The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune has been assigned the job of integrating the physical, chemical and engineering aspects of the tool."This tool will help capture the static and dynamic features of the emissions from various sources. It will have an integrated framework to handle both primary and secondary pollutants using chemical transport model. The system will also be able to handle the source specific interventions with the framework to estimate benefits of interventions.

Hindustan Times, January 23, 2021 | Deccan Herald, January 26, 2021

Waste Management

Karnataka government to form SPV to handle Bengaluru's garbage problem. The state government has decided to take away the garbage management plan from the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and float a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) — a parastatal body to handle waste management. The decision is aimed at bettering the solid waste management process across the city and plugging possible 'leakage of revenue'.

Free lunch for 1 kg of plastic waste: SDMC opens 23 more 'Garbage Cafes'. Continuing its novel green initiative, the South Delhi Municipal Corporation opened 23 more "Garbage Cafes', offering free meals in restaurants for one kg of plastic wastes. Under the novel step, anybody depositing one kg of plastic wastes with 'garbage cafes' would get a coupon for a free breakfast, lunch or dinner in restaurants partnering with the South Delhi's civic body in this unique venture. Intensifying the unique initiative 'Plastic Lao Khana Khao', 23 more 'Garbage Cafes' were opened in South, Central and West zones

India generated around 33,000 tonnes Covid-19 waste in 7 months: CPCB. India generated around 33,000 tonnes of COVID-19 biomedical waste in the last seven months, with Maharashtra contributing the maximum to it, according to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data. Over 5,500 tonnes of COVID-19 waste was generated across the country in October -- the maximum for a month so far. According to the data received from state pollution control boards, since June 2020, all states and union territories have generated 32,994 tonnes of COVID-19-related biomedical waste which is being collected, treated and disposed of by 198 common biomedical waste treatment facilities (CBWTFs).COVID-19 biomedical waste could include PPE kits, masks, shoe covers, gloves, human tissues, items contaminated

State-wise generated COVID-19 Biomedical Waste (since June 2020)	Quantity (in tonnes)
Maharashtra	5,367
Kerala	3,300
Gujarat	3,086
Tamil Nadu	2,806
Uttar Pradesh	2,502
Delhi	2,471
West Bengal	2,095
Karnataka	2,026

Source. Business Standard, January 10, 2021

with blood, body fluids like dressings, plaster casts, cotton swabs, beddings contaminated with blood or body fluid, blood bags, needles, syringes etc.

Business Standard, January 10, 2021 | Deccan Herald, January 29, 2021 |Deccan Herald, January 29, 2021