Climate Change: Our Shared Future

What is the issue?

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- Erratic weather patterns are becoming more common these days.
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- Sadly, international efforts are falling short of strong outcomes due to failures to take up coordinated action.
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What are the recent climatic trends?

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- **Weird Weather -** In recent months, 140 wildfires raged across California and 80 people were killed in similar wildfires in Greece.
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- Europe has been sizzling under heat waves and unseasonal dust storms have killed over 500 in India.
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- Torrential rains in Japan and other such extreme rain events are devastating crops and homes across vast parts of the world.
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- All of these weather events are far beyond normal variability (or stationarity), and is indicative of a new era of the unprecedented.
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- What we know for certain is that this intensity, variability and ferocity of weird weather will only get worse from here.
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- **Climatic Impact -** The connection with weird weather and climate change is also being seen through studies called attribution.
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- The “World Weather Attribution Network” estimates that climate change has more than “doubled the likelihood of the European heat wave”.
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- It has also tripled the likelihood of drought in Cape Town — the South African city that narrowly missed Day Zero, when it would run out of water.

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What is does the numbers say?

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- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will soon release its 1.5°C report on the impacts of the world reaching that level of temperature rise.
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- Notably, there has already been a little over 1°C rise now in comparison to the pre-industrial period, which has already generated adverse effects.
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- Any further increase is hence only likely to aggravate this trend, which is already creating immense losses of lives and properties.
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- While the western world is largely embracing cleaner technologies, India and China continue to depend on coal as a vital resource.
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- With the massive volumes of coal that India uses, it is likely to increasingly get targeted at international forums for being irresponsible.
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- Although, India has been a very small emitter in the historical and per capita measures, it will nonetheless be pressured on climatic forums.
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What is the way ahead?

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- **India’s Case -** Even if not for retarding climate change, pollution levels in our cities itself is reason enough for us to adopt clean energy source.
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- In this context, we need to close old and polluting thermal plants and new emission standards must be implemented as early as possible.
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- Pet coke has already been banned, including its import from the US and massive renewable energy projects and natural gas projects are taking over.
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- **Worldwide -** The problem also is that the world is still not anywhere close to giving up its fossil addiction, and renewable energy uptake has been marginal.

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- In recent years, the demand for coal is rising and investment in oil and gas is up and all of the climate change solutions are fighting to even survive.
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- Considering our vulnerability, strong and coordinated action is needed to be taken by all countries with equitable “burden sharing”.
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Source: Business Standard

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