

Emissions Gap Report, 2026

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Index & Reports | Environment

Why in news?

The recently released *Emissions Gap Report, 2026*, indicates that India sees a drop in GHG emissions in 2025, even as UNEP flags a huge gap in global reduction efforts.

- **Emissions Gap Report** – It is an annual flagship publication that assesses the difference between where global greenhouse gas emissions are headed and where they need to be to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.
- **Released by** – United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).



Key Findings

Global Insights

- Emphasises that every additional fraction of a degree increases risks of heatwaves, floods, droughts, wildfires, and ecosystem loss, and delayed action will make it increasingly difficult to limit peak warming to even 1.7-1.8°C.
- **Missed target** - The chance of holding global warming to below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels with no or limited overshoot is gone.
- The focus must now shift to limiting the extent and duration of overshoot and bringing temperatures back below 1.5°C by the end of the century.
- **UNEP's warning** - Every additional fraction of a degree and additional year of warming above 1.5°C raises climate risks. The cap of 1.5°C, anyway, has never been considered safe.
- In 2024, the world for the first time recorded a temperature rise above 1.5°C.
- **Hottest Months** - August 2026 has been one of the hottest months ever recorded & September 2026 was the second hottest month on record, according to the Copernicus Climate Change Service.
- **Slight decline in GHG** - Global GHG emissions have registered a slight decline in 2025 from 2024 levels.
- Global GHG emissions reached a total of 58.4 gigatons of CO₂ equivalent (Gt CO₂e) (range: ±5.5) in 2025; this is a decline of 0.1 Gt CO₂e from 2024 levels.
- **Source for GHG emissions** - More than two-thirds of all GHG emissions are from fossil sources; the rest are CO₂ from land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF), methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gas emissions (F-gases).
- **CO₂ emissions** - From fossil fuel combustion of oil, coal and gas, and nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases emissions continued to increase in 2025, while methane emissions remained almost the same as in 2024.
- 63 countries have decreased their GHG emissions over the past decade. However, 124 countries have increased emissions - several countries with high per capita and historical emissions have still to peak their emissions.
- **Future Goal** - The goal should now be accelerating mitigation to achieve 1.5°C target by the end of the 21st century & the task now is to minimize the duration and magnitude of overshoot and return to 1.5°C by the end of the century.
- **Massive emissions cuts required** - To remain on a lower-warming pathway, global GHG emissions must fall relative to 2025 levels by
 - 18% by 2030
 - 45% by 2035
 - 69% by 2040.
- Large-scale removals of CO₂ from the atmosphere will be required to return to or below 1.5°C.
- **NDC Emission Reductions** - Full implementation of current NDCs would only cut emissions by 5-8% by 2030 and 11-15% by 2035 (relative to 2025 levels), falling drastically short of what is required.

India's Insights

- **Decline in GHG emissions** - GHG emissions declined in 2025 compared to 2024, breaking a long period of rapid emissions growth, and were attributed partly to

weather-related factors and partly to structural shifts towards renewable energy.

- **3rd largest emitter** – India remains the world's 3rd largest emitter in absolute terms; however, its per capita emissions are less than half the global average and substantially lower than those of China and the United States.
- Besides India, the European Union and Russia also recorded emissions declines in 2025, while global emissions overall remained broadly similar to 2024 levels.
- **Source of emissions** – The emissions growth in India stems from essential sectors such as
 - Electricity generation
 - Transport
 - Industry
 - Agriculture
 - Other development-related activities.
- **Unconditional NDC** – Under current policies, India is among only six G20 members assessed as likely to meet their unconditional 2030 climate targets, alongside China, Indonesia, Russia, South Africa, and Türkiye.

References

1. [TOI | Emissions Gap Report 2026](#)
2. [Down to Earth | Emissions Gap Report 2026](#)

