State of Climate of India in 2019

Why in News?

The State of Climate of India Report was released by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) recently.

What does the report say?

- The Statement on Climate of India in 2019 confirms that the **extreme weather events** have become par for the course in the country.
- This is what climate scientists have been claiming for more than half a decade.
- It notes that excessive heat, cold and rainfall killed 1,562 people in 2019.
- In 2019, the mean **temperature was 0.36 above normal** while the country also recorded **excess rainfall** during both the southwest and northeast monsoons.
- Intense dry spells were interspersed with floods in several parts of the country.
- This is a phenomenon that policymakers will increasingly be called to factor while drawing up projects in areas as diverse as agriculture, urban planning, water resources and disaster management.

How the report should be seen?

- The IMD report should be seen in conjunction with **long-term meteorological trends**.
- The World Meteorological Organisation, for example, reckons that the decade starting 2011 remains on track to be the warmest on record.
- At the same time, data from the European Centre for Medium Range Forecast shows that the relative humidity in the mid-troposphere in the Subcontinent has increased by about 2% in the past four decades.
- Such warming has increased the capacity of oceans to form intense cyclonic disturbances.

What are the observed vagaries?

- In 2019, as the IMD report notes, the Indian Ocean witnessed **eight cyclones**.
- By that very fact, cyclones don’t kill but buildings can turn hazardous during

such extreme weather events.

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs does have guidelines for climate-friendly construction.
- But planners in coastal cities and towns rarely pay heed to its provisions.
- Kerala, southern Karnataka and Gujarat were **heavily deficient** till July 2019.
- But in the last week of July, these states recorded **surplus rainfall**.
- For farmers, such vagaries mean **disruptions in the entire cropping cycle**.

What is needed?

- Increasing their resilience calls for efficient **rainwater storage and use**.
- The changing dynamics of weather also demand cooperation between states that share a river basin.
- This year, Maharashtra and Karnataka debated over opening the gates of the Almatti dam on the Krishna.
- By the time the two states agreed over the amount of water to be discharged from the dam, the damage was already done.
- It’s clear that dealing with exceptional weather will require **interventions at the national, state and local-levels**.
- The Statement on Climate of India 2019 drives home the urgency of such interventions.

Source: Indian Express

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