STATE OF INDIA'S ENVIRONMENT 2025: ENVIRONMENT

NEWS: State of India's Environment in Figures 2025 warns of worsening climate, health and development indicators

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

The *State of India's Environment in Figures 2025* report reveals alarming trends in climate change, pollution, health, and inequality, highlighting India's environmental and developmental crisis. It calls for urgent policy actions on climate resilience, healthcare, employment, and sustainable resource use.

State of India's Environment in Figures 2025

- Released by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) and Down To Earth (DTE) on World Environment Day 2025.

- Highlights alarming trends in India's environmental degradation, public health crisis, and economic disparities.

- Based on 48 indicators across four broad themes:

    - Environment

    - Agriculture

    - Public Health

    - Human Development

- No state/UT excels across all domains; progress is highly uneven.

- Data primarily sourced from publicly available government datasets.

Environmental Crisis

- 2024 recorded as India's warmest year, with 25 states witnessing unprecedented rainfall.

- Climate Migration:

    - Extreme weather events occurred on 88% of days in 2024.

    - 5.4 million internal displacements caused by climate events, nearly half in Assam alone.

    - Floods accounted for two-thirds of displacements, marking the highest climate-linked migration since 2013.

- Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions:

    - India's share of global emissions reached 7.8% in 2023, the highest since 1970.

- Emission growth rate increased by nearly 1 percentage point between 2020 and 2023.

- Forest Loss:

  - 29,000 hectares of forestland diverted in 2023-24, the highest in a decade.

  - Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest forest diversions.

- Wildlife Crisis:

  - Human-elephant conflict resulted in a 36% increase in deaths (2020-23 vs. 2023-24).

  - Tiger attacks caused 82 human deaths.

- River Pollution:

  - Toxic heavy metals detected in nearly 50% of monitored river sites (2022).

- E-waste and Plastic Waste:

  - E-waste generation surged by 147% in seven years.

  - Plastic waste reached 4.14 million tonnes (2022–23).

Agriculture and Land Use

- Sikkim leads in organic farming and sustainable land-use practices.

- However, it lags behind in farmer welfare, indicating an imbalance in development focus.

- Groundwater Depletion:

  - 135 districts now extract groundwater from depths exceeding 40 metres.

  - This is nearly double the number reported in 2014.

  - Indicates increasing unsustainable water use and an impending water crisis.

Pollution and Public Health Crisis

- Air Pollution:

  - Residents in 13 state capitals, including Delhi, experienced unsafe air on one out of every three days since 2021.

  - Life expectancy reduced by 8 years in Delhi and 6 years in Lucknow due to poor air quality.

- Healthcare Infrastructure:

  - India faces a 36% shortage of community health centres.

- There is an 80% deficit in availability of medical specialists.

- Out-of-Pocket Health Expenditure:

  - Increased to 45%.

  - In Uttar Pradesh, individuals bear two-thirds of health expenses out-of-pocket.

- Excess Deaths:

  - India recorded 3.06 million excess deaths in 2020-21.

  - This is six times the official COVID-19 death toll.

Economic and Social Vulnerabilities

- Incomes declined for salaried and self-employed workers between 2017-2023 (inflation-adjusted).

- Informal Workforce:

  - 73% of India's workforce is informal.

  - Over half lack access to basic employment protections and benefits.

- Gender Disparity:

  - Only 20% of women are employed full-time.

  - In contrast, 60% of men are in full-time employment.

Recommendations and Suggested Measures

- Strengthen Climate Adaptation:

  - Improve climate resilience strategies to address displacement and extreme weather impacts.

  - Utilize National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), which includes eight missions such as:

    - National Solar Mission

    - National Mission for a Green India.

- Enhance Pollution Control:

  - Enforce stricter waste management laws and pollution control measures.

  - Example: Rwanda's 2008 ban on non-biodegradable plastics led to cleaner cities and growth in eco-tourism.

- Healthcare Reforms:

- Boost healthcare infrastructure.

- Aim to reduce out-of-pocket expenses via universal health coverage.

- Example: PM-JAY covers 500 million poor citizens, cutting hospitalization costs by up to 60%.

- Formalize the Workforce:

  - Extend social security to informal and gig workers through the Code on Social Security (2020).

  - Promote digital wage payments (e.g., Direct Benefit Transfers under MGNREGA).

- Improve Data Transparency:

  - Encourage better public access to data to enable evidence-based policymaking.

World Environment Day

- Celebrated annually on June 5.

- Established in 1972 during the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference).

- First celebration held in 1973 with the theme "Only One Earth".

- Led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

- Theme for 2025: "Beat Plastic Pollution".

- Host for 2025: Republic of Korea (South Korea).

Conclusion

- The *State of India's Environment in Figures 2025* serves as an urgent wake-up call.

- While India has made progress in some sectors, worsening indicators related to climate, health, and economic inequality demand immediate attention.

- Policymakers must urgently prioritize sustainable development, promote equitable growth, and adopt stronger environmental conservation measures to ensure a resilient future for India.

Source: https://www.downtoearth.org.in/environment/state-of-indias-environment-in-figures-2025-warns-of-worsening-climate-health-and-development-indicators#:~:text=The%20Delhi%2Dbased%20think%20tank's,infrastructure%20and%20deepening%20economic%20strain.