

Weather disasters soar, but deaths fall

UN report shows mounting global impact of climate change over 50 years, as extreme events surge five-fold

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WEATHER disasters are striking the world four to five times more often and causing seven times more damage than in the 1970s, the United Nations weather agency reports.

But these disasters are killing far fewer people. In the 1970s and 1980s, they killed an average of about 170 people a day worldwide. In the 2010s, that dropped to about 40 per day, the World Meteorological Organization said in a report Wednesday that looks at more than 11,000 weather disasters in the past half-century.

The report comes during a disaster-filled summer globally, including deadly floods in Germany and a heat wave in the Mediterranean, and with the United States simultaneously struck by powerful Hurricane Ida and an onslaught of drought-worsened wildfires.

"The good news is that we

TOP 10 DISASTERS IN THE PERIOD 1970-2019			
Disaster	Year	Country	Deaths
Drought	1983	Ethiopia	3,00,000
Storm (Bhola)	1970	Bangladesh	3,00,000
Drought	1983	Sudan	1,50,000
Storm (Gorky)	1991	Bangladesh	1,38,866
Storm (Nergis)	2008	Myanmar	1,38,366
Drought	1973	Ethiopia	1,00,000
Drought	1981	Mozambique	1,00,000
Extreme temperature	2010	Russia	55,736
Flood	1999	Venezuela	30,000
Flood	1974	Bangladesh	28,700

have been able to minimise the amount of casualties once we have started having growing amount of disasters: heat-waves, flooding events, drought, and especially ... intense tropical storms like Ida, which has been hitting recently Louisiana and Mississippi in the United States," Petteri Taalas, WMO's secretary-general, told a news conference.

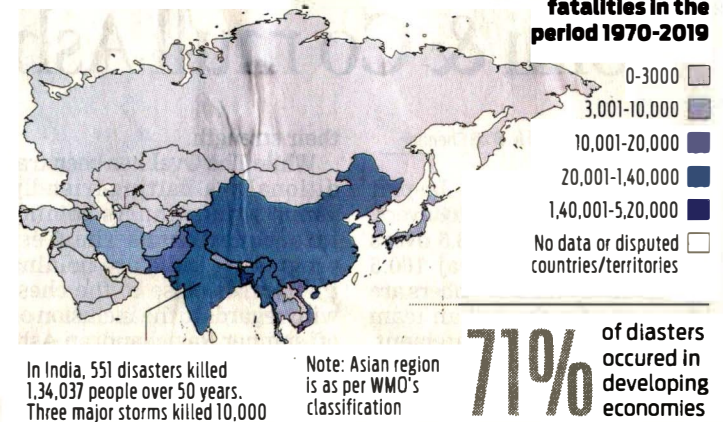
"But the bad news is that the economic losses have been growing very rapidly and this growth is supposed to continue," he added. "We are going to see more climatic extremes because of climate change, and these negative trends in climate will continue for the coming decades."

In the 1970s, the world averaged about 711 weather disasters a year, but from 2000 to 2009 that was up to 3,536 a year or nearly 10 a day, according to the report, which used data from the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters in Belgium. The average number of yearly disasters dropped a bit in the 2010s to 3,165.

Most death and damage during 50 years of weather disasters came from storms, flooding and drought.

More than 90% of the more than 2 million deaths are in what the UN considers developing nations, while nearly 60%

ASIA'S TOLL



of the economic damage occurred in richer countries.

In the 1970s, weather disasters cost about \$175 billion globally, when adjusted to 2019 dollars, the U.N. found. That increased to \$1.38 trillion for the period from 2010 to 2019.

What's driving the destruc-

tion is that more people are moving into dangerous areas as climate change is making weather disasters stronger and more frequent, UN disaster and weather officials said. Meanwhile, better weather warnings and preparedness are lessening the death toll.

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