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State of India's Environment

Through the eyes of numbers

Kiran Pandey

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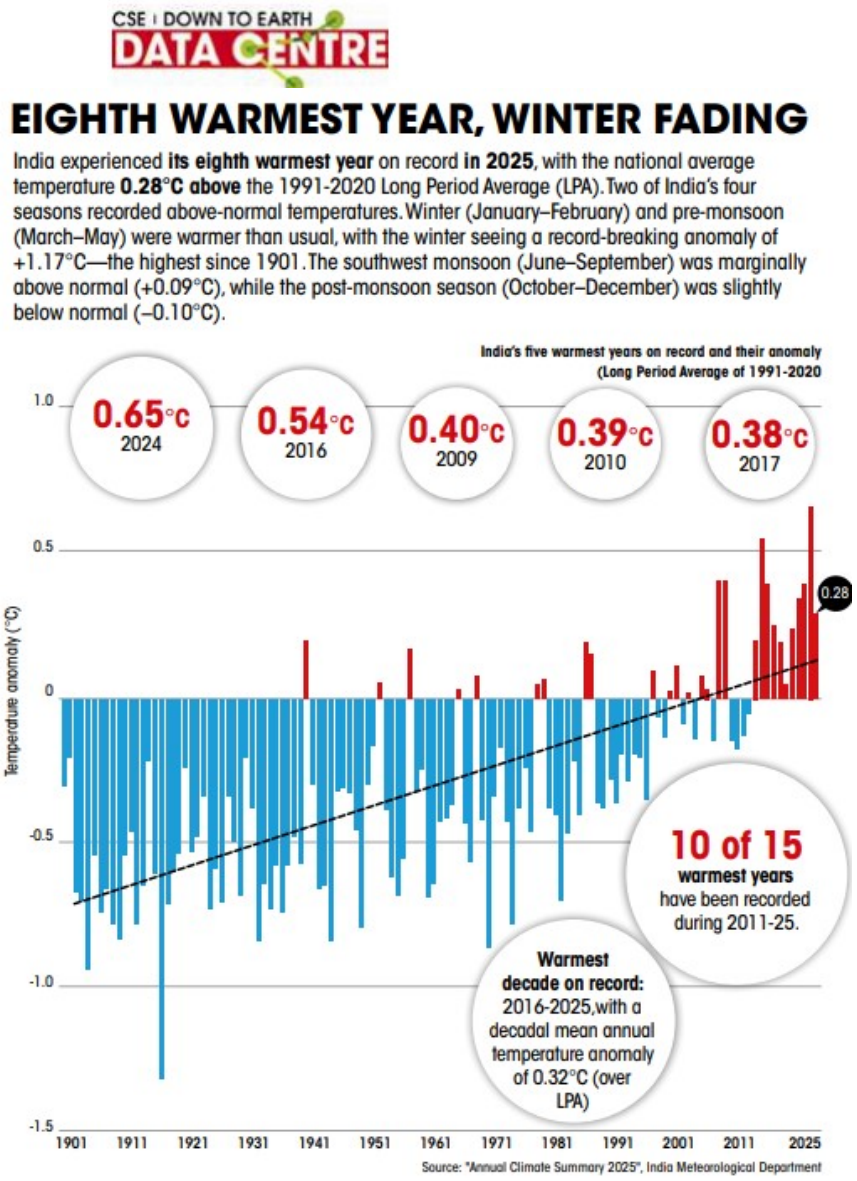
Centre for Science and Environment

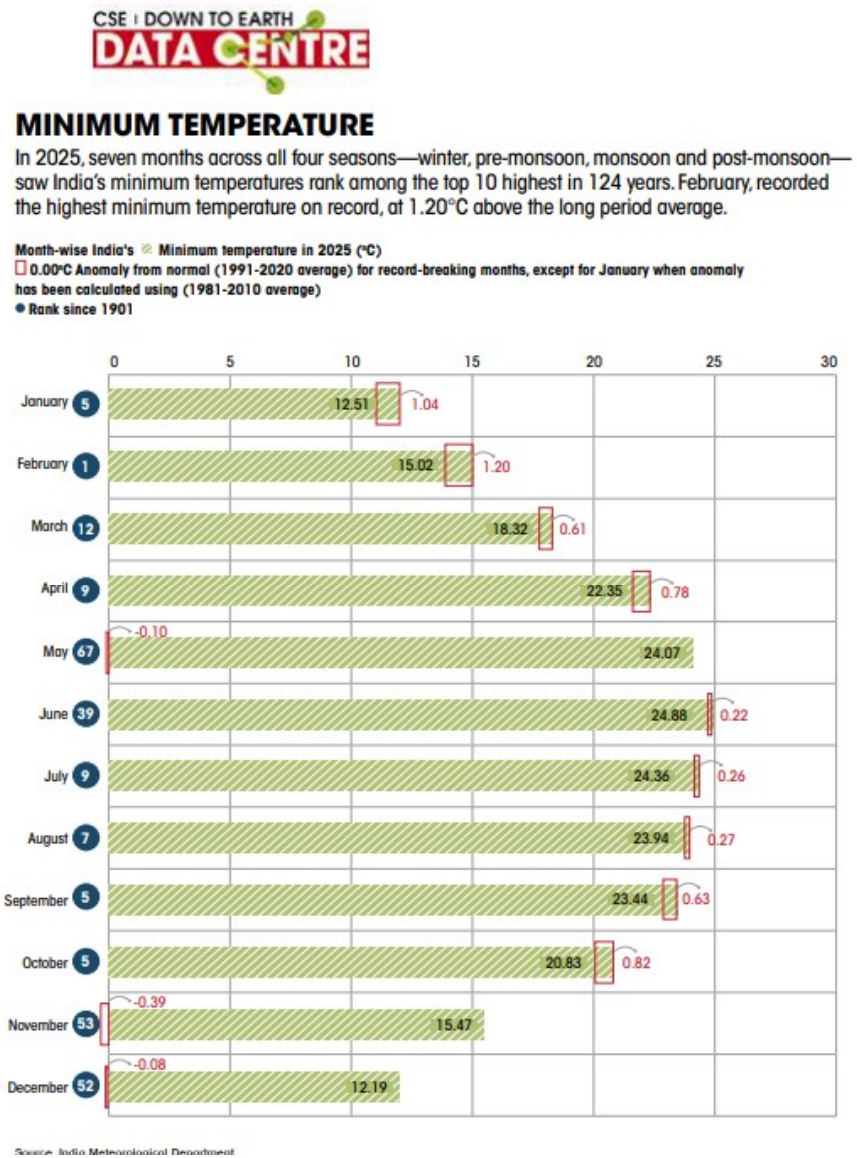


State of Climate

Records: The years 2023 to 2025 were collectively more than 1.5°C warmer than pre-industrial levels, making this the warmest three-year period on record globally.

2025 was India's eighth warmest year on record, with the national average temperature 0.28°C above the 1991-2020 long-period average (LPA)

Warmest decade on record: 2016-2025,with a decadal mean annual temperature anomaly of 0.32°C (over LPA)



State of Climate…

The warming trend was evident across all temperature indicators

In 2025, India's minimum temperatures in seven months across all seasons ranked among the 10 highest in 124 years

Mean temperatures in four months across winter, pre-monsoon and monsoon seasons ranked among the 10 highest in 124 year

In 2025, India's average maximum temperatures in three months across winter and pre-monsoon seasons ranked among the 10 highest in 124 years

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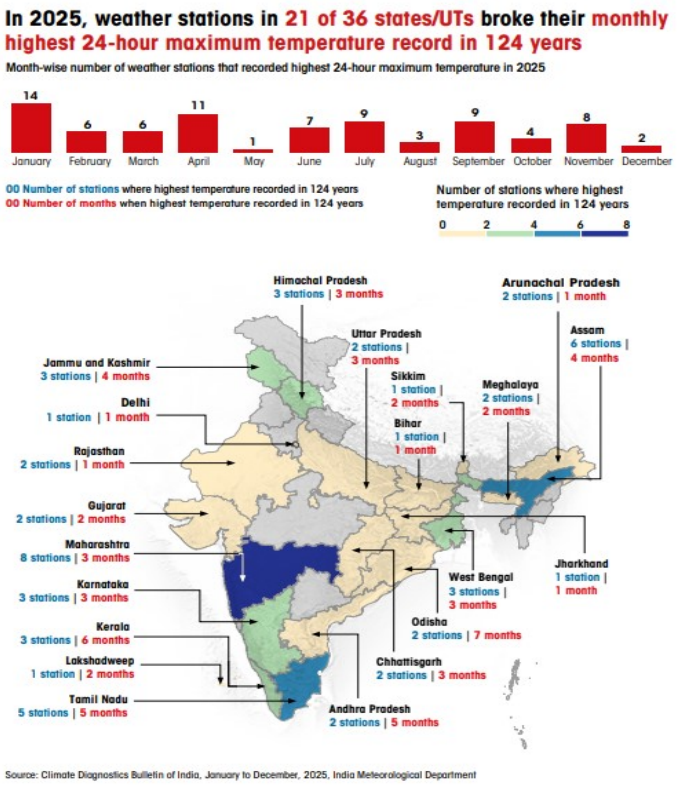
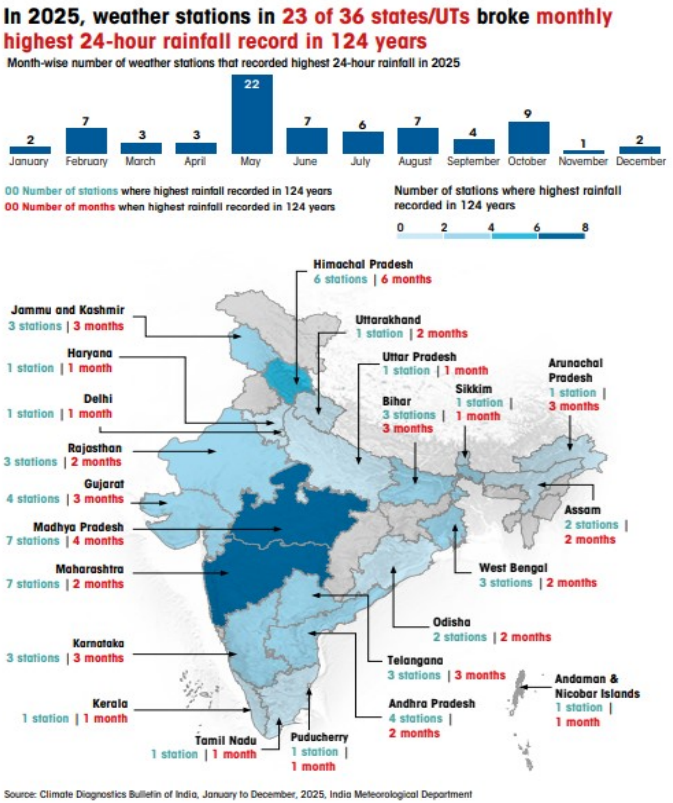
State of Climate

In 2025, weather stations in 21 of 36 states/UTs broke their monthly highest 24-hour maximum temperature record in 124 years



Source: Climate Diagnostics Bulletin of India, January to December, 2025, India Meteorological Department

In 2025, weather stations in 23 of 36 states/UTs broke monthly highest 24-hour rainfall record in 124 years



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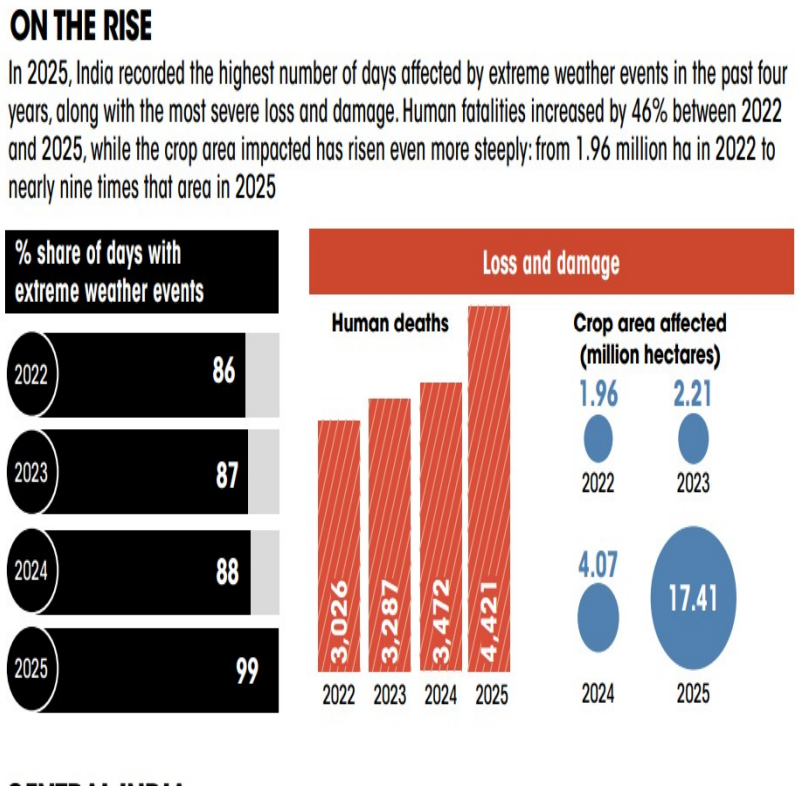
State of Extreme weather



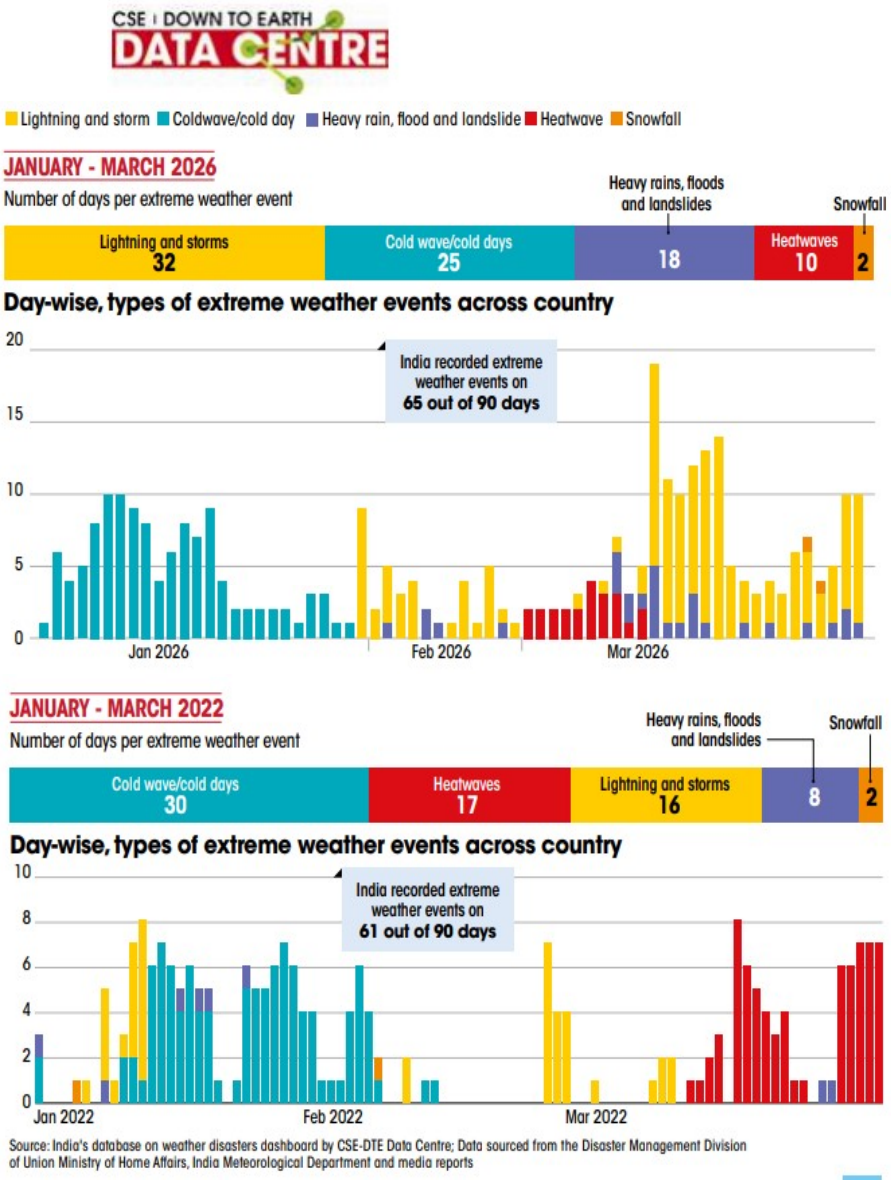
Geographical sweep: All states/Union Territories have reported extreme weather events in 2025.

In 99% days (360 days) of the year extreme weather events were recorded. These events claimed 4,421 lives and damaged at least 17.41 million hectares (ha) of cropped area

In 2025, India recorded the highest number of days affected by extreme weather events in the past four years, along with the most severe loss and damage. Human fatalities increased by 46% between 2022 and 2025, while the crop area impacted has risen even more steeply: from 1.96 million ha in 2022 to nearly nine times that area in 2025

Change in seasonality: Alongside monsoon, pre- and post-monsoon seasons are emerging as most devastating periods, recording more rain and flood events than before.

Fading winter: For the first time since 2022, February did not record any cold wave. Himachal Pradesh recorded severe heatwave in early March 2026



Extreme weather > 2026

The first quarter of 2026 (January to March) marked a rapid seasonal shift in India—from a weakening winter with only 25 cold-wave events confined to January

Fading winter: For the first time since 2022, February did not record any cold wave.

Himachal Pradesh has recorded a severe heatwave in early March 2026, (the earliest occurrence in five years)

First three months (January to March, 2026): 35 states and Union Territories witnessed extreme weather events, with 21 reporting their highest number of such days compared to 2022. These include: Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh

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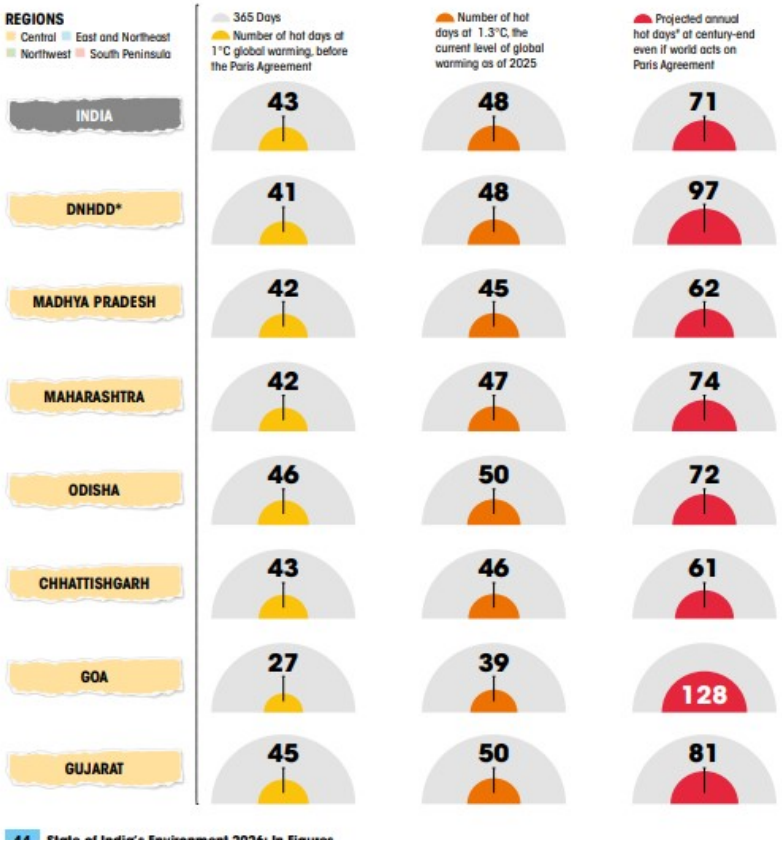
EXTREME HEAT DAYS IN INDIA TO RISE BY 50%

India experiences about 48 extremely hot days each year. Even if countries meet their Paris Agreement pledges, this could rise to 71 days under a 2.6°C warming scenario. Nine states are projected to see 50 to 138 more hot days by end of the century, and 14 states could see 30 to 49 more hot days.



Climate impacts > State of Heat

Heat has emerged as one of the severe consequences of climate change.

India experiences 48 extremely hot days each year. Nine states may see 50 to 138 more hot days by end of the century.

The human cost is evident in displacement.

Total 800,070 internal displacements recorded: disasters accounted for 84%, while conflicts 16%

In 2025, some 28 states/UTs recorded internal displacement (compared to 24 states/UTs in 2024)

Floods alone have driven most disaster-related displacement over the last decade.

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Climate impacts > Internal displacement

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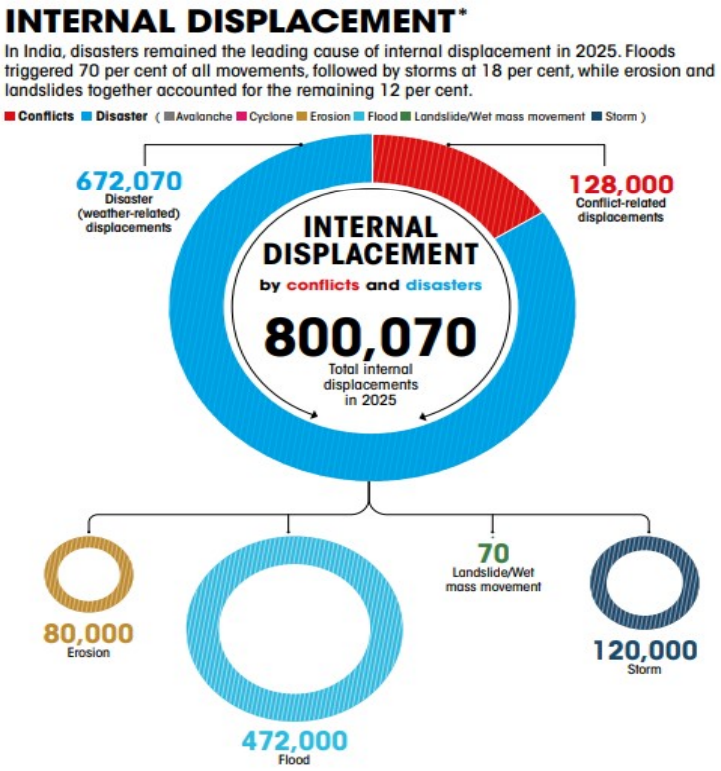
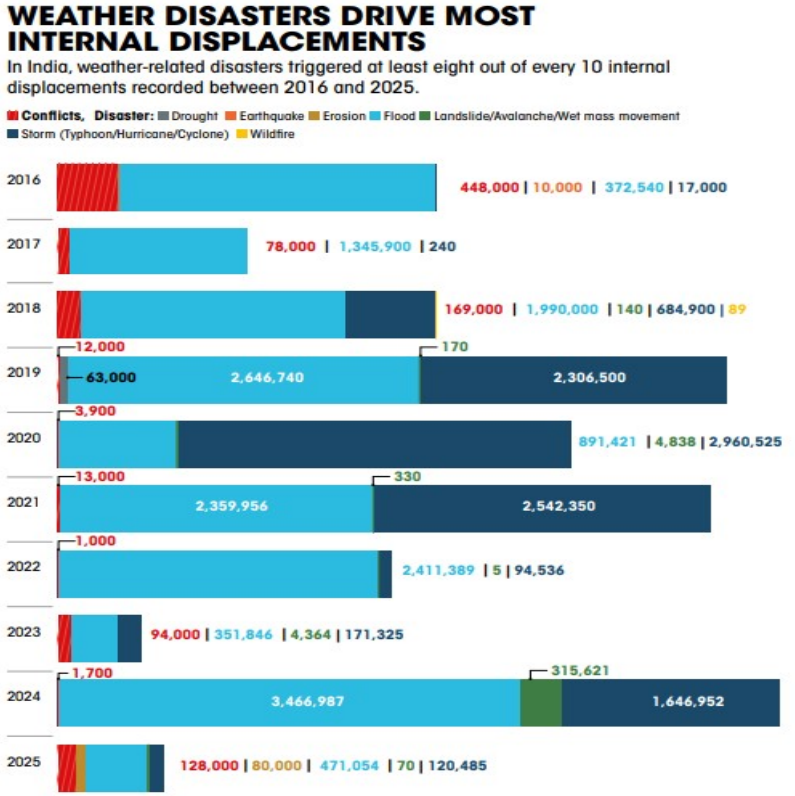


Floods alone have driven most disaster-related displacement over the last decade.



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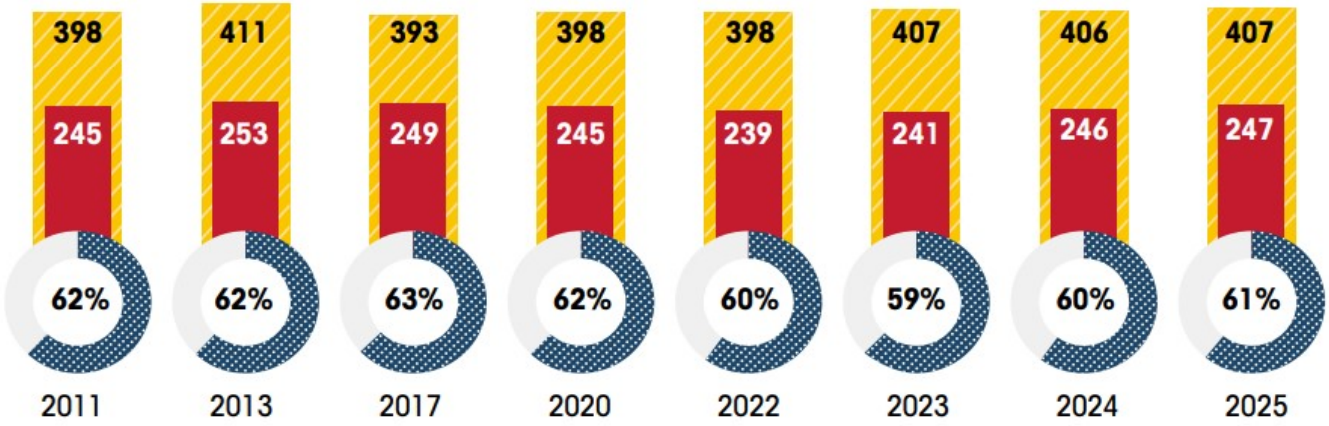
State of Water

GROUNDWATER AVAILABILITY

India's dependence on groundwater continues to increase and at least 15 states/Union Territories (UTs) have over-exploited locations where extraction is higher than recharge

Annual extractable groundwater resource (billion cubic metre or BCM) Annual groundwater extraction for irrigation, domestic and industrial uses (BCM) Stage of groundwater extraction (%)



Stage of groundwater extraction = Net annual groundwater extraction/ Net annual groundwater availability; % ages have been rounded to the nearest whole number

The country extracts nearly all of its available groundwater reserves, with annual extraction reaching over 407 billion cubic metres.

In several regions, groundwater withdrawal exceeds natural recharge, placing immense pressure on aquifers.

Fifteen states and Union Territories now report over-exploited groundwater zones. Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana are among the most stressed, extracting more water than nature replenishes.

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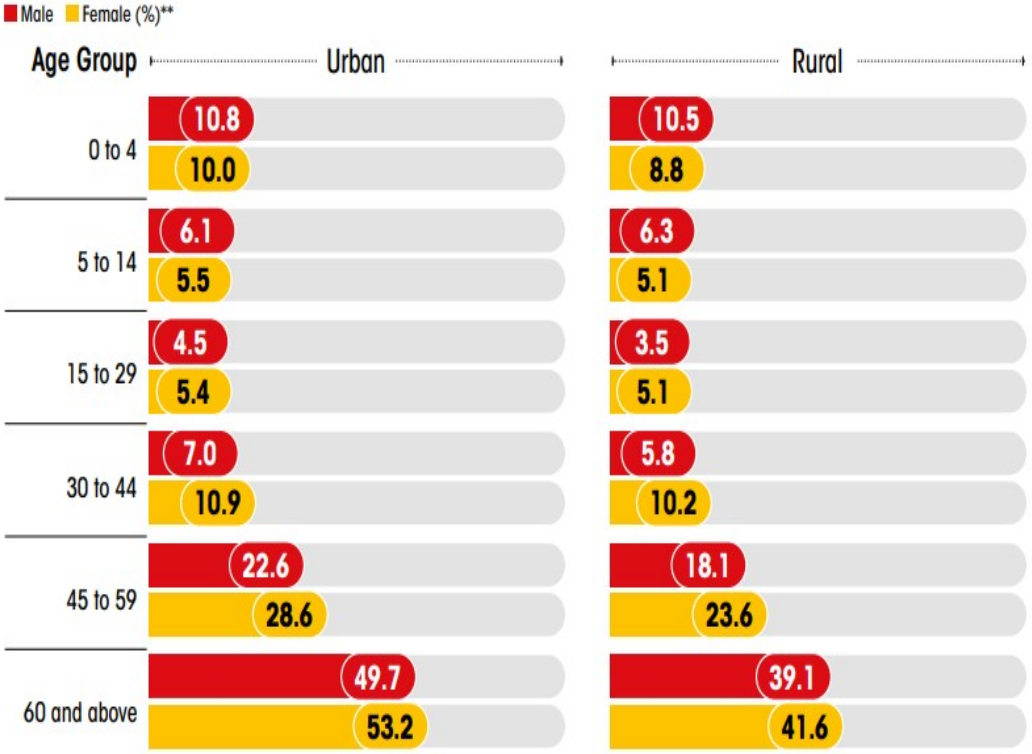
State of Health

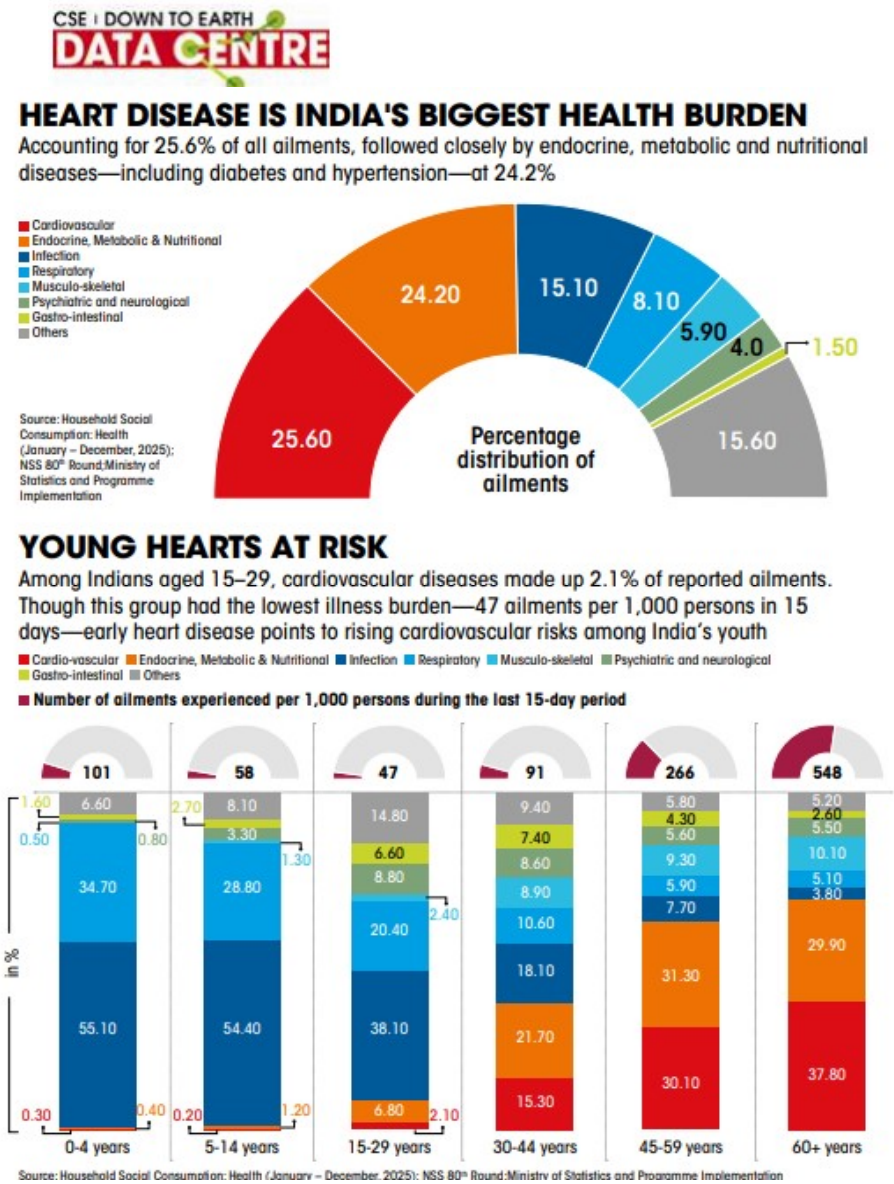
YOUNG GIRLS AND WOMEN REPORT MORE ILLNESS THAN MEN IN BOTH RURAL AND URBAN INDIA



Nearly 13 per cent of Indians now report suffering from some form of illness—the highest level recorded in three decades.

Children, the elderly, and increasingly women and girls, bear a disproportionate share of this burden.

Young girls and women report more illness than men in both rural and urban India

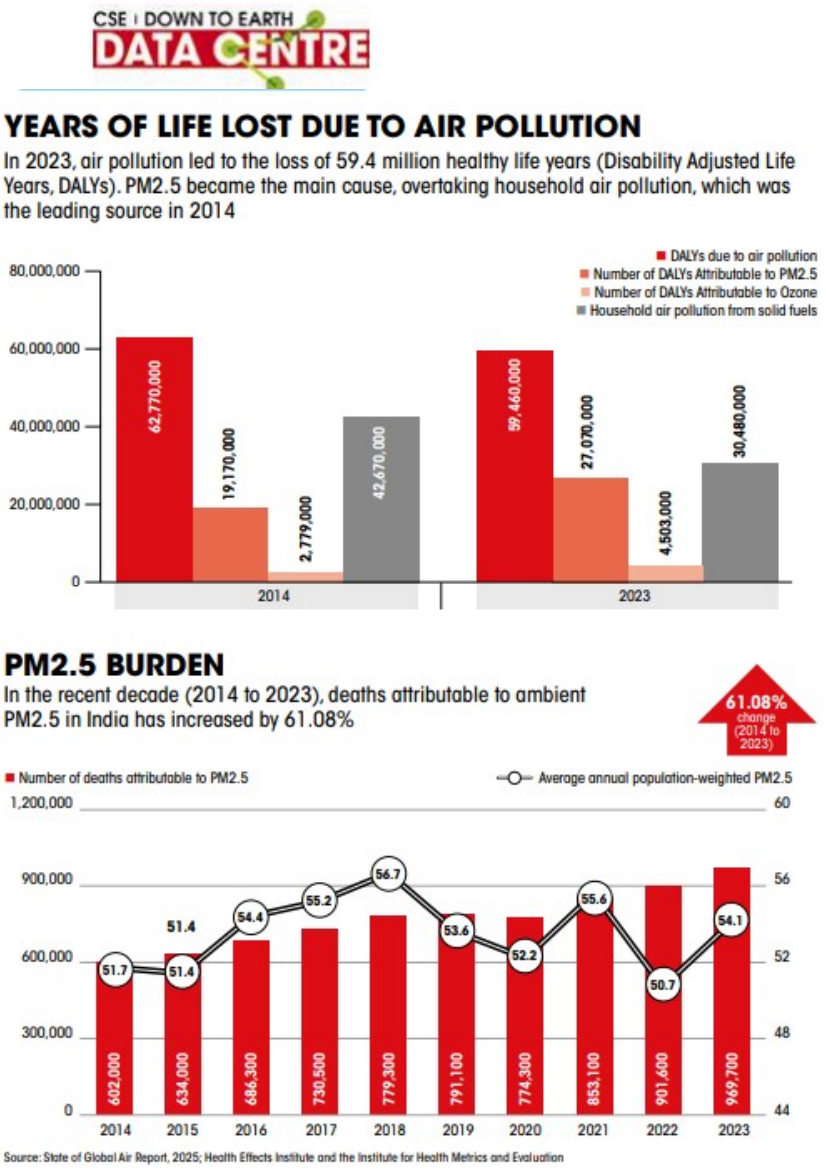


State of Health

Heart disease has emerged as the country's largest health challenge, accounting for 25.6% of all ailments, followed closely by endocrine, metabolic and nutritional diseases—including diabetes and hypertension—at 24.2%

Heart disease is affecting Indians at younger ages (15 to 29 years) than ever before.

Cardiovascular disease is becoming a visible concern.



State of Health/Air

The link between environment, health and wellbeing is becoming impossible to ignore.

Illness has been linked to more than 30,600 deaths by suicide in a year. Mental illness accounts for the largest share.

India's share of global air pollution-related deaths rose from 23.76% to 25.34% between 2014 and 2023

Deaths attributable to ambient PM2.5 in India have increased by 61% over the past decade

Air pollution, heat stress and changing disease patterns continue to add pressure on public health systems

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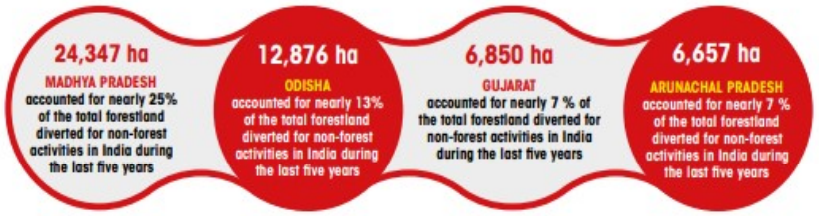
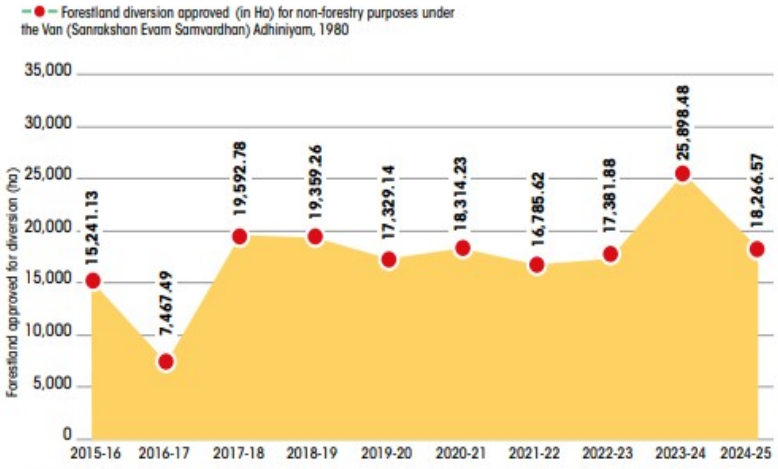
FORESTLAND DIVERSION

Between 2015-16 and 2024-25, India approved about 176,034 hectares (ha) of forest land for non-forest uses. More than half of this—around 97,050 ha—was approved in the last five years (2020-21 to 2024-25). This is about 23% more than the previous five-year period's diversion. Forest land diversion increased in 26 states during 2020-21 to 2024-25 compared to 2015-16 to 2019-20. The biggest rises were recorded in Assam, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Just four states accounted for at least 52% of the total forestland approved for diversion in recent five years (2020-21 to 2024-25)





Source: Replies to Parliament questions by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on Feb 5, 2026 and March 24, 2025

State of Forest and Biodiversity

Between 2015-16 and 2021-25, about 176,034 ha of forestland were approved for diversion to non-forest uses. More than half of this (around 97,000 ha) approved in last five years.

Just four states (MP, Odisha, Gujarat, Arunachal) accounted for at least 52% of the total forestland approved for diversion in recent five years (2020-21 to 2024-25)

Forest diversion increased in 26 states/UTs, reflecting growing pressure from development and infrastructure expansion.

Human-wildlife conflict is also intensifying. Incidents involving elephants and tigers have risen in several states, resulting in increasing casualties among both people and wildlife.

Elephant attacks on humans have increased across 10 states. Tigers killed 40 people in the first six months of 2025

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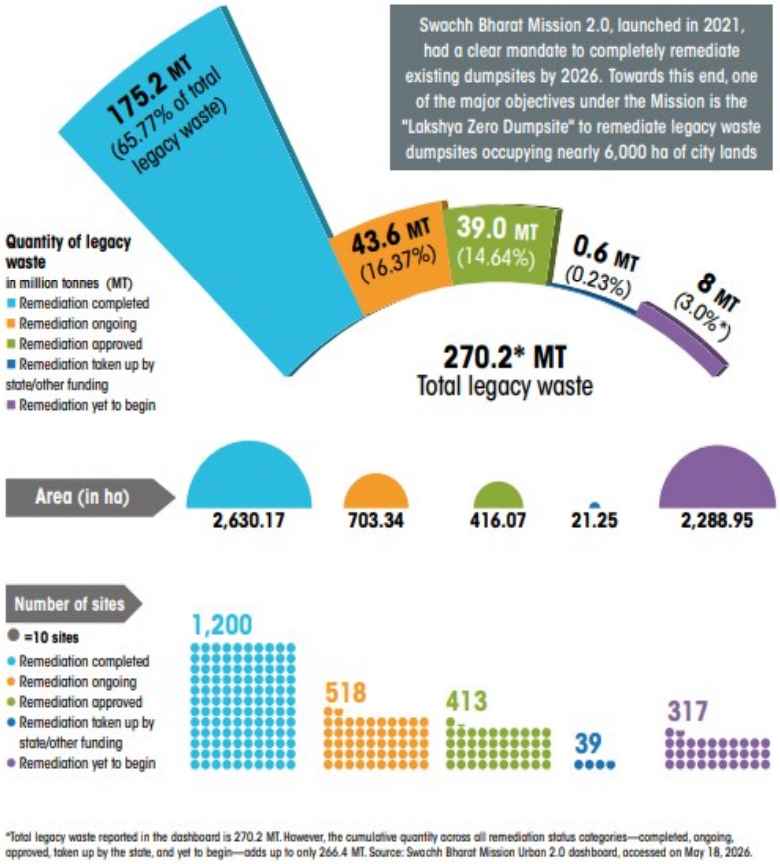
LEGACY WASTE

With five months left to meet its 2026 target, India has cleared nearly 65% of its legacy waste. Cleanup work is ongoing for another 16%, while 3% has not yet been taken up. The remaining 15% are either approved or being taken up by state/other funding groups. Of the 6,060 hectares (ha) of land affected by legacy waste, 43% has been reclaimed, 19% is under remediation or has received approval, while nearly 38% remains unaddressed



*Total legacy waste reported in the dashboard is 270.2 MT. However, the cumulative quantity across all remediation status categories—completed, ongoing, approved, taken up by the state, and yet to begin—adds up to only 266.4 MT. Source: Swachh Bharat Mission Urban 2.0 dashboard, accessed on May 18, 2026.

State of Waste

With five months left to meet its 2026 target, India has cleared 65 per cent of its legacy waste and nearly half of the affected land has been reclaimed.

Yet significant challenges remain, with several states still processing less than 40 per cent of the waste they generate daily.

Source segregation is now practised in most urban wards. But five states have failed to process more than 60% of the municipal solid waste they generate each day

Electronic waste too is a challenge. India's e-waste generation increased by 83% over the past eight years, while processing rates have recently slowed, raising concerns about future management capacity.

India stands at an important moment in waste management. New Solid Waste Management Rules notified in 2026 provide a stronger framework, but their success will depend on implementation by states and local bodies.

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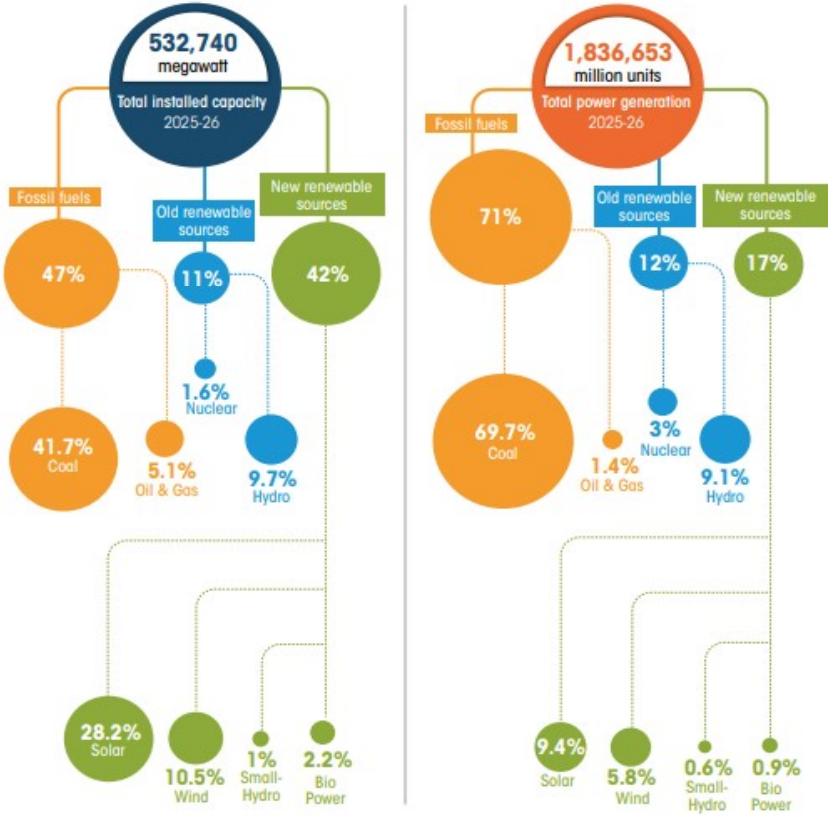
NEW RENEWABLES

India is betting big on renewable energy, with the Central Electricity Authority projecting that new renewables should optimally make up 32% of the country's total energy mix by 2030. Yet, despite accounting for 42% of India's installed power generation capacity, these sources currently contribute only 17% to actual electricity generation



Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number; as a result, totals may not add up to exactly 100%.
Source: India Climate and Energy Dashboard, NITI Aayog, accessed on May 22, 2026; 2026 Installed Capacity Report, Central Electricity Authority, March 2026

State of Energy

Renewable energy is growing rapidly. New renewable sources contribute 17% of total electricity generation in India and growth rates over the past decade have been remarkable.

In a decade (2016-17 and 2025-26), generations from old renewable grew 38% and new renewable by 270%. However, the country still has a considerable distance to travel to meet its 2030 targets..

State of Energy

While clean energy expands across the grid, Biomass-based fuels account for more than 50% of rural households' primary cooking energy use in 13 states/Union Territories.

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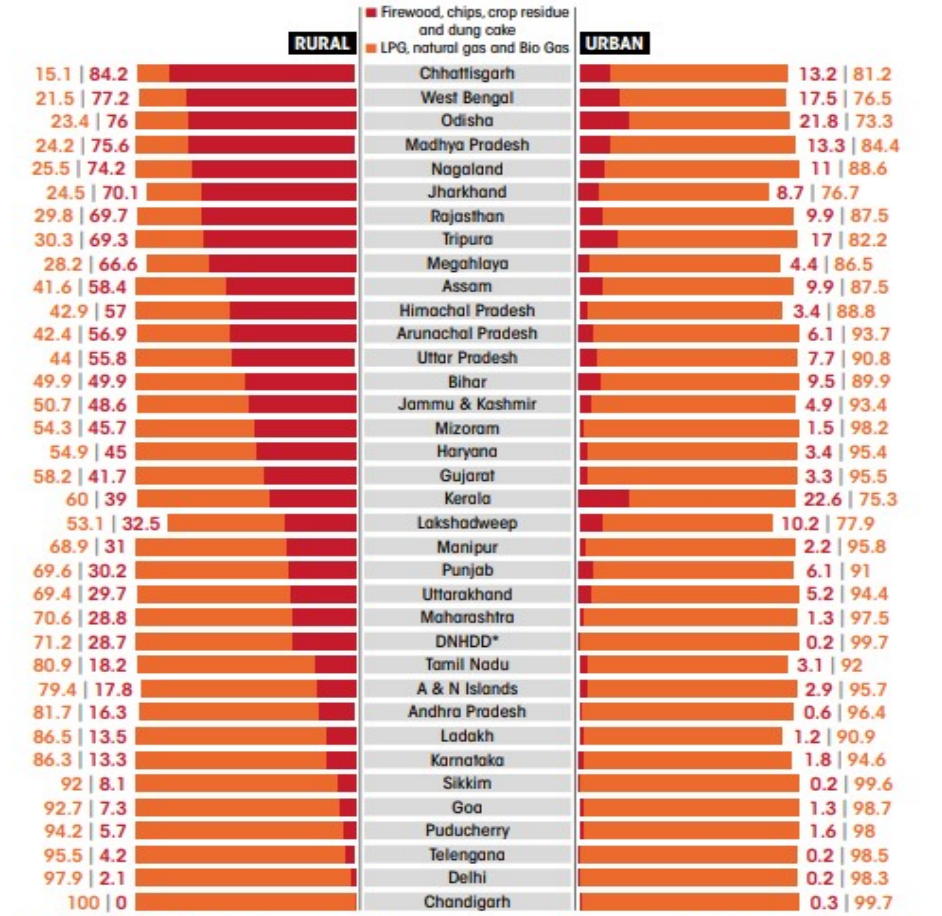
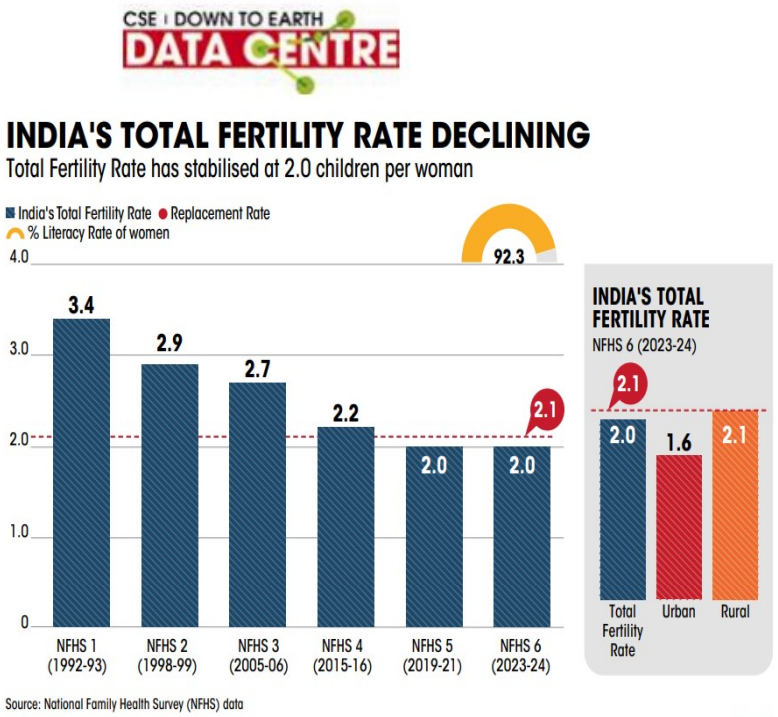
In 13 States/Union Territories, biomass-based fuels account for more than 50% of rural households' primary cooking energy use. In two states—Kerala and Odisha—over 20% of urban households rely on biomass fuels for cooking



Note: Figures may not sum to 100, as households often use multiple sources of energy; Source: 78th round Multiple Indicator Survey by National Sample Survey Office, 2020-21

*Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu; Andaman & Nicobar Islands



State of Fertility

India's demographic story is entering a new phase. The country's working-age population is approaching its peak, signalling that the demographic dividend window is gradually narrowing.

At the same time, fertility has stabilised below replacement levels, with the Total Fertility Rate standing at 2.0 children per woman. This reflects a profound social transformation driven by education, urbanisation, healthcare access and changing aspirations..

Over the past three decades, nearly every state has witnessed a substantial decline in fertility.

As India prepares for an ageing population in the decades ahead, the challenge will be to convert this trend into long-term economic and social resilience.

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