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- ❖ **Myanmar & India-ASEAN Relations**
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Climate Armageddon

Planet Earth is being frequently visited by the vagaries of climate change in the form of extreme weather events like floods, erratic rainfall, droughts, hurricanes, wildfires etc., that claim heavy toll of human and animal lives, causing irreparable damage to property and infrastructure. We humans have failed to hark the warning signals being sounded by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) through its Assessment Reports from time to time and especially the Fifth Assessment Report of 2014, Special Report on Global Warming released in October 2018, Special Report on Climate Change and Land released in August 2019 and the latest Special Report on Climate Change and Oceans released on September 25, 2019.

Failure of global leadership to come up to the expectations of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change agreed to by over 190 countries has spurred youngsters like Greta Thunberg to ask "How dare you?" Our failure to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is rapidly pushing us towards climate Armageddon. IPCC's latest report deals with as to how climate change is reshaping the oceans and ice sheets, and its major focus is how *water*, in all its forms, is closely tied to human flourishing. Continuous release of carbon pollution into the air entails the potential of accrual of serious implications for the humankind. This report makes it evident that climate change is going to reshape every system made of water on Earth. In other words, warming of ocean would lead to decline in seafood safety, accumulation of mercury in fish and the toxic bacteria *Vibrio* will become more common. Surge in the frequency of extreme coastal flooding events on the pattern of Hurricane Harvey and Katrina can be exacerbated by climate change. Scientific evidence cited in the IPCC report warns that climate change can push the worst rainstorms, including tropical cyclones and hurricanes thereby leading to increase the frequency of extreme El Nino and La Nina.

According to the report, if humankind manages to quickly lower its carbon pollution in the next few decades, then sea-level rise by 2100 may never exceed about one foot, and this will be tough but manageable. Concurrently, the report also warns that if carbon pollution continues rising through the middle of the century, then sea-level rise by 2100 could exceed 2 feet 9 inches and under those circumstances the task would be too gigantic to manage. While referring to the effects of climate change seemingly to be speeding up, the report adds that the seas are now rising at an unprecedented pace over the last century; and that the rate of global sea-level rise was 2.5 times faster from 2006 to 2016 than it was for nearly all of the 20th century. In the Antarctic ice sheet, the rate of mass loss had tripled relative to the previous decade and in Greenland, it's doubled over the past decade.

The IPCC's latest report informs that the oceans act like a massive sponge in the planetary system, and they have so far absorbed most of the warmth trapped by greenhouse gases. It is further reported that since 1993, the rate of ocean warming has more than doubled. Marine heat waves—when the ocean becomes so hot that it can kill plants and animals—happen twice as frequently now, and they have grown in intensity, duration, and size. According to the report, ecological upheavals of climate change are not restricted to the seas. Many glaciers will disappear within the next decade and—at the latest—within a century and that could have implications for water security across the globe. There are two huge stores of water on the planet – the oceans encompassing more than two-thirds of its surface, and the rocklike ice caps – and the scientists have already detected one key change in how those two stores of water interrelate. The biggest driver of sea-level rise has been heating itself for past some decades and as the ocean gets hotter, it literally occupies more space, what the scientists call "thermal expansion," and it applies to matter more generally; and meltwater from Greenland and Antarctica has overwhelmed this effect. The report warns that policies that curb greenhouse gases today can have a strong impact on future sea-level rise, particularly in terms of what happens after 2050.

— BK