Preparing for the Summer

What is the news?

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- The IMD forecast an above-normal temperatures over much of India in the summer months.
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- Also, the Australian international weather bureau says there is a **50% prospect of a similar phenomenon** this year as well, thus indicating a debilitated monsoon and weaker agricultural prospects.
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What are the facts?

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- NASA has pointed out, there has been a record three-year warming trend, with 2016 the hottest and 16 of 17 warmest years recorded, occurred since 2001.
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- Global weather in recent times has come under pressure from the El Nino warming that began in 2015.
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- But, the effect of El Nino on the global temperature is only a small part of the overall rise, indicating that the **trend could be correlated with the rise in greenhouse gases.**
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- India, a major emitter of GHGs, has classified 2016 as the century's warmest year, with an increase of 0.91ºC over the long-term average.
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What the government must do to adopt?

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- We must **shift away from further high-emission pathways** in the economy and adopt leapfrogging technologies.
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- It is also a call for policy initiatives to build **resilience by improving water harvesting and expanding tree cover,** including in cities.
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- For rural India, we must build surface irrigation facilities such as ponds through the employment guarantee scheme and climate funds.
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- In urban areas, more reservoirs needs to be built to augment water supply.
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- A **carefully planned school examination schedule** could spare the students from the worst of the summer.
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- Last year, schools in some states have decided to extend their summer vacations by a week or two. It might become necessary again this year.
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- Administrative decisions for summer management will need to be refined on the basis of coming IMD updates.
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What should be done to save farmers?

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- The IMD, ICAR and agriculture universities should work towards a more precise, micro-level understanding of rainfall, temperature, crop choice and inputs, particularly in rainfed areas.
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- The focus of farm research should shift towards **mapping climate patterns at the taluk level** over long periods to arrive at better surmises on the monsoon.
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- Research focus on the effects of input-intensive farming in irrigated regions has led to the neglect of more traditional areas such as managing rain variability.
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- Climate intelligence must form a more integral part of agriculture policy and extension services.
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- Finally, there must be a concerted shift towards **integrated, sustainable farming,** with agro-forestry practices.
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- Farmers need credit and support to manage this transition.
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Source: The Hindu

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