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NO HOLDS BARRED



The first problem is mixing up climate and weather. This is a perennial issue in his rhetoric; in 2016, he pointed to an unusually warm day in 1898 as evidence that the globe isn't overall getting hotter. That weather record was set in only two spots, Oregon and Maryland, making it pretty meaningless to the question of climate, which deals in long-term trends the globe over.

# Why Global Warming Won't Save You from Snow Days

STEPHANIE PAPPAS

Interestingly, the warming climate can sometimes actually trigger extreme snowfall events, because warmer air can carry more moisture. Meanders in the jet stream that channel frigid air down from the Arctic can then create the conditions for monster blizzards. Unfortunately, as climate change alters the polar regions, these jet stream changes may become more common.

ON Sunday, as much of the country plunged into polar temperatures, President Donald Trump took the opportunity to make a dig at climate science on Twitter.

"Be careful and try staying in your house," he tweeted. "Large parts of the Country are suffering from tremendous amounts of snow and near record setting cold. Amazing how big this system is. Wouldn't be bad to have a little of that good old fashioned Global Warming right now!"

Perhaps unsurprisingly for a president who has flirted with the idea that climate change is a hoax, Trump doesn't have global warming's effects quite right. Indeed, even as the globe gets hotter on average, some localities could see bigger winter storms. [The Reality of Climate Change: 10 Myths Busted]

#### Climate versus weather

The first problem is mixing up climate and weather. This is a perennial issue in his rhetoric; in 2016, he pointed to an unusually warm day in 1898 as evidence that the globe isn't overall getting hotter. That weather record was set in only two spots, Oregon and Maryland, making it pretty meaningless to the question of climate, which deals in long-term trends the globe over.

And the long-term trend isn't pretty. According to the U.S. National Climatic Data Center, there has not been a single month in which the average surface temperature on Earth has dipped below the 1901 to 2000 average since ... 1985. (The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's repository of this data is offline due to the government shutdown, but The Conversation has more detail on the numbers.)

A warming globe doesn't mean that winter will cease to exist, though scientists are already noting trends toward fairly mild winter temperatures. The Climate Science Special Report (CSSR), spearheaded by federal scientists, found that between 1986 and 2016 alone, average annual temperatures over the contiguous United States increased by 1.2 degrees Fahrenheit (0.7 degrees Celsius). Meanwhile, cold waves have be-



come less prevalent, while heat waves have become more common. And high-temperature records are far outstripping record lows.

#### The future of cold

So what about winter storms? They certainly still exist, but climate scientists predict that Americans will experience even fewer cold waves in the future, with "cold waves" defined as six-day periods in which the temperatures are below the 10th percentile of the temperature range for that area. Alaska will see the greatest decline in cold waves, according to the CSSR, while the Northeast will see the least extreme decline.

Snow cover, snow depth and extreme snowfall are also on the decline across the southern and western United States, according to the CSSR.

The Northeast is something of an anomaly: Extreme snowfall has increased in parts of the northern United States. Interestingly, the warming climate can sometimes actually trigger extreme snowfall events, because warmer air can carry more moisture. Meanders in the jet stream that channel frigid air down from the Arctic can then create the conditions for monster blizzards. Unfortunately, as climate change alters the polar regions, these jet stream changes may become more common. The result could be a sort of "fear or famine" situation for winter storms: As overall snowfall declines (and parches the already-arid West), some areas — particularly the Northeast — could see more individual extreme precipitation events.

It's worth noting that all of the trends caused by climate change are also overlaid on top of shorter-scale atmospheric patterns. For example, the famous ocean atmosphere pattern El Niño, which involves a warmer-than-usual central or eastern Pacific, alters winter weather across the United States. Typically, it brings wet, chilly weather to the southern half of the country and warmer, drier weather to much of the northern half. As of Jan. 10, the U.S. Climate Prediction Center forecasted that El Niño has a 65 percent chance of forming by the early spring.

—Originally published on Live Science.

## An Indo-Anglican's Document Dilemmas

NILOFAR SUHRAWARDY

Just as notion of recognising people by their dress has been propagated, it wouldn't be surprising if language is picked up next. Where would those in largely western attire and more comfortable with English than local languages be deported to? And what proof would be provided to other nations of these being their citizens?

Notwithstanding this limitation, as a part of the annual New Year resolutions exercise, I am deliberating on where to procure a birth certificate for officials when and if they do ever turn up demanding them. Parents are no longer around. All this scribe and her sibling are aware of is the hospital, where we began our life. Am 200 per cent certain that hospital's name bears little appeal for present party in power at the Centre and in the state where it is located. It is Kamala Nehru in Allahabad, the city now known as Prayagraj. And this spells another dilemma. Even if we had birth certificates, the officers are least likely to view them as genuine. The name of city, in present circumstances, may be viewed as false.

Ok, assuming they have no problems with city's name, how do we convince them about date and place of our birth? Which person can verify his/her own birth and also be sure that it is true? We don't have birth certificates. Whatever the date entered by parents at time of admission to school has to date been considered as proof of our date of birth. A possible option is for governments to ask hospitals across the country to provide them with a record of persons born before 1971. The credible point, perhaps hopefully, would be correct entry of parents' names. This scribe would not have too much problem with this formula for in all probability less than 10 babies born in Kamala Nehru Hospital and/or other hospitals in Prayagraj have this family name.

However, those with other surnames may not be so lucky. But let this be government's headache to ensure whether persons born here before 1971 are Indian citizens or not. With respect to another key issue

that of parents' place of birth, what do we do in case of their not being alive? Lively discussions with parents never ever focussed on their birth certificates. All we have been aware is that of hailing from Uttar Pradesh. It would be all more troublesome for people of our parents' generation to produce proof of their parents' birth. The older a person is, more problematic would be the exercise of providing proof of his/her parents' birth-certificates. Nobody would have been around if their parents weren't there. If only this simple explanation worked.

The preceding point draws attention to yet another aspect. If something is happening beyond Indian borders, in external territories, should it be considered as an internal issue — a concern of the home ministry or the external affairs ministry? If it concerns illegal immigrants, the defence ministry remains answerable for security lapses allowing their entry

It wouldn't be a bad idea to try and confuse officials asking for our parents' birth certificates by politely questioning on how we can provide the same, when we weren't around to get theirs made. Am not aware about how popular surrogacy, etc. was in ear-

lier days. It may have been known by some other traditional term. To date, have not heard of DNA tests being earlier conducted, precisely prior to 1971, to verify parentage. This is just being mentioned lest some new law is introduced about DNA tests being made compulsory. Well, at present, digging out non-existent birth certificates seems as impossible as conducting DNA tests of those who are not around.

It may not be a bad idea to suggest the United States' example regarding citizenship. Who knows, the American-formula may have some appeal. The pa-

ternal grandparents of President Donald Trump were German immigrants. His mother was born in Scotland. Former President Barack Obama was born in Hawaii and his father in Kenya. In fact, a significant number of Americans trace their origins to the United King-

dom and other parts of Europe. The recent decades have witnessed increase in Chinese and people from other Asian countries, including India and Pakistan taking American citizenship. Just think, who would be left behind in the USA if birth certificates of parents and grandparents were given importance there?

Yes, the question is not of others opting for Indian citizenship but of India granting citizenship to some minority citizens being oppressed in a few neighbouring countries. Perhaps, the government needs to be a little more specific. Through what process the question of which citizens belonging to certain minorities being oppressed in a few countries is going to be proved? It may assume the nature of a sensitive diplomatic issue.

The preceding point draws attention to yet another aspect. If something is happening beyond Indian borders, in external territories, should it be considered as an internal issue — a concern of the home ministry or the external affairs ministry? If it concerns illegal immigrants, the defence ministry remains answerable for security lapses allowing their entry. Maybe, the ministers and the officials of the three ministries should deliberate seriously on this. It may not be a bad idea to form another ministry, exclusively devoted to this issue, that of oppression of minorities in a few countries. The new ministry would need to draw lines regarding what is considered as oppression and what is not. Besides, the central government needs to be extremely cautious about the diplomatic missiles it may face regarding oppression of minorities within its own quarters. It may not be a bad idea for the government to ink its New Year resolutions in this direction, unless, of course, it is opposed to these as being non-Indian.

The writer is a journalist who specialises in communications studies and nuclear diplomacy. She is also the author of several books.