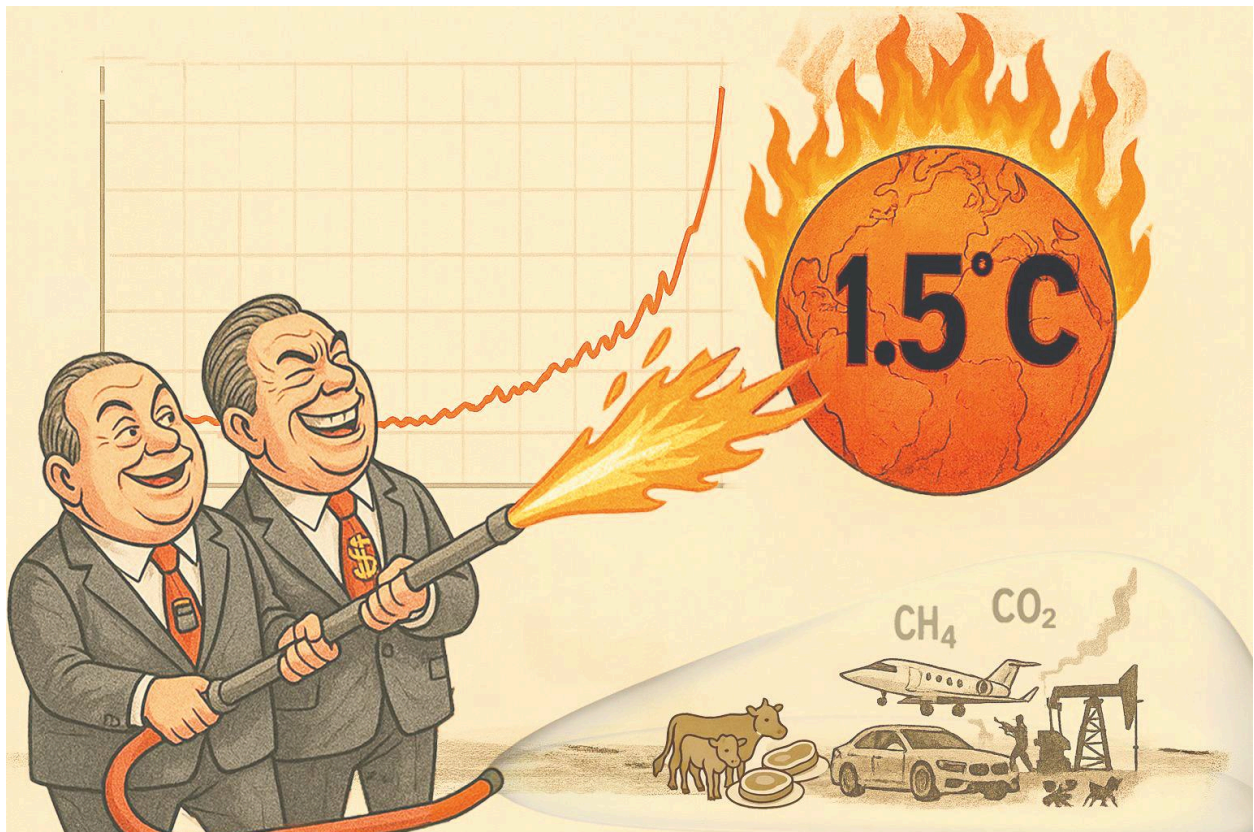


Operation 2030: Confronting the climate crisis within

Acharya Prashant |  The Sunday Guardian | Published: May 25, 2025



Operation 2030 urges inner transformation, climate accountability, and citizen-led change to combat ecological collapse.

For the first time in recorded history, humanity faces an existential crisis entirely of its own making — the sixth mass extinction. Unlike earlier extinctions triggered by natural forces, this one is driven by human activity. What we urgently need is a clearer look at the mindset that has brought us here.

The signs are all around: soaring temperatures, collapsing ecosystems, vanishing species. Yet beyond these visible symptoms lie deeper dangers — our widespread unawareness and inaction in the face of an accelerating crisis.

How did we reach this point — and can we still turn back? These are not just scientific questions. They are human questions for all who breathe, live, and hope

to leave behind a livable world.

This is the context in which I have committed myself to ‘Operation 2030’ recently launched by the PrashantAdvait Foundation. We at the Foundation have been of the realised view that the Climate crisis cannot have a purely political or technological solution. The Climate crisis is a situation resulting from mankind’s primitive tendency to consume – which reflects in population explosion, per capita consumption, and the global pop philosophy of maximising happiness through consumption. The crisis is therefore firstly inside us. The Foundation has been striving since a decade to bring home this point to as many people and policymakers as possible through books, videos, wisdom literature and information campaigns. In this context, Operation 2030 is an emergency call to raise awareness about the climate crisis, its driving mechanisms, and our responsibilities in addressing it. Before meaningful change can occur, people must first grasp the full scale and root causes of the problem.

Consumption And Carbon Go Together

To understand Operation 2030, we must revisit our carbon history. In 1750, atmospheric carbon dioxide levels were around 270 ppm (parts per million) — stable and sustainable. For over a century, the rise was modest, reaching 300 ppm by 1900. But the 20th century changed everything. Industrialization, two world wars, and post-war reconstruction triggered rapid emissions growth.

By 1950, with rising prosperity, the carbon curve turned exponential — increasing by 10 ppm per decade, and even faster in the 21st century. Scientific data confirmed the correlation: as emissions rose, so did global temperatures. A slow threat had become an urgent crisis.

By the early 2000s, global concern became consensus. One key outcome was the Paris Agreement at COP21 in 2015, based on a clear warning: if temperatures exceeded 1.5°C above normal, irreversible climate feedback loops would be triggered — self-reinforcing cycles that intensify warming even without new emissions. To prevent this, countries agreed to cut global carbon emissions by 43% by 2030, using 2019 as the benchmark. It is this significance attached to the year 2030 in the Paris agreement that lends Operation 2030 its name.

Operation 2030 addresses this long-standing urgency — a response to decades of delay. It was a collective promise to protect the future. But now, in 2025, that promise lies broken. The 1.5°C threshold we aimed to avoid until 2030 has already been breached — with global temperatures now already exceeding 1.5°C above normal. The alarm rang — but we were too distracted to hear.

This premature breach makes this operation more urgent than ever—a call to confront the full scale of the crisis we are already experiencing.

Why the Alarms Are Ringing Louder

We often think pandemics, floods, droughts, or wars are the greatest crises. But none compare to what we can face in coming years. This threat is unprecedented for both our species and the planet.

The breach of the 1.5°C limit is not symbolic. It likely signals that climate feedback loops are already underway — melting ice caps, methane release from permafrost, and altered ocean currents. These changes are not gradual or predictable; they feed on themselves. Once triggered, human intervention becomes nearly powerless.

Worse, despite our pledges, emissions remain unchanged since 2019, when we stood at 58 gigatons of carbon dioxide. The Paris Agreement had outlined three pathways: the so-called green path required us to reduce emissions to 33 gigatons by 2030 to keep warming within 1.5°C; the yellow path allowed for a reduction to 39 gigatons, risking a 2°C rise and the onset of destructive feedback cycles; and the red path — the one we are on — involves no significant reductions, ensuring a temperature rise of more than 3°C, with no predictable ceiling as the system enters a spiral of self-perpetuating warming. By 2025, we remain slightly above 58 gigatons, firmly on the red path.

Yet this reality is rarely discussed. National news, entertainment, and print media remain largely silent. This silence has consequences. That's why Operation 2030 is critical — to break through the noise and put truth back at the center.

Climate Injustice: The Innocent Will Suffer the Most

It's important to understand who is driving this crisis.

To meet the 2030 sustainability targets, each person on the planet should emit no more than 2.1 tons of carbon dioxide annually. By 2050, to reach the net-zero goal decided under the Paris Agreement, that limit must fall to 0.7 tons per person. Net zero means that emissions released are balanced by what the Earth or technology can absorb — not zero emissions, but no excess.

Today, per capita annual emissions vary widely. India emits around 1.9 tons, staying within the 2030 threshold. By contrast, the EU averages around 7 tons, the US 16, and oil-rich nations like Saudi Arabia and the UAE emit 20–25 tons per person annually. These aren't just statistics — they're ethical fault lines.

Ironically, those emitting the most often show the least effort to reduce. The wealthiest nations, with the most means and knowledge, contribute disproportionately to the crisis yet lag in real change.

In the last decade, the top 1% of global emitters were responsible for 1.3 million premature deaths by emitting over 20 times the sustainable share, mostly

in vulnerable regions like the global South, including India. The top 0.1% — some of the world's most admired figures — symbols of success — emit over 1,000 tons per person annually. In stark contrast, the bottom 50% of the world emits just 5%, yet bears the harshest consequences: floods, droughts, hunger, displacement, etc.

This is not just a climate emergency — it is a climate injustice. A few live in indulgence, while billions bear the cost. Behind this imbalance lies a deeper cultural narrative — the very idea of success itself, which now demands serious rethinking.

The Route To Take

1. Redefine Success, Reawaken the Self

The climate crisis is not just an environmental issue — it's a mirror to our inner void. We consume endlessly not out of need, but out of insecurity and incompleteness. Operation 2030 calls for a redefinition of success — from accumulation to awareness, from domination to harmony. True climate transformation begins when we replace material excess with inner wisdom. To this end, we aim to popularise wisdom literature and simplified philosophy available to us through ages. Though this route may sound impractical to some, the Foundation already has proof of concept in form of the lakhs of individuals whose life choices have been improved to become ecologically viable under the illuminating effect of wisdom literature from the directions of Vedanta, Stoicism, Buddhist deconstruction, Existentialism and Deep Ecology.

2. Expose the Real Culprits

A greater scrutiny of the psychological, economic and political processes that go into creating our role models. We cannot keep venerating and emulating those who are traditionally seen as successful, but are actually the worst culprits of the climate tragedy. The operation would ruthlessly question those holding elite status – for example, declaration of the carbon footprint of all important persons in the public domain, including corporate entities. We aim to work closely with organisations having a rigorous data-centric analytical approach to bring about transparency and accountability.

3. Price Carbon, Shift Demand

Be it the price of beef or luxury travel, it just does not take into account their carbon footprint. The costing must take into account the real economic cost of the carbon emitted during rendering of services and production of goods. On the demand side, we aim to influence the demand of goods by bringing into popular consciousness the carbon impact associated with them. Carbon pricing and taxation are already being explored globally e.g., in the EU and Canada, but this is an under-utilised tool. Operation 2030 advocates for carbon taxation and transparent product labeling, empowering citizens to make climate-conscious

choices. Awareness drives will help shift demand toward low-carbon living.

4. Make Climate Political — From the Ground Up

The operation would aim to influence political decision-making. In democratic systems, it is impossible to make the leaders move unless the electorate pushes them to. That's why Operation 2030 is citizen-first. Every vote, every purchase, every click is a climate decision. The youth especially must rise — they are not just future victims but present agents of change.

Operation 2030 aims to be a turning point in human consciousness — this external crisis is probably the last and the most compelling opportunity for internal awakening.

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