

May temperature 1.5°C warmer than earlier heatwave days recorded: Study

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INDIA'S heatwave in May 2024 was 1.5°C warmer than previous highs, as per a study.

According to a study by an independent group of climate scientists and researchers at ClimaMeter, heatwaves like those that hit northern India are now at least 1.5°C more intense.

The report stated that soaring temperatures are human-driven climate change and natural variability. Last week of May saw over 37 cities recording temperatures above 45°C, leading to heat-related illnesses with at least 56 casualties, and 25,000 suspected heat stroke cases.

The analysts said India's prolonged heat wave resulted from the naturally occurring El Nino phenomenon — unusual warming of the ocean surface in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean — and the rapidly increasing concentration of greenhouse gases — primarily carbon dioxide and methane — in the atmosphere.

The researchers analysed how events similar to the high temperatures in India's May heatwave changed in the present (2001-23) compared to



Study highlights

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- Over 37 cities saw temperatures above 45°C in May, leading to 56 casualties, 25K heat stroke cases

the past (1979-01).

"The temperature changes show that similar events produce temperatures in the present climate at least 1.5 degrees Celsius warmer than what they would have been in the past over a large area of the region analysed. The precipitation changes do not show any significant variations," the analysis read.

ClimaMeter's findings underscore that heat waves in In-

dia are reaching unbearable temperature thresholds because of burning fossil fuels, said Davide Faranda of the French National Centre for Scientific Research.

"There are no technological solutions for temperatures approaching 50°C. We should all act now to reduce CO2 emissions and avoid exceeding vital temperature thresholds in large areas of the subtropics," he said.

Gianmarco Mengaldo of the National University of Singapore said the findings show the complex interplay between natural variability and climate change, with the latter playing an essential role in critical synoptic-weather-pattern changes in tropical and subtropical regions that may significantly aggravate heatwaves shortly.

Northwest India and parts of the central region reeled under a punishing heatwave in May, testing India's disaster preparedness, with several states reporting heat-related deaths.

There are concerns that heatwaves in April and May have played a role in lower voter turnout during the Lok Sabha elections in India that began on April 19 and ended on June 1.

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