

Moscow melts in historic June heat wave

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The weather service, which has kept records since 1881, is forecasting temperatures above 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit) on Thursday and Friday.

Moscow has been hit by a historic heat wave this week, with temperatures reaching a 120-year record due to the effects of climate change, Russia's weather service said Tuesday.

On Monday the Russian capital sweated under 34.7 degrees Celsius (94.5 degrees Fahrenheit), according to Roshydromet, matching the record for a June day from in 1901.

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"The increase in temperatures recorded in Moscow for these days is unprecedented in 120 years," Roshydromet meteorologist Marina Makarova told AFP.

"This is because of global climate change."

The highest-ever recorded temperature in Moscow—more than 38 degrees Celsius (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit)—was in July 2010 when much of western Russia suffered a massive heat wave and huge fires.

Russia's second city Saint Petersburg, some 600 kilometres (370 miles) northwest of Moscow, has also had hot weather this month, with temperatures hitting 34 degrees Celsius (93.2 degrees Fahrenheit), the highest since 1998.

Not all Muscovites were ready to face the sweltering challenge.

"We're not used to such heat, that's the truth," said 35-year-old auditor Pavel Karapetyan, adding that it was "difficult."



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Others welcomed the change, especially compared to Russia's long, cold winters.

"We've come from Siberia. It's cold there, so it's nice to be here," Alexander Shmel, 33, told AFP.

As global temperatures rise with climate change, heat waves are predicted to become more frequent and intense, and their impacts more widespread.

Russia has set numerous records in recent years and in June 2020 registered 38 degrees Celsius (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit) in the town of Verkhoyansk—the highest temperature recorded above the Arctic circle since measurements began.

The rising mercury levels have contributed to devastating floods and forest fires that have affected Siberia with increasing regularity.

They are also contributing to the melting of permafrost, which covers about two-thirds of Russia's large territory.

Russia is also set to benefit from climate change, with a historic decline in the summer ice cover of Russia's Arctic maritime shipping route, called the Northern Sea Route, allowing for longer transit periods.

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