

Punishing heat wave in India reaches 115 degrees, part of a 'hotter and more dangerous world'

May 2 2022, by Elizabeth Weise



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

A punishing month-long heatwave across Asia is pushing temperatures in India and Pakistan above 110 degrees, with some areas hitting as high as

115 degrees.

The temperatures are putting millions of people at health risk and causing energy shortages, damaging crops and sparking wildfires. On Friday the Forest Service of India listed 277 large ongoing fire events in the country.

The region is known for [high heat](#) in the spring and [early summer](#), with May typically being the hottest month of the year. However, this heatwave raised temperatures 8 to 15 degrees above normal across much of India, NASA's Earth Observatory reported.

Such extreme heatwaves will only become more common in the coming years, said Friederike Otto, a senior lecturer in [climate science](#) at the Imperial College London's Grantham Institute, which studies climate change.

India's current heatwave has been made hotter by climate change that is the result of human activities like burning coal and other fossil fuels, Otto said.

"This is now the case for every heatwave, everywhere in the world. Until net greenhouse gas emissions end, heatwaves in India and elsewhere will continue to become hotter and more dangerous," she said.

Temperatures above 105 degrees can be extremely dangerous, especially in humid weather, according to the National Weather Service.

In the United States, a historic heatwave that hit the Pacific Northwest last June killed hundreds, according to local officials.

These [heat waves](#) are one of the clearest indicators that climate change is happening and global weather is changing, said Kevin Reed, a professor

of marine and atmospheric science at Stony Brook University in Long Island, New York.

"The UN's IPCC report last August was very clear. It said, 'For every additional increment of global warming, changes in extremely will continue to be larger.' That's happening now," Reed said.

March 2022 was the hottest March India has recorded since record-keeping began 120 years ago. The capital region of Delhi recorded its second hottest April in 72 years, according to the Times of India.

On Friday, the India Meteorological Department issued a five-day [severe weather](#) warning alert for multiple parts of the country, as temperatures in some areas reach more than 113 degrees. It is anticipated to last until at least the weekend.

Such heat isn't unknown in the region but prior to [climate change](#) would have only been seen about once in every 50 years, said Mariam Zachariah, a research associate at the Grantham Institute.

"Now it is a much more common event," she said. "We can expect such high temperatures about once in every four years."

(c)2022 USA Today

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Punishing heat wave in India reaches 115 degrees, part of a 'hotter and more dangerous world' (2022, May 2) retrieved 25 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-05-india-degrees-hotter-dangerous-world.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.