

Power demand peaks in northern India heat wave

June 18 2024, by Bhuvan BAGGA



A man in India sleeps in the River Ganges in Varanasi on June 18: much of northern India has been gripped by a brutal month-long heat wave.

Searing heat wave temperatures in northern India pushed power demand to a record high, the government said Tuesday, with residents of the

capital New Delhi also struggling with water shortages.

Much of northern India has been gripped by a brutal month-long heat wave, with temperatures regularly soaring above 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit).

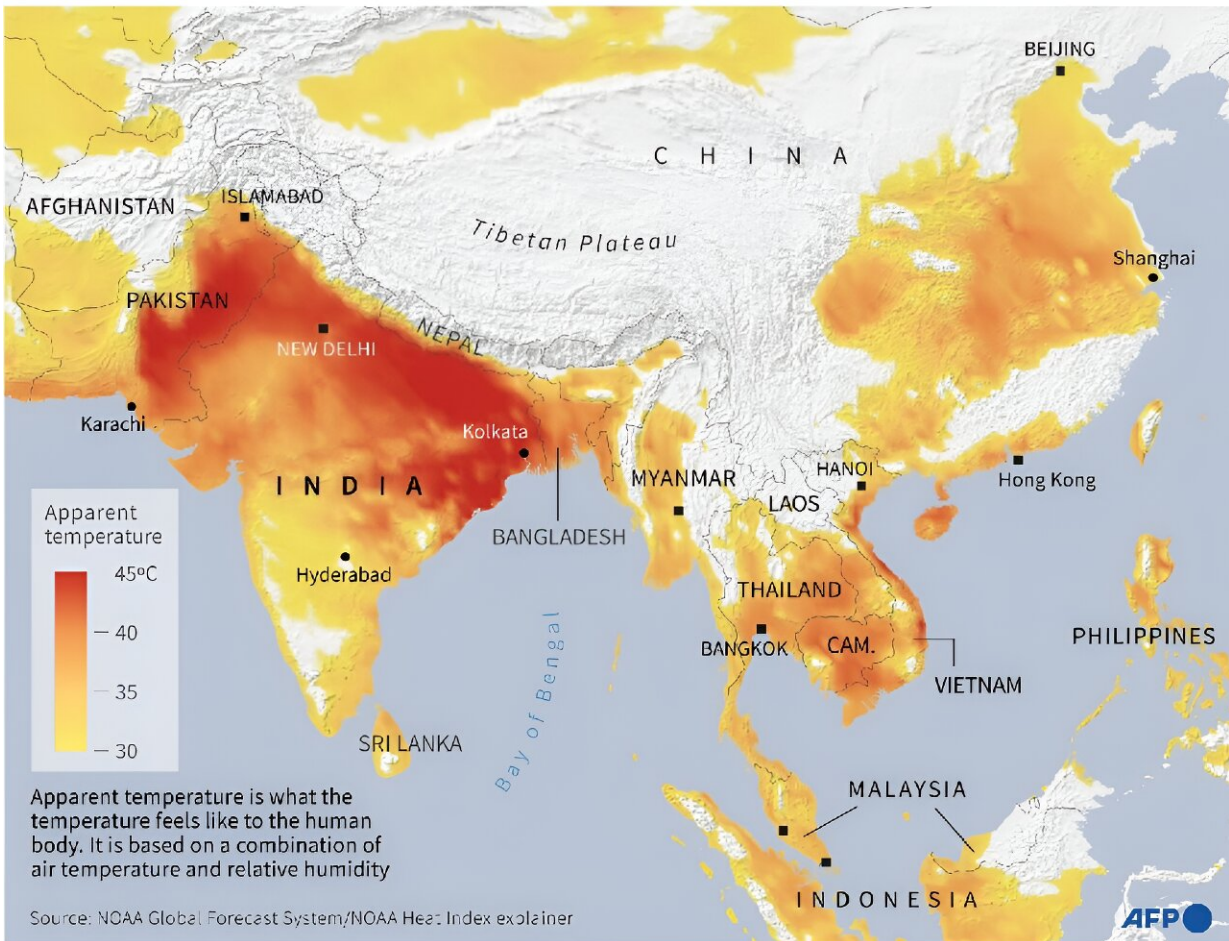
Northern India has "been experiencing high demand conditions due to a prevailing heat wave" since May 17, the ministry of power said in a statement, adding it had been forced to import 25-30 percent more power from neighboring regions.

"Despite these challenging conditions, the highest ever peak demand of 89 gigawatts in the northern region was successfully met" on Monday, it said.

India is no stranger to scorching [summer temperatures](#) but years of scientific research have found [climate change](#) is causing [heat waves](#) to become longer, more frequent and more intense.

Hot temperature outlook for Asia

Apparent temperature forecast for regions hotter than 30°C for Saturday, June 15 at 0600 GMT



Map showing a forecast in Asia for June 15, using the NOAA "apparent temperature" readings that take into account a combination of air temperature and relative humidity.

India is the world's third-biggest emitter of [greenhouse gases](#) but has committed to achieve a net zero emissions economy by 2070—two decades after most of the industrialized West.

For now, it is overwhelmingly reliant on coal for power generation.

Authorities have avoided widespread blackouts but there have been multiple localized power outages when supply equipment faltered in the intense heat.

The ministry said it ordered power companies to "maintain a high state of alert and minimize forced outages of equipment".



Men wearing scarves ride their carts on a hot summer day in New Delhi on June 18.

'Extreme care'

People across Delhi, a sprawling megacity with an estimated population

of more than 30 million residents, have been forced to rely on water tankers to meet demand.

The authorities have reduced supply to cope with demand, expanding this week to the city's heart in New Delhi, the base of government offices and the homes of top political leaders.

Delhi relies almost entirely on water supplies from the neighboring agrarian states of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

However, given the intense heat and the surge in demand in the respective states, city authorities say they were not supplied enough.

Residents in Delhi also blame politicians for poor planning and under-investment in basic infrastructure.

The India Meteorological Department, the national weather bureau, warned that "heat wave to severe heat wave conditions" are likely to continue until Thursday before gradually easing.



A man uses water dripping from a pipe to wash and cool on a hot summer day in New Delhi on June 18.

It has repeatedly warned people of the "very high likelihood of developing heat illness and [heat stroke](#) in all ages", with "extreme care needed for [vulnerable people](#)".

Temperatures are expected to fall as the annual monsoon rains move north this month.

© 2024 AFP

Citation: Power demand peaks in northern India heat wave (2024, June 18) retrieved 19 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2024-06-power-demand-peaks-northern-india.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.