

Heat kills at least 15 in India as temperatures near 50C

2 days ago

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A staff member pours water on the face of a patient suffering from heat stroke in a hospital in Varanasi

Several people have died due to heat-related ailments over the past 24 hours as temperatures continue to soar in northern and central India.

Ten fatalities were recorded at the government hospital in Odisha's Rourkela region on Thursday, authorities told Reuters news agency.

Heat-stroke related deaths have also been reported from the states of Bihar, Rajasthan and Jharkhand and the national capital, Delhi.

The searing heat comes as India is holding its general election, the results of which will be declared on 4 June.



Getty Images

People gather around a water tanker in Delhi

Mahendra Kumar, district magistrate of Bhojpur district in Bihar told the Times of India newspaper that three election officers and a policeman had died in the city on Thursday due to heat stroke.

"It was the hottest day, and despite having medical facilities at all centres, they collapsed. One home guard [volunteer policeman] became unconscious where he was staying," Mr Kumar said, adding that the man died in the hospital while being treated by doctors.

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He also said that around 30-40 people had been admitted to the same hospital on Thursday due to heat-related ailments.

Hospitals in the region are recording a rise in admissions due to heat-related ailments.

On Thursday, a labourer admitted with a heat stroke died while receiving treatment at a hospital in Delhi.

India's National Centre for Disease Control calls heat strokes a "life-threatening" condition with a [mortality rate of 40 to 64%](#).



Reuters

An autorickshaw covered with a cloth during a heat wave in Ahmedabad

The heat in northern, central and parts of western India has been unrelenting for the past two weeks, with maximum temperatures hovering around 45-46C for days at a stretch and even climbing up to 50C in some areas.

Several regions are experiencing severe water and electricity shortages due to a rise in consumption. The soaring temperatures have led to a surge in fires across India and authorities are employing drones to monitor forest fires in Jammu and Kashmir.

In the past week, capital Delhi and surrounding regions experienced record-breaking temperatures nearing 50C.

Videos of residents in Delhi jostling for water from water tankers have been widely shared on social media. Many parts of the capital are also experiencing frequent power cuts.

Officials are still investigating whether the recorded temperature of 52.9C in the Mungeshpur area on Wednesday was a result of a sensor malfunction at the nearby weather station.



Getty Images

A hospital in Delhi has set up a room for patients suffering from heat strokes

India saw a 55% rise in deaths due to extreme heat between 2000-2004 and 2017-2021, a [study](#) published in the medical journal, *The Lancet*, found.

Exposure to heat also caused a loss of 167.2 billion potential labour hours among Indians in 2021, the study noted.

While many parts of the country have regularly experienced heatwaves in summer, experts have said these are now becoming longer, more intense and frequent.

Delhi India

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