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Headline: Sweltering heat in Vietnam's north sparks power cuts

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HANOI: Residents in Vietnam's capital Hanoi flocked to its air-conditioned shopping malls on Saturday to escape power cuts at home, as the country's grid struggled to cope with the high demand caused by soaring heat.

Vietnam is one of many countries across South and Southeast Asia experiencing record-high temperatures in recent weeks.

As the temperature rose to 36 degrees Celsius, Bui Manh Duc Tai and his napping girlfriend were among those at the Aeon mall trying to escape the blistering heat.

"Our home was without power since this morning. We came here for some cool air," Tai told Agence France-Presse (AFP).

In another corner, student Nguyen Minh Thu sat on the floor trying to finish an assignment on her laptop.

"I had to come here for power so I could study," the agriculture student said, adding that the electricity at her home had been on and off all morning.

Scientists have warned that global warming is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events around the world, including heat waves.

Drought and a prolonged heatwave have put a lot of pressure on power supplies in the country's north, according to supplier Vietnam Electricity.

At another packed mall outside Hanoi, families with young children sought refuge in the air-conditioning.

"I have been here with my two young kids since lunch time. The kids can play, while I can go shopping. We will go back home after dinner. Hoping the power is back then," Do Thuy Dung said.

Average power consumption in Hanoi in May increased by more than 22.5 percent compared with April, Vietnam Electricity said.

State media also reported power cuts in recent days in Quang Ninh province, home to the world heritage-listed Ha Long Bay.

Several restaurants in Ha Long city were out of food on Friday night because power outages meant people could not cook at home.

Power cuts also hit hotels on popular islands.

Authorities have also turned off streetlights in some major cities to save power.

