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11:00 AM | BY - PRESHIKA MA'AM



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Vulnerability – exposure to **harm or risk**

Urban heat island effect – cities becoming hotter than nearby **rural areas** due to **human activity** and **infrastructure**

Physiological recovery – the body's process of **returning to normal after stress** (like heat)

Western disturbances – **weather systems** from the **Mediterranean** that bring **rain/cooling** to **North India**

Convective activity – upward movement of warm air that leads to cloud formation and rainfall

Residual effects – remaining impact after a phenomenon has passed

El Niño – climate pattern that warms ocean waters and affects global weather, often increasing heat in India

Heat stress – condition where the body cannot cool itself properly due to extreme heat

Structural interventions – long-term systemic solutions (not temporary fixes)

Informal sector – unregulated jobs without legal protections (e.g., daily wage workers)

Reactive measures – actions taken after a problem occurs rather than preventing it

Survivability limits – extreme conditions beyond which humans cannot survive

Adaptation finance – funds used to adjust systems to cope with climate change

Coalition – group of countries working together for a common goal

Sounded heat alerts – officially issued warnings

Scaled the 40°C mark – temperature crossed 40°C

to get rid of something
to move

Done away with natural cooling – natural cooling factors were removed

Adding to the heat – increasing intensity

Brave the heat – endure extreme temperatures

Verb

Will not suffice – will not be enough

sufficient

Roll out services – launch or implement services

Doorstep delivery – providing services directly at people's homes

Feeding inflationary pressure – contributing to rising prices

Current trajectories – present trends or direction

path

High heat: On India and warming India must address the underlying vulnerability to hot weather. India's summers are known to be hot, but this year the high heat has arrived noticeably early. The India Meteorological Department has sounded heat alerts in central and south India, including in Vidarbha, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana and Kerala. Parts of Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat have also scaled the 40°C mark, with Tamil Nadu and Karnataka not far behind. Local conditions in coastal areas, in particular, could be worse due to humidity and the urban heat island effect. Warmer nights also delay physiological recovery, increasing the local health-care burden. Such temperatures are usually encountered in May-June but have become apparent in April. While pre-monsoon heatwaves are common in India, they are becoming larger and more intense. This year, a lack of western disturbances and thunderstorms, along with lower convective activity, has also done away with natural cooling, with residual effects of the previous El Niño adding to the heat. Persistently high heat is linked to a significantly higher risk of death from cardiovascular causes. Some 247 billion work-hours were lost in 2024 to heat, according to The Lancet Countdown Global Report, with workers in construction and agriculture the most affected. Heat stress is an ongoing concern for farmers during the rabi harvest. Hot weather accelerates crop maturity, threatening food security and feeding inflationary pressure.

Experts have complained that most heat action plans (HAPs) — India's primary institutional response to heat — focus on emergency response and lack funds for structural interventions such as urban re-greening and mandatory heat-safety legislation for workers in the informal sector. They have thus failed to address underlying vulnerabilities. On April 23, in the Tamil Nadu and West Bengal polls, and Gujarat and Maharashtra by-elections, lakhs of electors had to brave the heat. Concerns about voter turnout in the heat prompted the Election Commission of India to keep polling booths open longer during the 2024 general election; such reactive measures alone will not suffice this year. If warming continues along current trajectories, more than a few parts of India will begin approaching human survivability limits. HAPs desperately need sufficient, long-term funding while public systems must roll out mobile health units and doorstep delivery of essential services during peak heat to reduce the income penalties that deter access. Colombia has convened a coalition of roughly 50 countries to explore a faster transition away from fossil fuels in a parallel 'climate conference'. India should join it, not least because of the greater access to climate adaptation finance it could afford.

1. **Heat Action Plans** are criticized mainly because they:

A) ~~Ignore rural areas~~

B) ~~Focus only on emergency response~~

C) ~~Are too costly~~

D) ~~Are outdated~~

2. What has reduced natural cooling this year?

A) ~~Increased rainfall~~

B) ~~Cyclonic activity~~

☒ C) Lack of western disturbances and thunderstorms

D) ~~Glacier melting~~

3. **Heat stress** mainly affects which group the most?

A) Office workers

B) Students

C) Construction and agricultural workers

D) Business owners

4. What is the impact of high heat on crops?

- A) Slows growth
- B) Stops irrigation
- C) Accelerates maturity
- D) Improves yield

5. Why is adaptation finance important for India?

A) ~~To reduce imports~~

B) To support climate adjustment measures

C) ~~To increase exports~~

D) ~~To control population~~

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