



## EDITORIAL: INDIAN EXPRESS

**GENERAL STUDIES 3: DISASTER MANAGEMENT**  
**TOPIC: HEATWAVES**

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**We need to tackle heatwaves with greater urgency**

### Heatwaves in India: A Growing Concern

#### 1. Heatwaves as a Silent Killer

- Heatwaves are becoming more frequent and severe in India, posing a serious risk to public health, infrastructure, and livelihoods.
- Despite this, public awareness about heatwaves remains low, and many do not believe they can be personally affected.

#### 2. NDMA's Role in Addressing Heatwaves

- The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has classified heatwaves as a significant hazard.
- NDMA is working to raise awareness and bring together stakeholders through workshops and initiatives to tackle heatwave impacts.
- A National Framework for Heatwave Mitigation and Management (2024) has been developed, focusing on long-term preparedness.

#### 3. Impacts of Heatwaves on India

- **Health:** 90% of Indians are vulnerable to heat-related health issues.
- **Economy:** Heat stress could lead to 34 million job losses by 2030 due to reduced productivity, especially in outdoor labor.
- **Water Resources:** High temperatures increase water demand and accelerate evaporation, causing water stress in 54% of India's land.
- **Agriculture:** Heatwaves can lead to crop failures, reduced yields, and higher irrigation needs, threatening food security.
- **Power Supply:** Increased demand for cooling during heatwaves strains power supply, especially affecting thermal power plants that rely on water for cooling.

#### 4. Measures Taken by the NDMA



- NDMA has been organizing workshops to help states and cities develop Heat Action Plans (HAPs) to manage heatwave impacts.
- **Heat Action Plans (HAPs):** HAPs are tailored to local needs, focusing on long-term preparedness and mitigation.
- **Public Awareness:** Programs have been launched to educate people about heat risks and health management during heatwaves.

## 5. Key Strategies for Heatwave Mitigation

- **Cool Roofs and Green Infrastructure:** Encouraged to reduce urban heat islands.
- **Early Warning Systems:** Improved coordination between IMD and NDMA for localized heat alerts.
- **Practical Measures:** Revising working hours, providing cooling vests for outdoor workers, and establishing cool rooms with drinking water in high-risk urban areas.

## 6. Institutional Efforts

- **Coordinated Approach:** Involvement of multiple sectors, including urban planning, healthcare, and labor, to implement effective HAPs.
- **Resource Allocation:** States are encouraged to classify heat as a disaster to better allocate resources and ensure more dynamic responses.

## 7. Scaling Up and Challenges

- Over 250 HAPs have been implemented across India, but awareness and local ownership remain challenges.
- More efforts are needed to transform cities and communities into heat-resilient ecosystems.

## Conclusion

Heatwaves are a growing threat to India, with significant impacts on health, the economy, agriculture, and water resources. While the government, through the NDMA, has developed strategies to mitigate the impacts, challenges remain in scaling up these efforts and ensuring local communities are fully prepared. Continued awareness and coordination across sectors are essential for building heat-resilient ecosystems that can withstand rising temperatures in the future.

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