**[Global boiling](https://www.dawn.com/news/1841828/global-boiling)**

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THIS year’s Haj turned tragic as over 1,300 pilgrims succumbed to soaring temperatures, which reached a blistering 51.8 degrees Celsius. This calamity marks a new chapter in the saga of extreme weather events gripping the planet, a phenomenon UN Secretary General António Guterres dubbed “global boiling”.

The deadly heatwave in Saudi Arabia is part of a broader trend of unprecedented heat affecting regions worldwide. Earlier this month, Pakistan and India faced similar extreme conditions. In Sindh, temperatures skyrocketed to over 52°C, with Mohenjodaro experiencing 52.2°C, nearly matching the country’s record high of 54°C.

Across the border, the situation is equally dire. The Indian Meteorological Department has issued a red alert for the country’s longest-ever heatwave. Over 100 deaths and 44,000 cases of heatstroke have been reported, with Delhi’s temperatures surpassing 44°C, severely affecting the quality of life and economic activities.

In July 2023, Secretary General Guterres introduced the term ‘global boiling’ to describe the escalating impacts of climate change, indicating that the planet was transitioning from ‘global warming’ to a more extreme and perilous state. Initially met with scepticism, this term has since gained alarming validation as unusual weather patterns, including extreme heatwaves and unprecedented rainfall, have been observed globally.

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One of the most alarming aspects of climate change is its unpredictability. Events that defy historical patterns have become the new norm, catching communities off guard. This climate ping-pong of drought to flooding and extreme heat to cold is quite intriguing. For instance, only weeks ago near Makkah, where extreme heat has killed hundreds, there were unprecedented flash floods. Videos circulating on social media show powerful floods sweeping across the Fatma Wadi in Al Jumum Governorate. According to witnesses, for the first time in recorded history, the local wadi overflowed.

In April this year, Dubai experienced record-breaking rainfall, the heaviest in over 75 years. Social media and TV screens were flooded with images of luxury cars, including Rolls Royces, Porsches and Lamborghinis, floating through Dubai’s waterlogged streets.

The floods wreaked havoc, resulting in deaths in the UAE and Oman, where 10 children died when their school bus was swept away. Over 1,000 flights at Dubai’s airport, one of the world’s busiest, were cancelled, causing significant travel disruptions.

Such severe storms and heavy rainfalls in April also led to flooding and fatalities in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan and Afghanistan reported several deaths caused by heavy rains and snowfall.

Southern China faced severe flooding in Guangdong province, displacing over 100,000 people. Meanwhile, northern China battled prolonged droughts and heatwaves, highlighting the varied and devastating impacts of climate change across the country.

These extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and severely impacting human health, agriculture, and ecosystems. Extreme temperatures and changing precipitation patterns reduce crop yields, increasing the risk of droughts and floods, thereby disrupting food production and supply chains. Accelerated melting of polar ice caps and glaciers contributes to rising sea levels, while thawing permafrost releases large quantities of greenhouse gases like methane, exacerbating global warming. Drastic changes in habitats lead to the extinction of species unable to adapt, with coral reefs facing wi­­d­espread bleaching and die-offs due to tem­­p­e­rature sens­­itivity.

The term ‘global boiling’ underscores the urgency and severity of the climate crisis. The unprecedented heatwaves, torrential rains, and their devastating impacts are a stark reminder of the need for immediate and robust climate action. As nations grapple with these extreme events, the global community must prioritise sustainable practices and policies to mitigate the escalating impacts of climate change and safeguard the planet for future generations.

The idea of ‘global boiling’ ironically aligns with the ‘boiling frog syndrome’. This metaphor illustrates the dangers of complacency and gradual change. Accor-ding to the story, if a frog is put in boiling water, it will try to save itself by quickly jumping out. However, if it is placed in cold water that is slowly warmed, it will not be able to see the danger and will die as the water heats up.

This metaphor aptly captures human complacency towards climate action. Nature, it seems, has escalated from ‘warming’ to ‘boiling’ to deliver a massive jolt from the climate cauldron.

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