**Burning Margalla**

**Countries in South and Southeast Asia faced severe heat waves in 2024.**

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The Margalla Hills are a hill range within the Margalla Hills National Park on the northern edge of Islamabad Capital Territory, Pakistan, just south of Haripur District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They are part of the Himalayan foothills. The Margalla range has an area of 12,605 hectares. It is a range with many valleys as well as high mountains. There are around 250 to 300 species of plants on the Margalla Hills. As many as two-thirds of them are used by people for their medicinal effects to treat or cure various diseases. The Margalla Hills are home to various species of wildlife, including monkeys, exotic birds, and carnivores such as the rare and presently endangered Margalla leopard. The most scenic and beautiful Capital of Pakistan Islamabad is situated in the valley formed by Margalla, which have been intermittently burning for the last almost one month mainly due to severe heatwave, worsened by deliberate or accidental human errors. It is so painful to see the burning hills from Murree to Taxila and Kahuta, causing thick smoke clouds further adding to the temperature. However, the large wildfire phenomenon is not only restricted to Margalla hills; the same is happening all over the province of KPK and Azad Kashmir, way beyond human control. The annual burning of the remains of the crops all along the motorway from Peshawar to Lahore and Multan is yet another environmental challenge caused by human neglect causing severe health issues.

[KMC, K-Electric agree to collect Municipal Utility Charges and Taxes: Wahab](https://www.nation.com.pk/24-Jun-2024/kmc-k-electric-agree-to-collect-municipal-utility-charges-and-taxes-wahab)

Countries in South and Southeast Asia faced severe heat waves in 2024. In May and June, tens of millions of people faced dangerous heat. Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and other South Asian and South Eastern countries experienced the longest heat wave ever, starting in mid-May. In parts of Pakistan and India, temperatures rose above 45 degrees Celsius, with some areas exceeding 50 degrees Celsius. Extreme heat is influenced by both local and global factors. Locally, reduced vegetation and low soil moisture contribute to higher temperatures. Urban areas, with their concrete and asphalt surfaces, retain heat, creating what is known as the urban heat island effect. Additionally, wind patterns and cloud cover play roles in local temperature variations. Globally, El Niño events and climate change amplify extreme heat occurrences. El Niño events have released additional heat into the atmosphere since May, exacerbating global warming. Consequently, regions like South and Southeast Asia experience more frequent, prolonged, and intense heat waves, and extended dry periods. During El Niño, increased ocean temperatures lead to changes in atmospheric circulation, which can cause heavy rainfall in some regions and droughts in others. These conditions pose severe challenges for agriculture, leading to reduced crop yields and increased wildfire risks.

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However, human-induced climate change is now affecting this cycle; studies indicate that factor is increasing the occurrence and intensity of severe El Niño events, multiplying their impacts such as droughts, floods, heat waves, and altered hurricane patterns. Climate models predict that extreme El Niño events could occur approximately every 10 years instead of every 20 due to global warming. Climate change presents a significant challenge for Global South countries due to their limited resources and capacity to respond effectively. These nations heavily rely on agriculture as a vital economic pillar, making them particularly vulnerable to the erratic weather patterns associated with climate change. Consequently, they often experience crop failures, food insecurity, and heightened poverty levels. Heat waves present significant risks to vulnerable populations in third-world countries, particularly women, the elderly, and children, exacerbating their health, education and socioeconomic challenges.

[Sindh orders inquiry into Sukkar Barrage damage](https://www.nation.com.pk/24-Jun-2024/sindh-orders-inquiry-into-sukkar-barrage-damage)

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