UN ESCAP Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2025

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The **UN ESCAP Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2025** warns that megacities in Asia—including **Delhi, Karachi, Dhaka, Manila, Shanghai, and Seoul**—could experience **2–7°C additional heat** due to the **urban heat island effect**, significantly exceeding global warming averages.

Key Findings:

1**Urban Heat Island (UHI) Effect:**

oCities may heat up by **+7°C** locally even if global warming stabilises at 1.5–2°C.

oDense concrete, low green cover, and waste heat from vehicles/ACs amplify temperatures in urban areas.

2**Chronic Heat Exposure in South Asia:**

oIndia, Pakistan, Bangladesh: **300+ days/year with heat index >35°C**, over **200 days >41°C** in some regions.

oHeat index accounts for humidity, reflecting the "felt temperature."

3**Extreme Heat Events:**

o2024 was the **hottest year on record** in South Asia.

oBangladesh heatwave (Apr–May 2024) affected 33 million people.

oIndia's long 2024 heatwave caused ~700 deaths, the second deadliest in the region.

4**Population Exposure:**

oOver **40% of South Asia's population** will face extreme heat (>35°C or >41°C) in medium- and long-term scenarios.

oUrbanisation ensures exposure will worsen, even with climate mitigation policies.

5**Compounding Risks – Heat + Pollution:**

oHeat exacerbates wildfires, droughts, particulate matter (PM10/5), and VOC emissions.

oCombined effects increase **cardiovascular and respiratory risks**.

6**Sectoral & Economic Impacts:**

oHeat-related working-hour losses projected to rise from **75 million to 8.1 million full-time job equivalents by 2030**.

oAnnual climate-related economic loss may reach **$498 billion** under high-emission scenarios.

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Why South Asia is Highly Vulnerable

- High humidity + high temperature amplify felt heat.
- Dense urbanisation traps heat in megacities.
- Large outdoor workforce in agriculture and construction faces unavoidable exposure.
- Limited adaptation capacity (cooling, electricity, water, shelters).
- High population density and poverty exacerbate vulnerability.