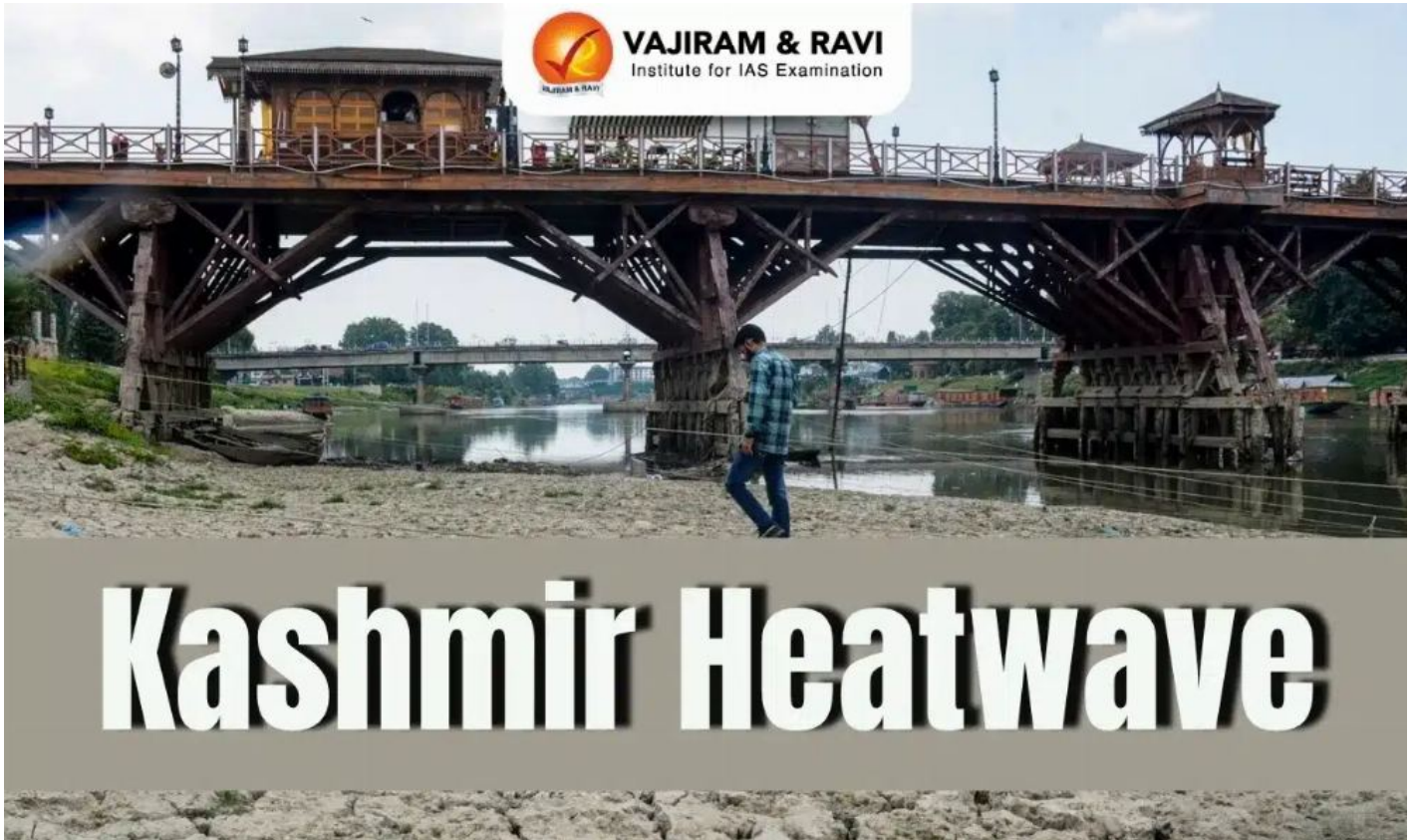


Kashmir's Unprecedented Heatwave: Causes and Climate Impact

July 8, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



Kashmir Heatwave Latest News

On July 5, the Kashmir Valley recorded its highest day temperature in over 70 years, with Pahalgam experiencing its hottest day ever. This follows the valley's hottest June in nearly 50 years.

Understanding Kashmir's Climate: A Balance of Seasons and Natural Cooling

- The Kashmir Valley experiences a temperate climate characterized by four well-defined seasons—spring, summer, autumn, and winter.
- Spring (March to May) and autumn (September to November) are generally pleasant and marked by moderate temperatures, making them ideal for tourism and agriculture.
- Winter (December to February) is harsh, with temperatures often plunging below freezing, especially in higher altitudes.

- Snowfall is common—heavy in the mountains and moderate in the plains.
- Summers (June to August), in contrast to many parts of India, are relatively mild.
- The region benefits from **frequent western disturbances** during this season, which bring intermittent rainfall that naturally cools the atmosphere.
- However, the recent surge in summer temperatures marks a notable deviation from these long-standing climatic norms.

Rising Heat and Erratic Weather Disrupt Kashmir's Climate Norms

- In recent years, Kashmir has witnessed a noticeable shift in its climate, marked by rising temperatures and prolonged dry spells.
- The region recorded its hottest June in nearly five decades, with temperatures averaging about 3°C above normal.
- On July 5, Srinagar reached 37.4°C—the highest in over 70 years and the third-highest ever recorded.
- These trends signal a clear departure from the Valley's traditionally moderate summer climate.

Consistent Heat, Not Just Isolated Spikes, Raises Concern in Kashmir

- Unlike past years where high temperatures were rare and short-lived, 2024 has seen **persistently elevated maximum and minimum temperatures**.
- This consistency in above-normal readings suggests a deeper climatic shift rather than an isolated weather anomaly, making the situation more worrisome for the region's environmental stability and public health.

Factors Behind Kashmir's Rising Temperatures

- The rise in Kashmir's temperatures is the result of multiple interlinked factors.
- **Global warming** is the overarching cause, raising baseline temperatures globally.
- Traditionally, when Kashmir's temperature crossed 35°C, rainfall would follow, offering natural relief. However, this pattern is now disrupted due to extended dry spells.
- Experts attributed this to a reduction in water vapour, caused by declining snowfall in the mountains.
- The little snow that does fall melts by March, leaving the mountains bare and reducing natural cooling.
- Additionally, Urban Heat Islands (UHIs)—areas where urbanisation traps heat—are further intensifying temperatures in cities like Srinagar.

Urban Heat Islands: How Cities Like Srinagar Are Getting Hotter

- Urban Heat Islands (UHIs) are urban zones that are significantly warmer than surrounding rural areas.
- In Kashmir, rapid **urbanisation, concretisation**, and the **loss of vegetation and water bodies** have intensified the UHI effect—especially in cities like Srinagar.
- These hard, heat-retaining surfaces absorb and radiate more heat, while limited green spaces offer little natural cooling.
- Added to this are **vehicular emissions** and **industrial activities**, which further elevate temperatures, making urban areas markedly hotter than their rural counterparts.

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/kashmirs-unprecedented-heatwave-causes-and-climate-impact/>

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