

Three-day heatwave likely to begin in city today

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A wide high pressure area has formed over Pakistan and India, resulting in an intense heatwave that has gripped Pakistan from Gilgit-Baltistan to Karachi. The next six to seven days are likely to be very hot and dry in Pakistan, with the center of the intense heat concentrated in plains of Sindh and Balochistan provinces.

A relatively shorter heatwave is also likely to grip Karachi and the adjoining areas from Tuesday due to the formation of low pressure areas in the Arabian Sea, which would change the wind direction and cut off the sea breeze towards the city, raising the temperature from 43 to 46 degrees Celsius from Tuesday to Thursday, Pakistan Meteorological Department officials warned on Monday.

“Small low pressure areas are forming on the surface of the Arabian Sea, which are sucking in the air from their surroundings. Under the influence of these low pressure areas, Karachi would be deprived of sea breeze for the next three days – from Tuesday to Thursday -- when the temperature is likely to touch 45 degrees Celsius at some point,” Director General Pakistan Meteorological Department Dr Ghulam Rasool told The News.

Officials say it would be the 4th heatwave gripping the coastal areas of Sindh, especially in the last three months, as earlier Karachi and its adjoining areas experienced three waves of intense heat due to climatic change from growing temperatures over the Arabian Sea surface as well as the formation of high pressure areas over upper Sindh.

“At the moment, both Pakistan and India are experiencing intense heat and vast areas of central India as well as entire Pakistan from Gilgit-Baltistan to Karachi are in the grip of intense heat due to a vast high pressure area concentrated on large portion of subcontinent,” he said, adding that the surrounding areas of Pakistan and India including Afghanistan, Iran, Central Asia, China and Tibet were under low pressure areas.

Experts said Karachi was under the influence of lower pressure areas, which were continuously forming over the Arabian Sea surface, and as a result, the wind direction would change, resulting in extreme dry and hot weather for Karachi for the next three to four days, starting from Tuesday.

“There is a possibility of the creation of a new heat record in Pakistan, especially in Sindh and Balochistan, as the center of the intense heat that has gripped the entire region is centered in Sindh and Balochistan,” Dr Ghulam Rasool said, adding that

Sindh's Nawabshah town had already established the world record of the hottest place on the earth in the month of April when the mercury soared to 50.2 degrees Celsius.

As far as Karachi's heatwave is concerned, it would be short-lived, he said, adding that the low pressure areas formed over the sea surface were also short-lived so the influence they had in the coastal areas would last a few days.

“On the other hand, if a cyclone is formed in the sea, it can cause a long heatwave which can extend to six to eight days, but at the moment there is not cyclonic activity in the Arabian Sea, so the coming heatwave would be short-lived and would be over expectedly from Friday next,” he maintained.

For Karachiites, the intensely hot weather would prevail for three days while for the people of the rest of Pakistan, the heatwave would continue for 7-8 days, including areas of Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan provinces, Met officials warned.