

Environment News Futures

Why did North India Fog so Heavily Last Week? | Explained

Dense fog covered the better part of north India during the last days of December and the first couple of days of 2024.

The story so far: As winter tightened its grip on northern India, a thick blanket of fog descended on several states in the last days of 2023 and first of 2024, creating challenging conditions for residents and travellers alike. Some places in the country's north reported low temperatures and dense fog for the last week of December. According to weather reports in late December 2023, minimum temperatures in Punjab, Haryana, and the northern reaches of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh hovered around 6-9 degrees C. In New Delhi, south Rajasthan, and north Madhya Pradesh, some places recorded minimum temperatures in the range of 10-12 degrees C, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

In the same time, most of North India also experienced a dense fog that reduced visibility in many areas to as little as 50 metres for several days. Haryana, including Chandigarh, plus isolated pockets of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh reported fog with visibility reduced to under 200 metres.

2023 Recap: Significant Climate Milestones of the Year

Multiple records were breached in 2023, even as we run out of time to stave off the worst effects of climate change

December 26, 2023 01:09 pm—Updated 01:29 pm IST



(File photo) | Photo Credit: AP/Seth Wenig

From registering the hottest summer on record to some significant steps at the yearly United Nations Climate Summit, 2023 was a year of climate extremes. *The Hindu* takes a look at some climate-related milestones that occurred during the course of the year.

2023 saw temperature records being broken month after month, and the year is all but set to be declared the hottest in history. According to Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), 2023 was 0.1°C warmer than the ten-month average for 2016, currently the warmest calendar year on record, and 1.43°C warmer than the pre-industrial reference period from January to October. In October 2023, average surface air temperature reached 15.30°C, 0.85°C above the 1991-2020 average for October.

India boosts AI in Weather Forecasts as Floods, Droughts Increase

Global warming has triggered more intense clashes of weather systems in India in recent years, increasing extreme weather events.

December 22, 2023 04:43 pm—Updated 04:43 pm IST

Reuters

India is testing artificial intelligence (AI) to build climate models to improve weather forecasting as torrential rains, floods and droughts proliferate across the vast country, a top weather official said. Global warming has triggered more intense clashes of weather systems in India in recent years, increasing extreme weather events, which the independent Centre for Science and Environment estimates have killed nearly 3,000 people this year.

Weather agencies around the world are focussing on AI, which can bring down cost and improve speed, and which Britain's Met Office says could "revolutionise" weather forecasting, with a recent Google-funded model found to have outperformed conventional methods.

Mexico Emitted 'Extreme' Amounts of Methane from Gas Pipeline, find Scientists

More than 260 to 550 tonnes of gas released from state owned pipeline operated by Fermaca Pipeline El Encino.

December 20, 2023 12:15 pm—Updated 12:15 pm IST – Mexico City

Mexico emitted "extreme" amounts of methane from a natural gas pipeline running through its northern border state Durango in 2019, a research paper published on December 19 showed, citing data collected from satellites.

Methane, a potent greenhouse gas that traps heat in the atmosphere and warms the planet much faster than carbon dioxide in the short term, is considered a top threat to the climate.

Scientists from Harvard University, led by Marc Watine and Daniel Varon, identified a hot spot in Durango that released thousands of metric tonnes of methane over two months.

Mr. Watine said the team was able to trace the methane leaks to the El Encino-La Laguna pipeline that passes through the states of Chihuahua and Durango, transporting natural gas from the United States to Mexico.

‘Green Nobel’ Prize to Recognize Environmental Work in Amazon Rainforest

The United Earth Amazonia prize will be awarded in June to six winners in the 130-year-old Opera House in Manaus. Prize money has yet to be decided, organizers said.

December 19, 2023 01:47 pm — Updated 01:47 pm IST

Humaita, Amazonas state, Brazil, August 3, 2023

The great-grandnephew of Alfred Nobel is offering a “Green Nobel” prize, unrelated to the Nobel Foundation, to environmental champions of the Amazon rainforest.

Marcus Nobel, a Swedish-American businessman based in Portland, Oregon, has instituted the annual environmental prize to spotlight projects that are helping preserve and sustain the rainforest and protect its biodiversity.

“Raising consciousness is very important to us,” Nobel said in an interview. His NGO called United Earth focuses on promoting a common humanity living in peace with itself and Nature. The prize, aimed at giving visibility to exceptional environmental contributions, was first awarded last year, with no prize money. The scope of the 2024 award will be expanded to include Brazil’s neighbouring nations that share the rainforest.

A five-meter statue of a globe representing the prize will be erected on the banks of the Rio Negro river in Manaus, as a symbol of the city’s commitment to protecting the Amazon forest, the mayor’s office said.

Japan Quake Survivors Face Freezing Rain, Threat of Landslides

By Kiyoshi Takenaka and Sakura Murakami

January 3, 2024 10:41 PM GMT+5:30—Updated 2 days ago

WAJIMA, Japan, Jan 3 (Reuters) – Rescuers raced against the clock on Wednesday searching for survivors of an earthquake in western Japan that killed at least 65, while evacuees continued to wait for further aid amid freezing temperatures and heavy rain.

The quake with a preliminary magnitude of 7.6 struck the Noto peninsula on New Year’s Day, levelling houses and cutting off remote areas from aid.

Heavy rain was forecast in the quake-hit areas on Wednesday, raising fears of landslides that could further hinder efforts to free many more people still trapped under rubble.