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Dry Spell in Kolkata Pushes Temperatures Higher

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Kolkata experienced a noticeable surge in temperature on Saturday, with the maximum climbing to 32.7°C, an increase of more than 3°C compared to the previous day. The rise marks the onset of a hot and dry phase for the city, as rain-bearing weather systems that were earlier forecasted to bring showers have shifted northward, leaving the region under largely clear skies.

Meteorologists from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) explained that the shift in the monsoon trough toward the Himalayan foothills has deprived southern West Bengal of the moisture-laden winds needed for rainfall. As a result, Kolkata is now expected to face a continued dry spell, with no significant precipitation likely until at least August 14.

The absence of rain, combined with rising daytime temperatures, has increased humidity discomfort for residents. While the mercury reading of 32.7°C may not seem extreme, the heat index, driven by high moisture levels, has made the afternoons feel considerably warmer. The IMD has advised people to stay hydrated and avoid prolonged exposure to direct sunlight during peak hours.

Street vendors, daily commuters, and outdoor laborers have been among the most affected. Several construction workers reported adjusting their schedules to start earlier in the morning to avoid working during the hottest parts of the day. Local tea stall owners and juice vendors, meanwhile, have seen a spike in sales as residents seek ways to cool down.

Kolkata's parks, which typically see more footfall during the cooler monsoon days, appeared quieter in the afternoons. However, evenings have drawn crowds back as temperatures dip slightly, aided by occasional breezes from the Hooghly River.

The dry spell has also sparked concerns among farmers in nearby districts who depend on consistent rainfall for the growth of paddy and other seasonal crops. Agricultural experts have cautioned that a prolonged rain deficit could necessitate the use of irrigation pumps, increasing costs for cultivators. The state agriculture department is monitoring the situation and has indicated that contingency measures will be activated if rainfall fails to resume in the coming week.

Water supply authorities have assured residents that storage levels in key reservoirs remain adequate for now. However, they have urged households to use water judiciously in anticipation of possible strain if the dry phase extends further.

Weather models suggest that the next chance for significant rainfall in Kolkata will arrive only after mid-August, when the monsoon trough is expected to drift south again. Until then, forecasters predict mostly sunny to partly cloudy conditions, with daytime temperatures ranging between 32°C and 34°C, and warm, humid nights hovering around 27°C.

Despite the discomfort, the dry weather has brought some temporary relief for those frustrated by persistent rains earlier in the season. Traffic movement has been smoother, and several outdoor cultural events have gone ahead without disruption from sudden downpours. Still, city health officials warn that prolonged heat and humidity can trigger fatigue, dehydration, and heat-related illnesses, and they recommend wearing light clothing, staying indoors during midday, and consuming sufficient fluids. With the Independence Day holiday approaching, event organizers are keeping a close eye on weather forecasts, hoping the dry spell will at least ensure clear skies for celebrations, even as residents quietly wish for the return of cooling monsoon showers.