

Argentina swelters under record heat wave



Temperatures in Argentina have been soaring above 40 degrees Celsius in a record-setting heatwave, making the country one of the hottest places on earth in recent days

Buenos Aires, January 16 (RHC)-- Parts of Argentina and neighboring countries in South America have been setting record-high temperatures as the region swelters under a historic heatwave.

“Practically all of Argentina and also neighbouring countries such as Uruguay, southern Brazil and Paraguay are experiencing the hottest days in history,” said Cindy Fernandez, a meteorologist at Argentina’s official National Meteorological Service.

Many towns have posted their highest temperatures since record-keeping began, with some zones heating up to 45C (113F), according to the weather service. “In Argentina, from the center of Patagonia to the north of the country, thermal values are being recorded that are reaching or exceeding 40 degrees,” Fernandez said.

The heat and a prolonged drought have hit the grain-producing country's crops, though there is hope that an expected drop in temperature next week will bring a period of rainfall to cool both plants and people.

The record-breaking heat also is straining the country's electrical grid, local media reported.

In Buenos Aires province around the capital, more than 75,000 users did not have electricity on Friday, the Clarin newspaper reported. Argentina recorded its highest electricity consumption level ever on Friday afternoon, the newspaper said.

"It's another hellish day," Elizabeth Bassin told the Reuters news agency as she waited for a bus in Buenos Aires. "'We live through a week of hot weather and it's almost as if the body is getting used to that heat."

Emanuel Moreno, who was delivering soft drinks, said he was working through the heat but had to keep hydrating. "Truthfully it is really hot and heavy, though when you are working you don't realise so much. You realise that you are very thirsty and you have to drink a lot of water, water and more water because if you don't, you can't go on," he said.

U.S. government scientists on Thursday reported that 2021 was the sixth-warmest year on record, and they are putting the blame squarely on climate change. The last eight years were the eight hottest and the last decade was the warmest since record-keeping began in 1880, the US scientists said.

Fernandez, the meteorologist, said a warm air mass had formed over Argentina, right in the middle of the southern hemisphere summer. "We're having many days of clear skies where solar radiation is very intense and in a context of an extreme drought Argentina has been going through for about two years," she said. "This means that the soil is very dry, and earth that is dry heats up much more than soil that is moist."

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