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MAGAZINE NOTES

Climate Change: A Health Emergency?

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Climate Change: A Health Emergency?

 **Science Reporter** Chapter 1 · 2 min read ·

Author: Parul R. Sheth | **Published:** Science Reporter, April 2026 (cover story)

The cover story's framing follows the WHO's position: climate change is a **health-multiplier**, amplifying nearly every existing disease pathway rather than creating new ones.

THE FIVE HEALTH PATHWAYS

PATHWAY	MECHANISM
Vector-borne disease	Warmer temperatures push malaria and dengue vectors into higher altitudes and latitudes, exposing naive populations
Heat stress	Direct mortality and occupational productivity loss; the elderly, outdoor workers and slum dwellers face the worst exposure
Malnutrition	Crop loss and nutrient decline under heat and erratic rainfall
Water-borne disease	Contamination after floods and extreme rainfall events
Respiratory illness	Air pollution interacting with wildfire smoke and dust

INDIA'S INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

- **NPCCHH** (National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health) under the **National Centre for Disease Control, MoHFW**: state and district climate-health action plans, surveillance of heat illness, and green-resilient health facilities
- **Heat Action Plans**: the Ahmedabad model (early warning, cool roofs, staggered work hours, hydration points) now replicated across dozens of cities and states
- The article's argument for Mains: health adaptation is the most under-funded layer of India's climate response; mitigation gets the capital, adaptation gets the circulars

MAINS ANGLE

Use this framing: climate change converts public health from a service-delivery problem into a risk-management problem; the unit of planning shifts from facility to geography (heat islands, flood plains, vector zones). **Way forward:** wage-loss insurance for outdoor workers during red-alert heat days, climate-tagged

disease surveillance through the Integrated Health Information Platform, and building codes that treat cooling as a health intervention.

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PROGRAMMES:

NPCCHH: under NCDC, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Heat Action Plans: pioneered by Ahmedabad; early-warning + response framework

MECHANISMS TO REMEMBER:

Vector range shift: malaria/dengue moving to higher altitudes and latitudes

WHO frames climate change as a threat multiplier for health

Earth Day: April 22

Sources: [Science Reporter / CSIR-NIScPR](#), [MoHFW](#)



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