**Can Singapore Control Its ‘Diabolical’ Hot Weather?**

The island nation had its hottest year on record in 2019.

By Heather Chen, March 5th, 2021



ILLUSTRATION BY JORDAN LEE

It’s often said that Singapore has four seasons: hot, hotter, hottest, and hell.

But the joke reflects a disturbing reality: experts say Singapore is now warming two times faster than the rest of the world on average. Weather conditions are also set to get more extreme and unpredictable as carbon emissions continue to rise, posing serious health risks for residents of the Southeast Asian island nation.

“Because of our warm and humid climate, every small increase in air temperature will be felt disproportionally strongly,” Matthias Roth, a professor from the National University of Singapore’s geography department, told VICE World News.

Experts like Roth have noted that that more severe heat conditions could put people at higher risk of having a stroke.

The faster increases have been going on for years, but residents of heavily-urbanized Singapore, which sits just 85 miles north of the equator, say the past few months have been particularly unbearable.

“Singapore is hot all year round and it’s normal to feel the heat more at this time of the year, but the weather lately has not felt normal,” said university student and marathon runner Joan Liew, who described the conditions as “excruciating” and “diabolical.”

She added that she has now avoided exercising outdoors.

While Liew’s experience is anecdotal, she is not imagining things.

Singapore’s official meteorological agency noted a recent sharp rise in temperatures and warned that maximum daily temperatures could reach 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) by as early as 2045.

The increase has been closely charted by British climate professor Ed Hawkins, who created a public color heat chart showcasing how much countries and continents have warmed over the past decade. In the case of Singapore, a clear change in gradient from cool blues to warm, bold reds can be seen between 1901 and 2019, the country’s hottest year on record.

“Everyone can look at these visualizations and instantly understand how temperatures in their own locations have changed,” Hawkins told Singapore’s TODAY newspaper.

Singaporean climate change scientist and professor Winston Chow attributed the rising temperatures to a phenomenon known as the “Urban Heat Island Effect,” which occurs when cities replace natural land cover with dense concentrations of concrete, pavement, buildings, and other surfaces that absorb and retain massive amounts of heat.

“Singapore has definitely been getting hotter and every degree counts,” Chow told VICE World News in a phone interview. “The hot weather we’ve been experiencing recently is not only a clear indicator of climate change but also the effect of how rapidly urbanization alters local climates.”

Please view the whole article at:

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/jgq37x/can-singapore-control-its-diabolical-hot-weather>