NEW BLOG

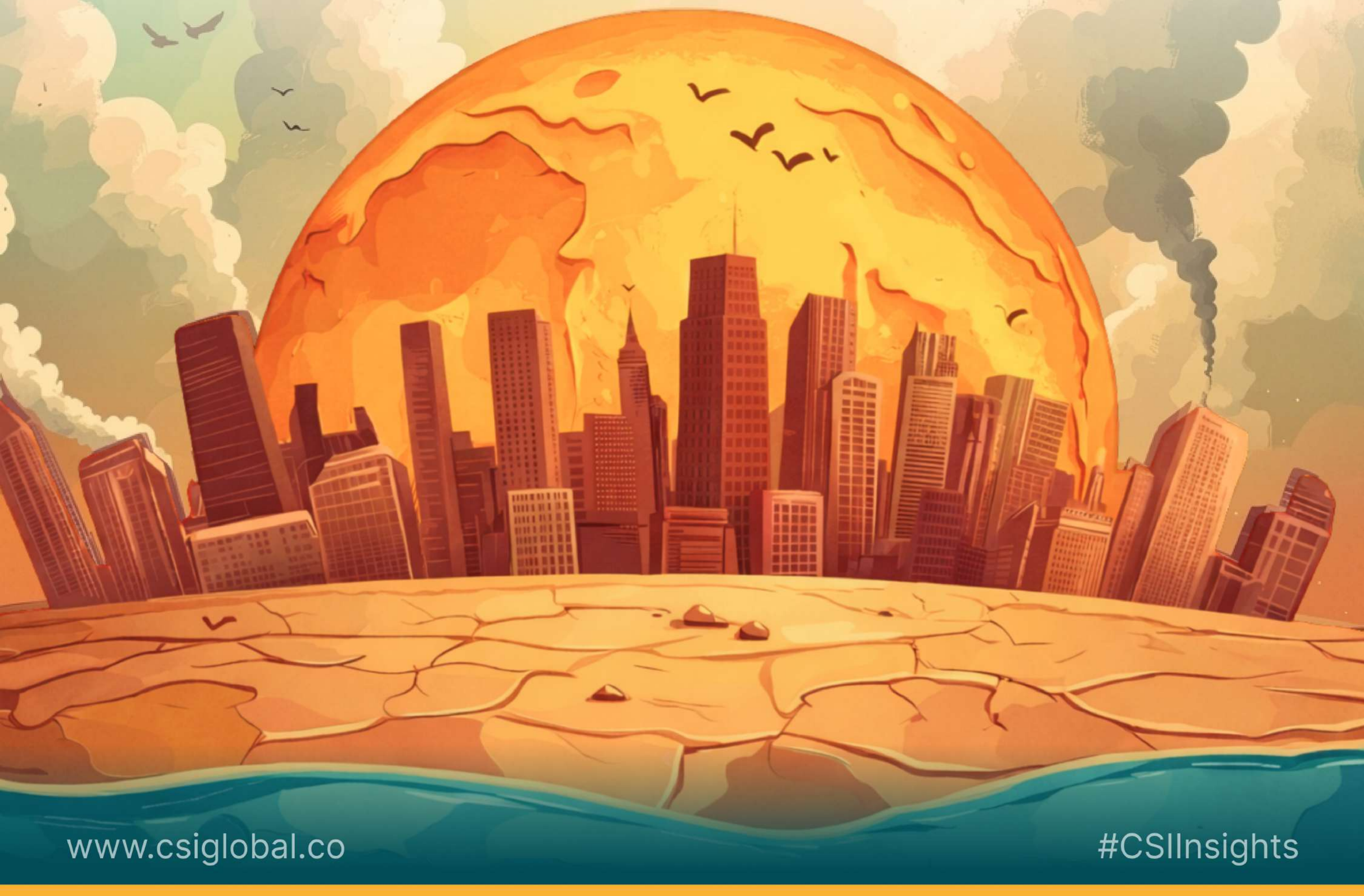
Climate and Sustainability Initiative

India's cities are warming.

ARE WE PREPARED?

From Heatwaves to Heat Action Plans

By Janhavi Bhujabal, Consultant, CSI



HEAT IS NOT AN ACUTE EMERGENCY

It is a chronic, recurring, and increasingly predictable risk.

India recorded over 24,000 heat-related deaths between 1992 and 2015. The 2015 heatwave alone claimed more than 2,000 lives. Unlike flood or cyclone events, heatwaves intensify gradually with disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations and informal labour.

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A 30-YEAR JOURNEY

Three decades of evidence have shaped the global policy response to extreme heat.

IPCC Warning

In the 1990s, the IPCC highlighted rising heat extremes, marking the beginning of global awareness of the risks posed by climate change and extreme temperatures.

European Heatwave

The 2003 European heatwave resulted in over 70,000 deaths, prompting the WHO to issue its first formal guidance on managing heat-related health risks.

EuroHEAT Framework

Introduced in 2008, the EuroHEAT framework standarised preparedness measures across Europe, establishing guidelines for effectively managing heatwaves and mitigating their impacts on public health.

Urban Labour Crisis

In the 2010s, heat was reframed as an urban labour and infrastructure crisis,emphasising the need for comprehensive policies to address heat stress on workers and urban environments.

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TIMELINE OF EVENTS

India's heat governance has evolved significantly from state-level responses to national frameworks.

Odisha's Heat Measures

In 1998, Odisha became the first state in India to implement heat management measures, recognising the need for proactive health responses during extreme heat events.

Ahmedabad's HAP Launch

In 2013, Ahmedabad launched India's first city-level Heat Action Plan (HAP), setting a precedent for urban centers across the country to address heatwave-related challenges systematically.

NDMA Guidelines Formalization

In 2017, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) formalised the national Heat Wave Guidelines, establishing a framework for consistent disaster readiness and community resilience across India.

Expansion of HAPS

From 2019 onwards, Heat Action Plans began scaling to Tier 2 cities, districts, and states, enhancing preparedness and response efforts to combat extreme heat hazards nationwide.

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57% OF INDIA'S DISTRICTS FACE HIGH OR VERY HIGH HEAT RISK

The district-level Heat Risk Index reveals the highest concentration of risk across central and western India. Risk is assessed across three dimensions: Hazard, Exposure, and Vulnerability. Effective heat governance requires interventions calibrated to this differential risk landscape.

Source: CEEW, 2025

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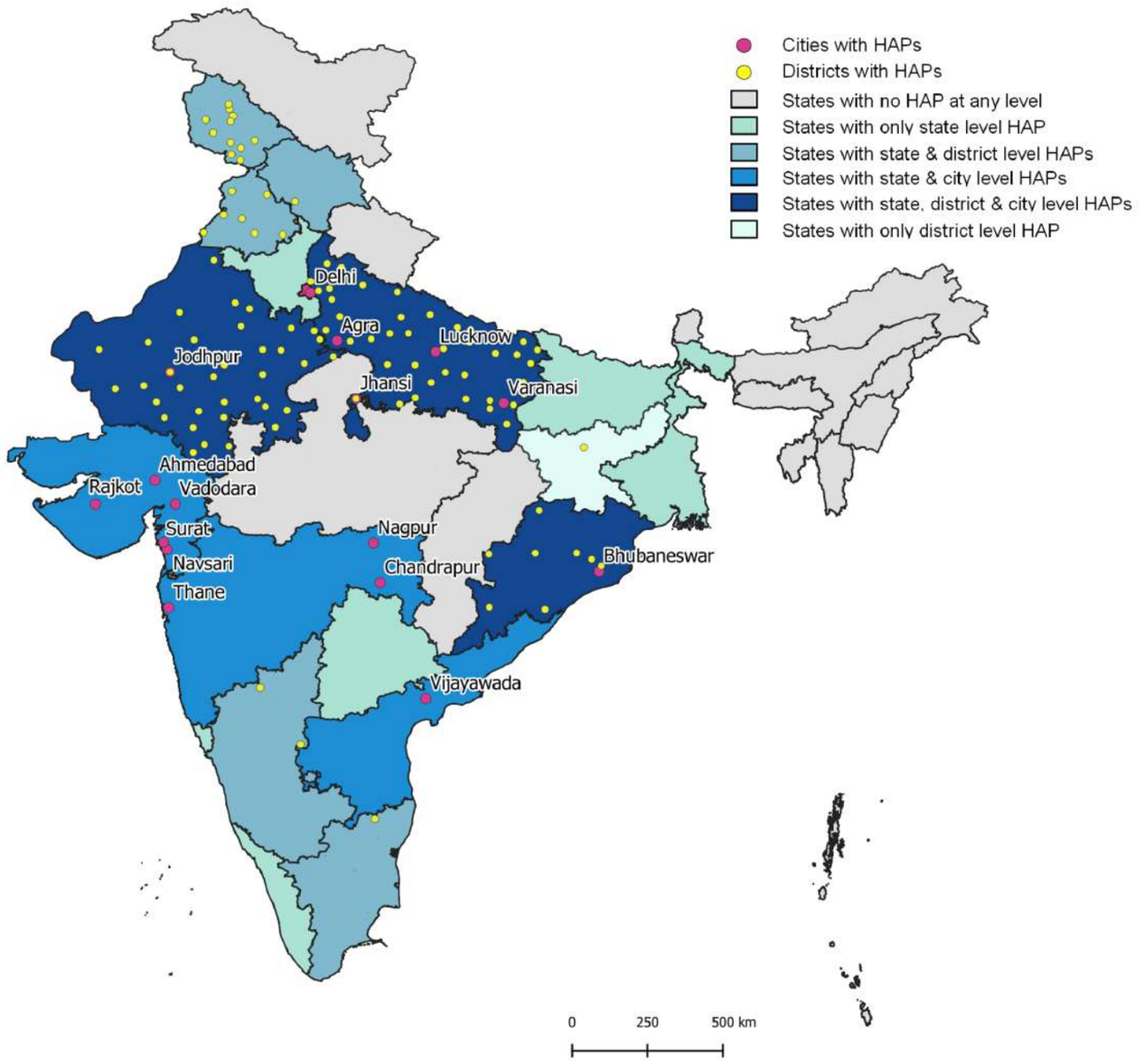
India has moved from a single city-level plan in 2013 to a national network of heat preparedness frameworks.

Heat Action Plans now span state, district, and city levels (as of February 2026). Core components include early warning systems, health system preparedness, urban cooling strategies, and inter-departmental coordination mechanisms.

Blog 2 examines a critical question: how are Heat Action Plans structured across cities in terms of institutional roles, preparedness and financing pathways?

Heat Action Plans in India (State, District & City Level)



Source: Author's compilation (2026) of publicly available heat action plans; spatial visualisation prepared using GIS software; CSI Analysis

Districts Highlighted

Uttar Pradesh (43)	Rajasthan (36)	Jammu and Kashmir (11)
Aligarh	Dholpur	Udhampur
Amethi	Sikar	Jammu
Hapur	Churu	Srinagar
Auraiya	Hanumangarh	Samba
Baghpat	Ajmer	Doda
Bahraich	Alwar	Reasi
Ballia	Balotra	Rajouri
Banda	Banswara	Poonch
Barabanki	Baran	Pulwama
Basti	Barmer	Ganderbal
Bhadohi	Beawar	Shopian
Bijnor	Bharatpur	
Bulandshahr	Bhilwara	**Odisha (9)**
Chandauli	Bikaner	
Deoria	Bundi	Nuapada
Etah	Chittorgarh	Gajapati
Farrukhabad	Dausa	Angul
Firozabad	Deeg	Subarnapur
Fatehpur	Dungarpur	Jajpur
Ghazipur	Jaipur	Cuttack
Gonda	Jaisalmer	Dhenkanal
Hardoi	Jalore	Nabarangpur
Jhansi	Jhalawar	Sundargarh
Kanpur Nagar	Jhunjhunu	
Lakhimpur Kheri	Jodhpur	**Others**
Kushinagar	Karauli	Vijayanagara (Karnataka)
Mahoba	Kota	Vijayapura (Karnataka)
Maharajganj	Nagaur	Barnala (Punjab)
Mainpuri	Pali	Fazilka (Punjab)
Mathura	Phalodi	Ferozepur (Punjab)
Mau	Pratapgarh	Hoshiarpur (Punjab)
Mirzapur	Rajsamand	Moga (Punjab)
Moradabad	Salumbar	Amritsar (Punjab)
Muzaffarnagar	Sirohi	Patiala (Punjab)
Pilibhit	Tonk	Bilaspur (Himachal Pradesh)
Prayagraj	Udaipur	Hazaribag (Jharkhand)
Raebareli		Vellore (Tamil Nadu)
Shravasti		
Sonbhadra		
Hamirpur		
Shahjahanpur		
Ghaziabad		
Gorakhpur		

Heat Action Plans in India (State, District, and City/Municipal Level), as of February 2026. Source: Author's compilation of publicly available Heat Action Plans.

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The expansion of heat governance frameworks in India is significant. Translating them into equitable, adequately resourced action remains the central challenge.

Read the full blog on www.csiglobal.co