



Vehicles caught in the rain near Sovabazar Metro station on CR Avenue on Friday evening. Picture by Bishwarup Dutta

Rain relief after scorching day

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Calcutta: A thunderstorm on Friday evening brought formidable rain, providing much-needed relief to a city reeling under the twin assault of heat and humidity.

The relief, however, will be short-lived, the Met office said.

A thunderstorm alert for Calcutta, North 24-Paragnas and South 24-Parganas was issued around 8.20pm by the Met office. The rain followed soon. It was preceded by gusts of wind and streaks of lightning.

Districts like Bankura, Purulia, Murshidabad, East and West Midnapore and East and West Burdwan got thunder-showers on Friday afternoon and evening.

In Calcutta, the maximum temperature was 35.7° Celsius on Friday, normal for mid-May. But a minimum relative humidity — a marker of the moisture quotient in the air during the driest part of the day — of 60% made the day feel much worse. For most of the day, even in the morning, spending time outdoors was extremely uncomfortable.

Around 12.30pm, the maximum was around 35° Celsius, but the RealFeel was 42°.

As the Celsius soars in south Bengal, north Bengal

is getting drenched. On Saturday, heavy rain is likely in Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar districts, said a Met forecast.

A Bay system is propelling the southwest monsoon towards the southernmost tip of India, even as Calcutta sizzles.

Monsoon is expected to set foot in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands on Saturday, said a national bulletin from the IMD headquarters. The usual date is May 20. It is also expected to reach Kerala on May 26, ahead of the scheduled June 1.

Normally, the monsoon winds reach Kerala and the Northeast together. The usual onset date for north Bengal is June 5 and for south Bengal, June 10. But there is no linear correlation between the onset dates in Kerala and Bengal, said a Met official.

Last year, monsoon set foot in Calcutta on June 17, a week behind schedule, but was accompanied by uniform rainfall and consistent overcast conditions. It had reached Kerala on May 24.

“A well-marked low-pressure area persists over southwest and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal. The system is acting as a catalyst for the onset of monsoon,” said a Met official.