

Death toll passes 1,400

AFP, New Delhi

Hospitals in India yesterday battled to treat victims of a blistering heatwave that has claimed nearly 1,500 lives in just over a week -- the highest number recorded in two decades.

Hundreds of mainly poor people die at the height of summer every year in India, but this year's figures are already the highest since 1995, when official data shows 1,677 people succumbed to the heat.

In southern Andhra Pradesh, by far the worst-hit state where top temperatures have reached 47 degrees Celsius and 1,020 people have died since May 18, doctors said they had never seen so many severe cases.

"Our wards are completely full," said J V Subbarao, medical officer at the Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Medical Sciences in Andhra Pradesh.

"I have worked as a medical officer in this district for 40 years and I have never seen anything like this, with so many people arriving already dead."

Another 340 people have died from the heatwave in neighbouring Telangana state, where temperatures hit 48 degrees Celsius over the weekend.

Forecasters said there was little hope of any immediate respite from the temperatures in northern India. "We think that these heatwave conditions will take another four to five days to subside," said Brahma Prakash Yadav, director of the Indian Meteorological Department.

The Press Trust of India news agency reported 43 deaths in Orissa, and another 13 in West Bengal.

Two people died in western Maharashtra state. Unconfirmed reports said two people had died in Delhi.



A mirage shimmers over Rajpath leading to India Gate in New Delhi, yesterday, as a deadly heatwave sweeps across the country. Inset, a young Indian child pours water on himself as he attempts to cool himself off in New Delhi.

PHOTO: AFP

Russia building up military on Ukraine border: report

Nato says Russia's nuclear threats 'deeply troubling'

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Russia's military is reportedly gathering troops and stockpiling weaponry, rocket launchers and tanks at a military base close to the border with Ukraine.

A reporter for the Reuters news agency who claimed to have seen weaponry being gathered at the base said number plates and identifying marks had been removed from many of the vehicles, while some soldiers had removed insignia from their uniforms.

The base is located on the Kuzminsky firing range, which lies about 50 km from the border with Ukraine.

Some of the weapons include types used in eastern Ukraine between where government forces have been battling pro-Russian separatists, such as multiple rocket launchers, tanks and self-propelled howitzers.

Soldiers at the base said they had been deployed there for training exercises.

Reuters reported seeing four goods trains transporting military vehicles and troops arrive at a rail station in the Rostov region of southern Russia, with at least two trainloads continuing towards the base by road.

It said a large section of dirt road leading across the steppe from the Kuzminsky range to the Ukrainian border had been recently repaired, making it easier to transport heavy vehicles across.

Ukraine claims Russia is assisting separatist rebels militarily, a claim Russia has denied throughout the protracted conflict.

Reuters said the amount of military hardware at the base was triple what had been seen in March this year, when only a few dozen pieces of equipment were visible.

The Russian defence ministry refused to comment on reports at the base, while Kremlin spokesman

Dmitry Peskov declined to comment on whether large numbers of weapons and troops being amassed was a signal of a forthcoming invasion.

Meanwhile, Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on Wednesday said Russia's provocative rhetoric and its dramatic expansion of flights by nuclear bombers are deeply troubling and dangerous.

Russia's plans to deploy nuclear-capable missiles in Kaliningrad -- near Poland's border -- and its threat to move nuclear forces in Crimea would "fundamentally change the balance of security in Europe," Stoltenberg warned, in speech during a visit to Washington.

In blunt language, the Nato chief delivered a scathing critique of Russia's behavior over the past year -- including Moscow's armed intervention in Ukraine -- and vowed the transatlantic alliance would redouble its commitment to "collective defense."

Syria al-Qaeda pledges no attacks on West

AFP, Beirut

Al-Qaeda's Syria affiliate would not use Syria as a launching pad for attacks on the West, its chief said in a wide-ranging televised interview late Wednesday.

Without showing his face, Abu Mohamed al-Jolani said his group, Al-Nusra Front, would protect Syrian minorities that renounced the regime.

The interview was Jolani's second with Qatar-owned Al-Jazeera TV since a similar appearance in 2013.

"Our mission in Syria is the downfall of the regime, its symbols, and its allies, like Hezbollah," Jolani said.

Jolani also denied the existence of the "Khorasan group," which the US had said was an offshoot of al-Qaeda that was plotting attacks against the US.



'Do more to help Rohingyas'

Dalai Lama urges Aung San Suu Kyi

AFP, Sydney

The Dalai Lama has urged fellow Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi to do more to help Myanmar's persecuted Muslim Rohingya minority amid a worsening migration crisis.

Despite thousands of Rohingya fleeing on harrowing boat journeys to Southeast Asia to escape poverty and discriminatory treatment by the country's Buddhist majority, opposition leader Suu Kyi is yet to comment.

Observers have attributed this to fears about alienating voters ahead of elections slated for November.

The Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader said she must speak up, adding that he had already appealed twice to her in person since 2012, when deadly sectarian violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state pitted the Rohingya against local Buddhists, to do more on their behalf.

"It's very sad. In the Burmese (Myanmar) case I hope Aung San Suu Kyi, as a Nobel laureate, can do something," he told Thursday's The Australian newspaper in an interview ahead of a visit to Australia next week.

"I met her two times, first in London and then the Czech Republic. I mentioned about this problem and she told me she found some difficulties, that things were not simple but very complicated.

"But in spite of that I feel she can do something." The issue was thrown into the spotlight this month when thousands of Rohingya, together with Bangladeshi migrants, were rescued on Southeast Asian shores after fleeing by boat.

The crisis has shone a spotlight on the dire conditions and discrimination faced by the roughly one million Rohingya in western Myanmar, a group widely seen as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

The Dalai Lama, perhaps the world's most famous refugee, added from his exile in the Indian Himalayas that it was not enough to ask how to help the Rohingya.

"This is not sufficient. There's something wrong with humanity's way of thinking. Ultimately we are lacking concern for others' lives, others' well-being," he said.

UK takes hard line on EU reform

REUTERS, London

The European Union must amend its founding treaties to accommodate Britain's renegotiation drive, Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said yesterday, warning that London needed a meaty deal to persuade voters to stay in the bloc.

Hammond spoke as Prime Minister David Cameron started a two-day European tour to try to charm other EU leaders into backing his reform drive, something he has promised to complete before giving Britons an EU membership in-out referendum by the end of 2017.

"If our partners do not agree with us, do not work with us to deliver that (reform) package, then we rule nothing out," Hammond told BBC radio.

"The advice we're getting is that we will need treaty change," said Hammond, explaining it was necessary to render changes that Cameron wants irreversible and safe from legal challenge.

Cameron has various demands, the thrust of which is to claw back powers from Brussels to allow Britain to opt out of what he sees as a dangerous shift to greater political integration.

Cameron is due to meet Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte in The Hague and French President Francois Hollande in Paris later yesterday before heading to Warsaw and Berlin today for talks with Polish Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Ahead of the talks, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said Paris would listen to Cameron because it wanted Britain to stay in the EU and was ready to consider some reform if it would benefit everyone.

But Fabius cautioned that Cameron's strategy was "very risky" and said his government would not sign up to anything that amounted to the "dismantling" of the EU.

"Britain has more to lose. When I say to investors France will stay in Europe, but Britain isn't sure it will, they listen," Fabius told France Inter radio.



These pictures show people protesting against austerity measures during a demonstration in London on Wednesday, following the State Opening of Parliament. In her speech, known as the Queen's Speech, Britain's Queen Elizabeth II set the stage for further budget austerity under Prime Minister David Cameron's newly elected centre-right government but promised measures for "working people" such as more free childcare. PHOTO: AFP

US military shipped live anthrax to lab by accident

AFP, Washington

As many as 22 people in South Korea and four US lab workers may have been exposed to anthrax after the American military accidentally shipped out at least one live sample, officials said.

The four lab employees were undergoing medical treatment as a precaution after the military sent the sample inside the country to a commercial lab in Maryland, US officials said Wednesday.

As many as 22 personnel may have been exposed to anthrax during a laboratory training exercise at the US Osan Air Force Base in South Korea using samples shipped from the same batch, a military statement said yesterday.

In addition to the military base in South Korea, more than a dozen other government and commercial labs in nine US states had received samples from the accidental ship-

ment, officials said.

All of the samples had been irradiated in March last year at a military lab in Utah and were supposed to be "dead."

But on Friday, a private firm in Maryland notified authorities that its sample was still active, setting off an urgent review of all material sent out to other labs, defense officials said.

Four people at three different companies that had "worked with the live anthrax" were receiving post-exposure treatment as a precaution.

The Pentagon and health officials said the incident posed no threat to public health. The sample was being used in a self-contained "laboratory environment" on the base.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), backed up by the Defense Department, is investigating the mishap.

Pope: Love not made in a day

CNN ONLINE

Speaking off the cuff to the many engaged couples gathered Wednesday in St Peter's Square for his weekly audience, Pope Francis said that a lifetime love takes time to grow.

"The alliance of love between a man and a woman, an alliance for life, cannot be improvised, and is not made in a day," the Pope said.

Francis spoke a day after his top deputy, Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin, referred to Ireland's vote this week in favor of gay marriage as "a defeat for humanity." There was no indication, however, that the Pope's message to the betrothed referred in any way to the Irish vote.

He did speak to the importance of couples using their engagement periods to "come to know one another better in planning for the beautiful yet demanding enterprise of marriage."

He also argued implicitly against premarital sex. "The Church, in her wisdom, maintains the distinction between engaged and married couples -- they are not the same," he said. "Today's culture and society have become rather indifferent to the delicate and serious nature of this passage."

150 years
BASF
 We create chemistry
BASF appoints new Managing Director for Bangladesh



BASF Bangladesh Limited has appointed Sujan Kumar Saha as Managing Director, with effect from April 3, 2015. He succeeds Janakiram Raju, who has retired after 35 years of service with BASF.

Sujan holds a Master of Pharmacy and an MBA from the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), both from University of Dhaka. He has more than 13 years of professional experience in local and multinational companies in Bangladesh & abroad. Before joining BASF, Sujan has worked as Director of Marketing & Sales at Anwar Group and Head of Marketing & Sales Operations at Novartis (BD) Limited.

About BASF : At BASF, we create chemistry -- and have been doing so for 150 years. Our portfolio ranges from chemicals, plastics, performance products and crop protection products to oil and gas. As the world's leading chemical company, we combine economic success with environmental protection and social responsibility. Through science and innovation, we enable our customers in nearly every industry to meet the current and future needs of society. Our products and solutions contribute to conserving resources, ensuring nutrition and improving quality of life. We have summed up this contribution in our corporate purpose: We create chemistry for a sustainable future. BASF had sales of over €74 billion in 2014 and around 113,000 employees as of the end of the year. BASF shares are traded on the stock exchanges in Frankfurt (BAS), London (BFA) and Zurich (AN). Further information on BASF is available on the Internet at www.basf.com.

Dhaka Foodies
The Daily Star
Dhaka RESTAURANT WEEK 2015
QUIZ 04
 Name the restaurants (participating in Dhaka restaurant week) has fish in their restaurant name?
Quiz 3 Winner: Tanjila, Mirpur, Dhaka
 To participate for your chance to win **TWO FREE COUPONS**, email your answer to tdshkrestaurantweek2015@gmail.com by 4pm today with your name, DOB, mobile number and address. The winner of the quiz will be announced tomorrow in this newspaper and through email.