

Prepare for the effects of El Nino

UN warns world as temperatures seen surging

AFP, Geneva;

The United Nations yesterday warned the world to prepare for the effects of El Nino, saying the weather phenomenon which triggers higher global temperatures is set to persist throughout 2023.

El Nino is a naturally occurring climate pattern typically associated with increased heat worldwide, as well as drought in some parts of the world and heavy rains elsewhere.

The phenomenon occurs on average every two to seven years, and episodes typically last nine to 12 months.

The UN's World Meteorological Organization declared El Nino was already under way and said there was a 90-percent chance that it would continue during the second half of 2023.

"The onset of El Nino will greatly increase the

likelihood of breaking temperature records and triggering more extreme heat in many parts of the world and in the ocean," warned WMO secretary-general Petteri Taalas.

"The declaration of an El Nino by WMO is the signal to governments around the world to mobilise

livelihoods."

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which feeds into the WMO, announced on June 8 that El Nino had arrived.

"It is expected to be at least of moderate strength," the WMO said.

It noted that El Nino's warming effect on global temperatures is felt most strongly within a year of its onset -- in this case in 2024.

El Nino is the large-scale warming of surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean.

Conditions oscillate between El Nino and its generally cooling opposite La Nina, with neutral conditions in between.

El Nino events are typically associated with increased rainfall in parts of southern South America, southern US, Horn of Africa and central Asia.

preparations to limit the impacts on our health, our ecosystems and our economies," said Taalas.

"Early warnings and anticipatory action of extreme weather events associated with this major climate phenomenon are vital to save lives and



A Palestinian man throws stones during clashes over an Israeli military operation in Jenin in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday. UN aid agencies yesterday voiced alarm at the scale of the ongoing Israeli military operation in Jenin, where 10 Palestinians have been killed, saying there were restrictions on medical access.

PHOTO: REUTERS

SPAT OVER SPEAKER

Thai alliance unites on House leadership

REUTERS, Bangkok

Lawmakers in Thailand yesterday endorsed a veteran politician and leader of a small party as the new speaker of the lower house, signalling a detente in a row between the two biggest players as they seek to form a new coalition government.

The nomination of Wan Muhamad Noor Matha, 79, was widely seen as a compromise between alliance partners Move Forward and Pheu Thai, which have sparred for weeks over the speakership, a post crucial to the passage of bills and the timing of key legislative votes.

Wan Noor represents the Prachachart Party, a junior member of an eight-party alliance dominated by Move Forward and Pheu Thai, which together won the lion's share of the seats in the May 14 election, thrashing conservative parties allied with the royalist military.

A southerner and ethnic Malay Muslim in predominantly Buddhist Thailand, Wan Noor has served previously as house speaker and has close ties with Pheu Thai's leadership.

He was the only nomination and his selection is pending royal approval.

"I will conduct duties fairly ... with transparency in considering draft laws and petitions to improve the lives of all Thais," Wan Noor told the house.

Among his first tasks will be to table a joint vote of the 750-member bicameral parliament on a prime minister to form the next government.

VIRTUAL SCO SUMMIT

Xi urges Shanghai ALLIANCE SOLIDARITY

Putin thanks the bloc for support during failed rebellion; Modi urges SCO to fight terrorism, help Afghanistan

AGENCIES

China's Xi Jinping yesterday urged the leaders of Russia, Iran and other Shanghai alliance states to boost ties and resist sanctions, as Vladimir Putin thanked the bloc for support during a failed rebellion.

Xi "called for efforts to safeguard regional peace and ensure common security", state news agency Xinhua said, adding that he urged member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation to "enhance their solidarity".

Putin thanked the Beijing-headquartered SCO, joining his first summit since a short-lived mutiny last month after the head of the Wagner mercenary group, Yevgeny Prigozhin, led a failed rebellion against the Kremlin.

"Russia is confidently resisting and will continue to resist external pressure, sanctions and provocations," Putin told the bloc.

"I would like to thank my colleagues from the SCO countries who expressed support for the actions of the Russian leadership to protect the constitutional order and the life and security of citizens," Putin added.

China and Russia have in recent years ramped up economic cooperation and diplomatic contacts, with their strategic

partnership having only grown closer since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

While China says it is a neutral party to the Ukraine conflict, it has been criticised by Western nations for refusing to condemn Moscow's offensive, reports AFP.

The SCO summit -- which yesterday welcomed Iran as its ninth member -- also saw an apparent dig by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi at arch-rival but fellow SCO member Pakistan.

"Some countries use cross border terrorism as an instrument in their policies, (they) give shelter to terrorists," said Modi, the host of the virtual meeting, without naming specific nations.

He said China, India, Iran, Pakistan, Russia and central Asian countries should jointly fight terrorism, help Afghanistan and tackle global challenges such as food, fuel and fertiliser shortages, reports Reuters.

India regularly accuses Pakistan of helping rebel groups, and the history of the two nuclear-armed neighbours has been mired in violence and bloodshed.

Pakistan also took part in the summit, with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemning the "hydra-headed monster of terrorism and extremism", while warning that "any temptation to use it as



a cudgel for diplomatic point scoring must be eschewed".

Both India and Pakistan said Afghanistan remained a key concern, with Modi warning of the risk it was a base to "spread instability", while Sharif called for an "urgent reset" in international engagement with its Taliban rulers.

Created in 2001 to discuss security and economic matters, other SCO members are Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Iran also joined as a full member of the grouping, with Tehran having intensified its diplomacy with friends and foes alike in recent months, seeking to reduce its isolation, improve its project strength.

Russian ally Belarus, which holds observer status, was also told it would become a full member at the next SCO summit.

Encompassing a vast stretch of the globe from Moscow to Beijing, the bloc makes up around half the world's population -- when including both member states as well as observer and "dialogue partner" nations.

India, which also hosts the G20 summit in September, is walking a diplomatic tightrope.

Uniquely, it is a member of both the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Quad, set up with the United States, Japan and Australia to counter Beijing's growing assertiveness.

Modi was last month hosted in Washington with the full pomp of a state visit, where US President Joe Biden spoke of "two great friends and two great powers".

RUSSIAN SHELLING

9 children among 31 hurt in Ukraine

REUTERS, Kyiv

Russian shelling wounded at least 31 people, including nine children, in the small town of Pervomaiskyi in Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region yesterday, officials said. Oleh Synehubov, the Kharkiv region's governor, said on the Telegram messaging app that the shelling took place at 13:35 Kyiv time and several cars were on fire. He said the windows of eight multi-story building were smashed. Meanwhile, Russia said yesterday there was no basis to extend the accord that allows Ukraine to export grain through the Black Sea, criticising what Moscow says are obstacles to its export of agricultural products.

BJP appoints new chiefs in many states

NDTV ONLINE

Gearing up for the big 2024 elections in India, and crucial state polls this year, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) yesterday announced new chiefs in many states. G Kishan Reddy, MP and union minister, will now lead the party in Telangana. BJP MLA Etela Rajender has been appointed chairman of the BJP's state election management committee for the upcoming Telangana assembly polls. Daggubati Purandeswari, daughter of former Andhra Pradesh CM NT Rama Rao, has been appointed Andhra Pradesh BJP president.

MASS SHOOTINGS

10 people killed across US

REUTERS

Mass shootings in Philadelphia, Baltimore and Fort Worth claimed the lives of 10 people ahead of the Fourth of July holiday, officials said, a grim illustration of the United States' decades-long failure to curb gun-fueled violence. In Fort Worth, Texas, three people were killed and eight wounded in a mass shooting following a local festival, police said yesterday. In a separate shooting incident in Philadelphia on Monday evening, five people were killed and two were injured when a suspect in a bullet-proof vest opened fire on apparent strangers. The Monday night shootings came a day after two people were shot dead and 28 others injured, about half of them children, in a hail of gunfire at an outdoor party in Baltimore.

IMRAN KHAN PROBE

Pakistan grants extra powers to graft body

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan has issued a presidential ordinance granting extra detention powers to the country's anti-graft body, which is currently investigating a case involving former prime minister Imran Khan, media reported yesterday. Imran, the country's main opposition leader who has faced a string of cases since being ousted from power, was arrested in the case in May, which led to violent protests across the country. He was later released on bail.



A youth walks past a closed beauty salon with images of women defaced at Shahr-e Naw area in Kabul, Afghanistan yesterday. Afghanistan's Taliban authorities have ordered beauty parlours across the country to shut within a month, the vice ministry confirmed yesterday, the latest curb to further squeeze women out of public life.

PHOTO: AFP