

2023 was world's hottest year on record

REUTERS, Brussels

Last year was the planet's hottest on record by a substantial margin and likely the world's warmest in the last 100,000 years, the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said yesterday.

Scientists had widely expected the milestone, after climate records were repeatedly broken. Since June, every month has been the world's hottest on record compared with the corresponding month in previous years.

"This has been a very exceptional year, climate-wise... in a league of its own, even when compared to other very warm years," C3S Director Carlo Buontempo said.

C3S confirmed 2023 as the hottest year in global temperature records going back to 1850. When checked against paleoclimatic data records from sources such as tree rings and air bubbles in glaciers, Buontempo said it was "very likely" the warmest year in the last 100,000 years.



Palestinian women react following an Israeli strike, at the European Hospital, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

IS group kills 14 Syria soldiers

AFP, Beirut

An Islamic State group attack killed at least 14 soldiers aboard a military bus in the Syrian desert yesterday, a war monitor said, in the second such attack this year.

"At least 14 members of the regime forces were killed" and several others wounded "in a bloody IS attack on a military bus," in the desert near the ancient city of Palmyra, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Last week, IS killed nine Syrian government troops and militiamen in an attack on military posts in the eastern desert, according to the British-based monitor.

The jihadist group continues to mount attacks on troops and other government targets from desert hideouts where its fighters regrouped after losing their last piece of territory in Syria in March 2019.

US air strike foils rocket attack on Iraqi air base

Pentagon not planning troops withdrawal from Iraq

REUTERS, Anbar

A US air strike on a rocket launcher late on Monday foiled an attack on Ain al-Asad air base, which hosts US and other international forces in western Iraq, two Iraqi army sources said.

Iraqi military sources said a rocket launcher fixed on the back of a small truck had been parked in a rural area about 7 km (4 miles) to the east of the base, with at least two rockets ready to be fired towards Ain al-Asad.

The US air strike destroyed the launcher, an army official said. US-led coalition officials were not immediately available to comment on the strike.

The United States has 900 troops in Syria and 2,500 more in neighbouring Iraq and says their mission is to advise and assist local forces trying to prevent a resurgence of Islamic State, which in 2014 seized large swathes of both countries but was later pushed back.

Since the Israeli offensive began in Gaza last October, the US military has come under attack at least 100 times in Iraq and Syria, usually with a mix of rockets and attack drones.

Iran-aligned militia groups in Iraq and Syria oppose Israel's campaign in Gaza and hold the US partly responsible.

Meanwhile, The Pentagon said on Monday it was not currently planning to withdraw its troops from Iraq, despite Baghdad's announcement last week it would begin the process of removing the US-led military coalition from the country.

"Right now, I'm not aware of any plans (to plan for withdrawal). We continue to remain very focused on the defeat ISIS mission," Air Force Major General Patrick Ryder told a news briefing, using an acronym for Islamic State.

He added that US forces are in Iraq at the invitation of its government.

Thai cabinet endorses clean air bill

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand's cabinet endorsed a bill aimed at tackling the kingdom's poor air quality yesterday, clearing the way for parliament to start debating the draft legislation.

The country registers dire air pollution levels every year, with Bangkok and the northern city of Chiang Mai ranked among the most polluted cities in the world on some days last year.

Industrial emissions, vehicle exhaust fumes and smoke from stubble burning by farmers from December to April send air quality plummeting annually.

Send more tourists

Maldives president urges China amid row with India

TOI, New Delhi

Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu yesterday urged China to send more tourists to the island nation amid a massive boycott campaign in India over derogatory remarks made by his ministers against PM Modi.

The three ministers were promptly suspended by the Maldivian government, but their remarks triggered backlash across India, which was the top tourist market for the archipelago in 2023.

Muizzu, who is seen as pro-Beijing, is currently on a five-day visit to China amid the backlash in India. On the second day of his visit, Muizzu termed China as the island nation's "closest" ally in his address to the Maldives Business Forum in Fujian Province yesterday.

He praised the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2014, saying that they "delivered the most significant infrastructure projects witnessed in Maldivian history", according to his speech.

Gabriel Attal picked as France's youngest PM

AFP, Paris



French leader Emmanuel Macron yesterday picked Gabriel Attal as prime minister in a bid to give new momentum to his presidency, with the 34-year-old becoming France's youngest and first openly gay head of government.

Following days of speculation,

Macron late Monday accepted the resignation of Elisabeth Borne, 62, who stepped down along with the rest of the government after serving less than two years in office. The overhaul comes ahead of the Olympic Games in Paris and European parliament elections this summer. A wider cabinet reshuffle is expected this week as Macron seeks to sharpen his team for the final three years of his presidency. "The president of the republic appointed Mr Gabriel Attal prime minister, and tasked him with forming a government," a presidential statement said.



Migrants take part in a caravan towards the border with the United States in Arriaga community, Chiapas State, Mexico, on Monday. More than a thousand migrants of different nationalities have resumed their passage in the caravan after not receiving a favourable response to their demands to receive humanitarian visas from the National Migration Institute.

PHOTO: AFP

Japan quake survivors seek news on rebuild plans

Death toll rises to 200; nearly 100 still missing

REUTERS, Nishiaraya

A week after a major earthquake struck the west coast of Japan, thousands of people are still without water and electricity and have yet to be told when plans to rebuild can begin.

The magnitude 7.6 quake killed at least 200 people on New Year's Day with nearly 100 reported missing. Sub-zero temperatures and heavy snow and rain have hampered the delivery of aid, leaving thousands with diminishing supplies and little information.

Mudslides, boulders and cracks in the road have buried homes and blocked access routes. Those living in areas that escaped the greatest damage, such as Nishiaraya, a village of 1,000 people on the outskirts of Kanazawa, brave the snow to collect drinking water.

"When will reconstruction begin? When will temporary



housing be built? We're not getting any information," said Nishiaraya resident Hiroe Kawabe. "If we can't live here we need to think about leaving. We want information on how long it will take."

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said on Monday that 500 people could be temporarily housed in a sports centre in Kanazawa but said more evacuation centres were needed. He said the government was

also working to find hotel rooms for evacuees.

On Friday, Kishida said that the government would tap 4.74 billion yen (\$32.77 million) of budget reserves for reconstruction efforts.

But the weather makes reconstruction a dangerous task and more snow and rain are expected in coming days.

Nishiaraya fire department chief Hisashi Ida said the biggest risk was not being able to plough the snow.

"Machines won't be able to get in and walking on bumpy parts where snow has accumulated will cause injuries. I think this will be a 'secondary disaster' and I am worried," Ida said.

Japan sits on the "Ring of Fire" arc of volcanoes and oceanic trenches that partly encircles the Pacific Basin.

It accounts for about 20 percent of the world's earthquakes of magnitude 6 or greater.

১০ জানুয়ারি
স্বাধীনতার মহান স্মরণি
জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের
ঐতিহাসিক স্বদেশ প্রত্যাবর্তন দিবস

এই দিনে জাতি ফিরে পেয়েছে আলোর দিশারি
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একটি দৃশ্যী ব্যাংক