

German highways buckle under extreme heat

Berlin: Authorities in Germany reported damage to highways and train cancellations on Saturday as a heatwave that baked western European countries this week moves to central and eastern parts of the continent.

With temperatures in Germany expected to hit 40 degrees Celsius, even the country's famous highway, the Autobahn, was overwhelmed. In two places outside Berlin, the concrete of the A2 burst due to the high temperatures and the highway had to be closed. Other highway damage was also reported across the country, according to German daily *Bild*.

Train operator Deutsche Bahn and other rail companies advised against all nonessential travel on long-distance and regional trains this weekend.

"Germany's transportation infrastructure is being severely affected by the record-breaking

heat this weekend," Deutsche Bahn said in a statement.

In the western city of Dormagen, dozens of residents of a nursing home were evacuated for medical care due to dangerous heat conditions in the building.

The local fire department reported that temperatures inside the home had reached 35 degrees Celsius. Air conditioning is not widespread in Germany and many countries in Europe because the continent is largely unused to such oppressive heat.

A resident at the home died overnight, but it was not yet clear whether the heat was the cause, a city spokesperson told German news agency dpa.

In France, temperatures were easing as the peak of the heatwave was starting to pass in some parts of the country. But hospitals remained under intense pressure in the face



People crowd the beach in Timmendorfer Strand, Germany, on Saturday. (Reuters)

of heat-related emergencies, including heart attacks, heatstroke and dehydration.

In the capital, the Paris public hospital authority said it activated its emergency response plan across all 38 hospitals to deal with a continuous increase in activity.

The AP-HP authority said on Friday its emergency de-

partments treated nearly 3,000 patients in the past 24 hours, over a third more than normal, with a large proportion of them over the age of 75 requiring hospitalisation.

Phone calls to its medical dispatch centres were up nearly 80 per cent compared with the same period in 2025, it said. Three-quarters of France,

encompassing tens of millions of people, was put under a red alert for extreme heat on Thursday and Friday as the mercury topped 40 degrees Celsius in some locations, including in Paris.

Concerns that hospitals could be overwhelmed prompted the postponement of the Paris Pride march for LGBTQ+ rights on Saturday, and a three-day music festival was cancelled.

The temperatures this week have been higher than those during a historic 2003 heatwave that was blamed for 15,000 heat-related deaths, many of them older people. The AP-HP's director, Nicolas Revel, said he doesn't expect as many deaths this time, at least in Paris hospitals, in part because treatment for overheating has since improved.

During another exceptionally hot summer last year, more than 5,700 deaths were attrib-

ed to heat, according to France's public health authority.

In the UK, sweltering conditions are expected to gradually ease this weekend, though an amber warning — one step down from red — remained in place until Saturday night.

Britons struggled to cope this week as the record June temperature was smashed three days in a row. Friday was confirmed as the country's hottest June day on record, with a provisional temperature of 37.3 degrees Celsius recorded in eastern England.

It was more than 1 degree Celsius hotter than the long-standing record for June heat in the UK, set in the summer of 1976.

On Saturday, police said a 22-year-old man's body was recovered from a river after he reportedly got into difficulty in the water during the heatwave.