

South Korea's hottest day in 122 years

Seoul: A record heatwave is gripping the Korean peninsula, sending temperatures soaring across South Korea and North Korea as authorities expand emergency measures and residents seek relief in cooling shelters, beaches and water parks.

Forecasters said on Monday that extreme heat, previously concentrated in South Korea's southeast, was spreading into the Seoul metropolitan area and other western regions. North Korean state media also reported temperatures approaching 40°C in parts of the country and a fifth straight tropical night in Pyongyang.

South Korea's weather agency warned temperatures could rise further in western regions this week.

Data from the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency from Sunday showed



Children cool themselves under a fountain in Seoul on Monday. (Reuters)

14 had died and 1,889 people had suffered heat-related illnesses since mid-May.

The Korea Meteorological Administration (KMA) said Yangsan recorded 42.5°C on Sunday, the highest temperature measured in 122 years of weather observations. The

southeastern city had already broken the national record on the two preceding days.

Prime Minister Han Seung-sook ordered ministries and local governments to mobilise all available resources to respond to heatwave and drought risks, after the government

raised its heatwave response alert to the second-highest level, unlocking funding for relief efforts and more frequent inspections in affected areas.

Power authorities have activated emergency measures and are closely monitoring supply and demand as electricity consumption is expected to reach a record high in late August amid surging air-conditioning use.

Severe heatwave warnings have been issued across parts of southern South Korea, including Busan, Ulsan, South Gyeongsang and parts of Gwangju and South Jeolla Province.

Local governments have scrambled to protect vulnerable residents. Seoul districts have expanded cooling shelters and distributed free water and sun umbrellas, while Yangsan has expanded

water-spraying operations and water distribution.

Searing temperatures have disrupted daily life. Over the weekend, the Korea Baseball Organisation cancelled games in Busan and Changwon and said further schedule adjustments could be considered if dangerous conditions persist.

Local media reported packed beaches, water parks and riverside recreation areas.

North Korea is experiencing similar conditions. State media said heat advisories covering much of the country would remain in place through the week and reported that tens of thousands of people had visited the Wonsan Kalma Coastal Tourist Zone during July.

Water parks in Pyongyang were also packed, according to state television.

Reuters