

HEATWAVE OVER 10 DAYS

CHINA BRACES FOR 'BIG HEAT'

Highest level alert issued in cities on the coast amid fears over dam failure risks

BEIJING

CHINA will suffer the return of more heatwaves over the next 10 days from east to west, with some cities on the coast already issuing the highest level warning and inland regions warning of dam failure risks as glacial melt accelerates.

A sharp temperature spike is expected today, before building up into heatwaves, defined as periods of atypically hot weather of three days or more. Today is the day of the "big heat" in the Chinese Almanac based on the lunar calendar.

The hot spell is expected to be similar in scope as heatwaves from July 5 to 17, but more regions could be hit by temperatures of 40°C or higher, Fu Jiaolan, chief forecaster at the National Meteorological Centre, said.

Some cities in Zhejiang province, home to many factories and exporters, yesterday issued red alerts, the highest in a three-tier warning system, forecasting temperatures of at least 40°C in the next 24 hours.

The load on the national power grid could reach a new high this summer as demand for air-conditioning by homes, offices and factories surges, with safe oper-



A medical worker in a protective suit sitting with ice blocks at a Covid-19 testing site, amid a heatwave warning in Nanchang, Jiangxi province, China, on Thursday. REUTERS PIC

ation facing "severe tests", the Emergency Management Ministry warned yesterday.

"For all factories in China and in Shanghai we have regulations that need to be followed," said Leo Zhang, president of chemical product maker Sika China.

"Every year we do things to make the work more comfortable, for example giving workers ice-creams when it gets too hot."

Zhejiang, as well as parts of Fu-

jian, Guangdong, Hunan, Jiangxi and the city of Chongqing, also face risk of forest fires in the near term, the ministry said.

In the western region of Xinjiang, accelerated glacial melt through July 29 posed risks to rivers and dams, the China Meteorological Administration said yesterday, warning particularly of a high risk of dam failure on a tributary of the Aksu River near China's border with Kyrgyzstan.

The heat in China this summer has been described as extreme.

From June 1 to July 20, the Yellow River and Yangtze River basins — major centres of industry and commerce — were hit by at least 10 high-temperature days more than the norm.

Heatwaves have also scorched other parts of East Asia, Western Europe, North Africa and North America, sparking wildfires in many countries. **Reuters**