

Sweltering north China in line for relief today...

By Wang Xiang | 2010-7-8

The heat wave that has baked north China for three days will start to ease off today, but much of south China will still have temperatures topping 37 degrees Celsius.

Yang Guimin with the National Meteorological Center said the average temperature in north China will drop below 35 degrees.

But Yang cautioned on China National Radio yesterday that residents may not feel more comfortable because, although the temperature will drop, the humidity will be rising.

This has been the hottest early July in 50 years for the capital city of Beijing, with the downtown temperature hitting 42.9 degrees Celsius on Monday. The extreme heat caused water and power cuts in many residential complexes, The Beijing News reported.

Residents living in Beijing's Changping District told the newspaper that the tap water in their complex hasn't reached higher than the fourth floor since Monday. They have to carry water with barrels from the first floor and then climb upstairs to meet everyday use.

The water company in Changping said the water cuts were caused by a massive demand of 2.86 million cubic meters, approaching the city's extreme daily water supply capacity of 3 million cubic meters.

Some water reserves in Beijing were running low.

Beijing Times said the city's water supply system hadn't ever been strained like this in over 100 years.

The extreme heat left homes in Beijing without electricity as many power transformers broke down under the scorching sun.

"I take a cold water shower every hour of the night," a Haidian District resident surnamed Zhang told the newspaper about his way of dealing with the heat.

"When we were suddenly left without power, my whole family rushed to a supermarket right after daybreak just for the air conditioning."

A Fengtai District resident surnamed Li said many of her neighbors fled their apartments after a power cut and took refuge in their air-conditioned cars the whole night.

Liu Changjiang, an official with Beijing Electronic Power Company, said the company received more than 500 complaints in 17 hours on Tuesday.

That's more than double the complaints for all of last week.

The death of a 55-year-old cleaner in Kaifeng City, Henan Province, was blamed on the 39.2-degree weather on Tuesday.

The man died after lying unconscious on his broom. He was ignored by passers-by who thought he was sleeping.

The hot weather in Henan's capital city of Zhengzhou reportedly melted tarmac and caused traffic to halt when car tires stuck to the road.

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