

Central Asia hit with record-breaking heatwave

July 1 2015

Turkmenistan reported its hottest June on record Wednesday, as a heat wave envelops former Soviet Central Asia.

"June 2015 was the hottest June since 1891 when records began. Daytime temperatures exceeded 40 degrees Celsius in the shade 16 times," a spokeswoman at Turkmenistan's state meteorological service in the capital Ashgabat told AFP Wednesday.

She noted that Tuesday, when temperatures reached 47.2 degrees celsius, was the hottest June day in Ashgabat in the recorded history of the energy-rich country.

Many Muslims fasting for the Ramadan holy month in the secluded Caspian state have taken time off work and are shutting themselves away in air conditioned rooms, one observant Muslim who did not wish to be named told AFP.

In Kazakhstan temperatures, while set to vary in the coming week, remain very high in the southern regions of the country.

"In the afternoon the streets are empty," said Shafarat Sataeva, 72, from the southern region of Kyzylorda, where temperatures reached 42 degrees Celsius in the shade on Wednesday, the highest anywhere in the country.

In Tajikistan over 50 people including three Russian soldiers stationed at

Russia's military base in the country drowned in mountain rivers and lakes as they sought to cool themselves.

The country's meteorological service said temperatures are expected to pass 40 degrees Celsius in the capital Dushanbe and warned of mudflows from high levels of glacial melt in the mountainous country.

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