

Weather Forecasters Warn of a Hot Summer

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The federal weather bureau said the upcoming summer, while hot, will not match last year's scorching records — even as it prepared to receive a shipment of 30 air conditioning units for its Moscow headquarters.

"The weather last summer was a very rare event, and we are not expecting it to happen again," deputy head Gennady Yeliseyev said Friday.

Yeliseyev said by phone that summer temperatures in the capital were nevertheless expected to exceed seasonal averages, with July to be the worst offender. Bureau head Roman Vilfand gave a similar forecast last month.

The bureau has opened a state tender for 30 air conditioners worth 1.5 million rubles (\$53,000) to be installed at its offices on downtown Bolshoi Predtechensky Pereulok in June, Interfax reported. Yeliseyev, who confirmed the tender, said the agency actually requested permission to purchase the equipment more than six months ago but the process has dragged on because of red tape.

Last summer's heatwave resulted in all-time temperature records in Moscow and caused wildfires that swept the countryside in central Russia, killing dozens of people and ravaging crops. Peat bog fires blanketed the capital in acid smog, prompting an increase in mortality rates.

Between Monday and Wednesday this week, the federal weather bureau forecasts dry and partly sunny weather with temperatures of 26 to 28 degrees Celsius in Moscow.

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