

At least 40 dead after bus falls into ravine in western Pakistan



Rescuers search near the wreckage of the bus

AFP | Quetta

An overloaded bus veered off a road and fell more than 20 meters into a ravine in western Pakistan, killing at least 40 people, officials said.

The chief minister of Balochistan province where the accident took place had ordered an inquiry, according to his spokesman, and Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in a statement expressed grief over the passenger casualties.

"A passenger bus travelling from Quetta to Peshawar plunged into a deep ravine in the mountainous Dana Sar area... 40 people have been confirmed dead and 11 others injured," said Sanaullah Sherani, the head of the emergency center in Zhob district near where the incident took place.

Sherani said the injured passengers had been taken to hospital, three of them in critical condition.

"The bus fell approximately 70 to 80 feet into the ravine," Sherani added.

"As the accident occurred in a rugged mountainous area, rescue teams faced significant difficulties during the initial phase of the operation," he said.

Death toll from bomb blast at Damascus cafe rises to 10

AFP | Damascus

Syria's health ministry said yesterday the death toll from a bomb attack at a Damascus cafe the previous day had risen to 10, with 21 people wounded.

The bombing - the deadliest since a suicide attack on a church last year - was not immediately claimed.

It took place near the capital's Palace of Justice, a key government building, sparking scenes of panic in the busy area.

Authorities said it was caused by an explosive device planted at the scene. The homemade bomb weighed about one kilogram and was packed with metal fragments. The health ministry had previously said nine people were killed and 20 wounded.

India, Japan sign AI, defence and energy deals after Modi-Takaichi summit



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) looks on as Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi reacts before their meeting at the Hyderabad House

TDT | Agencies

India and Japan signed a series of deals on Thursday to deepen cooperation in artificial intelligence, critical minerals, energy and defence following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart Sanae Takaichi at the 16th India-Japan Annual Summit in New Delhi. The measures aim to bolster economic security and cement one of Asia's key strategic relationships as geopolitical competition intensifies across the Indo-Pacific.

Artificial intelligence emerged as a central pillar of the new partnership, with both leaders pledging to combine Japan's strengths in advanced manufacturing and precision engineering with India's large software industry and expanding digital economy. Officials said the goal is to accelerate AI innovation and industrial applications, positioning the two countries as trusted players in critical technologies.

The summit also produced agreement on a joint roadmap for economic security, reflecting shared concern over supply chain resilience in sectors such as semiconductors, critical minerals and advanced manufacturing. Since the COVID-19 pandemic and amid rising geopolitical tensions, both governments have sought to cut vulnerabilities linked to concentrated supply

chains and to secure essential resources for strategic industries.

On defence, New Delhi and Tokyo announced their first joint defence co-development project, a symbolic but significant step in expanding military cooperation that has grown steadily over the past decade through exercises and maritime coordination. As fellow members of the Quad grouping with the United States and Australia, both countries say closer defence and technology collaboration is vital to maintaining stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Energy ties were reinforced through the launch of an India-Japan Bio-Gas Initiative that envisages 1,000 bio-gas and organic fertilizer plants across India. The project is intended to help diversify India's energy mix, boost rural energy access and reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels, while supporting environmental sustainability and the green transition.

Japan remains one of India's largest investors and development partners, backing projects such as the Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed rail corridor and expanding its footprint in banking, manufacturing and technology. Bilateral trade reached about 27.5 billion dollars in the 2025/26 fiscal year, with Japanese investment rising despite global economic uncertainty.

El Nino set to be 'strong', UN warns

Phenomenon expected to strengthen between July and September

- WMO warns of extremes
- Heatwave risks expected worldwide
- Pacific temperatures rising sharply
- Impacts felt into 2027

AFP | Geneva

El Nino is here and will quickly develop into a strong event between July and September, fuelling the likelihood of extreme weather, the United Nations' climate agency warned yesterday.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said the climate phenomenon would rapidly gain strength, as it warned countries to brace for impact.

El Nino warms surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, bringing worldwide changes in winds, pressure and rainfall patterns.

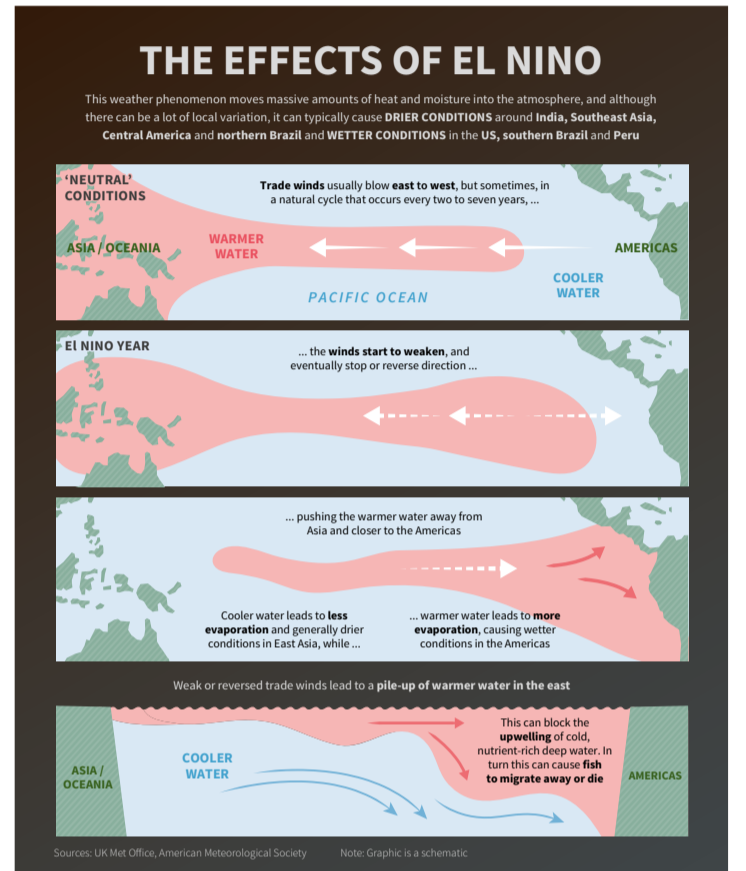
It typically takes place every two to seven years and lasts around nine to 12 months.

Conditions oscillate between El Nino and its opposite La Nina, with neutral conditions in between.

The WMO's monthly Global Seasonal Climate Update points towards "a rapid development into a strong El Nino event during July-September".

The UN agency classifies El Nino events as weak, moderate, strong or very strong, meaning it is set to reach the third-highest level out of four.

"El Nino conditions have developed in the tropical Pacific and are forecast to strengthen rapidly over the coming months, increasing the likelihood of... ex-



reme weather events in many parts of the world," the WMO said.

Heatwave risks

WMO climate scientist Alvaro Silva told a press conference that since last month, "we have much more confidence that strong El Nino conditions are developing in the equatorial Pacific".

He said the WMO may issue an update in the coming months, "for example, if we have forecasts suggesting this will be a really strong El Nino".

The Geneva-based agency said forecasts produced by global climate centres, using different models, indicate a consistent and significant warming of ocean temperatures across the central and eastern equatorial Pacific.

"Seasonal-average sea-surface temperature anomalies expected to exceed 2C in key monitoring

regions," it said.

"El Nino is expected to continue strengthening during the Northern Hemisphere autumn, with its influence extending across many regions of the globe."

The last El Nino contributed to making 2023 the second-hottest year on record and 2024 the all-time high at around 1.55C above the 1850-1900 pre-industrial average. While El Nino usually peaks between November and February, the resulting spike in temperatures typically comes later.

"The impacts of El Nino will be felt in different regions until the end of the year and beyond, also during 2027," underlined Silva.

The WMO said it was stepping up early warning support to help guide preparedness, especially in climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture and health.

Was EU lawmaker probing Pegasus spyware hacked with it?

AFP | Brussels

EU lawmakers voiced outrage yesterday over a report that a former Greek MEP's phone was hacked using Pegasus spyware -- while he was serving on a parliamentary inquiry into the surveillance tool.

The University of Toronto's Citizen Lab found that Stelios Kouloglou's phone was infected with Pegasus in 2022 and 2023, as the left-wing lawmaker sat as a substitute on the European Parliament committee investigating the spyware's use in Europe.

The researchers said they had "high confidence" in their findings but could not say who was behind the alleged espionage, while noting that Pegasus, developed by Israeli firm NSO



Group, had been sold to several governments.

The report issued yesterday sparked a wave of indignant re-

actions at the European Parliament in Brussels.

Belgian Green lawmaker Saskia Bricmont said she was "shocked", urging the European Commission to "take binding measures to ban the illegal use of spyware in Europe."

The Left group called for "strong measures" against spyware, arguing that little has been done in Europe to date, while the centrist Renew group said it was "very concerned".

An investigative journalist and EU lawmaker until 2024, Kouloglou contacted Citizen Lab himself in May to have his phone examined.

Questioned about the claim, the European Parliament said its services "constantly monitor cybersecurity threats as well as potential cyberattacks against its working environment".