

Deadly rains batter northern China in aftermath of storm Doksuri

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Floods have forced people in Beijing to flee on rubber boats

Beijing, August 2 (RHC)-- At least 11 people are dead and 27 missing after heavy rains battered northern parts of China, including Beijing, state media said on Tuesday, in downpours that have submerged roads and deluged neighbourhoods with mud.

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday called for “every effort” to rescue those “lost or trapped” as the remnants of the storm Doksuri dumped record rainfall in Beijing.

Among the dead were two workers “killed on duty during rescue and relief” efforts, broadcaster CCTV said. More than 100,000 people across the city deemed at risk had been evacuated, state-owned tabloid the Global Times reported.

Storm Doksuri, a former super typhoon, had swept northwards through China since hitting southern Fujian province on Friday after first scything through the Philippines. Rivers have swollen to dangerous levels, prompting Beijing to use a flood storage reservoir for the first time since it was built 25 years ago. As of Monday night, China’s capital city had sealed off more than 100 mountain roads.

Doksuri, one of the strongest storms to hit China in years, weakened as it rolled inland, but authorities warned that risks of further floods and other geological disasters remained.

Local authorities “must do a good job in treating the injured and comforting the families of victims, and minimise casualties”, CCTV quoted Xi as saying. “They must properly relocate affected people, work quickly to repair damaged transportation, communication and electricity infrastructure, and restore the order of normal production and life as soon as possible,” he added.

Localised thunderstorms and strong winds were forecast for Beijing on Tuesday, as well as for neighbouring city Tianjin and Hebei province, CCTV said. Beijing’s Fangshan district said it will deploy helicopters to drop off food, drinking water and emergency supplies to villages in mountainous areas that have been cut off.

Food delivery giant Meituan has added staff and extended delivery times as orders for vegetables, meat and eggs rose 50 percent and overall shopping on its app increased 20 percent, media reported. Several subway lines in the capital, including trains in western suburbs, were suspended on Tuesday. Beijing’s Mentougou district in the west saw dramatic damage a day earlier, after torrential rains turned roads into rivers, sweeping cars away.

Nearly 400 flights were cancelled on Tuesday and hundreds were delayed at Beijing’s two airports, tracker app Flight Master showed. Beijing recorded an average of 260mm (10.2 inches) of rainfall from Saturday to early Monday, with the Changping Wangjiayuan reservoir logging the largest reading at 738.3mm (29 inches).

The city government said rainfall over the past few days has broken records from a severe storm 11 years ago. In July 2012, Beijing was hit by what was then the strongest storm since the founding of modern China, with the city receiving 190.3mm of rain in one day, affecting more than 1.6 million people.

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