

## Tourist sites unscathed by deluge

By ZHENG XIN  
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Most scenic spots in Beijing got through the storm on Saturday unscathed, but rain continued to lash neighboring Hebei province, killing at least 17 people by Monday.

Meanwhile, the highway linking Beijing, Hong Kong and Macao remains blocked.

Some lamp poles, guardrails, signboards and parking lots were damaged by the worst storm in the capital in more than six decades, and the government is repairing them, Beijing tourism authorities said on Monday.

The worst-hit tourist sites included Shidu, Badachu Park and Tongzhou Grand Canal Forest Park, Yu Debin, deputy director of the Beijing Tourism Development Committee, said at a news conference on Monday.

Lu Yong, the committee's director, warned the public to stay away from undeveloped mountainous areas because Beijing might get another rainstorm on Wednesday.

"We will restore the warning and direction signs that were damaged by the storm as soon as possible, but we're also advising tourists not to go to dangerous places," Lu said.

Lu said the storm, which killed at least 37 people in the city, will not seriously hurt Beijing's tourism industry.

Liu Wenbo, director of the administrative office of Badaling special zone, where the famous Badaling section of the Great Wall stands, said "not fewer" tourists visited the scenic spot over the weekend than before.

"The rainfall here was not as serious as it was downtown," he said.

Famous downtown tourist sites, such as the Palace Museum, the Temple of Heaven and the Summer Palace, were not damaged by the torrential rainfall, according to the Beijing Municipal Administration of Cultural Heritage.

China CYTS Tours Holding said its business in the capital was not affected because most of the scenic spots and routes are in the northern part of the city, where storm damage was not as bad as in the southern part.

A bus driver for a private transportation company in Hebei province that carries passengers from Beijing to Hebei's capital, Shijiazhuang, said no trips have been canceled or prices increased despite the rain.

However, he has to take a different route because the Beijing-Hong Kong-Macao Expressway was still blocked on Monday. That was the only highway still flooded in Beijing, according to the committee.

"The detour adds an hour to the trip between the two cities," said the driver, named Fu.

The storm that hit Beijing on Sat-



Rescue workers pump water from a section of the Beijing-Hong Kong-Macao Expressway in Fengtai district of Beijing on Monday afternoon.

ZHANG LIMINGZHU / FOR CHINA DAILY



**We will restore the warning and direction signs ... but we're also advising tourists not to go to dangerous places."**

LU YONG  
DIRECTOR OF BEIJING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

urday ravaged neighboring Hebei on Sunday and Monday.

At least 17 people have been confirmed dead and 21 missing in Hebei, the provincial civil affairs bureau said on Monday.

Eleven thousand tourists and 2,700 rural residents are still stranded in Laiyuan, Laishui and Yixian counties, as roads leading to rural tourists attractions remain blocked and telecommunications cut off.

The rain has brought floods and hail to 56 counties in Hebei, and nearly 160,000 people were evacuated over the weekend.

Hebei's Yesanpo tourist resort was one of the worst hit areas.

Thousands of tourists, who were short of water and cut off in traffic and communication, have been taken away from Yesanpo, according to the micro blog of Laishui county, where Yesanpo is located.

## Capital to upgrade drainage

By ZHENG JINRAN  
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Rescue work following the heavy rainstorms that hit Beijing on Saturday is continuing, as the local government pledges to upgrade the poor drainage system.

The floods left at least 37 people dead and caused traffic chaos across the city.

"The rescue and cleanup work is going on, with thousands of people's participation," said Liu Lizhi, a publicity official with Beijing Water Authority.

During the downpour, transportation in the lower areas of the city was paralyzed, especially in some underpasses with poor drainage systems. Deep water was logged at 52 sites in downtown areas, including many underpasses, especially at the Guangqumen Bridge on the East Second Ring Road where a 34-year-old man drowned in a stranded car.

The water was drained by Sunday night, and traffic in the downtown areas has returned to normal.

"The design standards of underpasses are poor because they were constructed in the 1980s," said Zheng Jiang, deputy general manager of Beijing Drainage Group in a press release on Sunday. "It makes our

underpass drainage system vulnerable."

Many of the 78 underpasses, which were built lower than surrounding roads, have limited pumping capacity and are capable of draining away water only if the rainfall is less than 30 millimeters an hour, making traffic jams in rainy weather a regular sight, he said.

Pan Anjun, deputy director of the water authority, told China Daily the storms had revealed areas of concern.

"The chaos of transportation due to the summer rainstorms has exposed our weakness in municipal infrastructure," Pan said.

Thorough examinations of underpasses will be conducted, and upgrading plans will be made for every one of them to improve drainage, Pan said. He did not reveal schedule of the upgrading program.

According to a report released by the Beijing Drainage Group in early July, all 78 existing underpasses will be reconstructed by the end of 2015.

More powerful pumps will be installed if water fails to drain from the underpasses when rainfall reaches 50 mm. Adjustable reservoirs will also be built for some underpasses, which will prevent flooding even if the rainfall reaches 70 mm.

"One solution to improve the

poor drainage system in Beijing is to gradually upgrade the underground conduits and design standards," said Liu Dongwei, chief architect of the China Institute of Building Standard Design and Research. "But it's not a job that will be completed soon."

The new design standards should be implemented as part of the whole city development plan. In addition, more permeable materials should be adopted in more communities, he said.

"But this upgrading program requires the government to invest more," he said.

The heavy rainfall from the weekend storm drained into rivers running through the capital, which met in the North Canal, the northern part of the Grand Canal and also a branch of Haihe River feeding to the Bohai Sea through Tianjin.

The flood passed through Beijing and arrived in Tianjin on Sunday morning. The water level of the Qinglong and Jianhe rivers, which experienced flooding, peaked at 8.16 meters, 0.06 meters higher than the flood diversion level on Sunday night.

But the flood passed through that section safely, heading to the Bohai Sea on Monday morning.

## Typhoon threatens southern provinces

By ZHENG CAIXIONG  
in Guangzhou  
and HUANG YIMING in Haikou

Typhoon Vicente was barreling toward Guangdong and Hainan provinces and part of the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region on Monday night and early Tuesday morning, according to meteorological authorities.

Because of the typhoon, ferry service across Qiongzhou Strait has been suspended since 6 pm on Sunday, leaving many passengers and vehicles stranded in Haikou, Hainan province, and the Leizhou Peninsula in western Guangdong.

Train service between Beijing and Sanya in Hainan, as well as between Haikou and Shanghai, Changsha, Xi'an and Chengdu, has been rescheduled due to the suspension of rail ferry service between Guangdong and Hainan.

Local authorities said the ferry service will not be restored until Tuesday afternoon, when Vicente weakens.

In Shenzhen, which borders Hong Kong, 16 flights from Shenzhen Baoan International Airport were canceled on Monday because of the bad weather, and 10 ferry services linking the airport to Hong Kong and Macao were canceled.

Authorities have also cancelled six helicopter flights to Macao because of the storm.

In Guangzhou, many passengers were stranded in Baiyun International Airport after nine domestic flights were cancelled and 153 others delayed due to the storm.

Only 41 percent of domestic flights could take off from the airport as scheduled, according to an official from the airport on Monday.

Vicente is so far the strongest typhoon to hit China's coastal areas this year.

According to the Guangdong provincial meteorological observatory, the powerful rainstorm lashing Pearl River Delta cities will not subside until Thursday.

Some cities in South China have already been hit by raging storms in previous two days.

Haikou had 113.5 millimeters of rain and wind gusting at close to 70 kilometers per hour on Sunday night and Monday morning.

Huang Jianxue, a resident of Haikou, said the gale was so strong that many people stayed indoors on Monday.

"I was soaked to the bone when I got home from work," he said. "Peoples' raincoats were whipped around by the gales," he added.

The city's meteorological center issued a red storm alert on Monday, the highest warning level in China's four-tier color-coded weather warning system.

By noon on Monday, 2,486 fishing boats had returned to typhoon shelters in Haikou.

On Yongxing island in Sansha, Hainan, many coconut palms were toppled by the winds.

Cities in the Pearl River Delta, including Guangzhou, have been struck by the storms in the past two days. In Huizhou, Zhuhai, Yangjiang, Zhanjiang and Maoming, downtown streets were flooded after the downpours.

Liu Kun, deputy governor of Guangdong, has urged cities in the coastal areas to do what they can to avoid casualties and minimize economic loss.

"All the fishing boats must return to safe waters before Vicente makes landfall," he said at a work conference on Monday.

He said priority must be given to protecting agriculture, water conservancy projects and coastal and river dikes.

In Yangjiang alone, more than 6,500 fishing boats had returned to typhoon shelters ahead of Vicente.

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## Boats urged off crowded Yangtze as flood peak nears

By XU WEI in Chongqing  
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Authorities have called for tighter control of boats and small ships on the Yangtze River to ease river traffic congestion at the Three Gorges Dam, which is about to face the largest flood peak of the year this week.

In a joint statement, the State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters and the Ministry of Transport called on local authorities to try to dissuade owners of boats and small ships from operating during the flood peak period and to tighten safety measures of vessels crowded at the dam.

The Three Gorges Dam will face the largest flood peak this year before dawn on Wednesday after heavy rains hit upstream areas of the Yangtze River, the national flood control authority said.

The flow rate could also be the highest at the dam since it began operation, the authority said. The dam increased its floodwater release from 38,000 cubic meters per second to 43,000 cu m per second between Monday evening and Tuesday morning.

Authorities have promised to

improve the efficiency of ferry services at the dam as soon as the amount of floodwater release is lowered.

Shipping congestion at the Three Gorges Dam has occurred since late June as the flood peak approached.

As of July 13, there were 606 ships were caught in the river traffic at the dam.

The congestion has already affected river cruises that operate between Chongqing and the dam.

"We have to cancel the tour to the ship locks because of the congestion," said a staff member of Chongqing Tourism Investment Group named Jiang. His group operates river cruises along the Yangtze.

Jiang said the congestion has increased the company's operating costs because it has to disembark the passengers at Yichang, Hubei province, and then use buses.

Torrential rain has ravaged 17 of China's provinces since July 20, leaving 95 dead and 45 missing, the Ministry of Civil Affairs said on Monday, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Natural disasters caused by the downpours have affected 6.23 million people in 264 counties and 17 provinces and municipalities such as Beijing, Hebei, Shanxi, Sichuan, and



A man jumps across floodwater in Wujia township of Chongqing on Sunday. Heavy rains have hit the municipality since Saturday and affected 300,000 residents.

RAN WEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Guizhou, and forced the evacuation of 567,000 residents, the ministry said in a statement.

The ministry reported 37 deaths in Beijing, 17 deaths and 21 missing in Hebei, eight deaths and two missing in Sichuan, six deaths and four missing in Yunnan, five deaths in Chongqing, four deaths and one missing in Shanxi, three deaths in

the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, and three deaths and 14 missing in Shaanxi.

Rainstorms have destroyed 29,000 houses and damaged another 55,000.

National disaster relief and civil affairs authorities initiated a level-four emergency response and sent teams to the worst-affected areas of Beijing and Hebei on Sunday to

direct relief work.

As of Monday noon, natural disasters — strong wind, hail, floods, landslides and mudslides — had affected 110 million people on the Chinese mainland this year, leaving 680 dead and 137 missing, according to the ministry.

Jin Zhu contributed to this story.