

2 confirmed dead after heavy rain slashes C. China

Rain lasting for two days in central China's Hunan Province has left two people dead and 466,500 people suffering losses, while authorities on Friday closed all major tourist spots.

The rain damaged hundreds of houses in Hunan and 24,600 hectares of farmland were flooded. The two deaths occurred in Yongshun County, where a house collapsed on Friday burying two children, aged 7 and 5, according to the provincial civil affairs department.

The rain disrupted traffic in several towns. The civil affairs department is still investigating casualties and losses, while aid to the affected areas.

The Hunan provincial tourist commission closed more than 10 destinations, including Zhangjiajie National Forest Park and Fenghuang river town. The commission warned tourists against traveling, camping or picnicking near rivers or on hillsides.

The local weather observatory forecast that the rain would become heavier on Saturday, and last till Wednesday.

In east China's Jiangxi Province, the provincial weather observatory on Saturday issued a red alert for rain, the highest level in the four-tier weather alert system. Heavy rain since Tuesday has forced the evacuation of 14,000 people to safer places.

Hong Kong's future will be bright with support of mainland: K. Wah Group chairman

The Chinese mainland and Hong Kong have benefited each other and have grown together since Hong Kong's return to the motherland 20 years ago, K. Wah Group Chairman Lui Che-woo told Xinhua recently.

"The central government's policy towards Hong Kong has supported Hong Kong's development, while Hong Kong on the other hand has helped the mainland to open up further to the world," said the 88-year-old tycoon, wearing his trademark flap cap.

Lui believes that Hong Kong has maintained its core value over the past 20

years. "You can see that it is more prosperous nowadays."

Prior to 1997, some foreign and local companies moved their businesses away from Hong Kong for fear of uncertain future. K. Wah Group went the other way around.

"I think the return to the motherland presents lots of opportunities for Hong Kong," he said, "With the mainland behind our back, Hong Kong's future will be bright. So we concentrated our business in Hong Kong at that time."

Founded in 1955 and starting from quarrying industry, K. Wah Group has expanded rapidly during the past two decades, becoming a conglomerate of construction materials, properties, hospitality and entertainment and leisure resorts, with total assets value mounting to hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars.

Lui said Hong Kong has made huge progress in finance, trading, tourism and transportation after 1997, together with sound legal system, helping elevate Hong Kong's international status significantly.

"Hong Kong is right behind New York and London now, but without the support from the mainland, Hong Kong would not be so strong," Lui chuckled. "Hong Kong people should be grateful to all the benefits."

He said the successful implementation of the "one country, two systems" principle in Hong Kong has ensured its prosperity and stability.

"The principle is the smartest way to balance two different political and economic systems, enabling Hong Kong and the mainland to adapt and cooperate with each other. The achievement is well recognized," Lui said.

As one of the earliest Hong Kong companies to enter the mainland market in the 1980s, K. Wah Group has now become a major construction material supplier in the northern, eastern and southern China.

The company also seized the opportunities to transform itself into a fully integrated environmentally-friendly enterprise, in line with China's national policy of sustainable development.

"So far our eco-product business in the Chinese mainland is good, sometimes in short supply," Lui said.

With over five decades of quarrying experience, K. Wah Group also strives to share a piece of cake from the Belt and Road Initiative, as many infrastructure projects are planned along the revived ancient trade routes.

"I wish there would be more opportunities for us, and hopefully our business in countries along the Belt and Road will exceed that in Hong Kong," Lui said.

He also spoke highly of southern China's Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. "The concept is quite attractive," Lui said, adding Hong Kong will become an important hub of trading, tourism and industry as all the places

within the bay area will be linked more closely in the future.

“K. Wah Group has confidence in investing the bay area, and there are some projects under negotiation currently,” said Lui, with a high expectation that the central government will grant more incentives to Hong Kong businessmen.

He is upbeat about China’s future development. “The mainland is leading ahead in many fields, such as technology, and Hong Kong is also catching up. I believe the country will continue moving forward.”

2 pandas to leave for Germany for 15-year research



Photo taken on May 3, 2017 shows giant panda “Meng Meng” at the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding in Chengdu, capital of southwest China’s Sichuan Province. Giant pandas “Meng Meng” and “Jiao Qing” took a chartered flight on June 24 from Chengdu to settle in their new home at the Berlin Zoo in Berlin, Germany, on a 15-year research mission. “Meng Meng”, a female, is four years old, and “Jiao Qing” is a seven-year-old male. (Xinhua)

Giant pandas Meng Meng and Jiao Qing will take a chartered flight from Chengdu Saturday to settle in their new home in Berlin Zoo, Germany, on a 15-year research mission.

The furry ambassadors will be accompanied by two Chinese keepers, Berlin Zoo's senior vet, 1,000 kilograms of bamboo and a large number of biscuits.

Meng Meng, a female, is four years old, and loves being on camera and sleeping, while Jiao Qing is a seven-year-old male, who is very active and loves physical activity.

They were both born at Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding. Berlin Zoo has been preparing for their arrival since October.

"We have built new enclosures in an area of 5,500 square meters, neighboring the oldest enclosures, built for antelopes and giraffes in 1871," said Andreas Ochs, a senior veterinarian at the zoo.

Berlin weather is more agreeable than in Chengdu, so the pandas can stay outside for the whole year, according to Ochs.

The zoo has planned a 1,000 square-meter outside enclosure for each panda and a 250 square-meter inside area, as well as room for treatment, storing bamboo and quarantine.

To better host the bears, the zoo has sent a team to China to learn specific skills to care for them.

"We have learned to design enclosures for keeping the bears and how to go into the cage and remove the baby bear for nursing and to return it to the mother again once the couple give birth," Ochs said.

China has gifted three pandas to Germany since the early 1980s. Bao Bao and Tian Tian were the first panda couple in Berlin Zoo, though Tian Tian died in 1982.

Bao Bao remained alone until Yan Yan was loaned to the zoo in 1995 to breed. However, breeding attempts were unsuccessful despite trying artificial insemination seven times.

Thirty-four-year-old Bao Bao died in Berlin in 2012, as the oldest male panda in the world.

"Jiao Qing is grown-up now and Meng Meng will be ready to mate in two years. We expect to see their baby born in Berlin," said Yin Hong, Meng Meng's keeper in Chengdu.

China Wildlife Conservation Association and Berlin Zoo signed a 15-year contract in April. The research team at Chengdu Base singled the panda pair out based on their health, age and hereditary genes, said Yin.

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Germany.

"They are envoys for China-Germany friendship. All the people in Berlin are looking forward to seeing this pair of pandas soon," Ochs said.

16 arrested for illegally selling Apple user data in China

Chinese police have arrested 16 employees or former employees of an Apple contractor for selling the personal information of iPhone users.

In January, police in Cangnan county of eastern China's Zhejiang Province suspected several employees or former employees of an Apple distributor and a contractor of stealing user data, the county procuratorate said in a statement Friday.

In May, police caught 22 people, 20 of whom worked for the two companies, from Guangdong, Jiangsu and Fujian provinces.

So far, sixteen have been arrested and four remain under investigation.

Fifteen of those arrested work for Guangzhou Telecom Yingke Company, a contractor which provides consulting and after-sales service for Apple.

Prosecutors said that starting from August 2013, the chief suspects Yang, Li and Gan, used their internal system to illegally check personal information of iPhone users.

They illegally obtained names, telephone numbers, email accounts and addresses of Apple customers.

In July, 2014, they were fired by the company, but continued to collude with company staff to steal information until August 2016

Each item of information was sold at 10 to 180 yuan (US\$26.24).

Preliminary investigation showed that they made about 50 million yuan (about US\$7.35 million) of illegal profit.

Over 100 buried in southwest China landslide



Photo taken on June 24, 2017 shows the accident site after a landslide occurs in Xinmo Village of Maoxian County, Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, southwest China's Sichuan Province. The landslide on Sunday morning smashes some 40 homes, where about 100 people are feared to be buried. (Xinhua)

A landslide that occurred in southwest China's Sichuan Province on Saturday morning smashed some 40 homes, where about 100 people are feared to be buried, according to sources with the authorities in Maoxian County.

The landslide from a high part of a mountain in Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture of Aba fell to Xinmo Village at about 6 a.m., blocking a 2-km section of a river course.