

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.