

Heavy downpour forces evacuations in Hainan

Over 11,000 people have been evacuated in southern China's Hainan Province after heavy rain battered the island, the provincial flood control authority said Wednesday

Heavy downpours started to hit Hainan on Monday, with a total of 46 townships affected, the authority said.

In the city of Wanning, over 78 villages were flooded, a highway section was inundated and all schools were suspended for Tuesday.

Fire fighters, border patrol and armed police are taking part in rescue operations. All low-lying areas have been cordoned off and several tourists destinations have been closed, the authority said.

Icebreaker sets sail on China's 34th Antarctic expedition

China's research icebreaker Xuelong set sail from Shanghai early Wednesday beginning the country's 34th Antarctic expedition.

A team of more than 300 will make the 164-day trip of 37,000 nautical miles. They are expected to return to Shanghai in April next year.

The icebreaker will arrive in New Zealand to stock up on supplies in around 18 days. It will then sail south to the west coast of the Ross Sea, where researchers will conduct preliminary work on China's fifth station in the Antarctic, one of the key objectives of this expedition.

The fifth station will be a year-round research station able to independently carry out multiple scientific investigations in the Antarctic.

According to Yang Huigen, who leads the expedition team, researchers will also conduct other tasks during the trip such as observations of land, ocean, atmosphere, ice shelf and biology, establishment of an observation and monitoring network in the Antarctic, and survey of marine environmental protection.

Xuelong, whose name means snow dragon, is currently China's only polar icebreaker in service. In October, it completed the country's eighth Arctic expedition.

[Neolithic stone burial site found on China-Russia border](#)

Chinese archaeologists have discovered a Neolithic stone burial site by the side of a river on the border between China and Russia.

The Xiaonanshan ruins in Raohe County, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, are located on the Chinese side of the Wusuli River, known as Ussuri in Russia.

Archeologists have excavated more than 20 tombs and unearthed a trove of cultural relics including jade, stoneware and pottery, dating back around 9,000 years, according to the provincial institute of archaeology.

Li Youqian with the institute said the tombs are built with malmstone and basalt. Basalt cannot be found in the surrounding area, which means that ancient people transported the stone from other areas, he said.

The tomb chambers have very small space, some less than one meter long and archeologists believe that the bodies were placed in the tomb on one side with limbs flexed.

Li said the tombs also suggested a gap between the rich and poor in burial practices, as some tombs have large amounts of burial artifacts while others have none.

Traces of powdered human bones were found in some tombs. Further study will be required to identify the burial customs and living behaviors of the ancient community, he said.

The ruins were found at Xiaonanshan, a public park on a small hill, where residents enjoy views of the river and Russia on the other side.

Yang Yongcai, a local cultural official, said the river has abundant fish stock and the surrounding large areas of virgin forest would have provided sufficient food sources for early human settlers.

[Facial recognition implemented for traffic-related services in Wuhan](#)

Facial recognition has been implemented as a means of identification for

traffic issues in Wuhan, central China's Hubei Province.

The metropolitan traffic management bureau Tuesday updated its online service platform to use a combination of facial recognition and big data technology.

The platform will simplify the procedures of over 130 traffic-related services, including those related to vehicles, driving licenses and traffic offences, so that residents can scan their face instead of providing their ID for identification purposes.

The face scanning technology is safe and takes just a few milliseconds, according to Tan Wei, a traffic management official. It saves a digital photograph so that applicants do not need to provide physical photographs when applying for a driving license.

The platform will also be used for case investigation, as it can help police officers locate suspects.

Population of captive pandas reaches 520 worldwide

The population of captive giant pandas has reached 520 worldwide, according to the China giant panda breeding technology committee at its annual conference Tuesday.

Giant panda cubs are seen at the Ya'an Bifengxia base of the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in Ya'an City, southwest China's Sichuan Province, Oct. 13, 2017. [Photo/Xinhua]

As of early October, 63 captive panda cubs had been born in China, France, the United States, Japan, Spain, Belgium and Austria this year, 58 of which survived, bringing the population of captive giant pandas to 520, according to the committee

Besides Chinese scientists, 69 overseas experts from 13 countries participated in panel discussions at the conference, discussing giant panda conservation, breeding and reintroduction to the wild.

"China has achieved initial results in captive-bred pandas' wildness training and the rejuvenation of sub-populations," said Xie Zhong, vice chairman of the Chinese Association of Zoological Gardens.

He said that with the creation of giant panda national parks, the release of more pandas into the wild, and further scientific research, the various sub-populations of giant pandas would eventually be restored.