

Thousands battle floods along Yangtze River

Thousands of soldiers, armed police, civil servants and members of the public are battling floods in several provinces along the Yangtze River.



Staff members clear away mud after a flood at a vegetable base in Lianyuan City, central China's Hunan Province, July 3, 2017. Works of epidemic prevention and mud-cleaning are underway as floods subsided in central China's Hunan Province and south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. (Xinhua/Zhang Yang)

In Hunan Province, the water level at the Changsha monitoring station in the Xiangjiang River, a major Yangtze tributary, reached a record high of 39.51 meters early Monday, higher than the previous record of 39.18 meters set by a massive flood in 1998.

Floods have inundated houses, uprooted trees, damaged cars and sabotaged roads in Changsha, capital of Hunan.

The public, even elementary school students who are on summer vacation, volunteered to help fill sandbags to prevent the water from overflowing. Fourth grader Yang Shan, who lives in downtown Changsha, distributed ropes and filled sandbags for soldiers to carry to the riverbank.

Intermittent rain is forecast to last in Changsha until Wednesday, and the city is under heavy pressure to battle flooding.

In neighboring Hubei Province, the Three Gorges Dam on the upper Yangtze has

reduced water discharge by 70 percent in the last three days.

Its flow was 27,000 cubic meters per second before July 1, but has now been reduced to 8,000 cubic meters per second, according to the Yangtze River Flood Prevention Headquarters.

The reduction stopped 3 billion cubic meters of water and lowered the water level by up to 1.5 meters, the headquarters said.

"We hope the reduction of outflow will give soldiers and the people enough time to evacuate and stack up sand bags to battle the flood," said Wu Zhaohui, an official with the water resources bureau in Hubei Province.

In Hubei alone, 16,000 people are on high alert for flooding.

In eastern Jiangxi Province, 28,100 people are battling against the floods, as water levels in the Jiangxi section of the Yangtze and Poyang Lake, China's largest fresh water lake, have risen above warning levels.

Heavy downpours also hit Sichuan Province on the upper reaches of the Yangtze. Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport in the provincial capital of Chengdu was forced to close down for over an hour on Monday afternoon.

Nearly 8,000 passengers were affected and 40 outbound flights were delayed.

Besides provinces along the Yangtze, other southern areas of China have also been plagued by heavy rain.

Rain-triggered floods have killed 16 people and left 10 missing in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, with 91,600 local residents relocated so far, according to the regional civil affairs department.

According to the Ministry of Finance, a total of 1.88 billion yuan (276.8 million U.S. dollars) was allocated to 20 provinces and regions Monday to aid disaster relief.