

China flooding death toll nears 150

BELJING (Reuter)—Troops fanned out across southern China on Thursday to rescue tens of thousands of people stranded or left homeless by some of the worst floods in half a century that have killed nearly 150 people, officials said.

The Civil Affairs Ministry and local officials said the torrential rains that have spawned floods in four southern provinces had affected more than 10 million people and swamped vast swathes of valuable farmland planted with summer crops.

At least 144 people had been killed in the four southern provinces of

Anhui, Zhejiang, Jiangxi and Guizhou and 1,490 injured since storms and heavy rains lashed the provinces late last week, the ministry and local officials said.

An estimated 10 million people had been affected and hundreds of thousands left homeless after 98,000 houses collapsed and another 339,000 were severely damaged, it said.

Officials said 700,000 hectares of farmland had been swamped and estimated initial losses at more than 10 billion yuan (\$1.2 billion).

The highest floods in the city's history had battered scenic eastern Hangzhou,

killing 38 people in the tourist town and in surrounding Zhejiang Province, officials said by telephone.

More than 3.8 million people had been affected in the province and troops and police were battling through floodwaters to rescue 140,000 people trapped in their houses by the flood waters, officials said.

Where the waters had subsided, officials sifted through the muddy rubble of collapsed homes to count the dead.

Heavy rain was expected to soak Hangzhou for at least another four days and parts of the city were in danger of being submerged.

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AMDA to help China flooding victims

OKAYAMA—An international volunteer group of Asian doctors will send two members Thursday to the southern Chinese province of Guizhou to help those who have been hit by heavy rains and ensuing floodings, group members said.

The Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA) based in Okayama will dispatch a Japanese doctor and an assistant later in the day to offer medical service, jointly with local AMDA doctors, AMDA members said.

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