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31,000 soldiers on standby to cope with floods in northern Vietnam

Tuoi Tre News

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A specialized vehicle operates on the scene where a 3-meter long section of dam 790 in Cam Pha City, the northern province of Quang Ninh, broke on July 30, 2015.



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The Vietnamese military has put 31,000 soldiers on standby for activities to deal with floods that are spreading in northern Vietnam after killing 17 people in Quang Ninh Province, a senior official has said.

Colonel Vu The Chien, deputy chief of the secretariat of the National Committee for Search and Rescue, made the statement during an online meeting on Thursday related to the floods.

Accordingly, the Vietnam People's Army has set up a plan to deploy about 31,000 soldiers and 860 vehicles to help authorities and residents in northern provinces to deal with the flooding that has been caused by prolonged heavy rain there.

Chairing the conference, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Cao Duc Phat, head of the Central Committee for Disaster Prevention and Control, called on all local governments in northern and north-central Vietnam to be active in assisting people in coping with the ongoing spread of torrential rains and flooding.

The severe weather from now until next week has been forecast not only by the national weather agency but also by many international meteorological organizations, Minister Phat said.

Hoang Duc Cuong, director of the National Center for Hydro-Metrological Forecasting, told the conference that rainfall was recorded at 200mm in Lang Son Province's Chi Lang District and in Cua Ong Ward, Cam Pha City, Quang Ninh.

The center yesterday forecast that downpours would continue raging in the northern region, especially in Quang Ninh, Hai Phong, Lang Son and Bac Giang Provinces, and mountainous areas, from July 30 to August 4.

Speaking at the meeting, Hoang Van Thang, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, suggested that agencies concerned should arrange staffers to monitor reservoirs and dams that have contained water at 70 percent of their capacity for safety reasons.

All local authorities must be more responsible for protecting people and property in areas prone to landslides and rockslides due to floodwaters, especially in Quang Ninh, Thang added.

Heavy rains may cause flash floods and landslides in all northern provinces, especially in mountainous areas, he added.

Widespread downpours, rising rivers

Until next Tuesday, rains will gradually spread to midland and mountainous provinces in the northern region, with rainfall totals of 100-300mm on average, which may increase to 400-500mm in some areas, Cuong told the meeting.

This morning, his center also released a forecast saying that downpours, with rainfall of over 400mm, will spread from the northeast region to Viet Bac and northwestern areas in the days to come.

The Gulf of Tonkin will have winds as strong as 61kph and squalls of up to 88kph, and experience rough seas with waves reaching up to 2.5m in height.

The water levels of the Thuong, Cau, Luc Nam and Ky Cung Rivers in northern Vietnam are increasing, with a height of 4.3 meters recorded at 7:00 am Friday morning on the Thuong River in Bac Giang Province.

Heavy rains and rising rivers will cause flash floods in all northern provinces, especially Quang Ninh, Lang Son, Cao Bang, Bac Giang, Bac Kan, Ha Giang and Tuyen Quang, the weather forecast center warned.

Dam section breaks in Quang Ninh

A 3-meter long section of dam 790 in Quang Ninh's Cam Pha City broke on Thursday morning, local authorities reported.

The dam contains sludge from coal mining in the province.

Repairs are underway and reinforcement measures have been taken to consolidate the dam, preventing it from breaking under the pressure of torrential rains and floodwaters, said Tran Van Hung, deputy chairman of the Cam Pha People's Committee.

As the floodwaters began to recede on Wednesday afternoon, many locals returned to their homes, and most of them have suffered serious losses to their houses and other properties.

The provincial government has offered VND15 billion (US\$687,700) as support to localities which have sustained damage in the disaster, said Nguyen Van Doc, secretary of the provincial Party Committee.

"We will focus all efforts on relief for flood victims and will not let anybody suffer from hunger and cold," Doc said.

254 tourists taken ashore

A naval ship on Thursday evening took ashore 254 out of the around [1,500 tourists](#) who were stuck on Co To Island off Quang Ninh due to bad weather caused by downpours that prevented them from returning to the mainland, authorities reported.

These 254 travelers include 70 women and 93 children, said Do Van Hung, deputy head of Naval Brigade 170, which deployed the vessel.

"Because of unfavorable weather conditions, we only carried out one trip today, but we will try to take ashore all the remaining tourists from

the island on July 31,” Hung said.

After the stranded tourists are taken to Cai Rong Port, local authorities will arrange buses to bring them free of charge to the central bus station in Cam Pha, said Nguyen Nhu Hien, deputy chairman of the provincial People’s Council.

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