

China evacuates over 8 lakh ahead of typhoon

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Beijing: Chinese authorities have evacuated more than 800,000 people and canceled hundreds of flights as a strong typhoon with wind gusts up to 200 kilometers (125 miles) per hour headed toward the country's southeastern coast on Saturday.

Typhoon Chan-hom is expected to hit land Saturday afternoon between the coastal cities of Rui'an and Zhoushan, south of Shanghai, according to China's national weather service. It said the typhoon might be the most powerful to hit China since the communist government took power in 1949.

Some 865,000 people were evacuated from coastal areas of Zhejiang province, the provincial Civil Affairs Bureau said. The provincial flood control bureau said 28,764 ships had been ordered back to port by late Friday.

The country's railway service said more than 100 trains between the region's cities were canceled through Sunday.

All flights into and out of Zhoushan were canceled and bus services and speedboat ferry services halted. Elsewhere in Zhejiang, 388 flights were canceled in Hangzhou, 34 in Ningbo and 37 in Wenzhou, according to the provincial government.

Several area cities suspended inter-city bus services.

Chan-hom caused 20 injuries as it moved over islands in southern Japan, Kyodo news agency reported, citing the Okinawa prefecture government.

The storm also dumped rain on the northern Philippines and was expected to pass by Taiwan, where several flights were suspended. The stock market and public offices were closed Friday in Taipei, Taiwan's capital.

Earlier in the week, Typhoon Linfa displaced 56,000 people in southern China's Guangdong province.

- AP