

Powerful typhoon Faxai in direct hit on Tokyo

September 9 2019, by Shingo Ito



A man in Tokyo rides his bicycle during Typhoon Faxai, which made landfall just east of the Japanese capital

A powerful typhoon with potentially record winds and rain battered the Tokyo region early Monday, sparking evacuation warnings to tens of

thousands, widespread blackouts and transport disruption.

Typhoon Faxai, packing winds of up to 216 kilometres (134 miles) per hour, made landfall in Chiba just east of the capital before dawn, after barrelling through Tokyo Bay.

About 5,000 people in Chiba and Kanagawa prefectures were ordered to evacuate, public broadcaster NHK reported on its Twitter feed.

Authorities issued non-compulsory evacuation warnings to more than 390,000 people, as forecasters cautioned the rain and wind could reach "record" proportions.

Nearly 290,000 households lost power in the region, while at least 10 houses were damaged in Shizuoka with windows shattered and cars flipped onto their sides, according to local media.

"Please be on full alert against gusts and high waves and be vigilant about landslides, floods and swollen rivers," the Japan Metereological Agency said in a statement.

Television footage showed a huge roof collapsing at a gasoline station in Tateyama, south of Tokyo, with pumps crushed underneath.

Faxai was likely to cause havoc with the Monday morning commute in Tokyo, as train operators were forced to suspend major lines until at least 8:00 am.

"We need to inspect tracks and check if there is any damage as the [typhoon](#) is expected to pass through the region overnight," a train company spokesman told AFP.

East Japan Railway said its bullet trains on five lines were running, but at

reduced speed, while Central Japan Railway suspended the Tokaido bullet train linking Tokyo and Odawara city because of strong winds, NHK reported.

The typhoon already caused some travel disruption on its approach. About 100 bullet trains connecting Tokyo with central and western Japanese cities were scrapped on Sunday, along with ferry services in Tokyo bay.

Airlines cancelled more than 100 flights scheduled on Monday while some coastal highways were closed west of the capital in Kanagawa due to the storm, according to local media.



This umbrella provided little shelter for a man crossing a street in Tokyo during Typhoon Faxai

Rugby preparations affected

There were no immediate reports of serious injuries or significant damage but eight surfers were rescued amid high waves off Shizuoka in central Japan after they were swept out to sea, local officials said.

"Two helicopters were dispatched while special rescuers rushed out to sea," a fire department spokesman told AFP.

"We sent two of them to hospital but no one was in danger of dying," he added.

Some department stores and amusement parks, including Tokyo Disneyland, closed earlier than scheduled due to the approaching storm.

Faxai, travelling north at a speed of 25 kilometres per hour, was expected to hit northeastern Japan before fizzling out back to the Pacific.

Japan is well used to severe tropical storms and typhoons during late summer and autumn.

Strong typhoon Krosa lashed western Japan in mid-August, bringing strong winds and torrential rain that claimed one life.

And in late August, heavy rains left three people dead when massive

floods also hit western Japan.

Typhoon Faxai comes just as teams begin arriving for the Rugby World Cup, which kicks off on September 20.

The French team managed to sneak in just ahead of the typhoon and reach their training camp near Mount Fuji.

However, the Australian Wallabies squad found their preparations disrupted as the typhoon delayed their scheduled arrival.

Tournament rules say that if a pool match has to be scrapped due to extreme weather, it is classed as a draw, which could have a major impact on what is set to be a very close competition.

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