

Over 180,000 residents urged to seek shelter as tropical storm soaks Japan

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Flights were canceled and bullet train service suspended as Tropical storm Lan soaked Japan's main island.

More than 180,000 residents in a western Japanese city were urged to seek shelter on Tuesday as a tropical storm hit, swelling rivers and

triggering landslide warnings.

Downgraded from a typhoon, Lan roared in from the Pacific at around 5 am (2000 GMT Monday), soaking and buffeting the commercial hubs of Osaka and Kobe with strong winds as it rumbled northwards.

Tottori city, which faces the Sea of Japan, issued its top-level evacuation warning to around 182,000 residents late in the afternoon, as the weather agency warned of "unprecedented" heavy rain in the region.

"Lives are in danger. The residents are in a situation where immediate personal security needs to be ensured," Satoshi Sugimoto from the Japan Meteorological Agency told reporters.

Sugimoto urged people in the region to seek shelter on higher ground due to the risk of flooding.

Electricity was mostly restored but 9,200 households were still without power by Tuesday evening, according to a local utility.

Part of a pedestrian bridge was swept away in Kyoto and flying debris stopped local commuter trains.

Express bullet trains were suspended as planned along with hundreds of flights, including 240 Japan Airline services and 313 of rival ANA, particularly those serving Osaka.

Around 650 people were forced to stay overnight at Kansai airport, located on an artificial island in Osaka Bay, after rail and road access was cut off by the storm, Kyodo News reported.

The weather system was forecast to spend all of Tuesday sweeping over the region, before moving out to the Sea of Japan and up the coast past

Vladivostok and the Russian Far East.

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