



Hundreds of rescuers carry sandbags to build a 2-km long floodwall at a section of the Beijing-Hong Kong-Macao Expressway in Beijing's Fengtai district on Wednesday.

LIU PING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Man who rescued 170 relives horror night

By CAO YIN
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Four days after a giant rain-storm inundated Beijing, Liu Gang says his successful attempt to rescue people stranded on one of the city's expressways remains fresh in his memory.

On Saturday, the 25-year-old man saved more than 170 people who had been trapped by floodwaters on a section of the Beijing-Hong Kong-Macao Expressway.

"I got out of my car really quickly after I saw it was waterlogged and that the rain wasn't going to be stopping for a long time," said Liu, who works in Beijing's Changyang township, managing the affairs of people who lack residence permits. "I ran up to a patch of higher ground that happened to be next to that particular section, which is about 500 meters below the expressway's Nan-gangwa Bridge."

Before escaping from his car at about 7 pm, Liu had been driving to Beijing's central business district from his home in the city's Fangshan district.

"The section was in a depression and was jammed with traffic," he said. "Many of the cars there were waterlogged and many of the people were helpless. I didn't think twice. What I really wanted to do was to save more of them. So I shouted at some of the people I saw and asked them to climb onto their cars' roofs as quickly as possible.

"In the meantime, another five drivers escaped from their vehicles and they helped me find some things around that place that we could use in the rescue."

Fortunately for him, members of a construction team

were working about 400 meters away from the bridge. Liu asked some of them to help.

"I told them how dangerous the section was and said it was a matter of life and death," he said. "Suddenly, about 200 of them agreed to join me and showed that they really were willing to help these stranded people."

As the rescuers ran to the inundated section of the expressway at 9 pm, carrying eight life buoys, two ropes and several flashlights, the down-pour continued, unleashing swift currents.

By then, the water flooding the expressway section had risen up to the thighs of people who were standing on the roofs of vehicles, among which were three buses, Liu said.

"I tied one end of a rope to a tree that was up in a higher place and, with the other end and some life buoys, swam to the stranded vehicles."

The rescue did not go as smoothly as Liu had expected. Some of the trapped people snatched at his rope without awaiting their turns and refused to heed his instructions.

Liu told them he was a police officer, and said that older people, women and children should be the first to leave the dangerous section.

"I had to pretend I was a policeman," he said. "That was the only way to get these people, who were panicking, to pay attention and calm down."

Liu had once served in the army, an experience he found to be of great value on Saturday.

"I learned about rescuing people when I was a soldier," he said. "And I knew the most important thing for me to do



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LIU GANG
A MAN WHO SAVED MORE THAN 170 PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN TRAPPED BY FLOODWATERS ON A SECTION OF THE BEIJING-HONG KONG-MACAO EXPRESSWAY ON SATURDAY

was to first try to help the people who were weakest."

One of the men Liu rescued was in his 20s and had just undergone surgery in Beijing. When the disaster struck, he was on a bus with his grandmother, both on their way back to their home in Shanxi province.

"She at first wouldn't let me rescue the young guy and insisted on staying with her grandson," he said.

"I pushed a life buoy down onto the poor guy's body and asked a worker to help get him up to higher ground. I also tried to comfort the old woman by telling her everything would be all right."

Liu also rescued a pregnant woman and an elderly man who had suffered a cerebral thrombosis.

"Actually, I had no time to think about how dangerous these rescues were," Liu said. "All I knew was that I wanted to save more people."

He said he also made it a point to comfort people who were frightened and to try to maintain order.

When people stranded in the expressway section started try-

ing to move to higher ground, workers were often there to guide them with the use of flashlights. Others escorted the recently rescued to a small yard used by the construction team.

"The workers even carried weak people to safety on their backs and gave us rooms to rest in," Liu said.

The work ended at about 2 am on Sunday when military and police crews from the city's center arrived at the expressway with food and drinks.

During the rescue, Liu's father tried to call him many times but couldn't get through until Sunday morning.

"I knew my family was worried about me," Liu said. "I left my phone in the yard so it wouldn't interfere in the rescue work."

Zhao Shan, 26, one of Liu's colleagues, was not surprised to learn that Liu had saved people on the expressway.

He said Liu's willingness to help others has a lot to do with his character and with the place he works.

"Liu is an outgoing and brave man who shoulders responsibility," Zhao said.

"He likes helping others. His work has him talking with all different sorts of people. That has helped to make him really good at communicating."

Yu Yaping, director of the municipal flood prevention authority's information office, praised Liu's rescue work and said now is a good time to teach people how to rescue themselves in disasters.

"After all, professionals need time to conduct rescues," he said.

"So it's essential to learn how to save their time by knowing how to rescue yourself."

Tuesday.

In North China's Hebei province, the death toll climbed to 31 after rainstorms hit the province over the weekend, provincial authorities said on Wednesday. At least 20 people were still missing.

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Tan Zongyang, Ji Jin, He Dan and Xinhua contributed to this story.

Netizens, municipality make maps of flooding

By XU WEI
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Authorities and Internet users have made maps of Beijing roads and areas that were flooded during Saturday's downpour as the municipality braces for more heavy rain today.

On Tuesday, the Beijing Water Authority released a map of roads that were swamped (<http://t.cn/zWSQv21>), and asked residents to avoid those areas in future major storms. Beijing's worst rainstorm in 61 years was responsible for at least 37 deaths and stranded countless motorists on roads. Weather forecasts said the municipality could be hit by more heavy rain on Wednesday night and today.

The water authority mapped out 30 road sections where the rainwater had been more than 30 cm deep, and 33 road sections where the water was less than 30 cm.

Most of the road sections where the water was deeper than 30 cm were at low-lying intersections. The majority of these sections were on the municipality's Second Ring, Third Ring and Fourth Ring roads. More



A screen shot of a Google map showing flooded roads in Beijing created by users of Guokr.com, a social network website for science fans.

road sections were flooded in the southern part of the municipality than in the north.

The municipality's map went online after several similar homemade ones. The online campaign was initiated at Guokr.com, a social network website for science fans.

Registered users at the website shared their experience of the

flooded roads. A netizen with the Internet name of "golden-grape" compiled the experiences and released a Google map of the roads and communities that had been flooded.

Forty places were labeled on his map as "danger zones" with details of dangers in specific areas, such as "manhole covers washed away".

SAFETY TIPS

1. In case of an emergency, dial 119 or 110 for help. Hotlines may be busy during storms. If the line is busy, call your family or friends for help.
2. If you are in an area that's flooded, seek higher ground, go to a place that is sturdy and contact rescue authorities for help. If possible, collect floating objects such as wood basins or buckets for future use. Stay in a safe place if you do not know whether the floodwaters have receded.
3. If you are driving and approach a flooded roadway, get out of the car as soon as

possible, seek higher ground and call the police.

4. If you drive through a flooded roadway and the water exceeds half the height of the car's wheels, stop driving or you may become stranded.

5. If your car is stranded and the windows will not open, use a hammer to break one of the windows. Don't hit the center of the window. Strike one of the corners, where the glass is more fragile.

6. If your car is submerged, it will be difficult to open the doors because of the water

pressure. Wait until the car is filled with water, and then the door should open easily.

7. Do not walk through moving water. The force from six inches of moving water is strong enough to knock you down. If you must walk through water, try to wade through a section that is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.

8. Stay clear of water that is in contact with downed power lines.

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Rain: Storms hit many parts of the country

FROM PAGE 2

"I had wanted to join rescue work for the quakes in Wenchuan in Sichuan province and Yushu Tibetan autonomous prefecture in Qinghai province before, but they were too far away. There is nothing that can stop me from offering my services now," Liu said.

Water supplies in Beichaying village have been cut off since Saturday, and villagers have no

water to cook or wash in.

"The air reeks of the smell of dead rats and chickens," Liu Cunli, 50, from Beichaying village, said.

"We have no water to drink or wash in. We urgently need the government to send specialists to prevent an epidemic."

Zhang forecast more heavy rain on Friday and Saturday.

Storms have lashed many parts of China over the last few days. Torrential rain swept through 17

provincial areas on Friday, leaving 95 people dead and another 45 missing, according to the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

The Office of State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters said that, by 2 pm on Wednesday, floods in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River had receded and water levels dropped below the alert level.

In Chongqing, water is receding in most areas after the city's worst flood for 31 years on