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Heavy rain floods Tainan, Kaohsiung

WHEN IT RAINS: Greater Kaohsiung Mayor Chen Chu said the city had bad luck lately, citing the rain and rumors as hindering efforts to recover from the blasts

By Shelley Shan / Staff reporter, with CNA



A man ploughs his scooter through a flooded street in Greater Kaohsiung yesterday as heavy rain caused flooding in coastal areas of southwest Taiwan.

Photo: Huang Chih-yuan, Taipei Times

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A moist air current dumped torrential rain on southern Taiwan yesterday, prompting the closure of schools and offices in Greater Tainan and Greater Kaohsiung, where sporadic flooding has been reported.

The Water Resources Agency issued a Level 1 flood warning for the two municipalities and a Level 2 warning for Pingtung County.

Government agencies and schools in Greater Tainan were closed yesterday morning, while Greater Kaohsiung authorities suspended classes and work in government offices in the afternoon.

According to the Central Weather Bureau, the areas that received the most rainfall in the 13 hours between midnight on Monday and

1pm yesterday were Greater Tainan's Sigang (西港) and Anding (安定) districts, where 318mm and 313mm of rain accumulated respectively.

Pingtung's Liouciou Township (琉球) was hit by 302mm of rain during the same period, while Greater Kaohsiung's Dashe (大社), Renwu (仁武) and Hunei (湖內) districts reported accumulations of 249mm, 239mm and 238mm respectively, bureau data show.

Greater Tainan's disaster operations center said it had evacuated 70 people as a precaution since Monday night, including 32 residents of an education and nursing institution for the developmentally challenged.

The bureau said there is a high chance of torrential and extreme torrential rainfall in southern Taiwan today. People in the center of the country should be wary of damage caused by the rain.

"Greater Kaohsiung has been really unfortunate recently," Kaohsiung Mayor Chen Chu (陳菊) said yesterday, referring to the gas pipeline explosions that killed 30 and injured 310 on July 31 and Aug. 1; the recent downpours that have inundated the streets ripped open by the blasts; and recent online rumors saying the explosions have made the municipality's air toxic because.

Greater Kaohsiung Tourism Bureau Director Hsu Chuan-sheng (許傳盛) called on netizens to refrain from spreading misinformation and said he has asked police to identify the person behind the original post warning of "toxic air."

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Meanwhile, more than 5,000 Taiwan Railways Administration passengers were affected yesterday when train tracks were flooded and a pantograph malfunctioned.

The malfunction terrified passengers on the No. 3131 train, who were horrified to hear explosions as the train entered Baoan Station at 9:07am, but the administration later explained that the blasts occurred because of a tilted pantograph, the part on top of a train that collects power from the overhead cable.

The passengers were evacuated after the train entered the station and the electricity supply to the track was resumed at 10:55am, the administration said.

It added that flooding was reported on multiple track sections in Greater Tainan, Greater Kaohsiung and Pintung yesterday morning. Surging river water slowed trains to just 50kph between Greater Tainan and Baoan (保安).

As of 11am yesterday, 5,850 travelers had experienced delays.

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