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China braces for "severe" flooding on Yangtze River

Reuters | Apr 2, 2016, 10:39 AM IST

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File photo of flood in China's Nanjing, Jiangsu province on June 28, 2015. (Reuters photo)

BEIJING: Severe floods are expected on China's Yangtze River this year due to a strong El Nino weather pattern, the official Xinhua news agency said on Friday. The El Nino conditions are the strongest since records collection began in 1951, and resemble a 1998 weather

pattern that flooded the river and killed thousands, the official Xinhua news agency said on Friday, citing vice minister of water resources, Liu Ning.

"Precipitation in the upper, middle and lower reaches of the river is forecast to be as much as 80 percent more than normal from May to August," Xinhua said.

Some Yangtze tributaries had already begun flooding and the flood control and drought relief situation was "extremely severe", Liu said, according to the news agency.

Provinces and cities along the river needed to make contingency plans, Xinhua cited Wang Guosheng, the governor of central Hubei province, as saying.

China has frequently been devastated by natural disasters, particularly by floods and earthquakes that have claimed millions of lives over the centuries.

Flooding, an annual problem, has been exacerbated by urban sprawl and poor drainage infrastructure in many cities.

Xinhua said 1,320 people died in the 1998 floods, though estimates vary and some put the death toll at more than 4,000.

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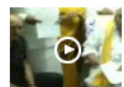
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