

Builders race against time to finish work

By ZHENG JINRAN
zhengjinran@chinadaily.com.cn

Thousands of builders on 44 sites in Fangshan district, Beijing, have been working round-the-clock over the past 10 days, racing against time to make sure residents who need temporary homes can have better places to live as soon as possible.

Duo Yuehua, 58, a group leader of one of hundreds of construction teams on the Yancun township site, witnessed 560 houses being finished in 10 days.

"It was the toughest task in my 38 years of working," he said.

Duo has had coronary heart disease for years and always carries pills with him.

"My family persuaded me to quit because my body could not handle the intensity," he said. He added that in the past 10 days, the longest sleep he had was four hours on Sunday night, after the construction was finished.

"It has been normal for all of us to work for 24 hours and take a short break, maybe for three or four hours," he said. "There have been more than 5,000 people working on this site, especially after the rains last weekend."

The weather jeopardized the process somewhat, he added.

This site is one of 20 constructed by Beijing Construction Engineering Group, which began the project on July 27.

It rained on and off during the construction period, so the mud on the site was very deep, making it difficult for vehicles transporting concrete to enter, he said. They had to transfer

the concrete with excavators, which have a higher chassis and can operate in deep mud.

"In addition, there was no place for us to sleep," Duo said. Pointing to several large tents outside the construction site, he said: "They are for temporary workers. On most occasions, we (the team leaders and workers from the construction company) slept under a tree or any place that was dry."

Many workers received minor injuries, such as cuts on their fingers, he said. He admitted that he felt heart pain during the intense construction period.

"I know the task was hard for me, as a man in my 50s. But I could not resist the call, you know. People needed our help," he said.

Guo Haigang, an official from the construction company, said many workers were gathered in a very short time. Some had no time to collect more clothes or phone chargers, making it difficult for their families to reach them.

"Some of their families came to the site after hearing about it on the news, bringing clothes and other items," he said. "Most of the workers didn't have time to go back home. We all made some sacrifices, but you see, many residents came to thank us after they moved in on Sunday night."

When the construction was finished, Duo and his team took photos of themselves smiling in front of the temporary housing site.

"We will build permanent houses for these residents just across the road," he said. "Then people can move out of the makeshift houses and into their new homes."

Temporary house is now home

By ZHENG JINRAN
and WANG QINGYUN

Villagers whose homes were damaged by flooding in Beijing's rural Fangshan district began to move in to temporary housing on Monday, and the process will be completed by Friday.

"It's very good, beyond our expectation," said Wang Yufu, 58, whose house was damaged during the torrential rains. His family of six moved to three temporary houses in Hongsi village on Monday.

"Cars were sent to help us move in the early morning," he said, sitting on his new bed.

Every temporary house on the Hongsi village site, with an average size of 20 square meters, has two single beds, a desk, a table and a closet. Each kitchen and bathroom are shared by 35 families, according to the site's constructor Beijing Urban Construction Group.

Every 50 temporary houses are required to have a shared area with a kitchen and bathroom, according to guidelines issued by the municipal government recently.

"But in some small sites with 10 or 20 makeshift houses, the standard will have some variations. All we insist on is ensuring that the residents' life is convenient," said Liu Haiqi, a publicity official for the Beijing Municipal Commission of Housing and Urban-Rural Development.

"Food has been allocated for us by the village government," said Wang. "We can cook now. We cannot believe that would happen in such a short period."

Sun Shu, an official in charge of the temporary housing community of Hongsi, said 419 families from four villages will move in by Friday. "They will pay for the electricity but the drinking water is free."

In addition, a medical clinic, shop and a small police station have been built. A large recreational area with new exercise equipment has also been located in the middle of this new community in Hongsi, where 966 makeshift houses with white



Fifty-year-old Wang Zhiguang (left), his grandson Wang Ruiyao and his daughter-in-law Zhang Yumei have lunch at a temporary house built for them by the local government in Beijing's Fangshan district on Monday. Floods damaged their house on July 21.

ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

walls and red roofs stand in line. It is the largest among the 44 sites in Fangshan district.

The large mountainous area of Fangshan suffered more damage than other districts in Beijing on July 21 during the heaviest rainfall in 61 years, which caused 79 deaths.

In the temporary site of Yancun township, Du Guiliang and his family have spent a night in their temporary house. He got two rooms for his family.

"I will buy more beds, making my new house comfortable for the coming years," said Du. He said he is satisfied with the living conditions now but had to spend a night in his friend's apartment because his family of five didn't prepare enough beds.

Some residents will live in temporary housing for three years until their new homes are completed. In Fangshan, those who lost their houses will get new, permanent houses of up to 200,000 square meters.

The district has also been working to maintain hygiene standards.

Yang Dongli, director of the district health bureau,

said authorities have finished inspecting the quality of the sources of drinking water for more than 400 villages.

"Water wells in many villages were damaged on July 21 because their disinfecting apparatus was destroyed by the flood," said Yang. "Now the water authority of the district is installing new disinfecting apparatus. Hopefully, they will be finished by mid-August. Now the medi-

cal workers are disinfecting them on a regular basis.

"We don't allow people to drink water whose quality has not been tested, or has been tested and failed. Those who cannot drink from their usual water sources will get clean drinking water from district authorities."

The district also has finished a round of disinfection of all its residential communities, said Yang. "There have been no

reports of outbreaks of water-borne diseases since the flood. The hospitals and other medical centers report every case of such diseases to the district's center of disease control and prevention, and we find the number is similar to those of past years."

Contact the writers at zhengjinran@chinadaily.com.cn and wangqingyun@chinadaily.com.cn

Car repair shops go into overdrive

By AN BAIJIE
anbaijie@chinadaily.com.cn

Vehicle repairman Wang Xiaojun has been busier than ever since July 21, when the heaviest rainfall in six decades hit Beijing, damaging many vehicles in the ensuing floods.

Wang, 46, who owns an automobile repair workshop in the Xiaowuji Auto Parts Market in southeastern Beijing, said that he has been "working round-the-clock" with three employees.

About five to six cars have been coming to his workshop every day, triple the normal number, Wang said.

"Many cars have to be parked on the nearby road since there is not enough space in my workshop," he said. "Most of the cars were waterlogged."

The unexpected surge in business has made repairmen like Wang much busier than before. He tried to hire more workers but found that other repair shops were also seeking repairmen.

"It took several days to fix a waterlogged car since the components had to be taken apart and dried in the sun for at least three days," Wang said.

Lu Yuping, manager of a company providing automobile rescue service in both Beijing and Central China's Henan province, said that the company has been busy rescuing vehicles every day.

"One or two cars used to call our company for rescue service every day in Beijing in early July, but the number soared to more than 10 cases each day after the heavy rain," she said. "The price of rescuing a car has also



LIU CHANGLONG / XINHUA

Repairmen place waterlogged car seat cushions in the sun to dry them out at an auto parts market in Beijing on July 23.

increased from 200 yuan (\$30) to 1,500 yuan."

Lu Hong, 49, a manager in a Beijing-based public relations company, was trapped inside his SUV in flood water while driving on the Beijing-Hong Kong-Macao Expressway on July 21. He managed to get out of the vehicle and escaped to a safer place before it was completely submerged.

"I could only get my vehicle back after three days when the floodwaters receded," he said. "It was covered with mud, and all of the electronic devices in the car were destroyed."

The rainfall was so destructive that a large number of cars needed to be overhauled because the engines were damaged, according to Wang, the repairman.

"The engine is the most important part and the most expensive," Wang said. "To fix the engine of a car always costs as much as 30 percent of the whole car's price."

Liang Wei, a resident in Beijing whose BMW was submerged near the Guangming

Bridge on July 21, had to spend nearly 400,000 yuan to fix the destroyed parts, including the engine.

"It cost me 1.2 million yuan to buy the car, and now I had to pay an extra 400,000 yuan for the repairs," he said.

Liang tried to claim compensation from Ping An Insurance since he spent more than 80,000 yuan paying insurance to the company every year since 2008 when he bought the car, but his request was refused.

"The insurance company said I have not bought insurance covering water damage, but I bought the insurance for vehicle damage. Now that my car has been damaged, I should get the compensation."

Ping An Insurance, one of China's major insurance companies, said on its website that car owners should buy insurance for water damage or they would not be compensated.

Liang said he was considering suing the insurance company if his claim gets rejected.

"The insurance company

should do its business in a responsible manner, rather than just focusing on making profits," he said.

Previous judicial cases show that vehicle owners are more likely to win lawsuits against insurance companies over compensation of water-damaged vehicles.

A car owner in Lishui, Zhejiang province, sued a local insurance company in August 2011 because the insurance company refused to compensate him after he spent more than 41,400 yuan to fix the engine of his water-damaged car, according to Legal Daily.

The court decided the company should cover all of the car owner's expenses of fixing the car, given the fact that the engine was a key component of the car that should not be exempt from compensation, said the report.

The China Insurance Regulatory Commission said that 41,000 vehicles damaged by the heavy rain had been reported to insurance agencies in Beijing as of July 29, involving an estimated 370 million yuan in compensation.

Outside Beijing, insurance agencies in the neighboring city of Tianjin received nearly 8,000 claims for damaged vehicles. In addition, 1,131 cases were received in Hubei province and more than 5,000 cases in Guangdong province, all hit by heavy downpours and ensuing floods, Dong Bo, an official from the insurance regulatory commission, told Xinhua News Agency.

Liu Hua in Zhengzhou contributed to this story.

Exclusive CBD offices from Regus

- Prestigious locations in Beijing and Shanghai CBD
- From 1 to 200 persons, tailored to various business needs
- Ready to use, available now
- Flexible terms from 1 day to 1 year

SHANGHAI | BEIJING | HONG KONG | TAIPEI | CHENGDU | CHONGQING | DALIAN
GUANGZHOU | HANGZHOU | MACAU | SHENZHEN | TIANJIN | WUHAN | XIAMEN

400 120 1205 www.regus.cn

Servcorp Virtual Offices

- Full business and IT solutions without the physical office space
- CBD address, dedicated receptionist, global network of luxurious meeting rooms
- No deposit, no long term commitment required
- Business registration suites available from RMB 2,500/month!

Serviced Office 400 656 0166
Virtual Office 400 689 6855 W | virtual-offices.com.cn

Shanghai Level 29 Kerry Centre
Beijing Level 24 China Central Place
Guangzhou Level 54 International Financial Center
Chengdu Level 18 Shangri-la Offices
Hangzhou Level 3 Jiahua International Business Center

HONG KONG | BEIJING | SHANGHAI | CHENGDU | GUANGZHOU | HANGZHOU

CHINA BUSINESS GUIDE



Also available:

- Setting Up Wholly Foreign Owned Enterprises in China (Third Edition)
- Setting Up Joint Ventures in China (Third Edition)
- The Yangtze River Delta: Business Guide to the Shanghai Region
- The Greater Pearl River Delta

CHINADAILY E-SHOP

Please visit our online e-shop to subscribe or contact:
Fax: 86-10-84883600; Tel: 86-10-84883603/3631
Email: yuanhui@chinadaily.com.cn http://eshop.chinadaily.com.cn