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TV drama depicting a tumultuous period in country's history adapted to Peking Opera PAGE 20

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Neither rain nor protests dampen birthday spirit

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Aided by boatmen, residents make their way around streets flooded by heavy rain in Rongshui Miao autonomous county in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region on Sunday. LONG LINZHI / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Already soggy southern China warned to brace for new floods

By HOU LIQIANG in Beijing and FENG ZHIWEI in Changsha

As a heat wave in northern China continues, more rain is expected along the Yangtze River, which flooded for the first time this year on Saturday.

China's national weather observatory issued a yellow alert for the third consecutive day on Sunday, the second-lowest in a four-tier weather warning system, for rainstorms in the southern part of the country.

The southern regions have seen six heavy downpours. June precipitation in central Hunan province, for example, was double that of the same month last year.

Days of torrential rains in Hunan raised the water level of the Xiangjiang River, a major tributary of the Yangtze, beyond its record flood level on Sunday morning. The water level at Changsha, Hunan, reached 39.44 meters at 3 pm — the previous record, set by a massive flood in 1998, was 39.18 meters.

Already at 3.44 meters above the warning, the water level is expected to continue to rise as heavy rains are forecast for upstream regions over the next few days. Water at Dongting Lake and in several major rivers in Hunan has also risen above warning levels.

### 8 people killed, 35 injured when gas pipe ruptures, burns

A ruptured gas pipeline in southwestern Guizhou province burst into flames, killing eight people and injuring 35 on Sunday morning.

Four of the injured were in critical condition, and eight others sustained severe injuries, the provincial government said in a statement on Sunday night. All the injured were taken to the hospital, and people living near the site

of the fire were evacuated, the authorities said.

The fire was put out by 7 pm, and the gas leak had been controlled, they said.

Around 10 am, a section of gas pipeline running through Qinglong county, Guizhou, was broken in a landslide after days of heavy downpours, and leaking gas had been burning for hours, the statement said.

Some online video clips

showed flames shooting skyward.

More details about the cause of the rupture will come after an investigation, the provincial government said.

After the incident, public security authorities, firefighters and medical teams from the county, city and province converged on the site to assist.

The pipeline belongs to China National Petroleum Corp.

YANG JUN

Rain began to batter Hunan on June 22, and the ensuing floods have forced the evacuation of 577,100 people. Nearly 406,000 hectares of crops have been damaged, and 9,861 houses have been destroyed, according to the provincial meteorological service.

A rain-triggered landslide in Ningxiang county led to the deaths of five people. Four people remained missing.

Many parts of the county received more than 200 millimeters of precipitation within 24 hours, with flooding disrupting traffic and telecommunications, while raising water levels in reservoirs and

rivers above warning levels.

A search and rescue operation is underway.

"The water is rising, and my house is in danger of being submerged. I was relieved when I saw a rescue boat coming," said Zhou Changsong, who was evacuated on Saturday afternoon from Chenxi county, Hunan.

In the neighboring Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, flooding disrupted railway services, with 45 trains canceled, forced to return or detoured.

The State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters has ordered the Three Gorges Reservoir on

the Yangtze to reduce the flow of discharge to 18,000 cubic meters per second to relieve the flood pressure downstream, and launched a Grade III emergency response plan, the second-lowest of the four-tier national response system.

In Jiangxi province, which neighbors Hunan, flooding was blamed for seven deaths. Two people remain missing. About 440,000 people had been evacuated as of Saturday.

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Xinhua contributed to this story.

## Xi's HK visit leaves upbeat impression

President urges unity, reaffirms 'one country, two systems'

By AN BALJIE  
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President Xi Jinping's trip to Hong Kong, which concluded on Saturday, boosted the confidence of its people for a better future, despite various challenges remaining ahead, analysts and residents said.

During his 49-hour visit to the special administrative region, Xi participated in 20 activities and held intensive talks with people from all walks of life, ranging from schoolchildren and teenagers to top government officials.

He also inspected the People's Liberation Army's Shek Kong barracks in Hong Kong on Friday. The garrison should resolutely champion State sovereignty and ensure the region's prosperity and stability, he said.

In his speech on Saturday marking the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China, Xi called on the fifth-term government of the Hong Kong SAR to unite people of all sectors to fully and faithfully implement the principle of "one country, two systems".

Noting that China's rapid development provides an invaluable opportunity, Xi called on the people to "cherish the opportunity, seize it

“Any attempt to ... challenge the power of the central government ... is an act that crosses the red line.”

President Xi Jinping

and focus your energy on Hong Kong's development”.

He said that there are many challenges for Hong Kong. For example, it has yet to build public consensus on some major political and legal matters; the Hong Kong economy faces a number of hurdles; and housing and other issues that affect the daily lives of the people have become more serious.

To address the challenges, Xi said, "We must stay on the right and steady course, gain a full understanding of the policy of 'one country, two systems' and faithfully implement it."

In his speech, Xi warned against moves to undermine national sovereignty or challenge the central govern-

ment's power.

"Any attempt to endanger China's sovereignty and security, challenge the power of the central government and the authority of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region or use Hong Kong to carry out infiltration and sabotage activities against the mainland is an act that crosses the red line, and is absolutely impermissible," he said.

Many Hong Kong people expressed appreciation for the president's visit, saying they hope the public will heed the messages the president brought and reunite to achieve an even brighter future.

Lau Siu-kai, vice-president of the Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macao Studies, said he was delighted to see Xi reaffirming the central government's firm stance in implementing the "one country, two systems" principle in Hong Kong.

The president's commitment to it helps boost people's confidence in Hong Kong's long-term prosperity and stability, and helps it focus on devising strategies to push forward its own development along with the country's.

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## First emergency phone line turns 80

LONDON — The introduction of the world's first emergency telephone number 80 years ago was celebrated on Saturday by three police forces across Britain. Now the 999 number to alert police, fire, ambulances and coast guards to emergencies is the best known number in Britain.

In London, the Metropolitan Police, described how, in its early days at Scotland Yard, a handful of police officers transmitted emergency messages by Morse code.

Today, the emergency service is run from three high-tech centralized communications complexes in Bow, Hendon and Lambeth boroughs.

In the early days of the

1930s, just 24 staff members in the old Victoria Embankment headquarters of Scotland Yard dealt with a couple hundred calls a day. The three centralized complexes now employ more than 2,000 people who deal with up to 20,000 calls daily.

The system has been upgraded and redesigned numerous times over the decades, leading to the sophisticated multiscreen automated service that prioritizes 999 calls using interactive satellite mapping, as well as access to translators in 170 languages and special text numbers for deaf people.

Police in Britain have long made use of new technology to help them fight crime. The

first case of a criminal being arrested through use of telegrams was recorded in 1845.

The impetus for a new, dedicated emergency number came after a tragic event in London in 1935 when five women died in a fire at a Wimpole Street doctor's house.

A parliamentary committee inquiry followed, and recommended a universal number easily memorized by the public and instantly recognizable to telephone operators.

After 111, 222 and 0000 were rejected, the number 999 was agreed upon, and thousands of traditional red phone boxes were converted to allow free emergency calls starting in July 1937.

XINHUA

## Kidnap suspect charged; Chinese 'heartbroken'

By WANG LINYAN in New York

The Chinese consulate in Chicago is asking for a thorough investigation and swift justice in the case of a Chinese scholar, Zhang Yingying, 26, who is feared dead after an apparent kidnapping.

"We are shocked and heartbroken about what happened to Zhang," said Hong Lei, China's consul general in Chicago, adding that the feelings are shared by all Chinese people.

Brendt Christensen, 28, was formally charged in US federal court on Friday with kidnapping Zhang more than three weeks ago.

According to an affidavit, FBI agents, who had Christensen

under surveillance after identifying his vehicle, overheard him explaining that he kidnapped Zhang on June 9.

"Based on this, and other facts uncovered during the investigation of this matter, law enforcement agents believe that Ms Zhang is no longer alive," a statement by the US Department of Justice said.

The criminal complaint said Christensen had read about kidnapping on a fetish-oriented social networking website, FetLife. It said police found that the part of Christensen's car where Zhang was believed to have been sitting had been cleaned.

Hong, the consul general, visited members of Zhang's



Zhang Yingying: Chinese scholar has been missing more than three weeks

family on Saturday morning, expressing condolences and promising support.

Zhang's boyfriend, Hou Xiaolin, said the most urgent thing is to find Zhang quickly, and he expressed hope that those responsible will be given harsh punishment.

Zhang, a graduate of Peking University, was conducting research at the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She was living in university housing.

She was reported missing on June 9, when she was supposed to see a prospective landlord.

Her last phone activity was at 1:30 pm that day — a call in which she told the landlord she was running late and would not be there until around 2:10, local media reported.

Zhang's father and other family members arrived at the university from China in mid-June.

Christensen, will remain in custody pending his initial court appearance in Urbana, which is scheduled for Monday at 10 am.

An associate chancellor of the university, Robin Kaler, said on Saturday that Christensen had earned a master's degree in physics from the University of Illinois in May, and that "his affiliation with the department ended that same month", according to The Associated Press. Christensen's LinkedIn profile online states that he is a PhD candidate in physics at the university and has been a graduate teaching assistant there since 2013, the AP reported.

## Circling for soccer



Kindergartners gather during a soccer festival in Changxing county, Zhejiang province. XU YU / XINHUA

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## Long March 5 rocket fails after launch

The flight of China's latest heavy-lift carrier rocket, the Long March 5-Y2, failed on Sunday evening when an anomaly occurred after its 7:23 pm blastoff from Wenchang Space Launch Center in Hainan province.

Experts are working to discover exactly what happened.

The Long March 5, China's largest rocket to date, made its maiden flight in November, sending its payload into a pre-set orbit. The Y2 designation of Sunday's rocket signifies the second in the series.

XINHUA

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