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Beijing's Heaviest Snow in 54 Years Strands Thousands (Update1)

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By Bloomberg News



Nov. 12 (Bloomberg) -- **Beijing's airport** canceled more than 60 flights and delayed more than 120 others today as the heaviest snowfall in the Chinese capital in at least 54 years blanketed the city for the third day this month.

Tens of thousands of vehicles and people were stranded on highways linking the city with the surrounding provinces of Shanxi, Hebei, Liaoning and Inner Mongolia, according to state news agency Xinhua. Three children in Hebei province were killed and 28 others injured when accumulated snow caused a primary school cafeteria's roof to collapse, Xinhua reported separately.

"I don't want to get stuck out there," said Cristina Zanni, chief representative of Loro Piana (HK) Ltd., who postponed a trip to **Inner Mongolia** province in northern China. The airfield at Yinchuan near Inner Mongolia was shut after visibility fell to less than 500 meters.

Disruptions to travel may continue next week when Beijing goes on security alert before U.S. President **Barack Obama's** first state visit to America's second-largest trading partner, after Canada. Food prices including fresh vegetables and daily supplies may climb, as the city restricts non-Beijing registered trucks from entering the capital starting Nov. 15.

Seeding Clouds

The government induced snowfall in the capital on Nov. 10 by seeding clouds with silver iodide, the China Daily newspaper **reported** yesterday, citing an unidentified official at the Beijing Weather Modification Office.

Zhang Qiang, head of the office, said the agency induced snow on Nov. 1 by seeding clouds with 186 doses of silver iodide, according to a separate Xinhua report. The seeding brought an additional 16 million tons of snow, according to the report. Beijing takes every opportunity to induce precipitation as the city is suffering from drought, Xinhua cited Zhang as saying.

Airports in Hohhot, Lanzhou, Xi'an and Zhengzhou were also closed this morning, China Central Television reported.

As many as **124** train services were delayed as 16 centimeters (6.3 inches) of snow covered the city, while temperatures plunged to minus 6 degrees Celsius (21 degrees Fahrenheit.)

Snow is likely to continue for another two days in northern and northeastern China, according to the **China Meteorological Administration**. Shijiazhuang, capital of Hebei province near Beijing, had 55 centimeters of snow, the **weather** service said.

Economic Losses

In Beijing, snowfall is the heaviest since weather data began in 1955, according to the administration's

Web site.

China suffered an estimated 151.65 billion yuan (\$22 billion) in direct economic losses almost 20 months ago when the country's south was covered by the most severe snowstorms in five decades.

Power grids were knocked out and drinking water was disrupted. Millions of travelers were stranded during the annual Lunar New Year celebrations, forcing thousands of factories to suspend work and causing China's industrial production to expand at the slowest pace in more than a year.

Last year's snowstorm destroyed 11.9 million hectares (29.4 million acres) of cropland, forcing the government to hand out 63.3 billion yuan of subsidies to farmers.

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Last Updated: November 12, 2009 03:06 EST



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