

Boat With More than 450 People Aboard Sinks in China



Beijing, June 2 (RHC)-- A passenger ship with more than 450 people aboard has sunk in the Yangtze River during a cyclone in southern China, state media reports.

The incident happened on Monday morning when the ship was en route from the eastern city of Nanjing to the southwestern city of Chongqing, state broadcaster CCTV reported early on Tuesday. A rescue operation has been launched to recover the passengers with reports saying that five bodies have been recovered and at least 14 people have been rescued, but the vast majority aboard remain unaccounted for. Rescuers have been tapping on the ship's hull in a bid to locate survivor

According to the Chinese media, President Xi Jinping has ordered "all-out rescue efforts," and urged people in the provinces of Hubei and Chongqing to take part in the search and rescue work.

Strong winds and rain have made the search operation difficult, CCTV said, adding that the vessel was carrying 406 Chinese passengers, five travel agency employees and 47 crew members. The broadcaster further said that the yacht, named the Eastern Star, is 251 feet long (76.5 meters) and 36 feet wide (11 meters) and could carry as many as 534 people.

Back in January, a tugboat went down on the river between the eastern cities of Jingjiang and Zhangjiagang, in Jiangsu province, killing a total of 22 people. The provincial government blamed the incident on the boat's failure to properly complete the procedures required while undergoing trials.

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