



APPHOTOEDUARDO VERDUGO

People walk past vehicles piled up by flood waters after heavy rains in Tlanepantla, Monday, Sept. 7, 2009.

Heavy rains flood Metropolitan Zone

More than 1,450 properties were damaged by the torrential storm

THE NEWS

Mexico City's drainage system is still inadequate amid heavy rains that fell Sunday night, leaving hundreds of areas flooded and damaging more than 1,450 properties, admitted the director of Mexico City's Water System (SACM).

In his report on Monday, Ramón Aguirre said that intense rain in 640 square km of Mexico City received 27 million liters of water in three hours, enough to fill 13 Aztec Stadiums.

Despite Sunday's downpour, and even if equal amounts of rain fell throughout the rest of the rainy season, it wouldn't compensate for three months of drought. That is why a recovery to the Cutzamala Reservoir

System, which is 30 percent under capacity, isn't likely, Aguirre said.

In a press conference, he said that the city's drainage system can't accommodate the needs of more than 20 million people.

However, the city is partnering with the State of México and the National Water Commission to build the 15-million peso East Drainage Tunnel, to complement the Western Culvert, Deep Drainage and Great Canal systems, he said.

Yesterday's rainfall was the heaviest in 10 years in terms of concentration, most heavily affecting the city's northernmost borough, Gustavo A. Madero and overflowing the Tlanepantla River.

The Acueducto de Guadalupe

neighborhood alone registered some 1,000 instances of property damage, while the Moderna and Alamos neighborhoods had 120 incidents due to high levels of drainage in the Eastern Culvert.

Azcapotzalco Borough's Electricistas neighborhood recorded about 50 complaints bordering the Center-Western Culvert No. 5 and the Agrícola Oriental neighborhood in the Iztacalco Borough had 10 incidents.

Sunday's rainfall wasn't the most intense in one day; in 2008, 23 mm fell on one occasion, compared to 176 mm on Sunday. The difference, Aguirre said, is the amount that fell in heavily populated zones in the center and east sides. Higher altitude areas saw almost no rain, he said.



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The intensity was four times more than the capacity of the city's drainage system. Sunday's amount in those zones hadn't been seen since 1998.



Mexican Army and government workers continue helping people affected by flooding in Tlalnepantla, State of México.