

Jebi blasts Japan with 216kph winds

Strongest typhoon to hit nation in 25 years causes havoc in west coast

TOKYO: The strongest typhoon to hit Japan in 25 years made landfall, killing two and injuring dozens, as it battered the west of the country with violent winds and heavy rainfall.

The strong gusts ripped sheeting from rooftops, toppled trucks on bridges and swept a tanker anchored in Osaka bay into a nearby bridge running to the Kansai International Airport.

High waves whipped up by the storm also flooded parts of the seaside airport, where all flights were cancelled, and the severe weather caused power outages and travel chaos across much of the country.

Typhoon Jebi made landfall around noon local time, slamming into the west of the country packing winds of up to 216kph.

The fast-moving storm quickly crossed the country, and by nightfall was on the verge of leaving land and heading out to sea from Ishikawa in central Japan.

Local media reported two deaths in the storm, including a 71-year-old man killed in western Shiga prefecture after being trapped under a warehouse that collapsed in strong wind.

Public broadcaster NHK said 97 people had been injured across the storm's path, none of them seriously.



Storm damage: Vehicles damaged by Typhoon Jebi in Osaka, western Japan. — Reuters

only another 16,000 were under stronger – though still not mandatory – evacuation orders.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe urged people to evacuate early and ordered his government to take all necessary measures to protect residents, after the weather agency warned of landslides, flooding and violent winds, as well as high tides, lightning and tornadoes.

Arriving on land, Jebi had winds of up to 162kph per hour at its centre, making it a “very strong” typhoon, the weather agency’s chief forecaster Ryuta Kuroira said.

“This is (the strongest) since 1993.”

Local media warned that the wind was strong enough to topple traditional-style wooden houses as well as power poles, and urged people in affected areas to avoid non-essential travel.

Primary and middle schools in the storm’s path were closed while regional businesses also reacted quickly, with Universal Studios Japan in Osaka shutting down for Tuesday along with factories for several large manufacturers.

Nearly 800 flights were cancelled, including several international flights departing and arriving at Nagoya and Osaka, along with ferries, local train services and some bullet train lines. — AFP

ways and parts of its basement were flooded by high waves, a transport ministry official confirmed.

NHK also showed footage of a 100m tall ferris wheel in Osaka turning furiously in the strong wind despite being switched off.

Elsewhere, the winds whipped

away part of the ceiling from Kyoto station and peeled off multi-storey scaffolding attached to a building in Osaka.

Local media said more than a million households were left without power by the storm, and evacuation advisories were issued for nearly 1.2 million people, though

In Osaka, television footage showed a 2,591-tonne tanker that went crashing into the bridge connecting the city of Izumisano with Kansai airport, with the top part of the ship knocking away a part of the bridge. There were no reports of injuries.

The airport was closed after run-