Beat: Local

Tornado near Tokyo injures 67, damages hundreds of homes

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USPA News - A powerful tornado tore a path of destruction Monday through a city north of the Japanese capital of Tokyo, damaging hundreds of houses and injuring more than 65 people in the country`s worst tornado since May 2012, local authorities said. The tornado touched down at around 2 p.m. local time on Monday and wreaked havoc in the city of Koshigaya, about 22 kilometers (13.6 miles) north of Tokyo, before going on a 14-kilometer (8.6-mile) rampage that took it to the town of Matsubushi and the city of Noda in neighboring Chiba prefecture. Saitama prefecture police said at least 66 people were injured in Koshigaya, where at least six buildings were completely destroyed and more than 80 were badly damaged.

Among those injured was a 40-year-old man who suffered a skull fracture and an 82-year-old woman who broke her right leg. Also among those injured were 21 students who were injured at Hokuyo Middle School in Koshigaya while playing volleyball, but none of them were believed to be in a serious condition. Two young boys were also injured at an elementary school in the city when debris smashed through the building`s windows. A woman was also injured in the city of Noda, putting the total number of confirmed injuries at 67. Twenty-seven vehicles and 68 houses were damaged in Noda, while at least 10 houses were severely damaged in Matsubushi, although there were no reports of injuries from the town. Overall, more than 540 buildings were damaged in both prefectures, including some which were completely destroyed, according to the Kyodo news agency. The strong winds and lightning also cut power to nearly 30,500 houses in the region, including 22,400 houses in Kasukabe and more than 4,000 houses in Koshigaya. Monday`s tornado was the worst to hit Japan since May 2012, when a powerful tornado moved through neighborhoods after touching down near the city of Tsukuba in eastern Ibaraki prefecture, killing a 14-year-old boy, injuring at least 52 others, and damaging approximately 890 buildings. The country`s deadliest tornado since official record-keeping began in 1961 happened in November 2006 when a violent tornado hit the remote town of Saroma on the northern island of Hokkaido, killing nine people. A tornado in Miyazaki Prefecture in September 1881 killed at least 16 while tornadoes in 1903, 1941 and 1957 killed between 8 and 12 people.

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