

Central and Southern China are being **ravaged** by floods

On a recent rainy afternoon the owner of a small riverfront fish restaurant on sleepy Kaisha island, in the middle of the Yangzi river, was worried and **bemused** by the steadily rising waters. On a spit of land near the riverbank stood a cluster of trees, their trunks half-submerged. A wooden boardwalk leading out to a fishing **pier** remained only just above the **murky** water. "There is usually a metre of clearance under the walkway, " she said. "Yes, I have seen the water this high before, but never this early in the rainy season."

ravage 毁坏; 破坏

bemuse 使发呆; 使茫然

pier 码头

murky 黑暗的; 朦胧的

In the face of the worst flooding in decades, China raised the national-emergency response to its second-highest level on July 12th.

Flooding in dozens of provinces has already caused the death or disappearance of 141 people, the displacement of millions, the loss of 28, 000 homes and 82bn yuan in damage. Soldiers have been dispatched to help with relief.

Climate change may have caused extreme weather unusually early in the year, producing more rain than **hydro-engineering** can handle. Zhang Junjie of Duke Kunshan University says most Chinese experts agree that climate change is making the region's weather more volatile and will reduce farming and industrial output.

hydro-engineering 水利工程

In December, legislators began deliberating a new draft law on protecting the entire Yangzi river basin, including the restoration of riverside ecosystems that may help to reduce flooding. This, says Mr Zhang hopefully, is "giant progress".