Headlines: Damage and Recovery From Sandy

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Superstorm Sandy left at least 2 million homes and businesses across the state and about 80 0,000 customers in the city and Westchester remained without power yesterday. More than half of Staten Island is without power, and over a quarter of Manhattan is in the dark. In Manhattan there are no streetlights South of 25th St. on the Westside. The substation in the East Village that exploded was designed to withstand a 12.5 foot surge but was hit with a surge of 14 feet . Customers served by underground lines in Brooklyn and Manhattan are likely to have their power restored within four days . Bloomberg promised "a very heavy police presence " in the darkened neighborhoods. Thirteen people have been arrested for crimes that included looting.

The death toll for the city is now 22. Untreated sewage is flowing into waterways from more than a dozen locations around the city. A crane still dangles from a skyscraper in Midtown and could be there for weeks. The World Trade Center is flooded . Sand is piled up to 2 feet high on the Coney Island boardwalk. At least 111 homes were destroyed by fires in Breezy Point, Queens in a blaze among the worst residential fires in New York since the Fire Department was established in 1865.

Much of the Tristate region has been declared a major disaster area, and FEMA will distribute billions of dollars in aid, which will be a test for the troubled agency. Many homeowners who

thought their insurance policies covered floods are likely to have been mistaken - a common error - while others' policies have lapsed or won't cover all the damage.

The MTA is unaware of any permanent damage to the system but is still offering no estimate for when service will be restored. Buses have started running on some routes and could return to full service by sometime today.

Many are hoping the storm will finally push New York to prepare for climate change . â€śThree of the top 10 highest floods at the Battery since 1900 happened in the last two and a half years," Ben Strauss, director of the sea level rise program at the research group Climate Central in Princeton, N.J. "If thatâ€™s not a wake-up call to take this seriously, I donâ€™t know what is." Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo said the state should consider a levee system or storm surge barriers, although Mayor Bloomberg says he is focusing on recovery for the city. Some individual parts of Sandy and its wrath seem to be influenced by climate change , several climate scientists said, but its not clear that can be said for the storm itself. Sandy broke coastal flood records for New York City by more than three feet above the previous record and more than double the range between the previous top ten.

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View from below of the Brooklyn Bridge in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. Image by Barry Yanowitz , used under Creative Commons license.

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