

Tiger, rhinos flee to higher ground in India's flood-hit Assam

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A tiger seeking refuge from flooding in India's Kaziranga National Park startled residents when it took shelter on a daybed in a shophouse in Assam state

A tiger escaped from a wildlife park in India's flood-ravaged Assam and

stretched out on a shophouse bed Thursday, startling residents and shining a spotlight on the plight of animals caught up in the deluge.

The adult [tiger](#)—weighing more than 200 pounds (90 kilogrammes)—was like many other beasts in the World Heritage-listed Kaziranga National Park, trying to reach dry land as the reserve became submerged by heavy rains.

Wild buffalos running in floodwaters, exhausted rhinos resting on patches of land and elephants crossing a road were some of the unusual sights as rangers raced to reach animals struggling in the waters.

More than 50 [wild animals](#) have died so far, including some in [traffic accidents](#), as they tried to cross a busy highway outside the park and reach the nearby Karbi hills, local media reported.

The tiger was about to cross the highway when it appeared to change its mind and jumped into a scrap dealer's tin-roofed compound, sending onlookers into a tizzy.

"The owner was about to open the shop at 8:30 in the morning when he saw the tiger jump inside," Bhaskar Choudhury, head veterinarian for the non-profit Wildlife Trust of India, told AFP.

"One of the doors was open and it was dark inside. The tiger decided to go in and sit on the bed."



One-horned rhinoceros bask on a bank in flood-hit Kaziranga National Park in India's Assam state

Choudhury said instead of tranquilising the big cat, his organisation was waiting for sunset to allow the creature to emerge from the compound and take off on its own.

Meanwhile, forest rangers are using boats to traverse the parklands—now a large expanse of water—as they search for stranded or injured animals.

"It had been a long time since this type of flood has affected Kaziranga National Park," forest ranger Pradut Goswami told AFP.

The UNESCO-recognised Kaziranga is home to two-thirds of the world's remaining one-horned rhinos and several have been spotted basking in the sun on a patches of high ground surrounded by water.

With Assam usually one of the worst-hit Indian states during the annual rains, the park has been building ridges for the [animals](#) to swim to, although not all of them utilise the elevated areas.



Rangers kept a close eye on a tiger that sought shelter from the monsoon rains in a village shophouse

The floods, which are in their second week, have so far killed at least 27 people in Assam, sweeping away houses and boats.

Across South Asia, including Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan, the death toll has risen above 300 with millions of residents affected and hundreds of thousands displaced.

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