

Fears of worsening floods as monsoon rains pound South Asia

July 17 2019



Lahore residents wade through a flooded street after heavy monsoon rains in the Pakistan city

Children have been swept away by floodwaters and others killed in landslides caused by heavy monsoon rains across south Asia as the death

toll passed 250 Wednesday, with authorities bracing for worse weather in some regions.

The annual deluge is crucial to replenishing [water supplies](#) in the impoverished region, but the downpour from June to September often turns deadly.

Across India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan, millions of residents have been affected and hundreds of thousands displaced, with homes and boats washed away.

In flood-prone Bangladesh, which is criss-crossed by rivers, around one-third of the country is underwater and 59 people have died, officials said.

"It was raining the last few days, the landslide damaged many of our houses and a lot of people are suffering," said Sanjida Begum in Cox's Bazar district, home to nearly one million Rohingya Muslim refugees who have fled a military crackdown in Myanmar.

"Children are floating away while crossing these canals, even my nephew was washed away in the canal."

In India, the [death toll](#) rose to at least 100 and in remote areas entire communities were cut off by rising floodwaters which damaged or submerged roads.

"It's been 15 days (since) this area has been flooded," a local resident in Assam, where the death toll reached 22, told AFP.



Bangladesh has been particularly hard hit by the monsoon, with about a third of the country now under water

"The damage it has caused is very bad. Cattle have also been affected. Everything has been destroyed."

Video footage shared on [social media](#) showed rescuers pulling a rhinoceros calf from swollen floodwaters in the state's World Heritage-listed Kaziranga National Park, home to two-thirds of the world's remaining one-horned rhinos.

In Bihar, which borders Nepal—and like Assam is one of the worst-affected regions in India—locals told AFP they were unable to reach food supplies.

Some 33 deaths have been reported and 2.5 million residents affected in the state. Locals were erecting makeshift shelters on elevated land with the meagre belongings they had salvaged from the floodwaters.

In Mumbai, the number of victims from a building collapse following [heavy rains](#) rose to 14.

Mixed outlook

Authorities said floods would worsen in certain regions, while other areas would get some respite over the next few days.

Conditions in Assam state have not improved, officials said, with the army called in to help out with rescue efforts. Water levels in parts of Bihar have receded as the rain has cleared and some sunshine returned.



Indian men walk in flood waters in Kamrup districts of Assam, which has been badly hit by monsoon rains

In the worst-affected district in Bangladesh's north and central districts, the state-run Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre said major rivers would rise further in the next 24 hours.

The latest victims there were a woman and four children who died after their small boat sank in floodwaters.

Floods are frequent in Bangladesh and in 1998 some 70 percent of the country was briefly underwater in one of the worst deluges in the country's history.

In Nepal, at least 83 people have died and 17,000 families have been displaced, but people have started to return as [water levels](#) recede, Home Ministry spokesman Ram Krishna Subedi told AFP.

Further northwest, in the Pakistan-administered part of Kashmir, flash floods killed 23 people.

Seven people from the same family, including five children, were killed when the roof of their house collapsed due to heavy rainfall in Sheikhpura city near Lahore, Pakistani officials said.

Aid agency Save the Children said damaged infrastructure, including roads and bridges, were making it difficult to access remote communities, with thousands of villages cut off.

Citation: Fears of worsening floods as monsoon rains pound South Asia (2019, July 17) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-07-worsening-monsoon-pound-south-asia.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.