

19 dead, thousands seek shelter in South Asia monsoon floods

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At least 19 people are dead after floods triggered by South Asia's annual monsoon.

At least 19 people are dead after floods triggered by South Asia's annual monsoon, with a week of relentless rains forcing thousands of people to

seek shelter in India.

Floods are common and cause widespread devastation during the treacherous monsoon season, but experts say [climate change](#) is increasing their frequency, ferocity and unpredictability.

The toll from flooding and landslides last weekend in Nepal had risen to 14 by Friday, with more than two dozen still missing, according to officials.

"Search and rescue teams are still on the ground," Dhruva Bahadur Khadka, a spokesman for the country's national disaster authority, told AFP on Friday.

Four others were killed after flooding in landslides in India's remote Himalayan state of Arunachal Pradesh near the Chinese border, disaster management authorities there said Thursday.

Authorities in neighboring Assam state said one person had died in [flood waters](#) by Thursday evening, with more than 1,300 villages inundated.

Around 14,000 people had left their homes for emergency shelters, Assam's disaster agency added.

Bangladesh is also on alert after forecasters warned of potential floods in northern districts bordering India.

At least 20,000 families had so far been affected by flooding in low-lying areas around the northern district of Kurigram, authorities said.

"The major rivers in the region are swelling," district administrator Mohammad Rezaul Karim told AFP. "The situation may worsen anytime if the flow from upstream increases."

The Asian Summer Monsoon is essentially a colossal sea breeze that brings South Asia 70-80 percent of its [annual rainfall](#) between June and September every year.

It is vital for agriculture and therefore for the livelihoods of millions of farmers and [food security](#) in a region of around two billion people.

But it also brings destruction every year in landslides and floods.

A 2021 study by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) tracking shifts in the monsoon from the mid-20th century suggested it was becoming stronger and more erratic.

Last year catastrophic monsoon floods put a third of Pakistan under water, damaging two million homes and killing more than 1,700 people.

Bangladesh saw record flooding the same year that killed more than 100 people and cut off seven million others, with relief efforts continuing for months.

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