

Floods kill 175 in India, Nepal

BY AFP

NEPAL. At least 175 people have died and thousands have fled their homes as monsoon floods swept across Nepal, India and Bangladesh, officials said yesterday, warning the toll could rise as the extent of the damage becomes clear.

Three days of relentless downpours sparked floods and landslides that have killed at least 70 people in Nepal, 73 across northern and eastern India and 22 in Bangladesh.

Around 200,000 people are living in emergency camps in Assam in northeast India, which suffers frequent flooding during the annual monsoon rains.

Another 15,000 have had to leave their homes in the eastern state of Bihar, which borders Nepal and where one official said seven rivers were at danger levels.

Blame game

Huge swathes of the state were submerged in 2008 when a river burst its banks across the border in Nepal, with the two countries trading blame for the disaster.

In Nepal, police said over 48,000 homes have been totally submerged by the floods.

As emergency workers struggled to reach far-flung areas, the country's home ministry said another 47 people were missing, presumed dead.

The Nepal Red Cross warned that shortages of drinking water and food could create a humanitarian crisis in the impoverished Himalayan country.

"In many parts of the country there is a scarcity of safe drinking water creating a high risk of health hazards," spokesman Dibya Raj Poudel told *AFP*.

"Several villages and settlements are unreachable. Telecommunications, mobile phones are still not working so it is difficult to give a full assessment."



Troubled. An Indian man wades through flood waters while carrying household items at Koliabor village in Guwahati, the capital city of India's northeastern state of Assam yesterday. AFP PHOTO

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