

Death Toll in India's Torrential Downpours Reaches 213



New Delhi, July 31 (RHC)-- Nearly 213 people have died in torrential rains in the western states of Gujarat and Rajasthan, according to local reports. Rescuers continue to look for survivors as they sift through villages devastated by the heavy downpour and flooding.

Flash floods have reportedly wreaked havoc in the western regions of Rajasthan. In many villages in the region, people had to be rescued from their rooftops by the Army, National Disaster Response Force, NDRF and State Disaster Response Force, the SDRF.

Gujarat and Rajasthan are home to cotton and millet farms that have been severely impacted by the excessive downpour. Tens of thousands of farmers in the region fear that the crop might be damaged by the excessive moisture.

"Cotton and millet harvests are expected to suffer in about three districts each in Gujarat and Rajasthan, but the biggest worry is that the extra moisture could lead to pest attacks in these areas," Devinder Sharma, an independent farm expert, told Al Jazeera.

Ahmedabad, the commercial hub, and Gujarat's capital saw its airports partially flooded, forcing flights to be diverted. Over 150 factories were forced to shut down, and over 50,000 people were struggling to drain water from their land and homes.

According to the state-run India meteorological department, rains that began in June initiating the four-month monsoon season have been 4 percent higher than the average.

The torrential downpour and severe flooding that has continued for over two weeks have also affected India's northeastern states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Manipur, claiming nearly 83 lives so far, Al Jazeera reported. The downpours also triggered landslides and displaced over two million people.

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