As the global warming catastrophe escalates

Nepal suffers devastating flooding

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The catastrophic flash floods that struck northern Nepal and China's Tibet region on Wednesday have created a massive human disaster. At least 270 people have been confirmed dead in Nepal, but with hundreds still missing, this figure will likely climb considerably. In Nepal, more than 900 are missing, including tourists and other travelers. China reported three deaths and 558 missing.

The disaster was triggered by a major glacial collapse. A significant portion of a glacier's lower end broke away at an elevation of around 5,200 meters (17,060 feet), dropping 1,200 meters (3,937 feet) onto the valley floor and accumulating rock and debris as it fell.

The resulting mudslide traveled at about 50 metres (164 feet) per second. The collapsing mass appears to have swept into the Lhende Khola, which feeds into the Bhote Koshi and then the Trishuli River, producing a destructive surge downstream across the Nepal–Tibet border.

The U.S. Geological Survey analysis of seismic stations, long-period waves and satellite imagery found on Thursday that the shaking initially registered as a magnitude 4.4 earthquake, which was generated by the collapse, with its energy equivalent to a magnitude 5.2 seismic event.

The hardest-hit areas include the Rasuwa district and settlements around Timure and Syabrubesi, with a population of about 50,000, as well as parts of Nuwakot, downstream, all located in Nepal near its northern border with the Tibet. Footage shows torrents of water and debris surging through villages, submerging buildings and carrying away vehicles.

"Entire villages and market areas have been wiped out" said David Fisher, the Nepal head of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Locals were traumatized. Raju Bhade, 56, told AFP Wednesday, "I got a call from (my brother-in-law) this morning, and they were crying and said their entire house had been swept away. Three family members were rescued, but his brother is still missing."

Kalpana Malla of Nepal's Nuwakot district told the BBC that her "family members were swept away by the flood in front of my eyes." Her father, mother, sister and their children were all washed away. With floods surging along the river, the damage will increase in lower areas.

Goma Pandit told BBC that she has lost her buffaloes and all her other cattle. "My farmland is also swept away. Ten sacks of mustard seeds, tons of corn and rice paddy are all gone. Nothing is left." Some 10,000 households are in dire need of immediate relief, including emergency food parcels, safe shelter, drinking water, sanitation and medicine.

More than 720 houses have been destroyed, and 2,153 houses have suffered partial damage. The Rasuwagadhi Friendship Bridge, which serves as Nepal's lifeline for northern trade, tourism and one of two major operational land borders connecting Nepal directly to China, was washed away, along with 19 other bridges and 40 kilometers (almost 25 miles) of roadways. Several highways were closed. The deluge inundated major border market hubs and halted all bilateral trade. The flood damaged around 430 MW of electricity-producing capacity, including solar and hydropower installations.

The flood struck a region containing two sacred mountain lakes, Lake Mansarovar in Tibet and Gosaikunda, revered by Hindus, Buddhists and Jains. Because this is the peak travel season, the area normally draws thousands of visitors from India seeking spiritual journeys and dips, and many tourists were affected.

The extent of the tragedy indicates that there were very minimal, if any, proactive rescue preparations or specialized early warnings. Moreover, there are warnings that a second flood may occur.

Monsoon rains from June to September routinely cause fatal floods and landslides throughout South Asia, but the new Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) government in Nepal just ignored it despite its promises of "new governance." Prime Minister Balendra Shah stated that the government mobilized security forces and promised food, clean water, medication and temporary shelter, adding that the "state is with you with all its means and resources."

But locals faced an immediate crisis with limited

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assistance. Pema Dorje Ghale, a rural resident, told onlinekhabar.com on Wednesday that many residents in Timure had escaped to higher ground, and some families had been left without food and were surviving on river water while waiting for rescue teams. Initially, just two of the Nepalese army's 15 helicopters were deployed for rescue efforts.

Nepal is exceptionally exposed to natural hazards. It lies at the collision point of the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates, contains steep and unstable mountain terrain, experiences intense monsoon rainfall and is home to glaciers rapidly affected by global warming. But this alone does not explain the scale of the tragedy.

Every year, floods and landslides devastate the region. Between 2015 and 2024, Nepal recorded 8,418 monsoon-related disaster incidents, affecting more than 56,000 families, damaging 36,479 houses and destroying 195 bridges. In 2024 alone, 495 people died in monsoon-related disasters. Landslides, the single deadliest category of monsoon disaster in Nepal, accounted for 1,296 of the 2,317 recorded monsoon deaths over the decade. This exposes a pattern, not an isolated tragedy.

Many families who survived earlier disasters never receive adequate compensation or permanent housing. Riverbanks are left unprotected, and settlements continue to be built in hazardous areas because poor people have nowhere else to live. More than a decade after the devastating 2015 earthquake, many survivors continue to live in inadequate housing or structures vulnerable to future earthquakes, landslides and floods.

The scale of the death and destruction cannot be explained by geology or weather alone. It is the product of climate change, decades of state neglect and the subordination of public safety to profit and the budgetary demands of capitalism.

Nature does not pay attention to the nation-state system created by capitalism. The tragedy, originating on the Chinese side but devastating Nepal downstream, highlights the irrationality of the nation-state system, which must be abolished to build an effective defense against such tragedies.

The Bhote Koshi disaster is part of a global intensification of extreme weather. Deadly flooding has struck West Virginia and Texas in the United States, while floods in Bangladesh killed more than 50 people and affected over 1 million. Storms in Chile killed at least 10 people and cut more than 99,000 people off from basic services. Europe has faced record heat and wildfires, the evacuation of approximately 375,000 people in France and Spain, and thousands of excess deaths during a June heatwave.

Simon Cox, chief scientist at the Mountains to Sea programme at Earth Sciences New Zealand, said, "Climate change is generating conditions that can destabilise high-mountain rock and ice."

Driven by decades of fossil fuel emissions, ecosystem destruction and capitalist governments refusing to protect human life, global climate catastrophes are intensifying. Scientifically, atmospheric warming increases the severity of heavy precipitation while accelerating evaporation. This dries soils and vegetation, creating conditions that simultaneously worsen floods, severe droughts, extreme heat waves and destructive wildfires.

Despite the availability of environmentally friendly energy sources, capitalist governments make no serious efforts to solve the issue of global warming. Donald Trump even withdrew the US from the Paris Climate Agreement in January 2026, calling the climate crisis a "scam" while prioritizing fossil fuel extraction and deregulation.

Trillions of dollars are available for weapons, military bases and imperialist war, while poor and technically backward countries like Nepal lack robust bridges, secure communications, functioning warning systems and disaster management infrastructure. The flood victims of Nepal need immediate, unconditional relief. All missing people must be searched for; survivors must receive food, water, shelter and medical care; and displaced families must be guaranteed permanent, safe housing and compensation.

Recurrent flooding is just one example of the incapacity of the ruling classes to address even the most basic requirement of the working masses. It is a warning to workers everywhere. Climate disasters are becoming more frequent and destructive; the death toll is determined by social priorities. Under capitalism, the poor are left exposed while wealth is protected. The alternative is the international unification of the working class in a socialist struggle to reorganize society based on human need and scientific planning.

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