

Nepal Flash Flood 2026

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Geography

Why in News?

Recently, a catastrophic high-altitude flash flood struck Nepal's Rasuwa district along the Nepal-Tibet border.

- **Origin** - The flash floods originating from upstream in Tibet.
- The surge of water spread through the **Lhende Khola, Bhote Koshi, and Trishuli River** corridors.
- Avalanche debris temporarily impounded water in a narrow valley section.
- The natural barrier breached rapidly, releasing a massive, high-velocity surge of water, sediment, and boulders downstream.
- **Triggering events** - Extreme events triggered by thermal and structural instabilities in frozen water environments, including Glacier Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs), permafrost degradation, and high-altitude ice-rock avalanches.
- **Cascading Disaster Phenomenon**- Occurs when a primary cryospheric trigger (e.g., an avalanche) creates secondary hazards (landslide dam impoundment) leading to tertiary impacts.
 - Catastrophic downstream flooding and infrastructure failure.



- **Impacts** - Damaged at least 6 major hydropower and transmission assets—including the

- 111 MW Rasuwagadhi,
- 78 MW Sanjen Khola, and
- 60 MW Upper Trishuli 3A projects,
- disrupting nearly 430 MW (~12%) of Nepal's total installed power capacity.
- Severely damaged the Rasuwagadhi-Gyirong customs checkpoint and key bridges.
- It halts Nepal-China overland trade and prompts heightened flood alerts along the lower Narayani (Gandak) and Koshi river basins in northern India.
- It causes widespread loss of life, severe destruction of critical hydropower infrastructure, and cross-border flood warnings downstream toward India.
- International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) assessments indicate that a high-altitude ***ice and rock avalanche*** in Tibet collapsed into the Lhende Khola.

Lhende Khola is a key tributary of the Bhote Koshi.

River / Feature	Geographic Role & Characteristics
Lhende Khola	High-altitude transboundary stream on the Nepal-Tibet border where the avalanche impoundment occurred.
Bhote Koshi River	Transboundary river originating in the Tibetan Plateau; acted as the main upper conduit for the flood surge.
Trishuli River	Formed by the confluence of Bhote Koshi and Langtang Khola at Syabrubesi; one of the main tributaries of the Narayani (Gandak) system.
Narayani / Gandak River	Major transboundary river system carrying meltwater from central Nepal into the Gangetic plains of Bihar, India.
Rasuwa District	Mountainous border district in Bagmati Province, central Nepal, home to the Langtang National Park corridor.

References

1. [The Hindu | Severe damage across Rasuwa and Trishuli corridor](#)
2. [BBC News | Devastating flash flood hits Nepal-Tibet border region](#)