

## Flood news from across the land

**Date:** Wednesday, May 27 @ 00:20:44 EDT

**Topic:** home



**27 May, 2009** - As rain beat down on the country, lives and belongings were lost

### **Thimphu :**

A Thimphu student died yesterday when a bridge he was crossing at Semtokha collapsed into the Olaronchu stream, which had swollen because of the rain. His body is yet to be found. The class six student was on his way to the Loselling lower secondary school, located near the Changji complex, along with two other

**By 4:30 pm yesterday Paro-Thimphu road was blocked at Ramtokto**

schoolmates. The time was 7:00 a.m.

An eyewitness said that the swiftly rising Olaronchu had already weakened the makeshift bridge, below the Thimphu workshop. Two students managed to jump to safety.

Swollen up streams also washed away a student in Hongtsho.

As rivers and streams in Thimphu surged to potentially perilous flood levels, they set off waves of anxiety among the public. The Wangchu threatened to send water spilling over its banks. Residents living along the banks packed up their valuables and headed for higher ground.

Kuensel found Ugyen Lhaden, 38, who lived in a building below the sewage office in Babesa, crying beside the expressway. The rain had formed several streams of water, from higher ground, and washed away her belongings. "I thought of going back to save some clothes but I wasn't allowed," she said. A police rescue team said the water level around her building had risen to dangerous levels.

The centenary farmers' market was a pool of water. Most of the stored vegetables were damaged. A vegetable vendor, Dorji Rinchen, 72, said the design of the market was flawed. Water from upper ceilings was leaking into the floors below.

### **Ha :**

The Ha-chu washed away four labour camps and a workshop in Ha town, flooding the town and forcing residents to evacuate their homes and live in hospital and guesthouses. No casualties were reported.

The road between Ha town and several places was blocked.

Dzongkhag officials helped people carry their belongings. Nine vehicles, including a tractor, have been deployed for the purpose.

### **Dagana:**

The swollen Darachhu washed away the Dagachu bridge at around 11:20 am yesterday, cutting off Dagana dzongkhag from the rest of the country.

It also washed away 20 m of the Dagana-Sunkosh road.

Dagana dzongda Tashi Gyaltzen said that the dzongkhag was paralysed as there was no electricity and road. The generator is also out of order, he said.

#### **Mongar:**

The Kurichu hydro project has shut down two of its four turbines after heavy rainfall deposited huge debris and silt in the dam.

The project recorded the highest inflow of water at 2,900 cu m/sec yesterday. Last year's highest inflow was 1,500 cu m/sec. The 60 MW project now generates only 26 MW.

A massive landslide in Rotpashong on the Mongar-Lhuentse highway and two others in Sengor and Thrumsengla have cut off Mongar from both Thimphu and Lhuentse. Machines have been deployed in the area to clear the blockage.

#### **Bumthang:**

Bumthang dzongkhag officials said they were draining water from the Chamkhar ground flooded by the Chamkhar chu. A falling retaining wall damaged two alto cars and a hilux near the Jakar dzong.

#### **Paro:**

Dotey rongchu, a tributary of the Parochu, submerged two bridges. The motorable bridge, leading to the gup's office near Shaba, was washed away. The Dantak camp in Bondey was also flooded with water. By late evening, the Parochu was spilling on the road near the Paro dzong. A swelling stream from Gyenekha damaged a bridge in Charkilo (about two km from Chunzom). **Chukha:**

As of 4:15 p.m. yesterday, the Phuentsholing-Thimphu highway was blocked at three places. One at Wangkha, another between Tanalum and Tshimasham, and a third at Taktikothi. One Dantak labourer was killed while clearing a landslide area. **Punakha:**

The Phochu level was increased by nearly 50 percent and the Mochu level had reached a nearby village Changyul. The Mochu had brought with it boulders and trees and was hitting the new baazam (traditional bridge), say officials. Dzomithang was submerged. Officials and monks were evacuated.

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