

Everest region flood warning system falls into disrepair

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Dhaka: A multi-million-dollar early warning system designed to protect communities in Nepal's Everest region is reportedly no longer functioning properly after years of neglect, according to reports citing officials and local residents.

The system, installed around the Imja Tsho, was originally developed to alert downstream villages of potential glacial lake outburst floods. The lake sits at over 5,000 meters above sea level and has long been considered a high-risk site due to rapid glacier melt in the Himalayas.

As per reports, local officials in Nepal have acknowledged that key parts of the system have deteriorated. Siren towers installed to warn nearby communities are reportedly rusting, with some no longer operational due to lack of maintenance and, in certain cases, missing components such as batteries.

Reports cited villagers in the Everest region saying, no proper inspection has taken place for years, despite earlier commitments that the system would be regularly monitored. As a result, concerns have grown that the warning network may fail in the event of a sudden glacial lake outburst.

The project, originally supported by international funding and implemented as part of a risk reduction initiative, also included satellite-based monitoring intended to track changes in water levels and send alerts to authorities in the capital. However, officials say data transmission has become inconsistent, limiting their ability to issue timely warnings.

Experts warn that climate change is accelerating glacier melt across the Himalayan region, increasing the size and instability of glacial lakes like Imja Tsho. This raises the risk of sudden flooding that could devastate downstream settlements, trekking routes, and infrastructure.

Residents in vulnerable villages, including Sherpa communities living along potential flood paths, say they feel increasingly exposed. Local representatives have also expressed concern that tens of thousands of tourists visiting the Everest region each year could be at risk during peak trekking seasons.

Government meteorology officials say funding shortages and shifting priorities have delayed maintenance, while some resources were redirected to similar projects in other parts of the country. Efforts are now being discussed to restore monitoring systems and improve long-term sustainability, though no clear timeline has been confirmed.

Despite these assurances, local voices in the region say the situation leaves them living with constant uncertainty, as the early warning system meant to protect them appears increasingly unreliable.

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