

Homes inundated as Missouri River floods

Rivers breach a dozen levees after heavy rain and snowmelt

By **HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH**
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Hundreds of homes flooded in several Midwestern states after rivers breached at least a dozen levees following heavy rain and snowmelt in the region, authorities said Monday while warning that the flooding was expected to linger.

About 200 miles of levees were compromised — either breached or overtopped — in four states, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said. Even in places where the water level peaked in those states — Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and Kansas — the current was fast and the water so high that damage continued to pile up. The flooding was blamed for at least three deaths.

“The levees are busted and we aren’t even into the wet season when the rivers run high,” said Tom Bullock, the emergency management director for Missouri’s Holt County. He said many homes in



Anthony Thomson, left, and Melody Walton make their way out of a flooded neighborhood Sunday in Fremont, Neb.

a mostly rural area of Holt County were inundated with 6 to 7 feet of water from the swollen Missouri River. He noted that local farmers are only a month away from planting corn and soybeans.

“The water isn’t going to be gone, and the levees aren’t going to be fixed this year,” said Bullock, whose own home was now on an island surrounded by floodwater.

One couple was rescued by helicopter after water from three breached levees swept across 40,000 acres, he said. Another nine breaches were confirmed in Nebraska and Iowa counties south of the Platte River, the Corps said.

In Atchison County, Missouri, about 130 people were urged to leave their homes as water levels rose and strained levees, three of which had

already been overtopped by water. Missouri State Highway Patrol crews were on standby to rescue anyone who insisted on staying despite the danger.

“The next four to five days are going to be pretty rough,” said Rhonda Wiley, Atchison County’s emergency management and 911 director.

The Missouri River already crested upstream

of Omaha, Nebraska, though hundreds of people remained out of their homes and water continued to pour through busted levees. Flooding was so bad around Fremont, Nebraska, that just one lane of U.S. 30 was uncovered outside the city of 26,000. State law enforcement limited traffic on that road to pre-approved trucks carrying gas, food, water and other essential supplies.

“There are no easy fixes to any of this,” said Fremont City Administrator Brian Newton. “We need Mother Nature to decrease the height of the river.”

In southwest Iowa, the Missouri River reached a level in Fremont County that was 2 feet above a record set in 2011. The county’s emergency management director, Mike Crecelius, said Monday that more water was flooding into low-lying parts of Hamburg, where a wall of sand-filled barriers was breached when one failed.

President Donald Trump tweeted Monday that he is staying in close contact with Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds and South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem about the flooding.

Reynolds, touring

flood-ravaged areas of the state for the second straight day, warned that flooding will worsen along the Mississippi River as snow melts to the north.

The National Weather Service said the river was expected to crest Thursday in St. Joseph, Missouri, at its third-highest level on record. Military C-130 planes were evacuated last week from nearby Rosecrans Air National Guard base.

In North Dakota, Fargo was preparing for potentially major flooding along the Red River — the same river that ravaged the city a decade ago. Mayor Tim Mahoney declared an emergency and asked residents to help fill 1 million sandbags in response to a weather service warning that snowmelt poses a big risk in Fargo. Sandbag-filling operations start March 26.

In Illinois, weather service readings showed major flooding along the Pecatonica River at Shirland and Freeport, and the Rock River in the Rockford area and Moline. Freeport City Manager Lowell Crow said officials there expected the Pecatonica River “to possibly rise to a record level or at least to a level we haven’t seen in 50 years.”

More than 1,000 people feared dead after Mozambique cyclone

By **ANDREW MELDRUM**
Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG — More than 1,000 people were feared dead in Mozambique four days after a cyclone slammed into the country, submerging entire villages and leaving bodies floating in the floodwaters, the nation’s president said.

“It is a real disaster of great proportions,” President Filipe Nyusi said.

Cyclone Idai could prove to be the deadliest storm in generations to hit the impoverished southeast African country of 30 million people.

It struck Beira, an Indian Ocean port city of a half-million people, late Thursday and then moved inland to Zimbabwe and Malawi with strong winds and heavy rain. But it took days for the scope of the disaster to come into focus in Mozambique, which has a poor communication and transportation network and a corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy.

Speaking on state Radio Mozambique, Nyusi said

that while the official death toll stood at 84, “It appears that we can register more than 1,000 deaths.”

Emergency officials cautioned that while they expect the death toll to rise significantly, they have no way of knowing if it will reach the president’s estimate.

More than 215 people were killed by the storm in the three countries, including more than 80 in Zimbabwe’s eastern Chimanimani region and more than 50 in Malawi, according to official figures. Hundreds more were reported injured and missing, and nearly 1,000 homes were destroyed in eastern Zimbabwe alone.

Doctors Without Borders said rivers have broken their banks leaving many houses submerged and 11,000 households displaced in Nsanje, in southern Malawi.

U.N. agencies and the Red Cross helped rush emergency food and medicine by helicopter to the stricken countries.

Mount Chiluvo in central Mozambique was badly hit by flooding. One resident

said he heard a loud noise, like an explosion, and suddenly saw a river of mud rolling toward his home.

“I was indoors with my children, but when we looked we saw mud coming down the road towards the houses and we fled,” Francisco Carlitos told Lusa, the Portuguese News Agency. The family lost their home and possessions but safely reached higher ground.

The country’s president, who cut short a visit to neighboring Swaziland over the weekend because of the disaster, spoke after flying by helicopter over Beira and two rural provinces, where he reported widespread devastation.

“The waters of the Pungue and Buzi rivers overflowed, making whole villages disappear and isolating communities, and bodies are floating,” Nyusi said.

The Red Cross said 90 percent of Beira was damaged or destroyed. The cyclone knocked out electricity, shut down the airport and cut off access to the city by road.

Democrats say they’ve raised millions

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Washington Gov. Jay Inslee boasts he raised over \$1 million in the days after launching his White House bid. Former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper and others say they did, too.

Impressive numbers, even if dwarfed by the \$6 million or so reported by Bernie Sanders and now Beto O’Rourke.

The seven-digit figures for the lesser-known

Democratic hopefuls don’t lie, but they don’t tell the whole story either. Early bursts of donations don’t happen by accident, especially for candidates with little national name recognition such as Inslee, who hit his target thanks in part to an email list of donors he’s cultivated for months.

He’s among a crowded field of more than a dozen Democrats who are trying to show they can raise big money and realisti-

cally challenge Republican President Donald Trump. With the first-quarter fundraising deadline looming, some are straining credibility to give the impression of a spontaneous groundswell of support.

In addition to Inslee and Hickenlooper, Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar and California Sen. Kamala Harris have boasted they raised \$1 million or more in the hours and days after launching their campaigns.

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Chris Rich is the Eastern Oregon Regional Economist with the Oregon Employment Department. Chris is a graduate of Eastern Washington University with a degree in Economics. He studies the labor market of eight counties in Eastern Oregon. He provides objective regional economic expertise, analysis, and data for groups, organizations, and individuals with an interest. He and his family live in La Grande.



Jeff Blackwood retired as Forest Supervisor of the Umatilla National Forest, spending his career with the U.S. Forest Service. Since retirement, he has been involved with salmon and steelhead recovery planning, watershed restoration projects, and leadership training. Jeff has also been involved with the Pendleton Center for the Arts and the Eastern Oregon Climate Change Coalition. He and his wife Colleen live in the Mission area.

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