

factcheck

Fact and fiction - the line is more blurred than ever



In a world where information spreads faster than ever, not everything you see or hear is necessarily true.

This page takes a closer look at viral claims, trending stories and widely shared information — checking the facts, examining the evidence and separating truth from misinformation.

AI-generated elephant rescue videos mislead online amid Nepal flooding

AFP

Days after flash floods along the Nepal-Tibet border in August 2026 killed hundreds of people, social media posts shared videos falsely claiming they showed elephants rescuing people from the floodwaters. While elephants have been reported helping people during floods in other instances, the videos contain visual inconsistencies indicative of AI-generated content.

"Not all superheroes are humans. They're sometimes animals too. Kudos to this elephant who helped a person cross safely. #FloodDisaster #Nepal," reads a Tagalog-language caption of a Facebook video shared on August 27.

The 20-second clip shows a man stranded in fast-moving floodwaters, with a person behind the camera yelling in Thai, "Hey! Hey! (Look at) the water!"

An elephant then suddenly appears, wades through the current and allows the man to climb onto its back before returning to land.

Similar videos also circulated in various social platforms in India, Pakistan, Australia and South Korea.

Another post shared on Threads on August 30, 2026 purportedly shows an elephant rescuing children.

"The floods in Nepal is really heartbreaking (...) I see many stories of elephants rescuing people" reads the post's Korean-language caption.

Similar claims circulated across X, Threads, Instagram, YouTube, Tiktok and Facebook in various languages after flash floods along the Nepal-Tibet border killed at least 1,250 people, with more than 5,000 reported missing in Nepal and China's Tibet region.

The US Geological Survey said the disaster, the deadliest in Nepal since the 2015 earthquake, was triggered by a glacial collapse that unleashed a vast flow of icy debris.

Comments such as "Thank you Lord, you directed the elephant to rescue the tiny angels"

elephants rescuing people from floods in Nepal in 2017, both videos shared recently were either uploaded online prior to the floods in August 2026.

The visuals also contained multiple inconsistencies which indicated they were fabricated.

Old video

The first clip circulated in early August, weeks before the catastrophic Nepal-Tibet flash flood on August 26.

The video circulated in Philippine social media posts as early as August 1 and was also shared on various online platforms on August 8 amid flooding in Assam, northeastern India.

The video also contains several inconsistencies commonly found in AI-generated media.

At the start of the video, the man's hands appear to blend with the rock.

The texture of the elephant's skin is also inconsistent, with wrinkles appearing only in isolated patches. As the man climbs on to the elephant, the quality of the video significantly degrades.

Meta's AI detector also found digital signatures indicating that the video was likely generated using the company's AI tools.

AI-generated clip

A close inspection of the second clip also identified multiple visual artefacts.

One of the men in the back initially holds an overhead rope with his right hand, but later prays with both hands pressed together while the right hand remains on the rope -- effectively showing three hands.

Another person's hand holding the same rope also disappears and reappears.

Other onlookers' hands also become blurred and meld with nearby objects when they overlap.

An analysis of the clip using the Hive Moderation AI detection tool found the video is "likely to contain AI-generated or deepfake content"

Despite claiming to be filmed in Nepal, a woman in the video is also heard speaking Spanish, saying "gracias, gracias" while embracing one of the children.

While there were reports of



Screenshots of the falsely shared Facebook video (L) and Threads post sharing the screenshot image of the fabricated clip, taken on September 2, 2026, with AI labels and red crosses



Screenshots of the falsely shared video taken on September 2, 2026, with AI labels and highlights added



A screenshot of the fabricated video, taken on September 2, 2026, with an AI label and a visual inconsistency highlighted in red

Video shows Arctic glacier calving, not trigger for catastrophic Nepal-Tibet floods



Screenshot comparison of falsely shared video (L) and the original video uploaded by Richard Sidey

AFP

After deadly flash floods struck the Nepal-Tibet border on August 26, 2026, social media posts falsely claimed an old video showed the glacier collapse that triggered the disaster.

The Burmese-language caption claimed glaciers had collapsed, devastating Nepal and killing thousands. The footage shows chunks of ice breaking away from a glacier and falling into water.

The disaster sent a huge wave of freezing water, rocks and debris into settlements and hydropower facilities in Nepal and Tibet. At least 1,200 people were killed and more than 4,750 remained missing.

However, the viral video was filmed years earlier. Reverse image searches traced it to a July 22 Facebook post by filmmaker Richard Sidey, more than a month before the disaster.

Sidey said he filmed the footage at the Monacobreen glacier in Norway's Svalbard archipelago in 2018. He described it as a tidewater glacier calving into the sea.

While the exact cause of the Nepal collapse remains unclear, climate change is increasing glacier-related risks.

AI-generated images do not show Kenyan army recruits forming popular political slogans

AFP

AI-generated images falsely show Kenyan army recruits forming political slogans during a 2026 graduation ceremony.

The images claimed recruits formed "TUTAM", supporting President William Ruto's re-election, and "WANTAM", used by his critics.

AFP Fact Check reviewed event footage and photographs but found no evidence of such formations. Comparisons revealed altered backgrounds, missing structures and blurred, repetitive figures typical of AI generation.

The images are fabricated and do not show real formations by Kenyan army recruits.

A screenshot showing the false TikTok post, taken on August 26, 2026. AI symbol added

