

# Storms kill 35 in India

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NEW DELHI: Thunderstorms swept across western India killing at least 35 people and leaving widespread damage, officials said on Wednesday.

Strong winds barrelled through Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh states felling walls, trees and electricity lines. The storms have also been blamed for at least 25 deaths in Pakistan this week.

At least 10 people were killed in the desert state of Rajasthan, where a wall of dust swept over several cities. Another 10 were killed in neighbouring Gujarat and 15 in the central state of Madhya Pradesh, state emergency services told AFP.

Officials said victims were hit by lightning, falling trees or electrocuted by power lines. Strong winds and sudden rains also hit the capital, New Delhi, bringing searing summer temperatures down by 10 degrees.

The storms forced the cancellation of several political rallies as India's national election gathers pace. The wind blew away a tent that was to have been used for a rally by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Himmatnagar in Gujarat.