TOKYO: A severe snowstorm sweeping across Japan has killed at least 13 people and left more than 1,600 injured, media and officials said yesterday, as the capital faced a snowfall not seen in 50 years.

Many of the casualties were involved in traffic accidents, while 15 others were crushed to death after roofs collapsed under the weight of the snow. Some 130,000 people were trapped in small communities and businesses, while 280,000 roads and railway lines were closed, the Yomiuri Shimbun said, while an additional 14,000 people remained at some petrol stations delayed due to impassable roads.

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