

Bihar flood: Over 34 lakh affected as Ganga crosses flood mark at one place

PATNA, SEP 8: The Bihar flood situation worsened as over 34 lakh people across 13 districts have been affected, with the authorities sounding an alert in downstream areas after the water level of the Ganga crossed the "flood mark" at Sultanganj in Bhagalpur district on Tuesday, officials said.

A small boat capsized in a flood-hit area of Kharik Raghopur in Bhagalpur district this morning. State Disaster Relief Force (SDRF) personnel rescued all 10 people aboard the boat, officials said.

Floods have affected around 34.31 lakh people across 480 gram panchayats in 13 districts of Bihar, including Patna, Bhagalpur, Vaishali, Saran, Begusarai, Khagaria and Munger.

Around 29.13 lakh people have been impacted by floods as overflowing rivers inundated large swathes in 13 districts on Monday.

According to the Bihar Meteorological Service Centre, the state has recorded 79.6 mm of rainfall in September so far, which is 31 per cent above normal.

The Disaster Management Department in a statement said, "The Ganga at Sultanganj in Bhagalpur recorded 36.80 metres at 8



am on September 8, surpassing its previous Highest Flood Level (HFL) of 36.75 metres recorded on August 17, 2021. The trend, however, remains stable.

Several rivers, including the Gandak, Kosi, Budhi Gandak, Ganga, Punpun, Bagmati and Ghaghra, are flowing above danger levels at multiple locations.

The water levels of the Gandak river at Dumriaghat and Hajipur, Kosi at Baltara and Kursela, Budhi Gandak at Khagaria, Ganga at Digha, Gandhi Ghat, Hathidah, Bhagalpur, Kahalgaon and Munger are flowing above the danger level.

"A total of 432 community kitchens are currently

being operated in various districts for flood-affected people. In addition, 14 relief camps are also being run, where arrangements have been made for accommodation, food, medical care and other essential services," the statement said.

So far, around 1.29 lakh polythene sheets and approximately 22,900 dry ration packets have been distributed among flood-affected people.

A total of 1,832 boats are being operated to facilitate evacuation and transportation. So far, 3,142 quintals of animal fodder have also been distributed, the Disaster Management Department said.

As far as the discharge of water from major barrages in the state is concerned, the statement said the Gandak Barrage recorded a discharge of 1,04,400 cusecs at 10 am on Tuesday, with the trend remaining stable. The highest discharge recorded so far this year was 2,24,000 cusecs on July 14.

The discharge at Kosi Barrage stood at 1,69,985 cusecs at 10 am, with the trend showing a decline. Its highest discharge so far this year was 2,55,425 cusecs on July 20.

Altogether 27 SDRF teams and 10 NDRF teams have been deployed in various districts for rescue operations. (PTI)

Complaint For Remarks Against PM Modi: HC Refuses To Quash 2019 Summons To Rahul Gandhi

MUMBAI, SEP 8: The Bombay High Court on Tuesday refused to quash the summons issued to Congress MP Rahul Gandhi in 2019 in a defamation complaint over his remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whom he had called a "commander-in-thief".

A single bench of Justice N R Borkar dismissed Gandhi's petition against the magistrate court's order.

The HC, however, continued its 2021 order directing the magistrate to defer hearing on the complaint for six weeks so that Gandhi can approach the Supreme Court in appeal.

Justice Borkar said the court did not find any "perversity and illegality" in the magistrate's order and hence no reason to interfere. "This court finds no infirmity in the order. Hence, the petition is dismissed," the HC said.



Gandhi, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, had challenged a Girgaum magistrate's order of August 28, 2019 for a process against him on a complaint filed by one M H Shrishrimal, who claimed to be a member of the ruling BJP.

The defamation complaint against the Congress leader had been filed for Gandhi's "commander-in-thief" remark against PM Modi in 2018 over the Rafale fighter jet deal.

The HC in November 2021 directed the magistrate to defer the hearing on the defamation complaint, which meant the Congress

leader would not be required to appear before the magistrate.

The complaint had alleged that Gandhi defamed PM Modi in a public speech in September 2018 in Rajasthan.

Gandhi's counsel Sudeep Pasbola and advocate Kushal Mor argued that the complaint was frivolous and the complainant had no locus standi to file it.

The complainant was not an aggrieved party and hence cannot file such a complaint, they had submitted.

Shrishrimal in his complaint alleged that apart from the remarks during the rally against PM Modi, Gandhi had also posted a video on his personal X (formerly Twitter) account and referred to the prime minister as "commander-in-thief".

Chargesheet in Manipuri musician's killing within 8-9 days: Rijiju

NEW DELHI, SEP 8: Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Tuesday said Delhi Police has assured him that a chargesheet will be filed within eight to nine days in the killing of Manipuri musician C Vikram Singh in south Delhi.

He called for "strictest punishment possible" for those involved.

Rijiju said he spoke to senior Delhi Police officers, including those handling issues concerning people from the Northeast, and was personally monitoring the investigation.

"Police have assured me that the chargesheet will be filed within eight-nine days," he told reporters, adding that investigators would "not leave any stone unturned" in building a strong case against the accused.

Singh, a 54-year-old musician from Manipur who had been living in Kilokari village for several years, died after he was allegedly assaulted by a group of delivery workers and dhaba staff in the early hours of Monday when he objected to them shouting and drinking outside his



apartment. Police have arrested seven men and apprehended a juvenile in connection with the case.

Rijiju said the eight accused hailed from different states, including Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

Calling Singh's death "very unfortunate," the minister said the police acted swiftly after the incident and tracked down the accused after they fled. "The strictest possible, severe punishment must be given," he said.

Rijiju said police officials were in touch with Singh's family and arrangements had been made to fly his body to Imphal on Wednesday.

Responding to a question about Congress leader Rahul Gandhi raising concerns over the safety of people from the Northeast, Rijiju said the incident should not be politicised.

"Look, this is not the time for politics. I have been saying this repeatedly. Where does the BJP come into this? When such an incident takes place, and someone dies in such a tragedy, we should talk about taking immediate action. This is not a matter for politics," Rijiju said.

"The entire people from the Northeast are upset because he belongs to Manipur. But after all, he is an Indian. We all have to be concerned.

Why only Northeast? Every Indian must be concerned. Every life is precious," the minister said.

He said a special unit of Delhi Police dealing with issues concerning people from the Northeast was coordinating in the case and claimed mechanisms were in place to ensure quick police response whenever such incidents occurred.

According to police, the Sunlight Colony police station received a PCR call regarding the assault on Singh. A preliminary enquiry found that Singh, who belonged to the Meitei community, had objected to a group of men allegedly creating a nuisance outside his house.

He suffered injuries after the men allegedly rained blows and punches on him. His son Yaiphaba rushed him to Holy Family Hospital, where he later died.

The accused have been identified as Bharat Kumar (19), Pramod (26), Ramzan Khan (22), Deepanshu (21), Mohan Vishwakarma (32), Vijay (36), Mannu (26) and a juvenile. Police said they worked at different dhabas and food stalls. (PTI)

Deaths due to passive smoking in India up 50 pc compared to 1990: Lancet study

NEW DELHI, SEPT 8: Deaths in India due to second hand smoke increased nearly 50 per cent in 2023, compared to 1990, even as death rates improved by about 30 per cent, according to a global analysis published in The Lancet Public Health journal.

The estimates also suggest that while the population exposed to second hand smoke increased from 375 million in 1990 to 444 million in 2026 -- up by 18.4 per cent -- age-standardised prevalence dropped from 43.2 per cent in 1990 to 30.6 per cent in 2023 in India.

Age-standardised prevalence is a statistical adjustment made to data to allow a fair comparison of prevalence across age groups.

An international team of researchers forming the 'Global Burden of Disease (GBD) 2023 Second-hand smoke Collaborators' estimated prevalence of exposure to passive smoking and the disease burden it contributes to across 204 countries and territories.

"In 2023, an estimated 2.71 billion people worldwide were exposed to SHS (second hand smoke), including 767 million children aged 0-14 years," the authors wrote.



Globally, exposure prevalence was 33.9 per cent in 2023. China, India, and Indonesia accounted for nearly half of the world's exposed population, with 664 million, 444 million, and 142 million people exposed, respectively, in 2023, they found.

However, "age-standardised prevalence was highest in southeast Asia, east Asia, and Oceania (48.4 per cent), with female individuals in some countries experiencing nearly 1.8 times the exposure prevalence of male individuals," the team said.

In India, absolute deaths in 1990 due to passive smoking were 2,17,700, while those in 2023 were 3,25,600 -- death rates or deaths per hundred thousand population, however, fell from 46.1

in 1990 to 30 in 2023, down by 35 per cent, the findings show.

"The numbers mean that despite a fall in the adjusted rates, the absolute number of people exposed to passive smoking is still increasing. This can have long-lasting effects across multiple organ systems, not just the respiratory system," Dr Neetu Jain, pulmonologist and senior consultant at Pushpawati Singhan Hospital and Research Institute, New Delhi, told PTI.

"Second-hand smoke exposure is associated with an increased risk of several diseases, including cardiovascular and respiratory conditions. The effects of passive smoking can also be particularly concerning in people

with conditions such as coronary artery disease," she said.

Children were found to account for more than 12 per cent of the world's health burden from second hand smoke, with lower respiratory infections causing the greatest burden, according to the study.

"Passive smoking is avoidable if smokers take steps to prevent exposing others to tobacco smoke. Smoking outside the home and away from enclosed spaces can reduce exposure to second-hand smoke, particularly among family members and children. Children are especially vulnerable because their lungs are still developing, and exposure to tobacco smoke can adversely affect their respiratory health," Dr Jain said.

"The effects tend to be greatest among those who are least aware of what passive smoking is and the health risks associated with it," the pulmonologist said.

"However, we should encourage smokers to quit and focus on bringing down smoking across the country through effective tobacco control measures, including higher tobacco prices and taxes," she said. (PTI)

Relief, rescue operations underway on war footing in flood affected areas: Nityanand

SAMASTIPUR, SEPT 8:

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs and Ujjairpur BJP MP Nityanand Rai on Tuesday said that the Centre and Bihar governments are standing firmly with people affected by floods and that relief and rescue operations are being carried out on a war footing across several affected districts of the state.

Rai visited flood-affected areas of the Mohanpur block in Samastipur district to review relief and rescue operations. During his field visit, he met affected families and took stock of their problems and immediate requirements. The union minister



inspected community kitchens, animal shelters and medical camps being operated by the administration. He also reviewed arrangements for providing safe drinking water to people in the affected areas.

Rai travelled by boat to inspect several villages and hamlets in Mohanpur block that have been affected by the rising water level of the Ganga and surrounded by waterlogging. During the visit, he distrib-

uted relief materials among people stranded or affected by the floods and sought feedback from families regarding the facilities and assistance being provided by the administration.

Rai said that no flood-affected family would be allowed to face hardship and that the government was making every effort to ensure that relief materials and essential services reach affected people without delay.

He directed officials to ensure the timely delivery of relief materials and other essential facilities to flood-hit residents and to maintain continuous monitoring of the affected areas. (Agencies)

Chandigarh railway station traffic block to disrupt train services from September 10

PANCHKULA, SEPT 8:

Northern Railway will take a traffic block at Chandigarh railway station under the Ambala Division from September 10 to October 15 for carrying out infrastructure-related works at the station, leading to the cancellation, partial cancellation and diversion of several trains, besides changes in temporary stoppages and platforms.

According to the railway notification, the block will affect normal train operations at Chandigarh during the period. Several trains will remain fully cancelled, while some services will be short-terminated or short-originated at Ambala Cantt on specified dates. Two trains will be operated on a changed route, selected trains will be given additional temporary stoppages and the platforms of a large number of trains will also be changed in different phases.

Among the trains to remain cancelled are the 14331 Delhi Jn-Kalka Express from September 9 to October 15 and the 14332 Kalka-Delhi Jn Express from September 10 to October 16. The 54531/54532 Kalka-Ambala Cantt-Kalka Passenger will also remain cancelled during the notified period.

The 14541 Chandigarh-Amritsar Express will re-



main cancelled from September 9 to October 15, while the return 14542 Amritsar-Chandigarh Express will remain cancelled from September 10 to October 16. Similarly, the 14630 Firozpur Cantt-Chandigarh Satluj Express will remain cancelled from September 9 to October 15 and the 14629 Chandigarh-Firozpur Cantt Satluj Express from September 10 to October 16.

The cancellations will also affect the 74646 Jalandhar City-Ambala Cantt DEMU, 74645 Ambala Cantt-Jalandhar City DEMU, 74991 Ambala Cantt-Daulatpur Chowk DEMU and 74992 Daulatpur Chowk-Ambala Cantt DEMU on the dates specified in the railway notification.

The railway has also announced partial cancellation of several long-distance trains. The 15063/15064

Ramnagar-Chandigarh Express will be short-terminated or short-originated at Ambala Cantt on specified dates, with the affected journey between Ambala Cantt and Chandigarh remaining cancelled.

Similar arrangements have been announced for the 12983/12984 Ajmer Jn-Chandigarh Garib Rath Express and the 20989/20990 Udaipur City-Chandigarh Superfast Express. The trains will be short-terminated or short-originated at Ambala Cantt on the dates specified in the notification, affecting their operation on the Chandigarh-Ambala Cantt section.

The notification also lists two trains that will operate on a changed route on specified dates. These are the 14615 Lalkuan Jn-Amritsar Express and the 14616 Amritsar-Lalkuan Jn Express.

The railway has specified the revised operational arrangements and dates for these services in the notification.

To facilitate passengers during the block period, additional temporary stoppages will be provided at Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar (Mohali) for several trains. The trains covered under this arrangement include 18309 Sambalpur Jn-Jammu Tawi Express, 18310 Jammu Tawi-Sambalpur Jn Express, 18101 Tatanagar Jn-Jammu Tawi Express, 18102 Jammu Tawi-Tatanagar Jn Express, 11905/11906 Agra Cantt-Hoshiarpur Express, 15531/15532 Saharsa Jn-Amritsar Jansadharan Express and 14631/14632 Dehradun-Amritsar Express, on the dates mentioned in the railway notification. Download Interactive Maps

The traffic block will also result in changes in the scheduled platforms of trains at Chandigarh railway station. The platform changes have been divided into three phases, September 10 to September 21, September 22 to October 3 and October 4 to October 15.

The railway notification lists several trains whose scheduled berthing platforms will be changed during these three phases.