

Floods disrupt Nepal-China trade route, raising supply concerns ahead of festival season

KATHMANDU, SEPT 9: The devastating flash floods in Nepal's Bhotekoshi River have severely disrupted trade with China, raising concerns about the timely supply and prices of Chinese goods ahead of the festival season, a media report said on Wednesday.

The flash floods have damaged the border infrastructure and connecting roads, disrupting the movement of cargo trucks carrying goods imported from China, the Rising Nepal newspaper reported.

It has forced traders to look for alternative routes at a time when demand for consumer goods is expected to surge ahead of the festivals of Dashain, Tihar and Chhath.

Importing goods from China to meet the immediate demand has become a challenge, Ram Hari Karki, president of the Nepal Trans-Himalayan Border Commerce Association, said. He said the disruption could affect the supply of festival-related goods and increase transportation costs.

"More than 500 to 600 Chinese containers carrying goods for Teej, Dashain, Tihar and Chhath were moving from China towards Kerung. Many of these cargoes have been stranded after the Rasuwagadhi border was damaged," he said.

Meanwhile, more than 200 Nepali containers were swept away by the floods. "The floods swept away 200 containers, while businessmen have suffered losses of



at least NPR 2 billion," he said.

Rasuwigadhi is one of Nepal's major trading points with China and handles a significant volume of Chinese imports.

The situation has become more challenging for traders as the Tatopani border, another important Nepal-China trade route, is also not operating normally. With both major northern routes disrupted, traders have been compelled to divert cargo through the Korala border in Mustang, said Karki.

According to Karki, around 176 cargo trucks have already been diverted towards Korala.

However, he said the route could not serve as a practical year-round alternative to Rasuwagadhi because of its difficult terrain, high altitude

and longer transportation time.

"Using the Korala border is our compulsion, not an alternative," Karki said.

The diversion of cargo through Korala is expected to increase both transportation time and import costs.

Karki said it could take at least 10 to 12 days to transport cargo from China to Nepal and back through the Korala route, compared with the relatively shorter routes previously used by traders.

According to traders, the transportation cost of a cargo vehicle travelling from the Korala border to Kathmandu is currently around NPR 450,000 to NPR 500,000. This represents an increase of around 10 to 15 per cent in transportation costs, Karki said. Chinese goods account for a substantial share of

merchandise sold in Nepal during the festival season. Traders import garments, footwear, electronics, electrical goods, household items, decorations, toys and other consumer items from China.

Traders are now concerned that goods already ordered for the festival season may not reach the Nepali market on time because of the longer route and disrupted border infrastructure, said businessman Narayan Pandit. "Traders are worried about bringing goods already ordered from China on time for the upcoming festivals because of the longer route," he said.

As of Wednesday, more than 1,350 people have died due to the flash floods while search and rescue operations for more than 5,000 missing people continue. (PTI)

Will Challenge Allahabad HC Order Quashing Student Activist's NSA Detention: SG Mehta To SC

NEW DELHI, SEP 9: Solicitor General Tushar Mehta on Wednesday told the Supreme Court that an appeal would be filed against an Allahabad High Court decision quashing the detention of a Delhi University student and activist Akriti Chaudhary under the National Security Act (NSA).

The top law officer made the statement before a three-judge bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana.

SG Mehta referred to an earlier mentioning by a senior counsel in relation to a notice issued to a Greater Noida student over participation in the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)-led protest at Jantar Mantar, and clarified the notice was issued by an executive magistrate of Greater Noida and not the district magistrate.

"I am not on the matter.. (but) the Noida DM is flooded with queries from media, etc. what order have you passed, etc," SG Mehta said.

As the bench recalled that



the Allahabad High Court has recently quashed an order of the Gautam Buddha Nagar administration on the detention of another student and awarded compensation to her, SG Mehta said, "That we are challenging."

Earlier today, the CJI came down heavily on the Greater Noida executive magistrate for issuing notice to a student for taking part in the CJP-led Jantar Mantar protest, asking how the magistrate "dared" to issue a notice despite the court's earlier order.

The apex court said it would seek explanation from the Greater Noida executive magistrate over the issue.

The Allahabad High Court

on September 2 quashed the detention of Chaudhary under the NSA in relation to the April workers' protest in Noida.

A division bench of Justice Atul Sreedharan and Justice Achal Sachdev had strongly criticised the manner in which the detention order was passed by the Noida district magistrate and warned that continued "despotic" conduct by "errant" bureaucracy could reduce Uttar Pradesh to an Orwellian Dystopia.

It also awarded Rs 5 lakh compensation to Chaudhary and directed that the amount be recovered from the salary of the Gautam Buddha Na-

gar DM Medha Roopam, who passed the detention order, as well as other officers responsible right down to the SHO. Chaudhary is a history graduate from Delhi University and was arrested in connection with cases arising from the Noida workers' protest in April 2026.

The UP Police subsequently invoked the NSA against Chaudhary and activist-journalist Satya Verma on May 13. They were among several activists arrested in cases relating to the peaceful protest seeking higher wages.

In the order, the high court also made several significant observations on the roles of the bureaucracy and the police. It said officers are entrusted with immense powers because they bear responsibility for upholding the constitutional and legal rights, dignity, honour and welfare of citizens.

It directed that the high court's displeasure against the DM and police officers involved in preparing the dossier be recorded in their service records. (Agencies)

Bihar floods affect over 40 lakh people across 14 districts

PATNA, SEP 9: More than 40 lakh people have been affected by floods across 14 districts of Bihar following torrential rains over the past five days, with several rivers flowing above the danger mark, officials said on Wednesday.

"Incessant rain in various districts caused rivers and streams to overflow. Besides, heavy rainfall in catchment areas of Nepal has also led to rivers flowing above the danger level at several places," an official said.

According to a statement by the Disaster Management Department (DMD), around 40.21 lakh people in 514 gram panchayats across 84 blocks in 14 districts have been affected by floods.



The affected districts are Patna, Bhojpur, Saran, Vaishali, Bhagalpur, Begusarai, Buxar, Samastipur, Munger, Katihar, Lakhisarai, Khagaria, Purnia and Arwal.

According to the meteorological service centre, the state has recorded 79.6 mm of rainfall in September so far, which is 31 per cent above normal.

In its latest bulletin, the DMD said, "The Ganga at Sultanganj in Bhagalpur recorded 36.78 metres at 9 am on September 9, surpassing its previous Highest Flood Level (HFL) of 36.75 metres recorded on August 17, 2021. The trend, however, remains stable." rivers, including the Gandak, Kosi,

and other essential facilities have been made for 13,446 flood evacuees, it said.

"So far, around 1.94 lakh polythene sheets and approximately 29,400 dry ration packets have been distributed among flood-hit people. To facilitate evacuation and transportation, a total of 1,979 boats are currently being operated. So far, 5,178 quintals of animal fodder have also been distributed", the bulletin 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 86,000 cusecs at 10 am on Wednesday, with a stable trend. The highest discharge recorded so far this year was 2,24,000 cusecs on July 14.

The discharge at Kosi Barrage stood at 1,48,200 cusecs, with a stable trend, at 10 am. Its highest discharge so far this year was 2,55,425 cusecs on July 20. The discharge at Indrapuri Barrage (Sone river) stood at 80,785 cusecs at 10 am, and the trend is rising. The highest discharge recorded this year was 5,63,654 cusecs on September 2. In view of the possibility of flooding and for carrying out immediate relief and rescue operations, 27 SDRF teams and 10 NDRF teams have been deployed in various districts. The meteorological service centre has forecast light to moderate rainfall at some places and heavy rainfall at one or two places in the state during the next two days. (Agencies)

Trump gave USD 45,000 holiday gifts to Natalie Harp, two other White House aides

WASHINGTON, SEPT 9: President Donald Trump gave sizable holiday gifts to four White House aides, according to new financial disclosures released by the administration.

The gifts of USD 45,000 each to executive assistant Natalie Harp, communications adviser Margo Martin, and deputy director of Oval Office operations Chamberlain Harris as well as a USD 20,000 gift for director of Oval Office operations Walt Nauta were noted in the staffers' annual financial disclosure forms that were published by the administration last week.

Harp, Martin and Harris make USD 150,000 annually and Nauta is paid USD 175,000 a year, according to the White House's salary disclosure report to Congress.

A White House official, who was not authorised to comment publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity, said Trump "has a longstanding practice of giving Christmas gifts to people in his orbit, including at times employees and aides, both in government and in his time in the private sector."

The official did not say if any other staffers were given

similar gifts from the president, but added that the cash gifts were not related to the "individuals' official government duties, and therefore are entirely permissible under relevant legal and ethical standards."

The disclosures of the gifts were first reported earlier on Tuesday by The Washington Post. Harp is a constant presence by Trump's side and is known for carrying a portable printer with her so she can print out favourable media coverage and social media posts for the president, who prefers reading important information on paper rather than on a

screen.

Martin has been working for Trump since his first go-around in the White House. She started in the first term as a White House press assistant and followed the president to Palm Beach, Florida, to help run his media operations after he lost the 2020 election to Democrat Joe Biden. She returned to the White House with Trump after his 2024 victory.

Earlier this year, Trump appointed Harris to serve on the US Commission of Fine Arts, which has oversight over the president's White House ballroom project.

Iron Transporting Protein May Help Early Diagnosis Of Heart Disease, Says Study

NEW DELHI, SEP 9: Lower levels of serotransferrin, the blood protein that transports iron through the body, are an early indicator of coronary artery disease (CAD) and can help identify heart conditions earlier than routine clinical diagnoses, say scientists.

Iron deficiency is prevalent in patients of CAD, a common cardiovascular condition characterised by a narrowing of the coronary arteries due to atherosclerosis, primarily resulting from an accumulation of plaque or fatty deposits. An analysis of blood serum proteins by Delhi's Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) has revealed the critical role of serotransferrin in identifying cardiac disease.

"Serotransferrin may have value as an early diagnostic marker, meaning it could potentially help identify CAD earlier than routine clinical diagnosis," Sagarika Biswas, corresponding author on the study, told PTI.

A deeper understanding of how CAD develops is crucial

for developing effective diagnostics and therapeutics, the IGIB researchers said. Serotransferrin, found in previous studies to contribute to CAD, presents a potential avenue for investigation, they said. Exploring molecular and cellular processes related to serotransferrin may help shed light on how CAD develops and identify new targets for treatment, the team said.

"Of the total 197 differentially expressed proteins, serotransferrin (TF), an iron transporter, showed down-regulation in samples from CAD patients compared to healthy," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Acta Cardiologica. Downregulation means lower than normal levels.

The study, involving 50 CAD patients and 40 healthy people, also showed an increased level of the cardiac marker 'troponin I' among those affected by the heart disorder, demonstrating an inverse relationship with serotransferrin levels.

Troponin I is a specialised protein present in heart muscle cells, a damage or in-

jury to which causes the protein to leak and enter the bloodstream.

"TF (serotransferrin) protein was significantly associated with CAD progression and inversely correlated with cTnI (troponin I), suggesting it (serotransferrin) could be a potential therapeutic target pending further molecular and clinical investigation," the authors said.

Longitudinal studies would be required to estimate the duration in years before which serotransferrin could help identify CAD, explained Biswas, former distinguished chief scientist and professor at CSIR-IGIB's department of integrative and functional biology.

The study linked reduced levels of serotransferrin with the inflammatory environment created due to damage in the inner lining of arteries, which leads to an immune response against the accumulated fatty deposits.

According to Biswas, worsening ischaemia -- local anaemia due to a reduced blood flow caused by narrowed or blocked vessels -- and tissue injury can in-

crease troponin I, whereas inflammatory and metabolic stress may suppress serotransferrin expression or availability in CAD.

Further, levels of serotransferrin can reflect iron status in an individual.

"In standard iron studies, transferrin saturation below 20 per cent is commonly taken as evidence of iron deficiency, meaning less than 20 per cent of transferrin's binding sites are occupied by iron," Biswas said.

Transferrin refers to the family of iron-binding proteins, while serotransferrin is a subtype found in blood serum and plasma. A region on a protein's surface to which another molecule attaches itself is a binding site.

"Serotransferrin is an iron-transport protein, so a lower level suggests (a) reduced iron-binding and transport capacity. The protein may contribute to the functional iron deficiency component of CAD by limiting plasma iron transport, but the study did not quantify its contribution as a percentage," Biswas said in response to a question. (Agencies)

Seems PM Modi Wants Entire Caste Census Process To Fail: Congress

NEW DELHI, SEP 9: The Congress on Wednesday alleged that the government's decision to use open-ended questions instead of a drop-down list in the current format of the caste census is a "very serious flaw", and said it seems that Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants the entire process to "fail".

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said his party has held 17 press conferences across the country in the last four days and reiterated the demand for conducting the caste census in the right manner.

"A caste census is not just about counting castes, but about ensuring social justice. Right kind of questions --> Right data --> Right share --> Social justice," Ramesh said in a post in Hindi on X. Despite repeated demands by the Congress, the Modi government's decision to use open-ended questions instead of a drop-down list in the current



format of the caste census is a "very serious flaw", he said.

"It seems Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi wants different names, sub-castes and spellings for the same caste to be recorded in the census, so that the entire caste census process fails," Ramesh said.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi jointly wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on this issue, along with the party's key demand to conduct the caste census in

the right manner, but no response has come yet.

Both senior leaders had expressed serious objections to the current process of the caste census in the letter dated August 20, he said.

The letter had demanded that the current questionnaire be scrapped and a new one be prepared based on a certified list of castes, Ramesh said.

Conducting the count based on a pre-prepared and certified caste list, like the caste surveys in Telangana and Bihar, is a practical solution for this, he said.

The letter also demanded extensive consultation with political parties, experts and the public for the new questionnaire. Politics

"The Congress has reiterated the demand for a caste census along with the above demands by holding 17 press conferences across the country in the last four days on this issue," Ramesh said. (PTI)