

भारत सरकार
Government of India
केन्द्रीय जल आयोग
Central Water Commission
बाढ़ पूर्वानुमान प्रबोधन निदेशालय
Flood Forecast Monitoring Directorate

Tele : 011-29583829, 29583545

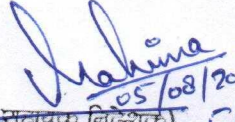
e-mail : fmdte@nic.in, ffwmcwc@gmail.com

भू. तल, विन 7, पश्चिमी खण्ड-2,
रामाकृष्ण पुरम, नई दिल्ली-110066

विषय : दिनांक ...03-08-2024..... की समाचार की कतरन (News Clippings) प्रस्तुत करने के सम्बन्ध में ।

मानसून/ बाढ़ सम्बन्धी समाचारों की कतरन (News Clippings) श्रवण हेतु प्रस्तुत हैं :

संलग्न : उपरोक्तानुसार


05/08/2024
(सहायक निदेशक) EAD(HM)

उपनिदेशक


05/08/2024

निदेशक (बा.प.प्र.)

The Hindu (03-08-2024)

Himachal flood toll mounts to six; 47 people still missing

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

The death toll in separate incidents of cloudbursts and flash floods across Himachal Pradesh rose to six on Friday, even as rescue and search operations continued on a war footing.

As many as 47 people are still missing in Shimla, Mandi and Kullu districts, after heavy rain left rivers in spate. Fifty-five people have been evacuated so far, while 27 are stranded at different places.

Chief Minister Sukhvir Singh Sukhu, who visited Samej in Shimla district to review the ongoing relief and rehabilitation efforts,



Task at hand: A rescue operation under way at Rajvan village in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh on Friday. PTI

said, "Each affected family will receive ₹50,000 as immediate assistance and ₹5,000 per month, for three months, for hiring rented accommodation."

Mr. Sukhu said widespread damage was reported in Shimla, Mandi and Kullu districts on Wednesday.

Vehicular traffic was disrupted across the State as several roads were blocked due to landslides and debris. The rain has damaged several roads, including national and State highways and bridges, causing losses worth crores of rupees.

Himachal flood toll rises to eight, search on for 45

Vedant Chandel

letters@hindustantimes.com

SHIMLA: Toll from the flash floods in Himachal Pradesh rose to eight on Friday with the recovery of three more bodies, while operations to search for 45 people still missing a day after cloudbursts in three districts continued.

Chief minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu along with education minister Rohit Thakur visited Samej on the border of Shimla and Kullu district to take stock of the situation and talk to the victims.

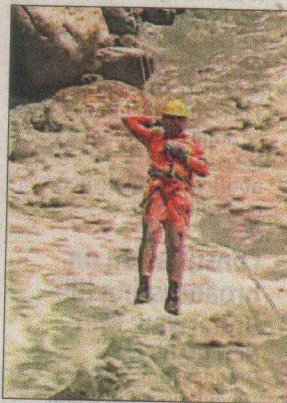
Over 30 people were missing after a cloudburst near Shrikhand Mahadev route on Wednesday night triggered flash floods in Sarpara, Ganvi and Kurban nallahs.

Talking to reporters, Sukhu said 17-18 women and 8-9 children are among those missing. "Our government stands with the disaster-affected people with full sensitivity. We will leave no stone unturned in relief work with the help of all organisations. Once again the state has suffered huge losses due to the disaster. We will all face this challenge together," Sukhu wrote in a post on X.

Five bodies were found in Rajban village in Mandi, one in Nirmamand in Kullu, officials said on Friday while mutilated parts of two people were recovered in Rampur, SP Shimla Sanjeev Kumar Gandhi said. The two bodies recovered in Rajban on Friday were identified as that of Aman (9) and Aryan (8) while five people are still missing on this site.

The rescue operations to trace over 45 missing people entered Day 2, with the army, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) spearheading the charge.

Revenue minister Jagat Singh Negi, who has been overseeing relief efforts in Rampur since Thursday said, "As soon as the flash floods struck, the district



Rescue operations underway in Rampur on Friday. ANI

IAF choppers join rescue ops along Kedarnath route

RUDRAPRAYAG: The IAF's Chinook and MI-17 helicopters on Friday joined the rescue operations in Uttarakhand to evacuate pilgrims still stranded on the rain-ravaged trek route to Kedarnath. Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama said since the start of rescue operations on Thursday morning, after the route to Kedarnath suffered extensive damage as a result of a cloudburst in Junglechatti near Lincholi, 5,000 people have been evacuated to safety, with some being airlifted. The SDRF and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) aided in the rescue efforts, he said. HTC

administration, with the help of police, CISF, ITBP, NDRF launched relief and rescue operations, which are continuing."

Relatives of the missing persons are camping at the sites with hope fading with every passing hour.

Hindustan Times (03-08-2024)

HT

5 UP districts flooded, 7 killed

LUCKNOW: Seven people have been killed in rain-related incidents in 24 hours till Friday evening in Uttar Pradesh while five of its districts were affected by floods, according to the state relief commissioner's office. Relief and rescue operations are underway, it said. The five districts in the state which are still flooded are Ballia, Lakhimpur Kheri, Farrukhabad, Sitapur and Bahraich.

Assam flooding toll reaches 116

GUWAHATI: The Assam flood toll rose by two on Friday, while over 18,000 people remain affected across six districts, according to an official bulletin. The Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) bulletin said one death each was reported from Golaghat and Morongi revenue circles of Golaghat district. The toll in this year's floods, storms, lightning and landslide has reached 116, it said.

Red alert sounded in 9 Bihar districts

PATNA: The India Meteorological Department on Friday issued a "red alert" for extremely heavy rainfall, thunderstorms and lightning over the next 36 hours in nine districts of Bihar. Red alert means 'take action', orange 'be prepared', yellow 'watch and stay updated' and green signifies 'no action needed'. The state government has asked people to stay abreast with weather-related updates.

The Hindu (03-08-2024)



Sombre recovery A body being transported across the river using a rope and pulley by rescue personnel at the landslide hit Chooralmala. THULASI KAKKAT

Death rains on Wayanad

Over 200 people died, two settlements were wiped out, and one severely impacted, after heavy rains caused a landslide in north-east Kerala's hilly district. **Abdul Latheef Naha** finds a land battered beyond recognition, with about 500 injured and many still missing. Even as support from across India pours in, questions are raised about why this happened

Trigger warning: The following article has disturbing details.

In the early, dark hours of July 30, Nature staged a macabre dance on two sleepy villages in the lap of the Vellarimala hill range in the Western Ghats. In a few minutes, roughly 200 households in the biggest ever landslide in Kerala's history, were wiped out.

When the sun rose in the morning, Mundakkai and Chooralmala, twin settlements in Wayanad's Vellarimala village in Meppadi panchayat had vanished, transforming a landscape of rolling hills into a horrifying trail of havoc. Two landslides, at about 1 a.m. and 4:10 a.m. have killed over 200 people so far and injured about 500. The number of people missing is nearly 300.

The Indian Space Research Organisation's National Remote Sensing Centre would later release satellite images showing that 86,000 square metres of land had simply slipped out of place. The swift flowing debris, from crown to run-out zone, lasted 8 kilometres. The crown zone was "a reactivation of an older landslide," it observed. The landslide plunged into the Iruvazhinjipuzha, one of the tributaries of the Chaliyar river, swollen with the rain. Both raged and burst their banks. The combination of cascading heavy mud and gushing water took its toll.

Now, families count missing loved ones. Every family has losses, some more than others. "I lost my sister Afeeda, her husband Sattar, and their children Filu, Adi, and Sanu at Mundakkai. Twenty-five members of Sattar's family have disappeared," says Sakeer K., a construction worker who had asked his sister to come to his house at Nellimunda, a couple of kilometres away, far from the river. "I feared for them as it was raining unusually heavily that night."

Jitika Prem, a dance teacher from Mundakkai, shudders at the thought of her missing students. She attempts to describe how she and her family ran out of their house to safety when giant rocks and logs flattened their home. She lost her cousins Sivan, Jijina, and Pramodini, who were found in a huddle, in death. Many gathered in a resort near Mundakkai to shelter.

The last time Kerala witnessed devastation like this was during the floods of 2018 that claimed 433 lives and affected over 5.4 million people. The Puthumala tragedy of August 2019 left 17 dead and flattened 58 houses.

Rescue and relief was quick, with over 1,800 personnel coming in, from the Indian Army, Navy, and Airforce; Indian Coast Guard Disaster Relief Team; and the National and State level Disaster Response Forces. State forces from the police, forest, excise, and motor vehicle departments are providing logistical support.

Forewarned but unarmed

The first landslide took place at around 1 a.m. The thunderous sound of the floodwaters woke people up, but many could not get out of their



I lost my sister Afeeda, her husband Sattar, and their children.... Twenty-five members of Sattar's family have disappeared

SAKEER K.
Construction worker

houses in time. Local WhatsApp groups were soon flooded with screams for help. The cry of a woman named Minnath went viral as it was forwarded from group to group. "Many people are stuck in their homes. Please come; help us. The house behind Basheerka's shop is gone. I don't know what happened to my husband." Her cries were heard, and she was saved by local people.

Onapparambil Moidu hung on to a ceiling fan after standing on a cot along with his daughter and her eight-month-old child. The swirling water and mud reached his neck. At that point, he says he made the most decisive move of his life, to get through a half open door. "I stared death in the face. The bypass surgery I recently underwent has weakened me. I mustered all my energy; my daughter hung on to my back, and I held my grandchild over my head. We pushed ourselves through the mud for about 250 metres," recounts Moidu, at a relief camp at Government Higher Secondary School, Meppadi town, about 15 km from the disaster zone. His feet were bandaged for injuries he suffered during the escape. Two camps in Meppadi of the 82 camps across Wayanad are catering to survivors. They are established in a government and a private school.

Moidu's was a two-storey concrete house, about 50 metres from the Iruvazhinji that flowed through Chooralmala. Nothing of it remains now. "I lost my wife's mother, her sister, her husband, and their children in Mundakkai. Several of my family and friends have disappeared," he says. Then adds, "If the first landslide was a test dose, then the second was nature's prescription."

Deadly deluge

When he heard the news of the first landslide, Wayanad District Panchayat president Samshad Marakkar reached Chooralmala at 2 a.m. along with his friends. "The second landslide came after 4 a.m. unleashing the sound of a dinosaur in a

DTS theatre. It was so huge that it wiped out everything in its path. I retrieved the first body of a man that morning, followed by that of a girl, and took them to hospital," he says.

The landslide took away people in their sleep and brought their mangled bodies to the Chaliyar downstream at Munderi. Many bodies went through the steep waterfalls of Soochippara, Kanthanpara, and Meenmutty before reaching Munderi in Pothukal near Nilambur.

It knocked down a bridge connecting Chooralmala with Mundakkai and Attamala, the Shiva temple of Chooramala, a mosque at Mundakkai, a Government Vocational Higher Secondary School in Vellarimala, and houses and business establishments. A few resorts were destroyed.

"I had several of my friends in Mundakkai and Attamala. They are missing," said Dheera Singh, a tea estate labourer from Madhya Pradesh, as he stands dazed at the site where the Shiva temple had stood. A ficus tree next to the temple site still stands, a witness to what is lost. So does a portion of the large temple auditorium. Temple priest Kumar Swamy's body was recovered and taken to his home State of Tamil Nadu. Mundakkai Masjid Imam Shihab Faizy Qayyoomi's body was retrieved from the Chaliyar at Pothukal. The landslide took away a portion of the masjid in which Qayyoomi was sleeping.

Shailaja K.M., who used to help Kumar Swamy clean the bronze lamps at the Chooralmala temple, says Shiva helped them get out of the chest-deep water. "My children and I gathered in one room as floodwaters began rising. We thought we would die. I sent messages on WhatsApp to my brothers, bidding them farewell," she remembers. They managed to push through the mud to safety. "We climbed to the second floor of our neighbour Azeez's house," says Shailaja.

It was pitch dark as the power lines had snapped. Some with clothes on and some without, ran into the coffee and cardamom plantations nearby to escape. There, they confronted elephants, but remained safe. "We realised that the wild elephant understood our plight. The tusker did nothing to us," whimpers Sujata, who was trapped in front of an elephant in the dark chilly night.

Trauma and support

Until the Army constructed a Bailey bridge across the Iruvazhinjipuzha, using prefabricated trusses on August 1 evening, the search for bodies in Mundakkai was hard, as rescue teams and machines could not make it across the river. "The bridge will make a big difference in the search operation. We have to search the whole area using earth movers and other heavy equipment. It will speed up the search and rescue operation," says Maj. Gen. V.T. Mathew, general officer commanding (GOC) of Kerala and Karnataka sub-area, in charge of the rescue operations at Mundakkai.

The bridge is going to make a big difference in the search operation.... It will speed up the rescue and search operation

MAJ. GEN. V.T. MATHEW

GOC, Kerala and Karnataka sub-area

Search teams too had harrowing experiences to report. "When our men entered a mud-covered abandoned house, they were anguished to see the bodies of three children huddling on a sofa under the concrete rubble. Similarly, they found the body of a man lying peacefully on a cot in another house," said a Fire and Rescue Services senior official.

When it rained during the search, people on the site raised worries about a fresh landslide. Toys, books, spectacles, children's clothes, utensils, medicines, framed marriage photos were found in damaged homes. Gas cylinders were seen under the rubble of some houses. "We expect bodies to be trapped under the debris, whether it is concrete or logs," says Sajeer Madasery, a volunteer.

Most bodies retrieved by the search teams were disfigured and mutilated. Identifying them remains a hard task at the Community Health Centre, Meppadi. Forensic surgeons have been brought in from different government medical colleges for postmortems. "We are making sure that postmortem procedures are done as fast as we can to help relatives identify and claim the bodies," says Dr. Reena K.J., Director of Health Services, Kerala.

The identification of mangled bodies is another traumatising experience for the survivors. "There is nothing more painful," says Basheer Saadi, Wayanad district president of the Santhanam help group that is volunteering here.

Mass graves have been dug at the graveyards of Meppadi Juma masjid, Nellimunda Juma masjid, and St. Sebastian Church at Chooralmala. Mass pyres have been prepared at Meppadi public crematorium. Many funerals were over with none shedding tears, because traumatised survivors and their relatives have been numbed by the tragedy. "The trauma is so deep; it will take a long time for them to recover. We are prioritising counselling for them," says Dr. Reena.

The State and Central governments responded to the disaster by mobilising forces for rescue and search. The State has posted four ministers at Meppadi to supervise the rescue and rehabilitation. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan says, "Counselling and privacy are very important for the survivors now." The Education Department will soon send teachers to the relief camps to teach the children lodged there.

Forest and Wildlife Minister A.K. Saseendran says the government will work on rehabilitation after completing the search operations. "It's going to be a top priority for us. We will use all our experience for it," he says.

THE HINDU — 03/08/2024

Times of trouble

While the Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced ₹2 lakh for the next of kin of the deceased and ₹50,000 for the injured, the tragedy opened up a debate between the Centre and the State. Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that the Centre had warned Kerala of heavy rains and landslides on July 23, 24, and 25.

Kerala Chief Minister, even when calling for joint measures to parry natural disasters caused by climate change and extreme weather conditions, refuted Shah's claims. He said that neither the India Meteorological Department (IMD), nor the Geological Survey of India (GSI), nor the Central Water Commission had issued a red alert for Wayanad ahead of the July 30 landslides. IMD issued a red alert for Kerala in the early morning of July 30, a few hours after the State witnessed its worst landslide.

The GSI had however, categorised the Vellari-mala region of Wayanad as a highly vulnerable zone after the 2019 Puthumala landslide that took place just a few kilometres downhill from Mundakkai. In an atlas of landslide-prone areas made by ISRO, Wayanad is said to be the most vulnerable in Kerala and is in the 13th position among the country's 147 landslide-susceptible districts.

In 2011 the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel, headed by ecologist-author Madhav Gadgil, had categorised the area into three ecologically sensitive zones, with the now impacted Vythiri taluk being one of the most sensitive. In an interview with *The Hindu* after the disaster, he had said, "No development should have taken place in these highly sensitive areas." There are resorts, artificial lakes, and other commercial construction in the area.

Experts say the continuous rain the region witnessed over the last two weeks had softened the soil, triggering the landslides. But they differ on how it happened. According to former GSI deputy director general C. Muraleedharan, heavy rain caused the supersaturated soil to blast like a dam, leading to a debris flow.

According to C.P. Rajendran, professor at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru, deforestation and unplanned buildings too were responsible. A study published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* in 2022 found that 85% of Wayanad was under forest cover until the 1950s and 62% disappeared between 1950 and 2018, whereas area under plantations went up by 1800.75%. However, Kerala Forest Statistics 2020 records show that forest cover in Wayanad stands at 74.18%, and is the highest in the State.

"The frequency of landslides has gone up in Wayanad," says Rajendran, suggesting long-term strategies. Imaginative and humane initiatives are the need of the hour for Kerala, which has a high-density population, he says, adding that landslide risk mapping is a must, using all available resources, including satellite images.

Meanwhile, rainfall continues in Wayanad.

The Hindustan Times (03-08-2024)

{ IN WAYANAD } TOLL RISES TO 210

Day 4: Search for life continues

Vishnu Varma

letters@hindustantimes.com

WAYANAD: The toll from landslides in Wayanad district of Kerala rose to 210 on Friday, while 139 other mangled body parts were retrieved from the affected areas, particularly, the Chaliyar river, as rescuers continued to search under the debris of homes for any signs of life three days after tragedy struck the area.

While 147 bodies have been identified so far, DNA tests have been conducted to identify 207 victims, officials said on Friday. Separately, over 490 people have been rescued from the affected area with 81 of them still undergoing treatment at hospitals in Wayanad, Kozhikode and Malappuram districts.

The landslides were reported between 1am and 4.30am on Tuesday, as huge mounds of mud, boulders, slush and debris flew downhill through the Iruvazhinji river, in the process flattening the densely-populated settlements of Chooralmala and Mundakkai which were nestled among pristine tea plantations.

Hope briefly flickered in Mundakkai as rescuers detected signs of life using an advanced radar system, but the search operation was called off at 9.15pm without any concrete results.

An intense search was carried out, with debris removed using machinery, after an official involved in the operation said that a "blue signal" (indicating breathing) was received on the radar while combing through a severely-affected area where a house previously stood.

However, the official clarified that it was unclear whether the breathing signal was from a human or animal.

In a late evening Facebook post, Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the search for life continues, with radars detecting even the slightest movements, offering glimmers



Damaged houses at the site of the landslide in Wayanad, on Friday.

REUTERS

of hope. "Amid the darkness and rubble of the collapsed building, rescuers continue their efforts, determined to find any remaining survivors," he said.

The state government has drawn up a comprehensive plan with rescue personnel divided into 40 teams scouring through six zones including the Chaliyar river. The Coast Guard and a team from the Tamil Nadu rescue forces has joined the search operations across both banks of the river up till Nilambur where most of the remains were fished out.

The construction of the Bailey bridge by the army helped rescue personnel move large machinery including earthmovers onto parts of Mundakkai which was inaccessible for the last three days. The role of the earthmovers, said officials, was critical in separating the debris and helping find bodies of victims who may have been stuck in the rubble.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Congress general secretary Pri-

yanka Gandhi Vadra, who were on the second day of their visit to the district, held meetings with panchayat officials on Friday, announced that their party would commit to building 100 homes for the victims of the tragedy.

"I have been here since yesterday. This is a terrible tragedy. Today, we had a meeting with the administration and the panchayat officials and they briefed us on the casualties they expect and the houses damaged so far. We have said that we are here to help in any way possible. Congress family would like to commit to building 100 plus houses here. I think Kerala has not seen such kind of a tragedy in a single area and I am going to raise it in Delhi and with the chief minister here," Rahul Gandhi said.

The Congress MP said he is going to raise the matter in Delhi and also with Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan as "this is a different level of tragedy and should be treated differently".

Cong gives privilege notice over Shah's remarks in RS

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Congress MP Jairam Ramesh on Friday submitted a notice to move a privilege motion against Union home minister Amit Shah in Rajya Sabha, over the latter's claims that the Centre issued multiple alerts to Kerala about a possible natural calamity, ahead of the Wayanad landslides, but the southern state did not heed the advance warnings.

In his notice, Ramesh, who is also the Congress general secretary, alleged that Shah "misled" the Upper House through his remarks "which have proven to be false".

"In his response to calling attention on the Wayanad landslides in the Rajya Sabha on July 31, the Union home minister made several claims on early warning systems and how they were not utilised by Kerala gov-

ernment despite alerts issued by the Union Government well ahead of the tragedy. These claims have been extensively fact-checked in the media," the Congress lawmaker said. The landslides that hit Wayanad early on Tuesday morning have claimed at least 210 lives so far.

"It is clear that the Union home minister misled the Rajya Sabha with his emphatic statements on early warnings.... It is well established that misleading the house constitutes a breach of privilege and contempt of house," he added.

Shah, on Wednesday, told Parliament that the Centre issued multiple alerts about a possible natural calamity and even rushed nine teams of the NDRF to the state but the Pinarayi Vijayan-led government did not heed the advance warnings.

Vijayan has refuted Shah's remarks.