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Rain red alert in Kerala, Assam landslide kills 3

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/GUWAHATI: At least three people have died and over 25,000 people are affected by landslides and flash floods across Assam, officials said on Sunday.

Torrential rain and landslides in the past few days have eroded sections of roads and railway tracks in Assam's Dima Hasao district affecting road and rail

connectivity to Barak Valley region of the state, said state disaster management officials.

Meanwhile, in Kerala, the India Meteorological Department sounded a red alert in five districts in view of the extremely heavy rainfall as rains continue to lash days ahead of the expected onset of Southwest monsoon.

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3 killed in Assam as rains lead to landslides, connectivity hit

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GUWAHATI: At least three people have died and over 25,000 people are affected by landslides and flash floods across Assam.

Torrential rain and landslides in the past few days have eroded sections of roads and railway tracks in Assam's Dima Hasao district affecting road and rail connectivity to Barak Valley region of the state, said Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) officials on Sunday.

"Three people including a woman died in landslide incidents at Haflong area in Dima Hasao district on Saturday," the Authority was quoted as saying by ANI on Saturday. Their bodies were recovered on Sunday.

According to a bulletin issued by ASDMA on Sunday evening, no fresh deaths were reported on Sunday. Seven districts of the state were hit by floods and over 25,000 people affected.

"...Besides Dima Hasao, flooding was reported from five other districts of the state, but the situation there is not as bad," said GD Tripathi, CEO, Assam State Disaster Management Authority.

A special advisory issued by Central Water Commission (CWC) on Sunday stated that Kopili river was flowing above danger level at Kampur in Nagaon district. Water level of



District officials said that all national and state highways in Dima Hasao district have been affected due to rain and landslides PTI

Buridehing river in Tinsukia district and Barak river in Cachar district were also increasing, the advisory said.

Seventeen trains were cancelled/partially cancelled due to damage to tracks and bridges at 26 locations on a 76-km stretch in Dima Hasao district and two trains were suspended, which left thousands of passengers stranded. Buses and helicopters were pressed into service to rescue stranded people.

District officials said that all national and state highways in the district have been affected due to rain and landslides and there's no electricity and internet connectivity in many areas.

"Efforts to evacuate 1,245 passengers from the 15616 Silchar-Guwahati passenger train

stranded at Ditokcherra is still underway. While many crossed a damaged bridge on foot and were sent by another train to Silchar. Nearly 200 passengers who were not in a position to cross the bridge on foot are being airlifted by Indian Air Force helicopters," informed Sabyasachi De, CPRO, Northeastern Frontier Railway (NFR) on Sunday.

According to Dima Hasao officials, 30 villages in the district have been affected by rains and landslides since May 13.

"Road communication between Haflong and Ditokcherra and also between Ditokcherra and Silchar has been disrupted. Efforts are underway to repair roads," Rikki B Phukan, district disaster management officer, Dima Hasao, said.

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India plans dam project as China seeks to divert river

Swati Luthra & Utpal Bhaskar
NEW DELHI

India plans to construct the country's second-largest dam at Yingkiong in Arunachal Pradesh to counter China's ambitious water diversion scheme of the river that feeds downstream into the Brahmaputra.

The proposed dam in the upper reaches of Arunachal will be able to store around 10 billion cu. m (BCM) of water, Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said in an interview. By storage, the Indira Sagar dam is the largest in India at 12.2 BCM.

The proposed dam is expected to involve an investment of around ₹50,000 crore and is part of the proposed Upper Siang multi-purpose storage project that will also generate hydropower.

China's 14th five-year plan has proposed building a massive dam over the Brahmaputra river, known in China as the



Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat. MINT

Yarlung Tsangpo, a development that has raised concerns in India because of the strategic ramifications. India and China relations have deteriorated after troops clashed along the Himalayan border, killing 20 Indian soldiers in June 2020.

Water in the lean season in the Brahmaputra comes from melting snow in the mountains on the Tibetan plateau. India's plan involves releasing water from the dam to maintain water security in case

China builds structures to divert water. Also, in the case of China releasing water from its upper reaches, such a dam will also help in storing water to prevent floods.

In response to a query about China's plans to build hydroelectricity projects on the Great Bend, right above Indian territory, where the Brahmaputra takes a U-turn, Shekhawat said, "We have planned a project for its mitigation in Yingkiong for constructing a dam in the upper reaches of Arunachal Pradesh. And probably that is going to be one of India's largest dams. We will hold water in that and will release it in the lean season when there is no rainfall to provide us (water) security."

While run-of-the-river (RoR) projects harness the river's seasonal flows to generate electricity, reservoir projects involve storing water, which addresses the risks associated with seasonal changes

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in the natural flow and availability of river water. Of the eight river basins in Arunachal Pradesh, Subansiri, Lohit, and Siang are of strategic importance as they are closer to the border with China.

"Dams don't only serve the irrigation purpose or to generate electricity; they also act as a mitigation cushion to prevent floods. Say, if ever from the upper reaches, there is water release, even then we will have a cushion to control release that water," Shekhawat added.

According to Indian planners, precipitation in China

contributes only 7% to the flow of three tributaries of the Brahmaputra—Subansiri, Siang and Lohit—that originate in China.

"Brahmaputra river has a huge quantum of 500 BCM (billion cubic metres) of water flowing into it. Of this, more than 75% comes from our catchment area. That's the reason why we are not affected by it a lot. But in the non-monsoon season, when the river gets water from snowmelt, we don't have water in our catchment area. So if they construct a dam and divert water in the non-monsoon seasons, then it will have an impact from



A file photo of a bridge on river Lohit, a tributary of Brahmaputra that is of strategic importance near India's border with China.

Arunachal Pradesh to Bangladesh. Earlier they (China) had said they were not doing anything. Later they said that they are constructing run-of-the-

river hydroelectric projects. And now there is evidence that perhaps they can also work on water transfer," Shekhawat said.

Of the 2,880 km length of the river Brahmaputra, 1,625 km is in Tibet, 918 km in India, and 337 km in Bangladesh. Of the total catchment area of 580,000 sq. km, 50% lies in Tibet, 34% in India, and the balance in Bangladesh and Bhutan.

"We have got clarity on other things. There is some small resistance at the local level, which the Arunachal government is working on. The total cost must be around ₹50,000 crore. Cost is immaterial. It should be constructed," Shekhawat said.

The total hydropower generation potential of India's North-Eastern states, and

Bhutan, is about 58 gigawatt (GW). Of this, Arunachal alone accounts for 50.328 GW, the highest in India.

Experts said China's plans may not have a major impact on the Indian side.

"Whatever flow of Brahmaputra river happens in India, a majority of it comes from the rainfall that happens in the Indian region. So the water that China intends to use will not have a major impact on the river on the Indian side," said Anjal Prakash, research director, Bharti Institute of Public Policy at the Indian School of Business, Hyderabad.

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'We are determined to complete Jal Jeevan Mission by end of 2024'

Swati Luthra & Utpal Bhaskar
NEW DELHI

The commodity supercycle has impacted the roll-out of the government's flagship scheme to connect every household with tap water, the Jal Jeevan Mission. Given that the marquee scheme, to be completed by 2024 holds the key to helping the BJP secure a third consecutive victory in the Lok Sabha polls, a committee has been constituted to find out a solution to restart the stalled work, Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said in an interview. Edited excerpts:

India has witnessed a severe heatwave. In terms of drinking water scarcity, how bad is the situation?

We have witnessed improvements with the Jal Jeevan Mission. The coverage of drinking water at household level has improved from 16% to 49%. Also, 33% of new households have started receiving water, which has helped relieve some pressure. The tap connections under this mission are called Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC). The functionality means quality water, and quantity means at least 55 litres of water per day per per-



son along with regularity. If the three metrics are met, the connection will be considered functional. Through this scheme we are close to reach-

ing 100% water connections in areas such as Bundelkhand, whose 11 districts used to be extremely water scarce. Similarly in drought-prone areas of Telangana, the challenges have been met. States such as Bihar today have more than 95% of households with running tap water. The scheme is under progress and we are determined to complete the project by the end of 2024.

What are the challenges?

The inflation in commodity prices is a huge impediment because it has affected the tenders and ultimately the work. The rise in prices of steel and plastic has affected the

costs of pipes, which were previously available at 50% of the current costs. Because of

the price rise, the contracts awarded earlier have become unviable for the concessioners. We conducted a meeting to address this issue. While new tenders have been

issued, but the projects with old tenders have stopped, which has affected the speed

with which the project was progressing. We have constructed a committee to

resolve such issues under the chairmanship of the secretary, Jal Shakti and Water Resources. We have also instituted a technical committee where along with the secretary, we have additional secretaries from states, engineering chiefs and concessioners.

Through this scheme we are close to reaching 100% water connections in areas such as (11 districts in)

Bundelkhand.
Gajendra Singh Shekhawat
Minister, Jal Shakti

Which are the better performing states?

The first state to reach 100% status was Goa, followed by Telangana, and Haryana. Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab, are doing exceptionally well. There are 12 states that are moving towards the 100% status.

Three states and three Union Territories have achieved 100% status. Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Sikkim are above the 90% mark. Maharashtra, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Mizoram, Jammu and Kashmir, are between the 60-70% mark.

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असानी चक्रवात के बाद से असम में बारिश ने किया हलाकान

बाढ़ के हालात! भारी बारिश से बही सड़क, 3 की मौत

एजेसी ॥ गुवाहाटी

असम में लगातार हो रही बारिश के कारण दीमा हसाओ के कई इलाकों में बाढ़ जैसे हालात निर्मित हो गए हैं। असानी चक्रवात के बाद से असम में लगातार बारिश हो रही है, जिससे कई इलाकों में जलभराव हो गया है। होजई और पश्चिम कार्बी आंगलोंग जिलों को जोड़ने वाली पीडब्ल्यूडी सड़क बाढ़ के पानी में डूब गई। शनिवार को दीमा हसाओ जिले के हाफलोंग इलाके में भूस्खलन की घटनाओं में एक महिला सहित तीन लोगों की मौत हो गई। वहीं इस इलाके के करीब 80 घरों पर गहरा प्रभाव पड़ा है। असम राज्य आपदा प्रबंधन प्राधिकरण ने ये जानकारी दी है।



कई गांव जलमग्न, 24,681 लोग प्रभावित

अब तक छह जिलों के 94 गांव में कुल 24,681 लोग बाढ़ से प्रभावित हुए हैं। ये 6 जिले कछार, धेमाजी, होजई, कार्बी आंगलोंग पश्चिम, नगांव और कामरूप (मेट्रो) हैं। वहीं जिले में बाढ़ की स्थिति गंभीर बनी रहने से कई गांव जलमग्न हो गए हैं। भूस्खलन के चलते लुमडिंग मंडल के लुमडिंग-बदरपुर पर्वतीय खंड के अनेक हिस्सों में जलभराव को देखते हुए कई ट्रेन रद्द अथवा आंशिक तौर पर रद्द कर दी गई हैं। भारतीय सेना के जवानों ने शनिवार रात कछार जिले के बालिवरा और बरखोला के बाढ़ प्रभावित इलाकों में बचाव अभियान चलाया।

उधर, केरल में कई इलाकों में भरा पानी, रेड अलर्ट

उत्तर भारत में इन दिनों तेज धूप और उमस वाली मौसम गर्मी से लोग परेशान हैं। हालांकि केरल से अच्छे संकेत मिलने शुरू हो गए हैं। यहां प्री मौसम बारिश शुरू हो गई है। मौसम विभाग ने केरल के कई जिलों में मूसलाधार बारिश का अलर्ट जारी किया है। दो जिलों में रेड अलर्ट और 6 में ऑरेंज अलर्ट जारी किया गया है। बारिश की वजह से पोर्ट सिटी कोच्चि में कई जगहों पर पानी भर गया और निचले इलाकों में रहने वाले लोगों को प्रशासन ने सुरक्षित स्थानों पर पहुंचाया है। वहीं सरकार ने चेतावनी जारी करते हुए कहा है कि लोग पर्वतीय इलाकों में जाने से बचें। सरकार ने पुलिस और रेवेन्यू अथॉरिटी को भी अलर्ट पर रखा है।



इस बार समय पूर्व मानसून की होगी दस्तक

मौसम विभाग का अनुमान है कि साउथवेस्ट मानसून इस बार 1 जून से पहले 27 मई को ही केरल में प्रवेश कर जाएगा। इस दौरान हल्की से मध्यम बारिश होने का अनुमान है। केरल में अक्सर मानसून के दौरान मूसलाधार बारिश होती है।

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यमुना का जलस्तर नहीं सुधरा

नई दिल्ली, वरिष्ठ संवाददाता। राजधानी में पिछले कुछ दिनों से कई जिलों में जलापूर्ति बाधित है। यहां पानी की किल्लत से लोगों को परेशानी हो रही है। पिछले चार दिनों से वजीराबाद बैराज पर यमुना का जलस्तर करीब चार फीट नीचे बना हुआ है। यहां पानी का स्तर 670.40 फीट है, जो सामान्य दिनों में 674.50 फीट रहता है।

हरियाणा से कम मात्रा में कच्चा पानी छोड़ने के कारण यह जलस्तर कम

हुआ है। जलस्तर कम होने से तीन जल संयंत्रों वजीराबाद, चंद्रावल व ओखला संयंत्रों का उत्पादन करीब 30 फीसदी कम हो गया है।

लोग पानी खरीदकर पीने के लिए मजबूर हैं। दिल्ली जल बोर्ड कई इलाकों में पानी के टैंकों की सप्लाई कर पानी आपूर्ति बहाल रखने की मशक्कत कर रहा है, लेकिन गर्मी में मांग अधिक होने से पानी की किल्लत बनी हुई है।