

Over 90 killed as Indore-Patna Express derails near Kanpur; Suresh Prabhu orders probe, promises

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Kanpur: In one of the worst train accident in recent history, at least 90 passengers were killed and over 150 injured when 14 coaches of the Indore-Patna Express derailed near Pukhraya in Kanpur dehat district in the wee hours of Sunday.

Indore-Patna Express derailed near Pukhraya in Kanpur dehat district

Four coaches of the train - S1, S2, S3, S4- were badly damaged in the mishap that took place at around 3 AM near Pukhraya. Most of the passengers were jolted out of their sleep to find themselves among mangled remains of the bogies.

"90 bodies have been pulled out so far. There can be more bodies trapped," Superintendent of Police, Kanpur Dehat Prabhakar Chowdhury told PTI over phone.

IG (Kanpur range) Zaki Ahmed said 96 people were killed and 76 seriously injured in derailment while 150 others suffered minor injuries.

"Over 150 injured people have been rushed to nearby hospitals in the area. All hospitals have been asked to be alert. More than 30 ambulances have been pressed into service," he added.Â

A team of Army doctors and rescue officials have arrived at the spot. 250 police officials are also involved in carrying out the rescue and relief operations.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the loss of lives in the train tragedy.

"Anguished beyond words on the loss of lives due to the derailing of the Patna-Indore express. My thoughts are with the bereaved families," he said in a tweet.

He also announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh each for next of kin of deceased and Rs 50000 for seriously injured.

Railways Minister Suresh Prabhu has ordered a probe into the train tragedy and announced ex-gratia for the families of the victims.

Rs 3.5 lakh exgratia will be given for the families of those killed in the derailment and Rs 50,000 for those grievously injured, he said.

Prabhu said the Commissioner of Railway Safety will probe the reasons behind the derailment.

"All rescue and relief work is on to deal with the unfortunate accident. All medical and other help rushed. Inquiry ordered. Situation monitored closely," Prabhu said, adding that he was also rushing to the accident site to personally monitor the rescue operation.Â

Minister of State for Railways Manoj Sinha along with four senior railway officials have rushed to the accident spot.

MOS Railway Rajen Gohain said a fault in the tracks may have led to the derailment.

"We haven't seen an incident like this in Indian Railways for a long time because we have taken a lot of safety measures.

"Earlier these kind of accidents used to happen because of the negligence of the driver but despite taking all safety measures this tragic incident took place. This is a cause of concern and we are investigating the reasons behind it.

"There must be a fault in the track as 14 bogeys have derailed and this happened despite regular checking of the tracks," he said.

Taking stock of the situation, Home Minister Rajnath Singh asked the Director General of National Disaster Response Force to rush to the spot.

Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav announced ex-gratia for the families of those killed in the mishap.

While Rs 5 lakh each will be given for families of those killed in derailment, Rs 50,000 will be given for seriously injured and Rs 25,000 for those with simple injuries.

The Chief Minister has instructed the DGP to personally monitor the relief operations and deploy traffic police along the route of the mishap site to ensure green corridor for ambulances to reach hospitals quickly.

Kanpur district officials have been instructed to take support of Indian Medical Association to avail the services of more doctors for extending medical support to train accident patients, the CM said.

More ambulances/roadways buses have been rushed to the spot for speedy relief operations, the CM said.

DG Health & ADG (Law and Order) have also been rushed to the accident spot to monitor the relief operations.

Railways Ministry spokesperson Anil Saxena said several people have been rushed to nearby hospitals with injuries, and the casualties may go up.

Accident relief train has been rushed to the spot, he said.

Northern Central Railways spokesperson Vijay Kumar said that doctors and senior railway officials have reached the spot. Rescue and relief operations were being carried out by district administration and railway officials.

Though the cause of the derailment was not known immediately, sources said the nature and timing shows that the accident was caused by a rail fracture.

However, the exact reason would be known only after an inquiry.

Buses have been pressed into service to help passengers complete their journey, Kumar said, adding that the S2 coach was severely damaged. Four AC coaches have also been derailed.

Railways have made available the following helpline numbers -- Indore-07411072, Ujjain- 07342560906, Ratlam-074121072, Orai-051621072, Jhansi- 05101072, Pokhraya- 05113270239.

- (With PTI inputs)
