



NEWS / INDIA

Monsoon rains bring Mumbai to a standstill

30 Aug 2017

Heavy monsoon rains have paralysed Mumbai, India's financial hub, flooding streets and disrupting land, air and road traffic.

Dozens of flights and local train services were cancelled on Tuesday as rains drenched the coastal city of nearly 20 million people.

Mumbai has been experiencing incessant heavy downpours since Saturday morning.

In three hours on Tuesday morning, Mumbai suburbs recorded 86mm of rains, just 2mm short of what was recorded over the previous 24 hours. Some areas have received more than 100mm of rain since Sunday.

Floods have killed more than 1,000 people in India, Nepal and Bangladesh in recent weeks and forced millions from their homes in the region's worst monsoon disaster in recent years.

With roads clogged, schools closed early along with some offices, and the evening rush hour saw people wading through knee-deep water on their way home or stuck in stranded vehicles for hours.

The meteorological department has warned that the Mumbai rains would continue for the

next 24 hours, prompting schools to remain closed until Wednesday.

Citizens were asked by authorities to stay indoors, except for emergencies and fishermen advised to exercise caution.

Narendra Modi, India's prime minister, urged residents to take all the necessary precautions in the wake of the chaos.

The National Disaster Response Force launched a rescue mission with police to evacuate people from low-lying areas.

"The heavy rains, flooding, are delaying our rescue work. Even we are stranded," Amitesh Kumar, joint commissioner of police, told Reuters news agency.

Rainwater also flooded the King Edward Memorial Hospital in central Mumbai, forcing doctors to evacuate the paediatric ward.

"We are worried about infections," Ashutosh Desai, a doctor, told Reuters news agency.

"The rain water is circulating rubbish that is now entering parts of the emergency ward."



Traffic was brought to a standstill in the city by water-logging [Shailesh Andrade/Reuters]

Flooding in the city in 2005 claimed over 1,000 lives, caused mudslides, swept away shanties and snapped electricity lines.

Water supply, communication networks and public transportation were totally shut down during the 2005 catastrophe.

India's monsoon season runs from June to September and often causes widespread destruction.

The Red Cross, the international humanitarian group, said last week that an estimated 24 million people in South Asia have been affected by floods this year.

SOURCE: NEWS AGENCIES