

Tamil Nadu**Heavy rain torments coastal T.N., brings life to a halt in Chennai**

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Train services, including the suburban services between Arakkonam and Chennai Central and the Beach and Tambaram stations, were affected by water-logging on the tracks on Tuesday. Photo: R. Ravindran | The Hindu

Army columns, boats deployed to rescue those stranded

As heavy rains continue to lash Chennai on Wednesday, several parts of the city have come to a standstill.

Dramatic scenes unfolded on the arterial Kotturpuram bridge near Adyar as the Adyar river has started overflowing. Tamil Nadu Housing Board Colony, with over 3,000 residents, is completely inundated. A rescue team is in action, strongly battling the currents of the river. The Kotturpuram bridge has been shut as water has completely entered into the bridge.

Earlier, water from Chembambakkam reservoir was discharged at the rate of 20,000 cubic feet per second into the Adyar river.

On Tuesday, torrential rains battered the already-ravaged coastal areas and bringing life to a grinding halt in Puducherry and Chennai. Heavy rain in the catchment areas of the Chembambakkam reservoir (25 centimetres between 8.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday) forced the authorities to discharge water at the rate of 20,000 cubic feet per second into the Adyar river. The Chennai Collector issued a flood warning, asking people living along the river to move to safer places.

Roads were flooded and essential services, including trains and buses, were suspended in most locations. As several areas were heavily water-logged, Saidapet bridge has been shut off.

Electricity was turned off in some areas as a precautionary measure. Most flights from and to Chennai were delayed, and those who landed found it tough to get out of the place, since south Chennai, on the fringes of which the airport is located, was among the worst affected. A holiday was declared for all schools and colleges.

Helpline numbers:



Train service between Tambaram and Beach was disrupted due water logging on the tracks. Photo: G.Krishnaswamy

Boats had to be called out once again to rescue residents caught in their workplaces and homes, after floodwaters entered the buildings. Water release from the reservoirs and the breaching of over 60 tanks in south Chennai contributed to the extensive damage in the city.

Puducherry received 19 cm of rain until 4 p.m. since Monday night, the highest in recent years. Roads connecting Villupuram and Cuddalore were inundated. Most lakes and ponds reached the full level. The Sankaraparani and Then Pennaiyar rivers were in spate. During the showers after Deepavali, Chennai and Cuddalore districts were literally marooned after a depression in the Bay of Bengal.

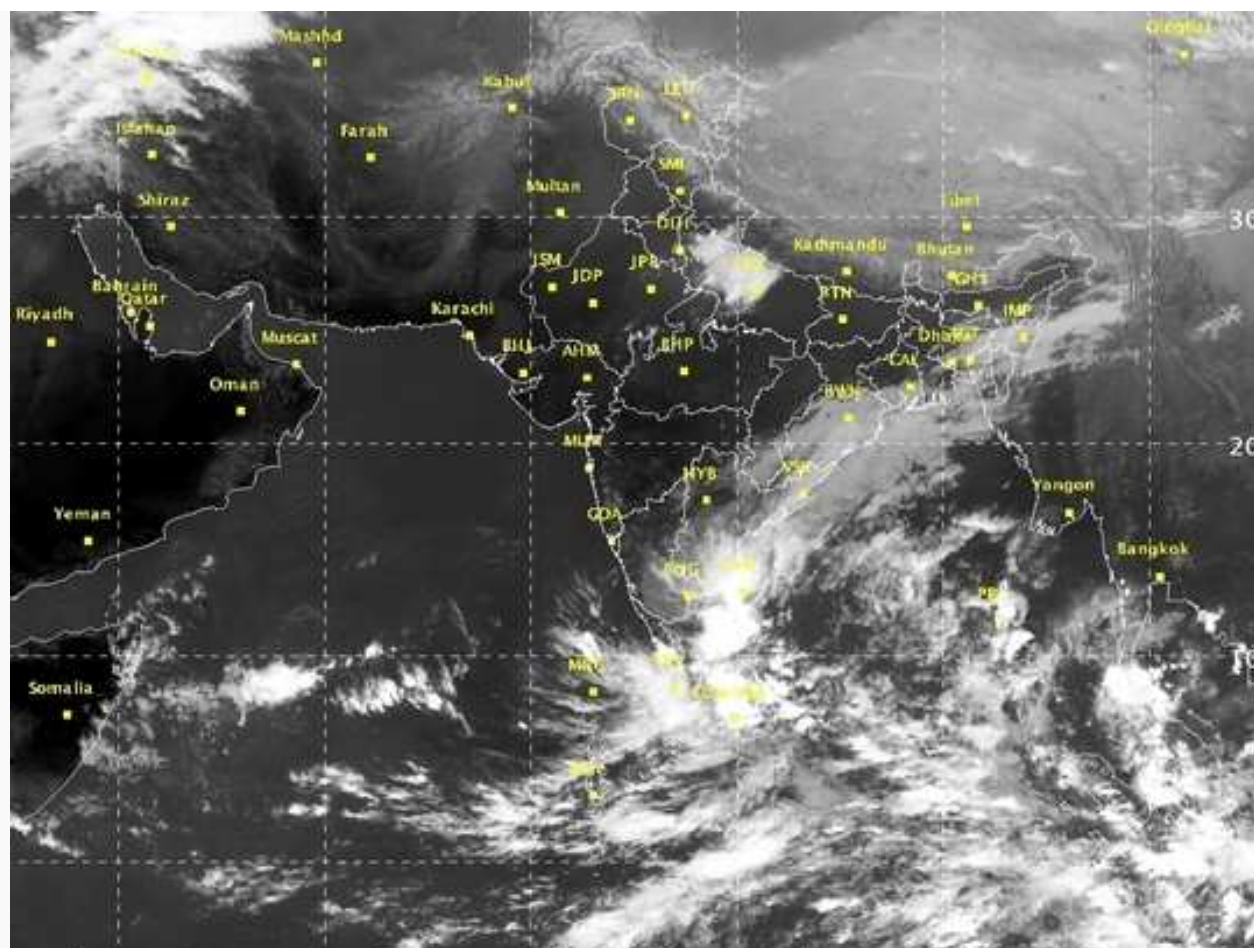
Chief Minister Jayalalithaa said senior IAS officers were sent to the affected districts to supervise relief works. Eight teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Arakkonam, have been sent out for rescue operations.

Modi speaks to CM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted late night that he had spoken to Ms. Jayalalithaa and assured her of all assistance during this "unfortunate hour."

Heavier rain has been predicted for the areas over the next four days. The Tamil Nadu government also requisitioned the Army's help for rescue and relief.

Two Army Flood Relief Columns are carrying out extensive operations in Tambaram and Urapakkam areas in Chennai. Experts say there is a clear danger of infectious diseases breaking out, given the sanitary conditions. They warn that the State must be prepared and initiate remedial measures as soon as possible.



Satellite image recorded by INSAT 3D at 1600 hours on Tuesday.



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Vehicles negotiate a flooded Poonamallee High Road. Photo: M. Vedhan