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Kashmir Cloudburst Flash Flood Kills Dozens

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– Categories: *Crime*

A sudden cloudburst in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district triggered a devastating flash flood on Thursday, killing dozens, leaving many missing, and destroying homes and community facilities. The disaster struck Chositi village in the remote Dachhan area during the annual Machail Mata Yatra pilgrimage, when hundreds of devotees were gathered.

According to local authorities, confirmed fatalities range between 37 and 60, while over 100 people remain missing. Conflicting figures from various rescue teams reflect the scale of the devastation and the ongoing challenge of locating victims. Over 300 individuals have been rescued so far, with at least 50 requiring urgent hospital care for severe injuries.

The flash flood, which officials say was caused by a high-intensity cloudburst, tore through the village in minutes. Witnesses described a wall of water carrying rocks, mud, and debris that swept away houses, vehicles, and a large community kitchen serving the pilgrims. Rescue workers, including teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), local police, army units, and civilian volunteers, are combing the area in search of survivors and bodies.

The timing of the disaster has added complexity to relief operations. The Machail Mata Yatra pilgrimage, which attracts thousands of devotees each year, had drawn more than 200 people to the affected community kitchen alone. Many of those swept away are believed to have been pilgrims from outside the region.

Officials have deployed additional medical staff and relief materials to the area. However, damage to roads and bridges, combined with intermittent heavy rain, is hampering the

movement of rescue vehicles. Authorities have also warned of possible further rainfall that could trigger new floods or landslides.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed condolences to the victims' families and assured that all possible assistance will be provided. Jammu and Kashmir's Chief Minister has ordered an immediate review of rescue and relief measures and pledged compensation to the families of those killed.

Meteorologists have explained that a cloudburst occurs when a large amount of rain falls over a small area in a very short period, often leading to sudden and severe flooding. While such events are not uncommon in the Himalayan region, experts note that their frequency appears to be increasing, raising concerns about the vulnerability of mountainous communities.

As the search continues, authorities have suspended the Machail Mata Yatra until conditions improve. Rescue teams are working against time, with hopes fading for those still unaccounted for. For survivors and the families of the missing, the tragedy has turned a sacred pilgrimage into a scene of loss and destruction.