

Gujarat Storm Kills Two, Red Alert Issued

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Heavy rain battered several districts of Gujarat on Wednesday, leaving two people dead after lightning strikes and prompting red and orange alerts across the state. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has warned of continued downpours, with Devbhoomi Dwarka placed under a red alert for Thursday.

The fatalities occurred in Junagadh and Porbandar districts, both severely affected by the extreme weather. In Porbandar's Kutiyana taluka, a migrant farm laborer identified as Anjuben from Madhya Pradesh was killed by lightning while working in Amar village. In

Junagadh's Manavadar taluka, 25-year-old Akshay Kanubhai Maru also lost his life in a lightning strike at Samega village.

Junagadh was among the hardest-hit districts, where Mendarda, Keshod, and Vanthali talukas recorded extraordinary rainfall – 331 mm (13 inches), 278 mm (11 inches), and 258 mm (10 inches) respectively. Porbandar taluka registered 256 mm (10 inches) of rainfall within 14 hours, while other areas such as Navsari's Gandevi (234 mm), Manavadar in Junagadh (206 mm), and Chikhli in Navsari (193 mm) also faced heavy downpours.

Local authorities confirmed widespread disruption. Around 600 residents in Junagadh and 50 in Porbandar were evacuated from low-lying areas. Rising rivulets forced the closure of 60 rural roads and 15 bus routes. Schools, colleges, and anganwadi centers were shut in the four worst-affected talukas of Junagadh: Keshod, Manavadar, Vanthali, and Mendarda.

Junagadh Collector Anil Ranavasiya reported no additional casualties beyond the lightning deaths but confirmed significant rescue operations. "Other than the death due to lightning, there is no rain-related casualty so far in Junagadh district. However, 36 persons were rescued from low-lying areas," he said.

In Manekwada village, 12 people, including five children, were trapped by rising waters. Acting on information from the Sub Divisional Magistrate's office, a team from the 6th Battalion of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) carried out a successful evacuation.

The IMD has also issued an orange alert for several districts, warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall in Banaskantha, Patan, Navsari, Valsad, Rajkot, Jamnagar, Porbandar, Junagadh, Morbi, and Kutch. With water levels continuing to rise in multiple rivers and low-lying areas, authorities have urged residents to remain cautious.

The rains also disrupted daily life in Navsari and Valsad districts, with several areas reporting waterlogging and road blockages. Officials stressed that further evacuations may be required if rainfall persists.

The deaths underscore the vulnerability of rural and migrant communities to natural disasters. The victim in Porbandar, a farm laborer from Madhya Pradesh, highlights the risks faced by workers who often have limited shelter and safety during extreme weather.

Authorities have called for greater awareness and the use of safety measures, particularly during thunderstorms.

While Gujarat frequently experiences heavy monsoon rains, the intensity recorded in recent days has led to severe challenges for local administrations. Rescue operations remain active as the state prepares for more rainfall in the coming days.