



Experts said that better stormwater drainage systems would not have been able to prevent the flooding caused by very extremely heavy rains. AFP

INDIA CYCLONE

Hundreds stranded; plants closed in flood-hit Chennai

14 have died in flooding, triggered by torrential rains that started on Monday

Reuters Chennai

Volunteers waded through stagnant water to hand out food and supplies, and some manufacturing plants remained shut in India's southern tech-and-auto hub district of Chennai on Friday, four days after cyclone Michaung lashed the coast.

At least 14 people, most of them in Chennai and its state of Tamil Nadu, have died in the flooding, triggered by torrential rains that started on Monday.

The cyclone itself made landfall further north in Andhra Pradesh state on Tuesday afternoon.

Authorities said some low-lying areas of the state were still inundated and government officials and volunteers were taking supplies to people stuck in their homes in slums and other areas.

The larger Chennai area is home to the Indian units of several global firms including Hyundai Motor,

Daimler and Taiwan's Foxconn and Pegatron which do contract manufacturing for Apple.

While many of them including Pegatron and Foxconn resumed operations within a day or two of the cyclone making landfall, some plants of the TVS group located in the worst-affected areas are yet to open, industry sources said.

Adani Krishnapatnam Port in Andhra Pradesh, said on Friday the cyclone had "very badly affected" its operations and it was declaring a force majeure period starting Dec. 3.

Force majeure is a notice used to describe events outside a company's control, such as a natural disaster, which usually releases it from contractual obligation without penalty.

State-run Madras Fertilizers notified stock exchanges that its Chennai plant has been shut and is tentatively expected to resume operations within two to four weeks.

Information technology services

providers told staff to work from home for the week, while schools and colleges closed. A few schools and colleges were converted into temporary shelters.

This week's floods in Chennai brought back memories of the extensive damage caused by floods eight years ago which killed around 200 people.

FASTFACT

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In Andhra Pradesh, the damage from the cyclone was relatively contained, with roads damaged and trees uprooted as big waves crashed into the coast.

Defense Minister Rajnath Singh visited Chennai on Thursday and announced New Delhi will release

a second instalment of 4.5 billion rupees (\$54 million) to Tamil Nadu to help manage the damage. The federal government has also approved a 5.6 billion-rupee project for flood management in Chennai, he said.

Chennai residents questioned the ability of the city's infrastructure to handle extreme weather.

"Not only has urbanization itself caused a problem, but the nature of the urbanization has preyed upon open spaces, holding areas like marshlands and flood plains," social activist Nityanand Jayaraman said.

Experts have, however, said better stormwater drainage systems would not have been able to prevent the flooding caused by very heavy and extremely heavy rains.

"This solution would have helped a lot in moderate and heavy rainfall, but not in very heavy and extremely heavy rains," Raj Bhagat P, a civil engineer and geo-analytics expert, said on Wednesday.