



Representational Image (File Photo: SNS)

At least five migrant labourers were killed and 13 others injured in Madhya Pradesh's Narsinghpur when a truck they were travelling in overturned in a village late night on Saturday.

These migrant labourers, a group of around 20 of them, were travelling from Hyderabad and going to Jhansi in Madhya Pradesh and Etah in Uttar Pradesh, in a truck carrying mangoes.

The accident took place near Patha village on Saturday night, said Additional Superintendent of Police Rajesh Tiwari.

"Five labourers were killed and 13 others were injured after the mangoes-laden vehicle overturned," he said.

The injured persons were admitted to the district hospital for treatment and two of them are critically injured.

The whole batch of these migrants were tested for coronavirus as one labourer showed symptoms of highly contagious COVID-19.

The incident comes just two days after another heart-wrenching Aurangabad incident where at least 16 migrants, who were sleeping on the railway tracks while returning to their native places amid the Coronavirus -induced lockdown, were crushed to death after they were run over by a good train on Friday leading nationwide condolences. Around 20 of them were walking from Jalna in Maharashtra to reach around 150 km apart Bhusaval in Madhya Pradesh.

According to the police, the labourers were walking on the railway tracks so that they might escape the highways where police could have stopped them and they thought that trains were not running due to the coronavirus lockdown so they can use the tracks. Because they were tired from walking a long distance, they did not realise and dozed off at the tracks.

Amid the nationwide lockdown, thousands of daily wagers and other migrants undertook epic journeys to reach home – walking, cycling and hitching rides when they could – in the absence of any public transport, the outskirts of many cities like Delhi and Mumbai teemed with people.

The nationwide lockdown, which began on March 25, was first extended till April 14, then till May 3 and finally till May 17 with a few relaxations built in. The unprecedented move to stem the spread of COVID-19 triggered possibly the biggest movement of people since Partition.

Some made it, some are still on their way while some others just gave up on the way. There have been several reports of workers desperate to be with their families in the uncertain days of a pandemic but dying before they reached their destination.

The first reported casualty of this exodus was 39-year-old Ranveer Singh, who worked as a delivery boy for a restaurant in Delhi and died in Agra after walking for over 200 km to Morena in Madhya Pradesh.

According to a report by SaveLIFE Foundation, at least 42 migrants died in road accidents while attempting to return home during the Coronavirus lockdown.

The report details that about 140 lives were lost in over 600 road accidents over the course of the two phases of the nationwide lockdown between March 24 and May 3.

Of this count, 30 per cent of the victims were migrant workers returning to their homes, said the report by the non-profit organisation which underlined over-speeding on empty roads as one of the most common reasons for deaths across states.

Apart from 42 migrants, 17 essential workers also died in road accidents.

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