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Avreena Khatoon to Vinod Kumar: The 16 migrants on trains who'll never make it home

Uncared for and unmourned, two of them even died anonymously with no takers for their bodies.



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Cadets of Scouts Guides provide drinking water to the migrants sitting in a Shramik Special train for their native places during ongoing COVID-19 lockdown at Mathura Railway Station Thursday May 28 2020. (Photo | PTI)

By Rajesh Kumar Thakur, Namita Bajpai, Mukesh Ranjan

Express News Service

PATNA/LUCKNOW/RANCHI: More than 3,800 Shramik special trains, started on May 1, have transported 50 lakh, migrant workers, to their homes.

Their lives torn apart by penury, hunger and uncertainty on account of the sudden lockdown, these exhausted yet relieved migrants have found comfort and safety in their native villages.

But at least 16 of them were not so lucky. Seven each from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and two from Jharkhand died even before they could be reunited with their families and village folk. Uncared for and unmourned, two of them even died anonymously with no takers for their bodies.

Avreena Khatoon

The visuals of her toddler son playing with the sheet of cloth covering her lifeless body at Muzaffarpur railway station in Bihar tugged at the heartstrings of the entire country.

The 35-year-old died on board the Shramik special train that arrived from Ahmadabad in Gujarat.

Divorced by her husband 18 months ago, she had gone to Ahmadabad, where her sister's family stayed, and took up a job in a small scale unit to bring up her two children aged four years and 15 months.

Her brother-in-law Mohammed Wazir alleged that she died due to hunger and heat in the train, but Muzaffarpur district magistrate, as well as the Railways, claimed that the family had admitted that she had been ill for several days when she was travelling.

Lal Babu Kamat

Working as a security guard in Surat for a decade, the 50-year-old had lost his job recently after he suffered a paralytic stroke.

With the lockdown imposed soon after, his family was stranded in the city without any income.

Securing a berth on the Shramik Special train to Darbhanga in Bihar on May 23 finally gave them some hope. But the joy of being able to return home was cut short as Kamat died on the train near Munger.

His wife Krishna Devi and three daughters de-boarded at Bhagalpur with his body and went to Darbhanga by road. Krishna Devi alleged that Kamat was on regular medication but had to miss the medicines in the train because there was no water.

Saroj Kumar: Losing his job post-lockdown, he reached Sasaram in Bihar on a Shramik train and then boarded an inter-state train to Patna via Gaya to reach home in Vaishali district. His brother claimed that he had not eaten anything for last two days.

Md Irshad: The four-year-old cried out of hunger and thirst as the Shramik Special train his family was travelling on took 39 hours to reach Patna from Delhi. He died enroute to Muzaffarpur.

Uresh Khatoon: The 35-year-old housewife died on a Purnia-bound Shramik special train from Surat. She was returning home after a heart surgery.



Vashishtha Mahto: The 65-year-old, too, had gone to Mumbai for treatment. He died at the Danapur railway station while returning by a Sharmik train to Darbhanga.

Om Prakash Pandey: He returned from Surat to his hometown Nawada, Bihar and fell sick soon after alighting from a migrant train. He was rushed to a hospital but died.

Ashok Gope: The 19-year-old from Jharkhand worked as a waiter in Goa. He died on a Shramik train at Hatia station in Ranchi. According to a relative, Gope was fine when they boarded the train on Monday. But after taking the meal on Tuesday night, he fell ill. After groaning in pain for hours, he succumbed at around 1 pm.

Mahipatra Singh: A labourer in Goa, the 36-year-old from Latehar district, Jharkhand was a TB patient and also suffered from stomach ailments. He was returning home with his three brothers but died on the way.

Dasrath Prajapati, 30, and Ram Ratan Gaud, 63: Both men were found dead on the migrant special train from Mumbai that pulled up at Varanasi station on Wednesday. Prajapati, a native of Jaunpur in UP, was physically challenged and

suffering from chronic kidney ailment for the treatment of which he had gone to Mumbai. Gaud was going to his village in Azamgarh district of UP. He, too, was suffering from some illness.

Bhushan Singh: The 58-year-old from Chapra, Bihar was found dead on Surat-Hajipur train when it stopped at Ballia in UP. Bhushan was coming from Surat where he worked in a textile factory.

Ram Awadh Chauhan: The mason was returning from Maharashtra to Azamgarh, UP, with his family. He reached Jhansi by a Shramik train and boarded a train to Gorakhpur. A diabetic, he had not taken medicine for two days as he was not getting regular food. He fell severely ill and died at Kanpur station.

Two other workers died on the same train but they are yet to be identified.

Vinod Kumar: The 44-year-old Ayodhya native, a heart patient, died in sleep on board the Mumbai-Basti Shramik Special train.

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Following the Patna High Court's suo-motu cognizance of the video of a child trying to wake up his dead mother, the Bihar government informed the court that the deceased was mentally unstable and had died a natural death during the course of her journey from Surat

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S.M. Ahmed

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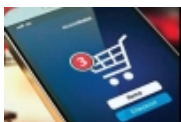
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