



The injured commuter in a wheelchair at Thane station on Friday

## Attending to the injured is our priority: GRP

Earlier, GRP had said that it is the job of the RPF to assist injured or sick rail commuters

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**T**he Government Railway Police (GRP) on Saturday came forward to acknowledge that any injured or unwell train commuter must be immediately rushed to hospital without any kind of jurisdictional debate between the security agencies.

The GRP's clarification came on a day Mumbai Mirror reported that an injured commuter, Sujit Pal, 34, had to wait 20 minutes for help at Thane station on Friday morning GRP and RPF bickered over whose job it is to ferry such people to the hospital.

Speaking to Mirror about the incident yesterday, additional director general (ADG) of GRP Jai Jeet Singh said, "Attending to the injured must be the priority. Our orders in this regard are absolutely clear. Any agency which finds any injured or unwell

passenger must immediately transfer him or her to the nearest hospital. Reporting the matter to GRP and subsequent inquiry/paper work can follow in due course. We are re-drafting the processes with the help of railway administration to ensure that such events do not recur in the future."

He further stressed that for all constituents of the railway safety system, security of passengers must come first. "Helping injured is a privilege and duty. Anyone who gets information first is the first responder and is duty-bound to provide all possible assistance," Singh said.

"Why does a station master or even any railway employ wait for the GRP to send the man to hospital? Injured must be provided medical attendance first. Other things will follow," he added.

This is a climbdown from the GRP's position that it is solely the job of the RPF to assist the rail commuters injured during accidents or those needing medical help and take them to hospital. Mumbai Mirror reported on August 18 that the heads of GRP posts have made this clear in separate letters to station masters in Mumbai over the past few days.

On Friday, Diva resident Sujit Pal suddenly became ill aboard a Badlapur-Thane train and fell off near Mumbra. The train was halted and fellow passengers picked him up and carried him into the motorman's cabin. The train pulled into Thane station, where the stationmaster asked the GRP to rush a bleeding Pal to a hospital. It was 9.05 am. But the GRP said it was the RPF's responsibility. The RPF did not respond to the call, leaving Pal, who had sustained head and face injuries, waiting in the station's emergency medical room, where he was given preliminary aid.

He was finally taken to Thane Civil Hospital at 9.25 am and needed seven stitches on the head. He is stable now.

# Mithi pollution: SC asks state to pay Rs 50 lakh

Apex court pulls up environment dept for not addressing pollution in the river caused by the 2005 deluge, doubles fine slapped by NGT



Sewage, industrial and domestic effluents, coupled with encroachments, have killed the river, say activists

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**I**n a big blow to the Maharashtra government, the Supreme Court has rapped the environment department for not taking remedial measures to address the high-pollution levels in the Mithi river caused due to the 2005 Mumbai deluge and asked it to cough up Rs 50 lakh as fine within two weeks.

The money has to be deposited with the court's registry office.

The August 16 order also directed the department to formulate a committee, comprising directors of IIT-Powai and National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur, to study the pollution level in Mithi and chalk out measures to prevent a rerun of the July 26, 2005, floods. Satish Gavai, additional chief secretary in the department of environment of the government of Maharashtra and the secretary of the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), will be the convener of the committee.

The MMRDA, the parent body of Mithi River Development Authority, had moved the Supreme Court to seek relief against an order of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) issued in October 2016, asking it cough up Rs 25 lakh as initial compensation for the damages caused to Mithi river.

The court, while issuing the direction, particularly mentioned that the appeals arose in view of the deluge that

killed more than 100 people while several fell ill due to the polluted water of Mumbai.

"Notwithstanding this tragedy of enormous proportions, no effective steps appear to have been taken by anybody in the state of Maharashtra including some of the statutory authorities to remedy the situation in-

**Under the guise of flood protection all that was done was to create land for real estate development. In some place, the Mithi River Development Authority built walls on mangroves**

—D Stalin, director of NGO Vanashakti

spite of the fact that a little more than 12 years have gone by," the Supreme Court observed.

D Stalin, director of NGO Vanashakti, which had taken up the issue with NGT along with another NGO called Jal Biradari, welcomed the court's directive.

"Hundreds of crores of rupee have gone down the drain, but Mithi continues to be polluted. Raw sewage, industrial and domestic effluents, coupled with encroachments on the floodplains, have almost killed the river. Under the guise of flood protection all that was done was to create land for

real estate development. The buildings that have mushroomed on the floodplains bear testimony to this. In some place, the Mithi River Development Authority built walls on mangroves," said Stalin.

After the NGOs approached the NGT in 2013, the tribunal's Western Zone bench heard the case for two years before issuing a split verdict in 2015, wherein a judicial member agreed that the walls raised by the Mithi River Development Authority were illegal, and the Coastal Regulation Zone clearance should be kept in abeyance.

The matter then went to the NGT's principal bench in 2015, which asked the state government in October 2016 to pay up Rs 25 lakh as initial compensation for damaging the river, but stopped short of ordering the removal of the walls. MMRDA then moved the Mumbai High Court, but it upheld the NGT order. Thereafter, the MMRDA knocked on the Supreme Court's doors in December 2016.

"We are grateful to the Supreme Court for being so environmentally sensitive to the plight of the dying rivers. This order will go a long way in boosting efforts to revive our rivers," said Stalin.

The court wants the joint team of IIT and NEERI to submit a factual report within three months on the extent of damages caused to Mithi, remedial measures and short-term and long-term future course of action.

When contacted, Gavai refused to comment on the SC order.



The Mirror report on Saturday