



# AES crisis: Centre sends advanced ambulances, medical team to Bihar

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**

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EVEN AS the toll from Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) rose to 136 on Thursday, the Centre deployed eight advanced life support ambulances (ALS) in AES-affected districts of Bihar.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan also mentioned the steps the Centre was taking to combat the problem. A Central team of 10 pediatricians and five paramedics has also been deployed to work in coordination

with the state government, he said.

“The state government has started a social audit along with an active case finding campaign through house-to-house surveys and moving prospective patients to the nearest PHC for early intervention. Surprise checks are also being conducted at PHCs by the Senior Deputy Collectors... early morning inspection of Anganwadi Centres is also being undertaken by SDCs and Child development Project Officers... They are also distributing ORS to each house in affected villages,” he said.

An ICMR team of experts has been deployed at the Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital (SKMCH) hospital for making the virology lab operational at the earliest, he further said. The multi-disciplinary team deployed earlier is reviewing all the case records of AES patients, admitted and treated in 2019.

Meanwhile, expressing serious concern over the “deplorable public health infrastructure” in the country, the NHRC Thursday issued notices to the Centre and all states and Union Territories.

**(WITH PTI INPUTS)**



# *Despite loan waiver, farmer suicides have continued unabated: Maharashtra govt*

Says more than 12,000 have ended their lives between 2015 and 2018

**RADHESHYAM JADHAV**

Pune, June 20

The BJP-led Maharashtra government admitted in the State Legislative Council that 12,021 farmers have committed suicide during its four-year regime (2015-18). This, despite the State launching various farmer welfare schemes, including a loan waiver. In the drought-hit Aurangabad region, 4,124 farmers have ended their lives in the last four years.

About 30 members of the State Legislative Council raised the question of farmer-suicides on the floor of the House recently. The opposition members asked the government why farmers in the State continue to commit sui-

cide. The members drew the government's attention to the farmers' demand for higher prices for their produce and assistance to tackle severe drought.

State Minister Subhash Deshmukh, in a written reply, admitted that 12,021 farmers have ended their lives in the last four years, out of which 6,888 cases were eligible for the State assistance of ₹1 lakh. He added that in 4,410 cases, the State has not provided help as these cases were not eligible for the assistance.

The State government had announced a ₹34,000-crore loan waiver scheme in June 2017. However, even this step has not helped farmers. *Busi-*



In the last 32 years, the number of farmer-suicides has soared in Maharashtra

*nessLine* had earlier reported that 4,500 farmers had committed suicide after the loan waiver scheme.

The government's admission shows that the situation has not changed for the farmers during the BJP-Shiv Sena regime. In fact, in the last 32 years, the number of farmer-

suicides has multiplied in Maharashtra.

According to information provided by the State government to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), 6,268 farmer-suicide cases were registered in Maharashtra from January 2011 to December 2014, during the Congress-Nationalist Congress Party regime.

## **Key reasons**

The State government, in its letter to the NHRC in 2015, stated: "The prominent reasons noted for farmer-suicides are debt, crop failure, inability to repay debt resulting in pressure from debtors, inability to procure enough money for daughter's marriage or other religious activities, chronic severe illness, vices like alcohol addiction, gambling etc."

# निजता के अधिकार में कभी दखल नहीं दे सकती सरकार

जबलपुर, (पंजाब केसरी): मध्यप्रदेश हाईकोर्ट ने एक अहम फैसले में कहा कि किसी भी व्यक्ति का घर उसका किला या गढ़ है और उसकी सीमा में वह निसंदेह अपनी इच्छा का मालिक है। किसी भी परिस्थिति में सरकार नागरिक की निजता के अधिकार में हस्तक्षेप नहीं कर सकती, जब तक कि उसका कृत्य किसी प्रतिबंधात्मक कानून का उल्लंघन नहीं हो। हाईकोर्ट ने यह फैसला पुलिस के एडीजी राजेंद्र कुमार मिश्रा के बीमार पिता कुलामणि मिश्रा के इलाज को लेकर दिया है।

मानवाधिकार आयोग ने डीजीपी को पत्र लिखकर डॉक्टरों की जांच समिति गठित करने और कुलामणि की बीमारी की सच्चाई का पता लगाने के आदेश दिए थे। जस्टिस अतुल श्रीधरन की एकल पीठ ने आयोग के उक्त आदेश को नागरिक के निजता के अधिकार और संविधान के अनुच्छेद 21 में प्रदत्त जीने का मूलभूत अधिकार का उल्लंघन करार देते हुए खारिज कर दिया। हाईकोर्ट ने कहा कि अगर यह मान भी लिया जाए कि कुलामणि की मृत्यु हो चुकी है और परिजन शरीर को रखे हैं तो भी यह कृत्य कानूनन अवैधानिक नहीं है और इसमें सरकार हस्तक्षेप

## मप्र हाईकोर्ट का बड़ा फैसला



## आयोग के वकील की दलील

आयोग की ओर से अधिवक्ता वीके श्रोती ने दलील दी कि कुलामणि की मृत्यु हो चुकी है और परिजन अवैधानिक रूप से शव रखे हैं। संक्रमित शव के कारण लोक स्वास्थ्य को खतरा है। कुलामणि के शव का पूरे सम्मान और सामाजिक रीति रिवाजों के साथ अंतिम संस्कार होना जरूरी है और ऐसा नहीं करना उनके मानव अधिकारों का उल्लंघन है।

## एडीजी का दावा- जीवित हैं उनके पिता

डीजीपी ने 18 फरवरी को आयोग को बताया कि कुलामणि की मृत्यु 13 जनवरी को हो गई है और बंसल अस्पताल ने मृत्यु प्रमाणपत्र जारी किया है। उन्होंने बताया कि एडीजी का दावा है कि पिता जीवित हैं और आयुर्वेदिक पद्धति से इलाज चल रहा है। इस पर कुलामणि की पत्नी शशिमणि ने हाईकोर्ट में याचिका दाखिल की थी। वरिष्ठ अधिवक्ता अजय मिश्रा ने कोर्ट को बताया कि कुलामणि जीवित हैं और आयुर्वेदिक पद्धति से इलाज वैद्य राधेश्याम शुक्ला द्वारा किया जा रहा है। उन्होंने दलील दी कि अगर कुलामणि की मृत्यु हो जाती तो अभी तक शव संक्रमित हो जाता और बदबू से आसपास के लोग परेशान हो जाते।

नहीं कर सकती। कोर्ट ने कहा कि भारत में व्यक्ति को उसकी इच्छा के अनुसार जीने या कोई कृत्य करने

का पूरा अधिकार है, जब तक कि उसका कृत्य किसी कानून का उल्लंघन नहीं करता। उल्लेखनीय है

● कोर्ट ने यह फैसला पुलिस के एडीजी राजेंद्र कुमार मिश्रा के बीमार पिता कुलामणि मिश्रा के इलाज को लेकर दिया

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कि एडीजी के पिता को सांस की तकलीफ के चलते जनवरी 2019 में अस्पताल में भर्ती कराया गया था। 14 फरवरी को अखबारों में समाचार प्रकाशित हुआ कि कुलामणि की मृत्यु हो चुकी है, लेकिन परिजन शव का घर पर इलाज करा रहे हैं। अखबारों की रिपोर्ट पर संज्ञान लेते हुए आयोग ने 14 फरवरी को डीजीपी को पत्र लिखकर तीन दिन में रिपोर्ट मांगी थी।



## चिकित्सा व्यवस्था चरमराने पर मानवाधिकार आयोग ने सरकार से किया जवाब तलब

■ नई दिल्ली (एसएनबी) ।

देशभर में चिकित्सा व्यवस्था चरमराने पर राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग ने केन्द्र तथा सभी राज्य सरकारों से जवाब तलब किया है। आयोग ने कहा है कि मुजफ्फरपुर में चमकी बुखार से 143 से अधिक बच्चों की मौत हो गई है।

आयोग के अनुसार गोरखपुर में भी कुछ समय पहले इसी तरह का हादसा हुआ था। एम्बुलेंस के अभाव में मातापिता अपने बच्चों के शव कंधों पर रखकर ले जाते हैं। डाक्टरों की कमी के कारण महिलाएं अस्पताल के सामने प्रसव से गुजर रही हैं। आयोग ने कहा है कि इस तरह की घटनाओं से साफ है कि देशभर में चिकित्सा व्यवस्था की हालत दयनीय है।

आयोग ने सभी राज्यों के मुख्य सचिव से कहा है कि वह छह सप्ताह में बताएं कि पिछले तीन साल में चिकित्सा के अभाव कितने लोगों की जान गई। इस तरह की घटनाएं दोबारा नहीं हो, इसके लिए क्या कदम उठाए गए। आयोग ने केन्द्रीय स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय से कहा है कि वह चार सप्ताह में रिपोर्ट दायर करे। आयोग डाक्टरों का एक दल भी बिहार, यूपी, हरियाणा अर पंजाब भेजेगा।



Children showing symptoms of acute encephalitis syndrome undergoing treatment at Sri Krishna Medical College Hospital in Muzaffarpur.

# NITISH GOVT FAILED TO FORESEE AES EPIDEMIC

*Most of the children who have died due to AES belong to the marginalised sections. A team will now study the socio-economic conditions of areas with high concentration of cases.*

NAYEAR AZAD  
PATNA

**A**cute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) continues to pose a tough challenge for the Bihar government. In the last three weeks, more than 160 children have died in the state due to the killer disease.

According to officials, in Muzaffarpur alone encephalitis has taken the lives of around 110 children. The rising cases of encephalitis and brain fever have raised questions on negligence and unpreparedness by doctors and government officials to tackle the situation.

On Tuesday, when chief minister Nitish Kumar visited Muzaffarpur to review the condition of patients he had to face protests by angry people amid sloganeering outside Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital (SKMCH), where most of the children have died since the outbreak of AES and brain fever.

Facing criticism over inadequate infrastructure, like beds, and lack of medical professionals in SKMCH, the

district administration has converted the prisoner's ward into a makeshift paediatric ICU.

Over 402 children are currently being treated at four ICUs at SKMCH.

Health officials from Muzaffarpur said, "Fresh cases with AES symptoms have been arriving for treatment almost every day since the outbreak of the epidemic. There is a shortage of beds but the hospital management is trying to cope with the outbreak with whatever infrastructure is available here".

On Sunday, Union health minister Harsh Vardhan had visited Muzaffarpur to take stock of the situation and stressed the need for "in-depth research" to find the reasons behind the outbreak of an epidemic.

"The situation is shocking. The government is taking all necessary steps to prevent the disease and save children from losing their lives. We also need to develop well-equipped research labs in at least five districts in order to find ways to detect and prevent the disease," Mr Vardhan said after he visited Muzaffarpur and announced

## DEATH ON THE PROWL

▶ Facing criticism over inadequate infrastructure, like beds and medical professionals, in Muzaffarpur's SKMCH, the district administration has converted the prisoner's ward into a makeshift paediatric ICU

▶ The AES is locally known as *Chamki Bukhar* or 'brain fever'

▶ An ex gratia of ₹4 lakh each has been announced for the families of children who have died

that a team from AIIMS will be rushed to the state.

Earlier this week, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) sent notices to the Central and state governments over reports of rising mortality rate due to AES in Muzaffarpur and other districts.

State government officials, however, maintained that all necessary steps have been taken to tackle the crisis.

Speaking about the issue, chief secretary Deepak Kumar said, "The state government is doing everything possible to tackle the crisis. Medical teams have been sent from other hospitals of the state to assist doctors at the SKMCH. Officials have also been asked to bear the transportation and medical expenses of patients suffering from AES."

Experts claim that encephalitis is a vector-borne disease which causes inflammation in the brain and its symptoms are convulsions, fever, and headache. It occurs mostly in summer and in north Bihar, the disease is locally known as "*Chamki Bukhar*" or "Brain fever".

According to a report, the symptoms of encephalitis which has affected the lives of more than 300 children in North Bihar could be linked to a toxin which is mostly found in litchi fruit.

Muzaffarpur is the largest producer of litchi in the country and most of the cases have been reported from the district.

The outbreak of the disease has been hitting the region every year since 1995, usually during the litchi season. Muzaffarpur is the

largest Litchi producing region in the country.

Official AES figures show 355 death in 2014, 11 deaths in 2015, four in 2016, 11 in 2017 and seven in 2018. However till June this year, the death toll has gone up to 135 in the state and more than 110 in Muzaffarpur from where most of the cases have been detected so far.

Sources said that most of the children who were admitted to hospitals with AES symptoms and lost their lives belonged to marginalised sections.

After his visit to Muzaffarpur the chief minister directed officials to constitute a team of experts to study the socio-economic condition of blocks and villages where a maximum number of AES cases was detected.

He had earlier announced an ex gratia of ₹4 Lakh each to the families of the children who died due to disease.

"A team will be sent to study the condition and environmental factor in the affected areas in order to find ways to tackle the surge in AES and brain fever cases," said chief secretary Kumar.

CHILD DEATHS IN BIHAR

# Centre deploys eight advanced life-support ambulances now

*Health ministry says central teams comprising 10 pediatricians and five paramedics each had started working on the ground, in coordination with the state government*

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** In view of the rising incidents of deaths due to AES/JE in Muzaffarpur and adjoining areas in Bihar, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan has issued instructions for deployment of eight advanced life-support (ALS) ambulances in the affected districts.

Accordingly, eight additional ALS ambulances were pressed into service for transportation of critical patients under the National Health Mission (NHM), a statement issued by the health ministry said. The central teams comprising 10 pediatricians and five paramedics each had started working on the ground, in coordination with the state government, it added. The teams were sent to Bihar on Wednesday. Vardhan further informed that 16 senior district officials and medical personnel were sent to the vulnerable blocks for monitoring and early identification of cases and ensuring daily reporting.

Their headquarters were also shifted to these blocks, he said, adding that the district collector was involved in the process now and was personally taking responsibility for the same. The collector had deputed senior deputy collectors (SDCs) or district-level



Children showing symptoms of Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) being treated at a hospital in Muzaffarpur, Thursday

PTI

officers to lead various block teams, Vardhan was quoted in the statement as saying. These teams would be assisted by a district-level medical officer and a medical officer in-charge (MOIC) to do the overall work at the block level, the statement said. It added that the authorities in Bihar were given instructions to switch to daily surveillance and monitoring for detecting early warning signs of the disease. "The

state government has started a social audit, along with an active case-finding campaign through a house-to-house survey, and is moving the prospective patients to the nearest PHC for early intervention. Surprise checks are also being conducted at the PHCs by SDCs.

"Additionally, the early morning inspection of anganwadi centres is also being undertaken by SDCs and child development project officers

(CDPOs). They are also giving ORS to each house in the affected villages," the statement said. The auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs) and accredited social health activists (ASHAs) were directed to visit every house to raise awareness on Acute Encephalitis Syndrome/ Japanese Encephalitis (AES/ JE) by distributing pamphlets and brochures, it said, adding that awareness was also being created through other mea-

sures such as announcements through microphones and inter-personal communication.

Also, a team of experts from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) was deployed at the Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital (SKMCH) in Muzaffarpur for making the virology laboratory operational at the earliest, Vardhan was quoted as saying in the statement. He added that the multi-disciplinary team deployed earlier was reviewing all the case records of the AES patients admitted to the hospital in 2019.

Expressing serious concern over the "deplorable public health infrastructure" in the country, the NHRC Thursday issued notices to the Centre and all states and Union Territories, underlining loss of lives in various parts of the country in recent times, including of over 100 children in Muzaffarpur. The National Human Rights Commission has also directed that teams comprising doctors on the panel of the NHRC, along with its officers, will visit hospitals, primary health centres and other health facilities in "vulnerable" states one by one, starting with Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab to conduct on-the-spot fact-finding investigation, officials said.



# एईएस से बिहार में नौ और बच्चों की मौत, अब तक 158

जागरण टीम, मुजफ्फरपुर : बिहार में एक्यूट इंसेफलाइटिस सिंड्रोम (एईएस) से गुरुवार को नौ बच्चों की मौत हो गई। सिर्फ मुजफ्फरपुर में अब तक इस बीमारी से 131 बच्चों की मौत हो चुकी है, जबकि बिहार के अन्य जिलों में 27 और बच्चों की मौत हुई है। गुरुवार को विभिन्न अस्पतालों में 17 नए मरीजों को भर्ती कराया गया है। अकेले मुजफ्फरपुर में अब तक 490 बच्चों को भर्ती कराया जा चुका है। मरने वालों में मुजफ्फरपुर में पांच और गोपालगंज, बेगूसराय, हजारीपुर और बिहारशरीफ में चार बच्चों की जान गई है। सूबे में एईएस से अब तक 158 बच्चों की मौत हो चुकी है। बुधवार तक यहां 149 की मौत हुई थी।

पटना से और दो सीनियर डॉक्टर भेजे गए मुजफ्फरपुर : स्वास्थ्य विभाग ने दो और सीनियर रेजिडेंट को मुजफ्फरपुर

## चमकी बुखार से मौतों के बाद केंद्र व राज्यों को एनएचआरसी का नोटिस

जागरण ब्यूरो, नई दिल्ली : बिहार में चमकी बुखार से 140 से ज्यादा बच्चों की हुई मौत को राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग (एनएचआरसी) ने गंभीरता से लिया है। आयोग ने गुरुवार को केंद्र और सभी राज्यों को नोटिस जारी कर स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं की खराब स्थिति पर जवाब मांगा है। राज्यों के मुख्य सचिवों को छह हफ्ते में जवाब दाखिल करना होगा।

वहीं, केंद्रीय स्वास्थ्य मंत्री हर्षवर्धन ने बिहार के मुजफ्फरपुर और आसपास एक्यूट इंसेफलाइटिस सिंड्रोम (एईएस) और जापानी इंसेफेलाइटिस (जेई) प्रभावित इलाकों में आठ एडवांस लाइफ सपोर्ट एंबुलेंस (एएलएस) तैनात करने के निर्देश दिए हैं।

में प्रतिनियुक्त किया है। इसके पूर्व कल आठ सीनियर रेजिडेंट को मुजफ्फरपुर भेजा गया था। स्वास्थ्य विभाग से मिली जानकारी के अनुसार पीएमसीएच के शिशु रोग विभाग में सीनियर रेजिडेंट

डॉ. दिलीप कुमार और डॉ. भीमसेन कुमार को तत्काल प्रभाव से मुजफ्फरपुर रवाना कर दिया गया है। ये दोनों सीनियर रेजिडेंट मुजफ्फरपुर में कैंप करेंगे और बच्चों को बेहतर से बेहतर इलाज देंगे।

# NHRC questions frailty of health infrastructure

Rights body serves notice to all States, Union Territories

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Thursday issued notices to the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry (MoHFW), and all States and Union Territories, over what it termed was the “deplorable public health infrastructure in the country”, an NHRC statement said.

The NHRC took *suo motu* cognisance of several media reports on recent deaths across the country due to “deficiencies and inadequacies in the healthcare system”.

This comes in the wake of over 100 children dying in Bihar’s Muzaffarpur due to Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) recently.

“The Commission has observed that large number of deaths of innocent people including women, children and elderly persons, are taking place due to lack of proper medical care, infrastructure, manpower and due to administrative failure, across the country,” the statement read.

## Deaths of children

The NHRC cited 143 recent deaths of children in Muzaffarpur as well as the loss of lives of children in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, due to the failure of oxygen supply in 2017.

“The Commission has reminded the Central/State Governments of their constitutional duty under Article 21 of the Constitution under which Right to Life is guaranteed. Quoting the Supreme Court of India, the



**Awaiting help:** A child suffering from AES lying on a bed at a hospital in Muzaffarpur. ■REUTERS

Commission has observed that right to live with human dignity is part of Right to Life.

“Referring to the widespread malnutrition prevalent in several States, the Commission observed that it

is the primary duty of the State under Article 47 of the Constitution to raise the level of nutrition and standard of living of its people, which the Commission observed, the State has failed,” the statement said.



## **NHRC notice to Centre, all states over 'deplorable' public health infra in country; to send teams**

Press Trust of India | New Delhi Last Updated at June 20, 2019 22:50 IST

Expressing serious concern over the "deplorable public health infrastructure" in the country, the NHRC Thursday issued notices to the Centre and all states and Union Territories, underlining loss of lives in various parts of the country in recent times, including of over 100 children in Muzaffarpur.

The National Human Rights Commission has also directed that teams comprising doctors on the panel of the NHRC, along with its officers, will visit hospitals, primary health centres and other health facilities in "vulnerable" states one by one, starting with Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab to conduct on-the-spot fact-finding investigation, officials said.

"Expressing serious concern over deplorable public health infrastructure in the country, the National Human Rights Commission has today taken suo motu cognisance of a series of media reports about the loss of precious human lives in various parts of the country in recent times, due to deficiencies and inadequacies in the healthcare system," the rights panel said in a statement.

The NHRC has issued a notice to the secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, asking for a comprehensive report within four weeks on the observations made by the commission.

The rights panel said it has also sent notices to the chief secretaries of all the states and Union Territories to submit their reports within six weeks, giving details of the incidents relating to the deaths due to lack of health and medical care facilities that have taken place during the last three years. They have also been asked to enlist steps taken to prevent the recurrence of such incidents, along with details of relief and rehabilitation provided to the aggrieved.

Apart from the death of a large number of children in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar due to Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES), the commission has recounted the loss of lives in Gorakhpur due to Japanese Encephalitis, death of newly born infants and other patients due to failure of oxygen supply, carrying of dead bodies by family members on their shoulders because of non-availability of ambulances, incidents of delivery of babies in front of hospitals due to negligence and non-availability of doctors.

Three more children suffering from AES have died in Muzaffarpur since Wednesday evening, taking the total number of deaths caused due to the outbreak to 118, the district administration said Thursday.

The teams of NHRC will also take stock of the ground situation, especially in vulnerable areas with regard to difficulties being faced by people and shortcomings on the part of the respective state government or central agencies, the statement said.

The commission finally intends to issue suitable guidelines for implementation by the state government or the Union Health Ministry, it added.

The NHRC also underlined that the success of a public health care system lies in easy accessibility, availability and affordability of treatment and it is the responsibility of the state to ensure comprehensive healthcare facilities for all.

The commission noted the central government's Ayushman Bharat scheme and several such other schemes running in the states in different names to provide health and medical care facilities, especially to the people of the poor strata of society.

"However, there is an urgent need for convergence and integration of child and maternal health schemes of the central and the state governments and their proper implementation," it said.

The commission also said that it has reminded the central and the state governments of their constitutional duty under Article 21, which guarantees the right to life.

Quoting the Supreme Court, the NHRC observed that the right to live with human dignity is a part of the right to life.

Referring to the widespread malnutrition, the commission said although it is the primary duty of the state under Article 47 of the Constitution to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people, it "has failed" in achieving this.

# **The New Indian Express**

## **NHRC notice to Centre, states over 'deplorable' public health infrastructure in country**

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20th June 2019

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## **NHRC notice to Centre all states over 'deplorable' public health infra in country to send teams**

*PTI* June 20, 2019 22:47 IST

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## Human rights panel issues notice to Centre, states over ‘deplorable’ public health infrastructure

*The toll in the Acute Encephalitis Syndrome outbreak in Bihar rose to 136, according to the state health department.*

June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019

The [National Human Rights Commission](#) on Thursday issued notices to the Centre and states over the “deplorable public health infrastructure in the country”.

The commission said it issued notices based on media reports of deaths across the country due to “deficiencies and inadequacies in the healthcare system”. The commission’s move comes amid an outbreak of Acute Encephalitis Syndrome in Bihar.

“Apart from the death of 143 children in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar due to [Acute Encephalitis Syndrome](#) [official toll for the state is 136], the Commission has recounted the loss of lives in Gorakhpur due to Japanese Encephalitis, death of newly born infants and other patients due to failure of oxygen supply, carrying of dead bodies by family members on their shoulders because of non-availability of ambulances, incidents of delivery of babies in front of the hospitals due to negligence and non-availability of doctors etc,” the panel said.

The commission has also directed its teams comprising doctors and officers to visit hospitals, primary health centres in “vulnerable states” to conduct a fact-finding inquiry. The NHRC has directed the teams to start with Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab.

The notices were issued to chief secretaries of all states and Union territories seeking a report on “incidents relating to deaths due to lack of health and medical care facilities” over the last three years. The states have been given six weeks’ time to submit the reports. A notice was also issued to the secretary of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare seeking a report in four weeks.

### **Encephalitis toll rises to 136: Bihar health department**

Meanwhile, the toll in the Acute Encephalitis Syndrome outbreak in Bihar has mounted to 136, PTI reported quoting the state health department on Thursday.

Statistics released by the health department showed that the total number of Acute Encephalitis Syndrome cases registered across the state since June 1 was 626 and the total number of deaths this month was 136.

Muzaffarpur reported the highest number of casualties, recording 117 deaths so far. Deaths have been reported from Bhagalpur, East Champaran, Vaishali, Sitamarhi and Samastipur districts too.

The health department said that among the various complications that are covered under the umbrella term Acute Encephalitis Syndrome, hypoglycemia or very low blood sugar level was the most prevalent as it affected 520 children and accounted for 110 deaths. There have been a few instances of Japanese Encephalitis and herpes, which are caused by viral infections, the department said.