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CM ALSO DIRECTS DISASTER MANAGEMENT GROUP TO PREPARE SOPs TO CHECK SUCH INCIDENTS

Chandigarh, June 11: Expressing anguish over the tragic death of 2-year-old Fatehveer, who failed to survive his 108-hour ordeal in a borewell in Bhagwanpura Village of Sunam, District Sangrur, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Tuesday ordered closure of all open borewells across the state.

The Chief Minister has also sought reports from DCs on all such existing open borewells, with a direction to take immediate corrective action to prevent the recurrence of such catastrophic incidents.

Taking serious note of the incident, the Chief Minister, who had been personally monitoring the rescue operations of Fatehveer, has asked the Disaster Management Group headed by the Chief Secretary to finalise a set of SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) to check and prevent such incidents.

The Group, which had been constituted to tackle natural calamities, has also been asked to study the inadequacies, if any, in the relief operations, and give recommendations to ensure better and quicker operations in the future in case of any such or similar manmade disaster.

Other members of the Group include (Principal Secretary Finance (PSF), Financial Commissioner Rural Development and Panchayat (FCRDP) and Financial Commissioner Development (FCD).

“Very sad to hear about the tragic death of young Fatehveer. I pray that Waheguru grants his family the strength to bear this huge loss. Have sought reports from all DCs regarding any open bore well so that such terrible accidents can be prevented in the future,” the Chief Minister earlier tweeted, soon after receiving information of young Fatehveer’s death.

He further wrote: “Have directed all DCs to ensure that no such open borewell exists in any of the districts & have asked them to submit a report within 24 hours. You can call on our helpline number 0172-2740397 if you have information about any such open borewells in your area.”

His prayers were with the child and his family, said Captain Amarinder, adding that rescue operations

were handed over to NDRF soon after the district administration received information of the child falling into the 125-foot deep borewell at 4.15 pm on 6th June. The district administration, however, continued to extend all help to NDRF all through the rescue efforts.

Army authorities at Patiala, Sangrur and at Chandimandir Command were also immediately informed, and monitored and guided the rescue operations though lack of the necessary equipment and skills to handle a problem of this nature prevented Army personnel from taking over the operation.

As per reports received so far by the Chief Minister, though NDRF personnel were able to tie a knot around both the child's wrists in less than 10 hours of arrival, the narrow diameter of the pipe caused the kid to get stuck, forcing them to give up this method, according to an official spokesperson. Meanwhile, the JCB and other machines that were rushed to the spot dug a pit to reduce the depth from which the operations were being carried out.

All possible technical support was also provided by the district administration but it took 46 hours to dig a parallel pit and lay pipes against its wall to prevent it from caving in. But problems with the angle at which the pipe was going in further obstructed the operation, necessitating some horizontal digging also.

According to the NDRF officials, no physical harm was caused to the child during the extraction process, which had to be conducted manually as use of machinery could have potentially harmed the child, especially because of the water requirement of such equipment.