"The strength of a nation lies not only in its response but also in its ability to safeguard its people from all avoidable harm."

8. Is public awareness being raised about event rules, safety precautions, and emergency procedures?
   - Are attendees being informed about event rules and regulations?
   - Are attendees being warned about potential hazards?
   - Are attendees being provided with information on emergency procedures?

9. Are event organisers collaborating with local authorities, such as police and emergency services, on real time basis?
   - Are event organisers working with local authorities to develop a crowd management plan?
   - Are local authorities providing support and resources for the event?
   - Are event organisers communicating with local authorities during the event?

10. Will there be a post-event review to identify areas for improvement and implement changes for future events?
   - Will event organisers conduct a review of the event's crowd management and safety?
   - Will lessons learned—including commission and committee reports—from the event be used to improve future events?
   - Will changes be implemented to prevent similar incidents in the future?

D. Revising Government Rules and Plans
To reduce the risk of stampedes and create safer environments for large crowds, the SDMAs may consider revising the following rules and plans as per the need, with due review of evidence and data:
   - **Crowd Management Guidelines:** Develop, update, and enforce strict crowd management guidelines for large public gatherings, including sports, rallies, festivals, and religious events. After each event, rate the performance of the guidelines.
   - **Event Permitting Process:** Revise the event permitting process to ensure that organisers have adequate anticipatory plans, skills, and assets in place for crowd management and emergency response, including surge response capacity of health, police, and key departments.
   - **Emergency Response Planning:** Develop and regularly update emergency response plans for large public gatherings, including procedures for responding to stampedes and other crowd-related emergencies, from safety to health.

Prepared by AIDMI for use by SDMAs of India, June 5, 2025.

Photo: AIDMI.

Stampede Deaths are Avoidable

Lessons Learned on Stampede Prevention: What Can State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) of India Do?

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has guidelines for avoiding and responding to any crowding or stampede at https://ndma.gov.in/sites/default/files/PDF/Reports/managingcrowds guide.pdf. NDMA must be contacted in advance for guidance by all.

Drawing from the lessons learned from the past experience of stampede, the following ten set of questions are made available to SDMAs to further strengthen their own preparedness.

"Where crowds converge, wisdom must prevail, lest the tide of humanity turn to tragedy."

A. Introduction

In the wake of recent tragedies, it's clear that crowd management is a critical challenge that demands national attention. To reduce the risk of stampedes and create safer environments for large crowds, event organisers and authorities must take additional proactive steps. NDMA documents must be consulted and NDMA experts must be contacted for guidance.

B. Recent Stampede Incidents in India

SDMAs may better learn from their own past and the past responses of other SDMAs to take anticipatory action. India has experienced several devastating stampedes in recent years, resulting in significant loss of life. Some of the most notable incidents from which lessons must be learned include:

- Hathras Stampede (2024): 121 people died in a stampede at a 'satsang' by Bhole Baba in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras.
- Mandhardevi Temple Stampede (2005): Over 340 devotees were killed during an annual pilgrimage at Mandhardevi temple in Maharashtra's Satara district.
- Chamunda Devi Temple Stampede (2008): Nearly 250 devotees were killed in a stampede triggered by rumors of a bomb going off at Chamunda Devi temple in Rajasthan's Jodhpur city.
- Naina Devi Temple Stampede (2008): 162 people died in a stampede triggered by rumors of rockslides at Naina Devi temple in Himachal Pradesh's Bilaspur district.
- Prayagraj Stampede (2025): 30 people were killed and 60 injured in a pre-dawn stampede at the Sangam area of the Maha Kumbh as millions of pilgrims jostled for space to take a holy dip on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya.

The above list is indicative. Each state has its own list, and may draw lessons from those stampede responses. To do so, the following set of ten key questions, along with sub-questions, will be useful in identifying potential gaps and areas for improvement:

C. Key Questions

1. Is there a crowd management plan in place?
- Are crowd control measures included in the plan?
- Are emergency response protocols part of the plan?
- Have event staff and security personnel been trained on the plan?

2. Is the venue designed to handle large crowds safely?
- Are entrances and exits wide enough for safe crowd flow?
- Is signage clear and visible to attendees?
- Are barriers in place to control crowd flow?

3. Are crowds being monitored by trained staff and security personnel?
- Are staff and security personnel trained to identify potential stampede hotspots?
- Can staff and security personnel respond promptly to emergencies?
- Are crowds being monitored for signs of overcrowding?

4. Is clear communication being provided to attendees?
- Are public address systems and signage being used effectively?
- Are attendees being informed about event rules and regulations on real time?
- Are attendees being warned about potential hazards by all media sources?

5. Is there an emergency response plan in place?
- Are first aid and medical facilities available?
- Are evacuation procedures in place?
- Are communication protocols established for emergency response?
- Is there surge capacity?

6. Have event staff and security personnel received training on crowd management and emergency response?
- Have staff and security personnel received training–including new technologies–on crowd control?
- Have staff and security personnel received training on emergency response procedures?
- Have staff and security personnel practiced emergency response scenarios with drone, CCTV, and AI?

7. Are access controls in place to prevent overcrowding?
- Are ticketing systems or food spots being used to control crowd numbers?
- Are entrance restrictions in place to prevent overcrowding?
- Are crowd numbers being monitored and controlled?
- Is there reserved capacity to exit crowds with case?

"As we march towards progress, let us ensure that the tide of humanity is guided by the principles of safety and care most dear to India."

"The path to safety is paved with preparedness; let us tread it with vigilance and foresight."