Bihar's Kesaria Buddha stupa waterlogged

Floods reported in some parts of the district after rainfall in the catchment areas

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The world-famous Kesaria Buddha stupa in east Champaran district of Bihar is waterlogged following floods in some parts of the district after heavy rainfall in the catchment areas of river Gandak in neighbouring Nepal.

East and West Champaran districts share their borders with Nepal at many places.

Cause for concern: Buildings surrounded by flood water in East Champaran, Bihar. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

'Issue of concern'

"Since it is waterlogged from all sides, it is feared that it may suffer damage. But, even last year too the stupa was waterlogged," said an Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) official in Patna over phone.

"It is indeed an issue of serious concern," he added preferring anonymity.

The stupa, located about 110 km from the State capital Patna, has a circumference of almost 400 feet and stands at a height of about 104 feet. The first construction of the nationally protected stupa is dated to the 3rd century BCE.

It is regarded as the largest Buddhist stupa in the world and has been drawing tourists from across several Buddhist countries.

The stupa's exploration had started in the early 19th century after its discovery led by Colonel Mackenzie in 1814. Later, it was excavated by General Cunningham in 1861-62 and in 1998 an ASI team led by archaeologist K.K. Muhammad had excavated the site properly.

The original Kesaria stupa is said to date back to the time of emperor Ashoka (circa 250 BCE) as the remains of an Ashokan pillar was discovered there. The local people call the stupa "devalaya," meaning "house of gods".

The ASI has declared it a protected monument.

However, a larger part of the stupa is yet to be developed as it remains under thick vegetation.