

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

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INDIA: FLOODS

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The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 180 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

This document is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

The Situation

With the monsoon season about halfway through and expected to continue for another six to eight weeks, the states of Assam and Bihar remain the most severely affected areas in India. A team of representatives from the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) and the International Federation arrived in Assam during the third week of July to conduct a four-day flood assessment mission.

Assam

The situation in Assam had begun to improve during the second week of July, but on 21 July following more heavy rain the situation took a turn for the worse. Fresh rainfall in catchment areas caused the water levels to rise in the Brahmaputra River and its major tributaries. Currently 21 out of 24 districts are affected by flooding.

The worst flooding is in Dhemaji, affecting over 600,000 people. Serious health issues are arising in Dhemaji with an increasing number of cases of viral fever, malaria, diarrhea and dysentery.

Water levels in the Upper Assam districts of Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh and Jorhat have receded but are still above the danger mark, while water levels have been rising in Morigaon, Dhubri and Goalpara.

Approximately a million head of livestock were harmed by the flooding from drowning, illness and a lack of feed. 200,000 hectares of standing crops have been severely damaged, and nearly six percent of cultivated land has been affected.

Bihar

Bihar experienced the first wave of floods during the final week of June, affecting 14 of the State's 38 districts. The situation has improved as water levels in some of the major rivers have receded. However some smaller rivers are still at or near dangerous levels.

Widespread damage to housing has been reported in Madhubani, Sitamarhi, Supaul and Aaria. Meanwhile, a loss of 35,000 livestock was reported from Saharsa.

Darjeeling district was severely affected by landslides and the hilly region has practically been cut off. The death toll in Darjeeling rose to 25. Surface transport links with both Darjeeling and Sikkim have been cut off since 26 July.

Red Cross/ Red Crescent Action

India: Floods; Information Bulletin no. 04

IRCS headquarters released relief buffer stocks from its Kolkata warehouse for distribution in Assam. IRCS is distributing relief supply kits to 2,000 families.

IRCS's Assam State branch maintains regular contact with the District branches in the affected areas. The IRCS Assam State branch through its District Branches distributed relief items from their local resources.

IRCS's Bihar State branch already deployed 70 boats for relief and rescue operations. The State branch is in the process of purchasing 500 pieces of Tarpaulin sheets, and 100 bags of bleaching powder to supply to the District branches for relief distribution. The State branch also arranged for 100,000 water purification tablets for distribution to flood victims. District branches, meanwhile, are distributing prepared food.

IRCS's West Bengal State Branch distributed the following relief items from their local resources:

| Non-medical items | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| PVC sheets | 200 rolls |
| Tarpaulins | 1,000 |
| Rice | 20 tonnes |
| Emergency rations | 5 tonnes |
| Children's clothes | 10,000 pieces |
| Dhoti | 10,000 pieces |
| Saris | 10,000 pieces |
| ORS | 10,000 packets |
| Medicines | |
| Halozen tablets | 500,000 |
| Cash fund | Indian Rupees 500,000 |

The Arunachal Pradesh State Branch has begun distributing relief materials. IRCS National Headquarter is in regular contact with the Branch and is monitoring the situation.

Government action

The Assam District Health Services have directed all health officers, and field workers to assist flood affected communities. DDT is being sprayed in malaria-prone regions particularly areas where there is stagnant water. Medicines and equipment are available in the district as well as in the Primary Health Centres to respond to emergencies. Fifteen new health posts were opened, 18 doctors have been employed for relief work and 11 mobile medical teams have been made available. Health monitoring measures have been put in place with field workers being sent to various areas.

Eight relief camps were set up in the worst affected districts of Dhemaji and Saharsa, and basic food items such as rice, dal and salt were distributed.

The Department for Animal Husbandry commenced a relief and rescue operation. This has involved engaging 410 veterinary staff, supplying medicines to 19 affected districts along with 11 tonnes of green fodder and 14 tonnes of cattle feed.

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India: Floods; Information Bulletin no. 04

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All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.