

INDIA: FLOODS

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The Disaster

Like many other countries in Asia, India has been hit by heavy rains and flooding this monsoon season. The same weather system that is causing severe flooding in Bangladesh has inundated Assam, Bihar, Meghalaya, Punjab, Tripura, and Arunachal Pradesh states. These rich, low lying agricultural lands are in the Ganges and Bramaputra River catchment areas. Other areas in the country are also affected.

In **Assam**, receding waters are depositing sand and silt, making 50% of the land unfit for cultivation. Nearly 25 million people have been rendered homeless in 22 out of 23 districts. In **Bihar**, 21 out of 55 districts (primarily in North Bihar) have experienced unprecedented floods. Roads are submerged and power supplies affected. According to conservative estimates 8.5 million people have been displaced. In **Uttar Pradesh**, the east of the State has been flooded and the situation is reportedly very bad in Gorakhpur division. The latest national update on the floods is as follows :

State/UT	Districts affected	Villages affected	Area affected in lakh Hectares	Population affected in lakh	Damage to crops in lakh Hectares	Damage to houses / huts	Human lives lost
Arunachal	7	52		0.26	N.A	330	23
Assam	22	3890	5.52	29.93	2.71	8706	51
Bihar	21	3823	4.49	54.31	1.66	33191	39
Kerala	14	1412				13015	75
Meghalaya	1	97		0.15		27	3
Punjab	8	85	0.22	0.06	0.22	1	17
Sikkim	4		0.1		0.1	1139	10
Uttar Pradesh	19	2008	2.1	11.69	1.09	1235	81
West Bengal	6		0.07	3.83	0.07	6635	15

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

Latest Red Cross Action : On 6 August a medical and relief team from the **Assam** state branch visited the worst affected villages in Nalbari district, distributing 250 packets of milk powder, 20 or 25 kg cartons of emergency rations, 10 litre tins of butter oil and 1000 pieces of assorted clothing among 1,500 people. Medical aid was also provided to nearly 250 people.

In **Bihar** relief items consisting of milk powder, rice, emergency rations and butter oil have been released from the regional warehouses of the state branch situated at Begusarai, Madhubani, Muzaffarpur and Jamalpur. Relief supplies, stocked at the district headquarters, have been distributed to people sheltered in schools and colleges. Soup kitchens have also been set up at two places in Muzaffarpur in a school sheltering about 1,000 people.

The **Uttar Pradesh** State Red Cross has intensified its efforts to assist 300,000 victims of floods in Gorakhpur division. The local branch has despatched medical teams which are already at work providing medical aid. Red Cross volunteers are educating people in health and hygiene matters and advising them to drink only boiled water.

Government action : Units of the armed forces have been evacuating thousands of marooned people. Dry rations are being distributed by the local administration and medicines are being provided to check water borne diseases.

Needs

The Assam State Branch has requested more milk powder, rice and assorted clothing and financial support to purchase medicines. Bihar state branch is running short of resources as nearly 8.5 million people have been affected by the floods. The branch needs 10,000 metric tons each of rice, milk powder and butter oil. It has also requested 1,000 rolls each of PVC sheets and cotton and 10,000 saris and dhotis (local clothing). The branch has specifically requested 10,000 doses of snake-bite sera as there is an alarming number of snake-bite victims. The Indian Red Cross Headquarters is addressing these requests.

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