

INDIA: LANDSLIDES

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The Disaster

A spate of massive landslides in the hill areas of Uttar Pradesh have killed approximately 300 people. On 18 August at 2.30 a.m. a huge landslide killed at least 255 people at Kalpa village, situated some 7,000 feet above sea level in Pithoragarh District. Sixty pilgrims who were stopping over in the village on their way to Kailash Mansarover were swept away.

On 19 August, at least 37 persons were killed in a fresh landslide triggered by heavy rains. This was the second major landslide in Rudraprayag District in the past week. In the first, on 12 August, 69 people lost their lives in 14 villages of Rudraprayag.

Damage to houses, crops and other features could not be assessed as all roads to Pithoragarh remained impassable due to mudslides and incessant rains. According to the latest government reports, huge rocks fell from the mountains into the Mandakini river, blocking its flow and causing flooding. Eyewitnesses said a large area of land had turned into a vast lake. The sliding rocks also damaged a road bridge near Jagshu in Ukhi Math.

With heavy rains still lashing the hills of Kumaon, more than 450 people are stranded at a height of 12,000 to 14,000 feet, under extremely difficult weather conditions.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Indian Red Cross has primary health care centres and child welfare centres in the district of Pithoragarh. Red Cross members from the centres and volunteers are assisting the local administration in rescue and relief work. At present access is possible only by helicopters. Hamlets in this region are scattered over a large area. A complete picture of damage may be available in a few days. State Government has announced financial assistance for the injured and next of kin. Relief supplies have been mobilised for transportation to the affected areas.

Needs

The Indian Red Cross is so far coping with its own resources.

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