

# ***BANGLADESH: Floods***

*20 July 1998*

## ***Information Bulletin N° 02***

### ***The Disaster***

Since the first information bulletin of 9 July, new floods, caused by heavy rains and onrush of waters from India, have hit Bangladesh. Over 500,000 people have reportedly been marooned in the districts of Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Hobiganj, Rangpur, Sirajganj, Manikganj, Pabna, Rajbari, Rajshahi, Kurigram, Faridpur, Nilphamari, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Khagrachari, Chittagong, Feni, Comilla, Cox's Bazar, Tangail and Natore. Local media state that 15 people have been killed and thousands are homeless. Road links between Chittagong and Cox's Bazar, Jamalpur and Sherpur, Feni and Ramgarh, and Bandarban and Lama have been damaged, prices of staples have risen and crop damage has been extensive, with 40,000 acres in Sirajganj district alone affected.

According to the Bangladesh Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre the water level of rivers in the Brahmaputra, Ganges, Meghna and South Eastern Hills Basins will see a rise of between one and 17 cm on current levels.

More rains are expected before the end of the current monsoon season in late September or early October. The main concerns of the moment are the rising water level in major rivers and the continued erosion of river banks.

### ***Government Action***

The Bangladesh Prime Minister has directed all divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners to remain alert. Thana and district administrations are requested to identify flood-prone areas and work out preparedness plans for evacuation of flood affected people and cattle and for undertaking relief operations. The Prime Minister also asked local authorities to develop post-flood rehabilitation programmes and called for an integration of the efforts of local people, NGOs, Scouts, the Red Crescent and other social and voluntary organisations in combating the floods.

The Government of Bangladesh is co-ordinating relief activities. At an interministerial meeting on Friday afternoon (attended by the Senior Director of BDRCS Relief Department) the government announced that it has allocated Tk 50,000 to each of 15 districts and Tk 25,000 to another 21 districts. Each district has been provided with 25 MT of rice/wheat for immediate distribution.

The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief recommended more funds be allocated, that steps be taken to save dams and embankments threatened by the floods, that preparedness actions

be taken to evacuate stranded populations via rescue vehicles and the army, that a supply of safe water be provided, that medical teams be sent to affected areas, that power supplies be ensured and that TV and radio be used to inform the public on measures to safeguard food and livestock.

As of 17 July, the Government had released Tk 1.8 million in cash and 1,721 MT of rice/wheat/biscuits.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society Headquarters sent out a message to all its Units on 15 July, asking them to keep in close contact with headquarters regarding the prevailing flood situation in their respective districts and, in the meanwhile, alert RC members and volunteers to prepare for relief operations.

On Friday morning a meeting was held between the BDRCS Relief Department and the Federation Delegation to discuss steps to be taken regarding a possible relief operation. The BDRCS/Federation are closely monitoring, mainly through government and media reports, the development of the floods in the country and will keep National Societies informed on the situation. The BDRCS is preparing a Plan of Action for submission to the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund.

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