

# INDIA: FLOODS

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## Information Bulletin N°1

### The Disaster

Like many other countries in Asia, India has been hit by heavy rains and flooding this monsoon season. The same weather system causing severe flooding in Bangladesh, has inundated Assam, Bihar, Meghalaya, Punjab, Tripura, and Arunachal Pradesh states since the beginning of the monsoon season over a month ago. These rich, low lying agricultural lands are in the Ganges and Bramaputra River catchment areas. The floods have resulted in displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, affected over 4 million, and caused extensive damage to property. At least 108 people have lost their lives in the floods and related landslides. Farmers have lost hundreds of head of livestock.

The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) reports that normal precipitation can range from 150 mm in the western most part of the country to over 10,000 mm in the north-eastern. It is estimated that more than 40 million hectares of land are periodically flooded, but this year has reached disaster proportions.

An estimate of the damages:

State/UT	Districts affected	Area affected in hectare	Population affected	Croplands damaged	House collapsed	Human lives lost
Assam	20	527,275	2,642,000	158,962	8,616	79
Bihar	16	175,000	1,827,000	44,000	10,319	5
Meghalaya	1	n/a	15,000	n/a	27	3
Punjab	8	19,000	6,000	19,000	1	17
Tripura	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>*721,275</b>	<b>*4,490,000</b>	<b>*221,962</b>	<b>*18,963</b>	<b>108</b>

\* data incomplete

About 30,000 people have been directly affected by floods in Namsai, Mahadevpur in Lohit district and Sagalee subdivision in Papum Pare district. Nine districts have been cut off from the rest of the country for over a month by high waters.

In Assam, the worst hit area, 7,155 villages in 21 districts have been affected. More than 271,000 hectares of land are submerged. The authorities have opened 179 relief camps to provide shelter and basic needs to the homeless.

### Indian Red Cross Action

The volunteers and paid staff of the IRCS branches assisted local officials in rescue and temporary relocation of those without housing. People living in low lying areas were shifted to safer places and

government shelters. IRCS is also assisting in the operation of community kitchens with the authorities and local organisations. Cooked food, clothing and medical care has been provided to the victims by a number of sources. The IRCS Headquarters issued emergency rations, rice, cloth sheeting, cotton blankets, butter oil, milk powder, assorted clothing and towels to Assam and Uttar Pradesh state branches for relief work. Efforts are being made to do some relief activities in other states as soon as resources are mobilised. The value of the goods provided by the IRCS to date exceeds CHF 364,000.

In some areas, branches are facilitating provision of safe drinking water, providing fodder for surviving livestock and helping villagers with home repairs. Medical teams have been organised by the IRCS to provide first aid and sanitation measures -- 67 teams are now in the field assisting flood victims. High emphasis is being placed on malaria awareness.

## *Needs*

At present the needs are being covered by state branches which have initiated fund-raising campaigns, and also through the assistance of IRCS headquarters. However, as the monsoon continues more flooding is expected. IRCS will keep the Federation informed of needs as they develop.

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