

# ***INDIA: EARTHQUAKE***

*31 March 1999*

## ***Information Bulletin N° 2***

### ***The Disaster***

An earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale hit Uttar Pradesh in northern India at 0035 on 29 March (1905 GMT, 28 March). The epicentre was 295 km's north-east of Delhi and 120 km's from Dehra Dun in Chamoli District close to the border with China and Nepal.

At least 100 people have been killed and many more have been injured by the initial earthquake and a string of aftershocks, several over the Richter scale magnitude of 5. Sixty-one people were killed in Chamoli District alone, 34 in Rudrprayag, and 5 in Tehri, while 284 people were injured. Officials expect more casualties because the powerful cluster of earthquakes has caused heavy devastation. Many of the villages in the region are remote, delaying reports of damage and casualties. A 16 km stretch of road leading to Chamoli has been blocked by landslides. Telecommunications have also been badly affected, hampering communication from the branches to Indian Red Cross Headquarters.

### ***Government Action***

The government has started clearing the debris on a massive scale. First aid has been provided by the Border Security Force, and casualties have been taken to hospital. Roads are being cleared, and the army is assisting the State government and the local authorities in their work.

The State Government has announced financial assistance for the affected families. The families of wage-earners killed in the earthquake will receive 100,000 rupees (approximately CHF 3,300). The injured will be given 50,000 rupees. Those whose houses collapsed will receive 25,000 rupees. Twelve relief camps have been set up to provide assistance and more camps are being organised.

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

The local Red Cross branch in Chamoli, the district most seriously affected, was on the scene immediately, helping with the recovery of survivors and extracting bodies. Medical care as well as psychological comfort has been provided to a large number of people by local Red Cross staff and volunteers.

A relief and assessment team from the the Indian Red Cross Society Headquarters and the International Federation visited Chamoli as well as the three neighbouring most severely affected towns yesterday (30 March). According to the team, the general situation is largely under control in the four towns. Health care, food, and water are being provided. The water supply has been restored. Relief camps have been set up. However, the Red Cross has also identified major unmet needs, specifically psychological support and certain relief items. Goods valued at 500,000 rupees, principally tarpaulins, blankets, assorted clothes, rice, and cooking oil (see below), have been sent from IRCS Headquarters .

## *Needs*

The Indian Red Cross plans to distribute the following items:

Tarpaulins	4,000
Blankets	4,000
Kitchen sets	2,000
Assorted clothes:	8,000 pieces
Rice	80 MT's
Cooking oil	2,000 ltrs

Damage to the Indian Red Cross First Aid Post is being assessed but it will most likely have to be reconstructed. Other rehabilitation projects will be considered and donor support may be sought, but due to the effective response of the Government and the Indian Red Cross an Appeal is not planned at this time.