

# OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## **INDIA: MONSOON FLOODS**

26 March 2003

*This Operations Update is intended for reporting on emergency appeals*

*The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in 178 countries. For more information: [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)*

*Appeal No. 24/2002*

*Launched on 14 August 2002 for CHF 2,934,000 (USD 1,988,000 or EUR 2,011,000) for six months for 200,000 beneficiaries. Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 180,000*

*Operations Update No. 4 ; Period covered: 14 November 2002 - 5 March 2003*

*Next update will be the Final Report*

### **IN BRIEF**

*Appeal coverage: 67.7%*

*Related Appeals: India Annual Appeal No. 01.54/03*

*Outstanding needs: CHF 948,534*

*Summary: Relief distribution has been completed in Assam as well as Bihar. Mitigation activities have started in Bihar and are expected to finish by the end of March 2003. The operation will be extended for two months to enable additional assistance to be provided. So far, the Indian Red Cross, with Federation support, has had a strong impact on reducing vulnerability among the thousands affected by the floods.*

### **Operational Developments w**

The floods which began in late June last year, worsened considerably in mid-July 2002 due to the heavy monsoon rains which swelled water levels and breached embankments in the main river systems flowing south into India from the Himalayas. Thirteen states were flooded. The floods claimed 841 lives and 3,729 cattle and destroyed 485,048 houses of 17,176 villages in over 115 districts. Assam and Bihar states were the worst hit and over 20 million people were affected, causing extensive damage to crops, roads and communication infrastructures. Hundreds of thousands of people were living in makeshift shelters on river embankments, roads and other available high ground. It has been reported that many families are still staying in the camps or river embankments.

In Bihar, where the scale of devastation was the worst in 25 years, the flood waters receded at the close of September. However, due to alluvial and de-alluvial action of the rivers, there has been mass destruction of homestead in the affected districts and still some habitats continue to be in a pool of stagnant water. The combined effect on the local economy has been devastating. Approximately 95% of standing crops are not

expected to survive and the next harvest is not until March 2003, spelling hardship for millions of farmers in the state. This poor state of India has also been suffering from drought.

Government relief distribution has stopped. The intervention of voluntary organisations has been on a limited scale. Though the government has supplied some medicines in the flood-affected areas for waterborne diseases, the measures taken to prevent the outbreak of diseases have been limited. Diarrhoea and vomiting have been reported from some pockets in the affected districts and availability of safe drinking water continues to allude the people. Road communication has been restored in most districts except for Sitamari, which continue to have frequent disruptions because most of the restoration works are temporary measures.

In Assam, the monsoon rains started earlier than usual with around 75% of the rains falling early in July 2002 causing 69 embankment breaches and the worst flooding since 1988. The monsoon floods have devastated 22 out of 23 districts, claiming 41 lives and destroying the homes of five million people. Road and rail communications were cut off during the flood in Dhemaji, Morigaon, Mangaldoi, Majuli, Goalpara and Dhubri districts. The last reports from the Red Cross mobile medical units (MMU) in different districts in Assam indicate, that cold, cough, fever, diarrhoea, dysentery, anaemia, vitamin deficiency, and gastrointestinal ailment remain the major problems. Suspected cases of malaria continue to be reported.

### **Red Cross and Red Crescent action w**

***Operational Goal: to meet the urgent needs of 30,000 displaced families in the affected communities for food, shelter, family packs, medical services, to ensure improved quality of water and to prepare for longer-term needs through necessary capacity building and disaster mitigation initiatives over six months.***

Following the launch of the international appeal on 14 August seeking CHF 2,934,000 and the release of CHF180,000 from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), relief operation was immediately initiated. Phase I of the operation includes the three-month deployment of six mobile medical units, distribution of 10,000 family parcels in Assam, dispatch of two NEHK (New Emergency Health Kit), two cholera kits and two million water purification tablets from the IRCS warehouse. In Bihar, the entire distribution of 20,000 family kits (including 2,900 supported on a bilateral basis) was completed on 15 February 2003. During the reporting period, the flood operation has progressed with the procurement to replenish the prepositioned family parcels in the Guwahati warehouse. Mitigation activities in Bihar have also started and are due to be completed this month. As a result, the floods operation has been extended for two months and the operational budget has been revised according to the current appeal coverage.

In Bihar, sporadic violence at the beginning of the year in the capital city of Patna and frequent power breakdowns in the state caused delays in the supply of certain items as well as the packing process. In response to the worst cold spell of the century in the state, Red Cross volunteers of Bihar state and district branches have distributed from local resources thousands of blankets, cotton blankets and quilts to the street dwellers (see Federation information bulletin of 13 January 2003 and news story). The Indian Red Cross NHQ also sent 3,000 woollen blankets to the Bihar state branch for distribution to the cold wave affected victims.

### **Shelter w**

***Expected result: 30,000 flood affected families to receive shelter materials within one to six months.***

The tender process for the procurement of general purpose plastic sheets was completed on 23 September 2002. Purchase orders for them as well as food and non-food items targeting 17,100 families were placed. Another 2,900 family kits funded bilaterally by American Red Cross were also purchased at the same time. However, the process took more time than originally planned due to a relatively complex nature of procurement, selection of suppliers and purchase approvals (many different items with various specifications combined with local business practices).

When the supplier of the plastic sheeting failed to provide the material according to approved specifications, a procurement committee consisting of one representative each from IRCS, Federation and the participating national societies (PNS) decided to go for the next higher bidder for the polythene sheets. As a contingency measure and to expedite the relief operation, IRCS (IRCS) dispatched polythene sheets from the Delhi warehouse to Patna, which have been replenished by the supplier. 3500 pieces of plastic sheets and 150 rolls of multi purpose plastic ground sheets were distributed, which catered to the needs of around 5,300 families.

In Assam, distribution of 10,000 prepositioned family packs, which included a general purpose plastic sheet each, was completed on 24 November 2002 in 14 flood affected districts. (see below table).

**Relief: distribution of food and basic non-food items w**

**Expected result: 30,000 flood affected families to receive basic food items and family kits over six months.**

The procurement of various items in the family kits took again longer than planned due to various administrative reasons. In addition, some of the items needed to be adjusted according to local practices in Bihar such as in the case of cooking utensils. Delays in getting approvals from Geneva along with failure to deliver on time and to comply with stipulated specifications by some suppliers slowed down the entire operation. For some items such as mosquito net, a new supplier was sought and 19,950 pieces dispatched from Kolkata warehouse. Packing on an average capacity of 1,100-1,300 packs per day started on 18 November 2002 in the warehouse which was granted to the Red Cross for free use until the end of the flood relief operation. In order not to delay the relief distribution further, cooking oil was excluded from the list due to substantial delay in supplies. In addition, taking into account the size of each family kit, it was decided to pack the 16 items in two separate HDPE bags (A bag consisting 20 kg beaten rice, 5 kg dal, plastic sheet and one kg salt whereas B bag consisting one dhoti, two sarees, one cotton blanket, one bed sheet, one set of cooking utensils, One towel, one toilet soap, washing soap, two mosquito nets, six candles, two match boxes). Beneficiaries were informed to have two family members to come the distribution points due to the size of the family pack. Two trucks (4 metric tonnes, MT and 9 MT) from Delhi and one (9 MT) from Kolkata were dispatched to Patna to support the distribution. One 9 MT truck could carry 200 A bags or 400 B bags. Private trucks were also used when necessary to transport goods in large amounts or when the road communications were in poor condition. By the end of January, 18,000 packs have been distributed in seven districts (see distribution table below). Distribution of the remaining 2,000 family kits was originally planned for the Sitamari district. However, the bridge providing main access to Sitamarhi has recently been disrupted. Nomadic tribes who migrated from Sitamarhi to Madhubani and Patna benefited instead from the distribution.

Land labourers who work as daily wage earners on agricultural land and who have lost their homes and means of livelihood come in as the preferential category for selection. Besides this criteria, the beneficiary list of 20,000 families also include:

- the destitute elderly;
- sick or handicapped;
- families headed by separated, divorced or widowed women with no source of income.

The Indian Red Cross Bihar district branch committee, volunteers and district administration were involved in the selection process. Coordination was done with other agencies to avoid duplication of beneficiaries. Since the relief operation began, the IRCS local branches in Bihar have distributed 210.75 MT of ready made food to 106,677 beneficiaries, 30,000 assorted clothes to 18,000 beneficiaries and 5,000 metres of cloth sheeting to 2,000 beneficiaries. In Assam, following the dispatch of pre positioned disaster preparedness stock for 10,000 families from the Guwahati warehouse on 19 August 2002, 10,000 selected families in 14 districts have benefited from the distribution (see table below). Each family received one general purpose plastic sheet, 3.5 kg BP5 (high energy biscuits), two mosquito nets and one cooking set. Beneficiary lists were made in collaboration with the revenue department. Even since the flooding started, the Assam state branch had distributed 6,000 mosquito nets to the relief camps through the Ministry of Health and had deployed one mobile medical unit.

**Distribution in Assam**

<i>Districts</i>	<i>Families</i>
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**Distribution in Bihar**

<i>Districts</i>	<i>Families</i>	<i>Complete</i>
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Regd. cases	12'835	11'480	8'377	9'048	10'905	6'355	<b>59'000</b>
Male	3'473	2'572	2'487	2'362	2'284	1'469	14'647
Female	4'139	3'948	3'183	3'288	3'239	2'502	20'299
Children	5'223	4'960	2'707	3'398	5'382	2'384	24'054
Medical & Health check up camps	57	62	58	59	55	47	<b>338</b>

### **Water and sanitation: distribution of water purification tablets w**

**Expected Result 1: 30,000 selected households to have improved quality of water over a period of one month.**

Availability of safe drinking water continues to allude the people in general in flood affected areas in Bihar. Following the dispatch of two million water purification tablets from Delhi, local Red Cross branches have distributed 1.5 million water purification tablets in September to 150,000 selected families. This was done with the help of trained volunteers in the 11 districts of Darbhanga, Samastipur, Madhubani, Sitamarhi, Khagaria, Muzaffarpur, Sheohar, Siwan, Gopalganj, Katihar and Purnea. 500,000 million tablets have been kept with the state branch as reserve. The initiative has had a positive impact on the health conditions of the population.

**Expected Results 2: 300 previously submerged water pumps or wells to be disinfected and the outbreak of water borne diseases prevented.**

Since bleaching powder is needed immediately after a disaster and Bihar state branch did not have adequate storage space, it was decided not to procure bleaching powder and to allow more family kits to be procured instead.

### **Capacity Building w**

**Expected Result 1: disaster response capacity of IRCS in flood-prone areas to be further improved through lessons learned based contingency planning.**

Under the ongoing DFID funded programme in Assam, a one-day flood relief learning review took place on 19 November in Guwahati. It was facilitated by the Federation regional disaster response delegate. The state branch secretary and four state branch staff, 17 branch secretaries and four volunteers from the pilot programme districts participated in the exercise. The review concluded with a SWOT analysis. A request was made for the learning review to be a post-flood annual activity at the state level. Indian Red Cross has duplicated the same review exercise for Bihar which was held in first week of March 2003, and was widely participated by the state branch secretary, field officer, district branch secretaries and volunteers.

**Expected Result 2: two flood platforms to be constructed and hand pumps installed in selected sites in flood prone areas by May 2003.**

Several meetings were held during the reporting period with the Indian Red Cross National Headquarters to discuss the implementation arrangements of the mitigation activities for Bihar and Assam. Due to delayed distribution plan caused by irregular supplies of goods in Bihar, mitigation activities have been delayed. Locations and specifications of tube wells were finalised in Bihar. Budget, including the technical training of volunteers, has been approved by the NHQ for twenty tube wells to be installed in Muzaffarpur and ten in Samastipur district. Among these 20 tubewells in Muzaffarpur and 3 in Samastipur have been constructed.

The appeal budget has been revised and the operating time frame extended for an additional two months to complete the mitigation activities in Bihar. There was a substantial saving of funds due to competitive rates being obtained from suppliers and favourable exchange rate fluctuations. IRCS has decided to purchase disaster preparedness stock with these funds which include 11,120 pieces each of cooking utensils, plastic buckets, cotton blankets, bed sheets, sarees and Dhosis (mens wear). The warehouses and transport costs which were budgeted for initially, were lent free of cost in Bihar and not required in Assam. Eventually, only one delegate was recruited for the flood operation because the relief distribution had already started in Assam (from their buffer stocks) so the relief delegate was able to effectively coordinate the operations in both the states.

### **Advocacy/Public Information w**

Indian Red Cross Bihar state branch held a press conference during the launch of the Red Cross relief distribution in Patna. There was wide coverage by the local print and electronic media, in both Hindi and English. The Red Cross assistance to the cold affected people, led by the vice president of Bihar state branch, was widely reported. The media coverage of Red Cross relief distribution in Assam was also positive, particularly on the occasion of deployment of the six MMUs.

### **Coordination w**

The India Operations Centre continues to work closely with the IRCS NHQ on monitoring the situation and providing technical advice and support. Regular meetings are held in Delhi to follow up on the implementation activities, narrative and financial reporting issues. A relief delegate, who arrived at the close of September 2002, continues to monitor the operation in Bihar and Assam, together with officials from the IRCS NHQ and state branches. Due to the departure of the logistics delegate at the India Operations Centre, the budget holdership of the operation lies with the Relief Delegate. One person from the NHQ was designated to function as field coordinator in Bihar, providing necessary advice and support to district branches throughout the course of the relief operation. Under ongoing disaster preparedness and response programmes, the IRCS and the Federation disaster management teams in Delhi are maintaining regular contacts and information sharing among government departments, UN organizations and other relief agencies at both national and state levels in various selected disaster-prone states.

### **Assessment and lessons learned**

A comprehensive assessment and lessons learnt workshop was conducted, which was hosted by the Bihar state branch and was attended by eight district branches, who were actively involved in the operation. The main objectives of the workshop were :-

1. To review the impacts of the floods of 2002
2. To review the strength and weakness of this operation and analyse the lessons learned in assessment, beneficiary selection and intervention
3. To analyse the actual impact of disaster response activities on the disaster victims.
4. To analyse preparedness activities and identify areas of improvement.

The workshop turned out to be a success with active participation of the district branches. A two way evaluation exercise was undertaken by the logistics delegate by mapping of the whole operation, to find the gaps and delays. Similarly, even the district branches voiced out their opinions in this evaluation exercise and contributed reasons from their end towards the delays. We were able to draft a comprehensive list of items which should be distributed during the immediate relief and post relief period, which will be a useful guiding tool in future operations for the state branch as well as the Federation.

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*All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

*This operation seeks to administer to the immediate requirements of the victims of this disaster. Subsequent operations to promote sustainable development or longer-term capacity building will require additional support, and these programmes are outlined on the Federation's website.*

*For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.*

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India - Monsoon floods						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 24/2002		PLEDGES RECEIVED				25.03.2003
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>CASH</b>						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				<b>2'934'000</b>		<b>TOTAL COVERAGE 67.7%</b>
AMERICAN - RC				98'108	20.09.2002	
AMERICAN - RC		942	USD	1'409	18.09.2002	PROGRAMME MGT & CONTROL
AMERICAN - GOVT/USAID		100'000	USD	139'050	30.09.2002	
AUSTRALIAN - GOVT		100'000	AUD	81'130	27.08.2002	
AUSTRALIAN - RC		124'300	AUD	102'411	27.09.2002	BLEACHING POWDER & MOBILE MEDICAL UNITS
BRITISH - RC		25'000	GBP	57'406	23.08.2002	
BRITISH - GOVT		147'059	GBP	337'677	23.08.2002	
CANADIAN - GOVT/CIDA/IHA		247'500	CAD	237'600	03.09.2002	
DANISH - GOVT		3'155	USD	4'729	16.08.2002	
FINNISH - RC		60'000	EUR	88'188	19.08.2002	
GERMAN - RC		200'000	EUR	293'600	12.09.2002	
JAPANESE - RC		99'400	USD	149'001	20.08.2002	
MONACO - RC		20'000	EUR	29'292	14.08.2002	
NETHERLANDS - GOVT		50'000	EUR	73'230	03.09.2002	
PRIVATE DONORS				792	19.09.2002	
PRIVATE DONORS				33	06.02.03	
SWEDISH - GOVT		700'000	SEK	111'860	21.08.2002	
SWEDISH - RC		260'000	SEK	41'964	15.11.2002	RELIEF ITEMS, TRANSPORT & DISTRIBUTION
SWISS - PRIVATE DONORS				1'600	12.09.2002	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				1'849'080	CHF	63.0%
<b>KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
AMERICAN - RC		25'533	USD	38'202	18.09.2002	BIHAR: 2 WHO NEW EMERGENCY HEALTH KITS, 2 WHO CHOLERA KITS
DANISH - GOVT		65'500	USD	98'184	16.08.2002	150 PCES PLASTIC ROLLS, 3'500 PCES PLASTIC SHEETING, TRANSPORT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				136'386	CHF	4.6%