

INFORMATION BULLETIN



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
الإتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

INDIA FLOODS: ASSAM AND BIHAR

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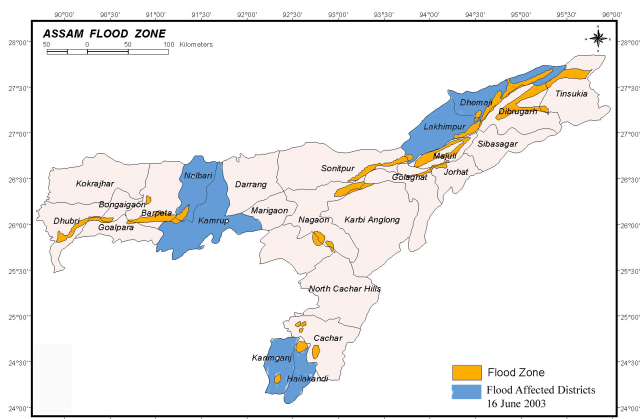
In Brief

This document is being issued for information purposes only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

The Situation

Assam

The north-eastern Indian state of Assam has been experiencing severe flooding since 13 June. Heavy downpours, with the onset of the monsoon, have caused flooding in most low lying areas in the districts of Hailakandi, Dhemaji, Karimganj, Barpeta, Nalbari, Darrang, Dhubri and Kamrup affecting more than 400,000 people. The situation in Assam has deteriorated over the past five days due to the continuing severe rainfall. All the rivers in the region are flowing above the danger level. Half of Guwahati city, the state capital, has been inundated by flooding, with the banks of the Brahmaputra River having broken. According to the most recent reports in the media some 2.5 million people are said to be affected.



Disclaimer: This map was collated based on the data information compiled by the Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation. UNDP has not verified the accuracy of information of the Map.
Source: BHTPC, India

Map Source : UNDP

According to the latest report of the Central Water Commission (CWC), the levels of most of the rivers are continuing to rise, and meteorologists are predicting more rain in the next few days. Meteorologists fear that incessant rain over the week could result in "catastrophic" conditions.

While media reports have been coming out of various parts of the state, a clear picture has yet to emerge, as the most affected areas have been inaccessible. According to local media sources, two hill districts of Assam both Barak and Brahmaputra valley were badly affected by the floods. Additionally the state capital Guwahati is suffering from floodwaters overwhelming nearly half the city.

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With the Brahmaputra River rising, the condition of the capital is expected to deteriorate. According to CWC morning report issued on 1 July Brahmaputra was 1.12 metres above the danger level.

The Kathakal River at Matizuri in the Barak Valley could reach the highest flood level ever recorded. The river was flowing two metres above the danger level. The state Flood Control Department reported that the Buridehing Subansiri, Dikhow, Dissang and Dhansiri rivers had continued to rise at a dangerous rate over the past 24 hours with record amounts of rainfall being recorded everywhere.

Majuli, the world's biggest river island, situated in north-east Assam is facing a critical flood situation with two important embankments at Jenagari and Dewal weakening and suffering from erosion by the floodwater. In lower Assam, the Kala River at Diakuchi has swept away two bridges, isolating 30 villages scattered throughout the Indo-Bhutan boundary.

In central Assam, floodwater breached a ring embankment in the Moribari-Lahorighat area. The embankment was constructed only last year with a large investment from the local government.

According to government sources in Assam, around 2,666 hectares land has been affected, including 1,688 hectares of crops. 19 houses have been destroyed and 816 partially damaged.

The government of Assam has responded by distributing the following items in the affected areas:

Item	kilogrammes
Rice	38400
Dal	4200
Salt	1200

The state government is taking adequate measures to assist the districts affected by the flooding. Relief materials in terms of food grains and other essential items are in the process of being distributed. The State government has sanctioned Rs 7.7 million as ad hoc gratuitous relief to the Deputy Commissioners for dealing with flooding or any other calamities. The Nalbari district administration has already distributed relief material to 3,500 people in the district.

The state health department along with district administration has been distributing water purifying tablets in the affected districts, as people are not able to access safe drinking water. According to the district administration in the affected district the doctors from the Primary Healthcare Centres (PHC) have been mobilized to the safe shelter areas where currently the affected populations are taking shelter. The immediate need is providing adequate health care for the people in the affected areas. One area where health is a major concern is Dhemaji, which has reported a few cases of viral fever, malaria, diarrhoea and dysentery in various low-lying areas. DDT is being sprayed in areas of stagnant water and malaria-prone areas.

Dhemaji

On 12 June floodwaters from the Jidhal River breached the north frontier railway line in two places near the villages of Chamarajan and Kekurigaon, measuring 100 meters and 50 meters respectively. Flooding between Chamarajan, Kekuri and Bhajugaon and in many other places washed out national Highway 52. Around 2.5 kilometres of National Highway 25 is under water, completely cutting off the Dhemaji, Jonai and Pasighat areas. 57 villages in the district, with a total population of over 22,000 have been affected. Latest reports suggest that the Jiaboroli River has flooded the Samdhora, Nepaligaon, Torajan and Ranagopal areas. While no deaths have been reported, there have been reports of damage to 137 hectares of cropland.

The Government released 7,500 kilograms of dal, rice and other food to meet the immediate needs of the victims (source UNDP).

Hailakandi

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The flood situation in Barak Valley is critical affecting some 150,000 people from 131 villages. Though the flood level is receding in the villages of Katlicherra circle, it is rising in the Panchgram and Katakhal areas. More than 100 families have been shifted to secure areas; Raised platforms have been used as relief shelters. No deaths have been reported but it is estimated that hundreds of hectares of paddy fields have been badly affected. People in the camps and shelters are suffering from scarcity of drinking water and proper sanitation systems. Food, medicine and chlorine tablets have been distributed in the villages and government-run relief shelters.

Karimganj

Floodwaters of the Kushiara and Singla Rivers affected the Patharkandi, Sonakuria and Kalkalighat areas, affecting 10,000 people in 47 villages in these districts. There was one reported death on 30 June, along with reports of several cattle being lost. The surging waters of the Kushiara River damaged at least three military camps on the Indo-Bangladesh border. The local Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) branch is helping authorities with rescue and relief operations.

Barpeta

Due to continuous rain in the catchments of the Pahumara and Kaldia Rivers the Bajali sub division of Barpeta district has been inundated. Portions of embankment of these rivers have been washed away causing severe flooding in Helena Bazar, Rampur, Bhaluki, Garchowk, Saderi Kotharali, Madan Rowta and the main road in Rehabari. Forty villages including Ghuramara, Balapara, Majuri, Kochiga, Rupdia, Kachakuri, Kurubaha, Majgaon, Bharegaon, Bamunpara, Bongalipara, Bhokumari, Dumuria are completely submerged.

Nalbari

Breaches of the embankment of the Marapagladia River has led to flooding of several villages of the Tihu Barama Revenue Circle of Nalbari District along with the villages under Barama. 20 villages of Barbhag revenue circle in Nalbari District have been affected by first wave of flooding as the swelling waters of the Pagladia River flowed through the Kapila Mahari and Satha channels, submerging large areas of land. Among villages affected are Arangmow, Nakhetri, Raitkuchi, Bargacha, Barbukia, Pandula, Sankuchi, Bokoha, Kamarkuchi, Chamarkuchi Satra, Simalia, Barsimalia and Kathalkuchi.

A total of 70 villages with a population of approximately 50,000 have been affected. Road access to Kaithalkuchi, Barama, Subhankata has been disrupted due to the approach to the bridge that linked these villages being washed away.

Darrang

The water level of the Brahmaputra River is flowing above the danger level. Four villages with population of approximately 1000 people, a land area of 267 hectares and crop area of 254 hectares have been affected. 19 houses have been destroyed while another 45 houses have been partially damaged. A relief centre has been opened and Red Cross Disaster Preparedness volunteers are working with the local authorities in the rescue and relief operation.

Dhubri

Due to severe erosion of a mud dam at Tumni under South Salmara Circle, water has flooded near-by villages in Tumni. Affected families of Tumni, Saikhowa and Sursuri villages have been shifted to safer places.

Kamrup

Guwahati city is flooded in Zoo Road and the Chandmari area. Road access between some parts of the city has been severely disrupted. Water is coming through the Bharalu River to the city due to the rising levels of the main Brahmaputra River. Steps have been taken to drain the floodwater. In the Rangia sub-division of Kamrup district, 5 villages over an area of 300 hectares have been affected by flood. One bamboo bridge over the Puthimari River at Niz Kaurbaha has been washed away. Roads in some areas have been swamped. A crop area of 235 hectares has also been affected.

Goalpara

With the water level of the Brahmaputra River rising dramatically, the floods have affected 400 villages with a population of about 160,000. Road communication between Lakhipur to Jaleswar and Chunari has been disrupted. The Goalpara-Dhudhnoi embankment has been breached at three points and boats have been requisitioned into service to help. IRCS Disaster Preparedness volunteers have been working with the local authorities in the rescue and relief operation.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action (Assam)

The Indian Red Cross Society's (IRCS) Disaster Preparedness volunteers have been using local boats and rafts made out of banana leaves in their rescue and relief operation. Two relief camps have been organized in the town of Dhemaji, providing safe drinking water and cooked food for more than 100 families. Shifting of marooned people is continuing, and more temporary relief centers are to be opened in the coming days.

The Karimganj district branch of Red Cross is helping the local authority in the rescue and relief operation in the district. The IRCS Community Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) volunteers in coordination with the local authorities in Barama under Nalbari district have organised relief camps. Raised platforms constructed by the IRCS in the Nalbari district during the 2002 Flood Relief Operation are being used as relief shelter by flood affected families in the district.

The district branches of Dhemaji, Karimganj, Nalbari, Darrang and Dhubri are providing locally collected flatted rice, molasses (jaggery), emergency rations and shelter materials etc.

Indian Red Cross Community Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) volunteers are rendering relief and rescue services to the marooned people in Kamrup. IRCS national headquarters, the Federation and the IRCS Assam state branch are continuing to monitor the situation.

Bihar

The latest reports from Indian Red Cross Society's Bihar state branch confirms that some 100,000 people have been affected due to floods caused by incessant rains overwhelming the catchments of all 44 rivers crossing over from Nepal to Bihar. Some of the flooded districts include Madhubani, Muzzaffarpur, Sitamarhi and Sheohar, Bettiah and Gopalganj. The flooding of roads and rail tracks is causing communication problems. IRCS Sitamarhi and Sheohar branch headquarters have already lost road links with other parts of the state.

State relief and rehabilitation department sources said many villages were submerged as the Gandak River continued to put constant pressure on its embankments. Fissures developed in a few places in Saran district since 29 June.

According to a Central Water Commission report, several major rivers such as the Ganga, Sone, Ghagra, Gandhak, Burhi Gandak, Bagmati, Kamala Balan are maintaining a rising trend at several points along their course.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action (Bihar)

The Indian Red Cross Society district branches are on full alert, and the district and sub-district branches have started relief and rescue operations in designated areas.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

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For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.