

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
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

INDIA: SEVERE STORM IN ASSAM

24 April 2003

Information Bulletin N° 1

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated: N/A

This Bulletin is intended for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

The Situation

At least 45 people including 14 women died and around 4,000 were wounded in a cyclonic storm which hit the northeastern Indian State of Assam on Tuesday night 22 April. According to government officials it was the worst storm in Assam in four decades. A police spokesperson said the overnight cyclone hit parts of western Assam's Dhubri district, 300 km from the State capital, Guwahati.

The storm devastated eight villages, uprooting houses and trees and disrupting communication networks in the district. It lasted 30 minutes and was accompanied by heavy rainfall. It flattened a cluster of six villages in the Kalapani district and Dhubri area, and as also effected areas in the neighbouring State of Meghalaya.

Most of the casualties occurred when thatched houses collapsed and trees fell on the villagers. Many were injured when tin roofs blew off of houses and struck them. Most of the injured are in serious condition. Several government buildings were destroyed and telecommunication and power transmission lines in the entire area were heavily damaged.

The most affected villages are Polaritola, Kazipur, Boriabeel, Tokapara, Bowskanta and Benganbhita, under Hatisingmari subdivision of Assam and Pipalbari in Meghalaya. A joint rescue operation by the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Assam Police has begun in the remote areas of Mankachar area of Assam's Dhubri district, which was worst hit by the storm.

According to the Dhubri's Additional District Magistrate 200 people are still in critical stage, and have been shifted to the town hospital in Mankachar which has remained cut off from the rest of the state. Around 600 people have lost their houses. Continuous rain has made it difficult to fully assess the situation. Authorities are facing problems in providing relief due to bad conditions of roads, blocked by hundreds of trees and electric poles. The district authorities have set up temporary relief camps in schools and in the locality. Relief materials have been rushed to the needy, according to the Additional Deputy Commissioner in Dhubri.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Red Cross state branch is distributing relief materials and food items to the cyclone affected persons. The Dhubri district branch has mobilized resources from the local communities and about 100 volunteers have started

relief work. They have so far distributed high protein biscuits, blankets, clothing, utensils, tarpaulins and baby food. Health care and first aid have also been provided.

A team of four doctors and 10 medical staff with required medicine have visited the affected area. Situation reports are being collected from every affected district and sub-district branches. The Indian Red Cross national headquarters is monitoring the situation and is constantly in touch with the Assam state branch and will intervene if required.

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.