

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: FLOODS

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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 over 181 countries.

In Brief

This Bulletin (no. 2/2005) is being issued for information only, and reflects the status of the situation and information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

Torrential rains set off by the northeast monsoon continue to cause widespread flooding in the Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, killing over 100 people. According to news agency reports, the deaths have been mainly due to collapsing walls, electrocution and other rain-related incidents. Earlier this week the states of Orissa and West Bengal bore the brunt of the deluge affecting a million people.

Major cities Chennai in Tamil Nadu and Bangalore in Karnataka are experiencing flooding causing significant disruption.

The Indian Meteorological Department has forecasted heavy to very heavy rainfall in parts of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh over the next two days. Warnings have been issued at several ports in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh with rough seas and wind squalls of up to 70 km per hour expected.

There is a cyclone threat due to a depression in the Bay of Bengal and it is forecasted to make landfall between Chennai and Ongole (in Andhra Pradesh) within the next 24 hours. An alert has also been issued to the north in Orissa as a precautionary measure.

Andhra Pradesh: The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) reports the main districts affected are Ongole, Nellore, and Machilipatnam.

Chennai, Tamil Nadu: The reported death toll in Tamil Nadu is 56. Four thousand people have been evacuated to temporary shelters. Road and rail traffic has been disrupted and international and domestic flights have been diverted or delayed. The Cauvery River has overflowed and there is reported damage to 300 houses in Kirshnagiri district. The Indian Red Cross says the worst affected districts in the state are Srirangam, Tiruchi and Nagappattinam. There are frequent power cuts and problems with access to drinking water.

Bangalore, Karnataka: Officials report state-wide the death toll is as least 40. The southern districts of Mandya, Hassan, Mysore, Chamraj Nagar and Kodagu have been badly affected. The army is on standby to assist in rescue and relief operations. The chief minister has announced the release of 550 million rupees (CHF 15.5 million/EUR 10 million/USD 12.2 million) for relief operations and is requesting further funds from central government.

More than 3,000 people have been relocated to relief centres in Bangalore as the city is battles flooding, exacerbated by three major lakes in the city breaching their banks.

West Bengal: At least 13 people are reported to have died as a result of the floods which have affected more than 300,000 people across seven districts. The situation in the worst hit East and West Midnapore districts continues to be very serious.

At least two rivers in the southern Sunderbans region have breached their banks, flooding 60 villages, and large areas of the paddy growing state were submerged by muddy flood waters.

Balasore, Orissa:

A total of 899 villages have been flooded in Balasore district with more than 400,000 people affected. The state government has announced relief plans. The situation has been improving with no rains since Wednesday (26 October).

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

IRCS district and state branches have been responding to the situation, while the national headquarters is maintaining close contact with the various national society branches in the affected areas. The national society is coordinating with government authorities and will continue to review its response based on assessments and requests for assistance from the authorities.

Branch level

State branches are providing basic assistance at branch level. The Orissa state branch has mobilized medical supplies for use in an IRCS medical clinic in Bhadrak district, and volunteers are running community kitchens while affected people are utilizing national society cyclone shelters. The West Bengal state branch has been distributing relief items such as tents, PVC sheets, clothing, kitchen sets and blankets. Detailed reports of distributions have yet to be received.

The Indian Red Cross disaster management coordinator is carrying out an assessment in Orissa.

The Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu state branches have started coordinating relief efforts with the affected district branches and have been informing the national headquarters accordingly. The Andhra Pradesh state branch has mobilized assorted medicines and chlorine tablets.

IRCS national headquarters action

Apart from keeping in close contact with all the affected state branches the national headquarters has mobilized resources which will be reach the affected areas over the coming week. The relief supplies are as follows:

For Tamil Nadu: relief stock mobilized regional warehouse in Tamil Nadu

- Rice – 8,114 kg

- Small supply of biscuits and baby food

For Andhra Pradesh: relief stock mobilized from Haryana and Tamil Nadu warehouses

- Emergency ration BP5 biscuits – 1,476 kg
- Cotton blankets – 1,000 pieces
- Men's clothing – 1,000 pieces
- Children's clothing – 1,000 pieces
- Used garments – 2,000 pieces
- Bed sheets – 1,000 pieces
- Tarpaulins – 2,000 pieces

The disaster management centre is monitoring the situation and is in constant contact with the Federation and other partners.

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