

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: SOUTH INDIA FLOODS

9 December 2005

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 183 countries.

In Brief

This Bulletin (no. 3/2005) 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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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

The southern Indian states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh are experiencing widespread flooding following renewed downpours last weekend. Tamil Nadu had already been affected by heavy rain over the previous fortnight. To date, the floods have claimed over 180 lives. At least 160 flood-related deaths have been reported in Tamil Nadu and 21 in Andhra Pradesh.

Approximately 300,000 people across the two states have now been evacuated, many relying on government-run relief camps or taking shelters in halls, school and public buildings.

Tamil Nadu

The state has suffered significant damage to crops and infrastructure over the past couple of weeks. A depression over the Bay of Bengal last weekend resulted in further heavy rain. Tropical storm Fanoos is forecast to strike the Tamil Nadu coast today at approximately 1800 GMT (23:30 local time) bringing renewed bad weather and rain. Landfall will be around Pondicherry and surrounding coastal districts of Tamil Nadu with heavy rain forecast.

Local industry is being badly hit by the disaster. In one industrial state alone, it is estimated 2,000 manufacturing units/plants have been affected. Replacing machinery and getting production up to pre-flood levels is expected to have a huge cost.

The central government announced last week an aid package of CHF 141 million (USD 108 million or EUR 91 million). Currently around 200,000 people in state capital Chennai and surrounding districts are using 140 government-run relief camps. To date, the government has provided 920,000 food packets for people who have been forced from their homes. With further bad weather forecast, more relief centres are being identified for anticipated evacuees. Food stocks are being put in place. The government has deployed large contingents of workers to clean up the areas which have gathered silt and garbage. Civic authorities have also commenced disinfecting areas and chlorinating water to prevent outbreak of diseases.

Andhra Pradesh

There has been heavy flooding across the districts of Nellore and Chittoor, causing flooding in low-lying areas and displacing thousands of people who are now seeking shelter and food aid in relief camps. Officials report nearly 30,000 people living in low-lying areas have been shifted to relief camps following the rains.

Isolated rain or thundershowers are likely in Nellore and Prakasam districts during the next 48 hours, but mainly dry weather is likely to prevail over Telangana, Rayalaseema and in the remaining districts of coastal Andhra Pradesh.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Indian Red Cross Society district branches have been responding for nearly three weeks in various affected areas. The national society is scaling up its response significantly and is mobilizing 35,000 family kits to assist affected people across both states.

IRCS Tamil Nadu state branch and the national headquarters action

The district branches of Madurai, Cuddalore and Nagapattinam have been active since the bad weather first hit Tamil Nadu about three weeks ago. Volunteers in all these districts have been mobilized and are assisting the local authorities in running relief camps by providing cooked food and maintaining hygiene. In some of the camps, the volunteers are also providing dry food packets.

As outlined in previous information bulletins, a relief distribution overseen by the Indian Red Cross chairman was undertaken in Cuddalore last week. The distribution included 8 tonnes of rice, 2,000 items of men's and women's clothing, 1,000 blankets, soap, detergent and torches.

As outlined in information bulletin 2 (5 December), the Indian Red Cross and the Federation are mobilizing 25,000 family packs for distribution to affected people. The Federation is funding 17,500 of the packs; the Canadian Red Cross is supporting 5,000 and the Spanish Red Cross 2,500. Each pack consists of a kitchen set, bed sheet, men's and women's clothing, towel, plastic mat, kerosene stove, candles and 10 kilograms of rice. The order for procuring the kitchen sets, women's clothing, towels, bed sheets and plastic mats has already been placed and will be delivered at the Tamil Nadu regional warehouse. The order for the kerosene stoves, men's clothing, candles, and rice is being processed and the last date for receiving quotations is 15 December. A water and sanitation unit mobilized by the Indian Red Cross national headquarters is providing 10,000 litres of drinkable water per day for affected areas in Tamil Nadu.

The district and Tamil Nadu state branch are sharing information on a regular basis with all the stakeholders and coordinating with the government.

IRCS Andhra Pradesh state branch and national headquarters action

The Indian Red Cross Andhra Pradesh state branch has already despatched: to Nellore district 1,000 pieces each of bed sheets, male clothing and women's clothing; and to Cuddapah district 200 pieces of children's clothing, 300 utensils, 50 tarpaulins, 220 men's clothing, 200 shirts, 45 trousers and 200 towels.

Upon request of the state branch, the Indian Red Cross national headquarters is mobilizing the following relief materials:

- 10,000 family packs
- 10,000 bed sheets
- 10,000 pieces of women's clothing
- 10,000 pieces of men's clothing
- medicines
- 10,000 litres cooking oil,
- 10,000 tents.

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