

# **BANGLADESH: TORNADOES**

31 May 1996

## ***Information Bulletin no. 04***

***period covered: 25 May - 31 May***

Approximately 300 people are still missing after the storm on Monday evening, 13 May, which spawned violent tornadoes in central Bangladesh, some 70 kms north of the capital, Dhaka and the death toll could yet reach 1,000. Secondary infections still present severe medical problems for many victims. Contaminated water sources remain a concern. The Government continues to look at ways of addressing the needs of the many children left orphaned by the disaster.

***The Field Clinics*** established by the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) are providing excellent service to the communities of Basail and Gopalpur. Medical teams work in two shifts to provide around-the-clock coverage. Between 15 - 23 May, the teams treated 4,780 patients. More than 60% received medical care for wounds and infections but there were also many cases of dysentery, diarrhoea, and fever.

***Distribution*** of shelter materials, tents, rice, dhal, oil and clothing should be over within a few days. By 28 May approximately 2,800 families had received their ration of food and clothing.

***The Blood Donor Campaign*** has been very successful. The Mobile Blood Team collected 127 bags of blood in Tangail, while in Dhaka the BDRCS Blood Bank collected 180 bags. Supplies were distributed to hospitals in and around the disaster area as well as in Dhaka, where some patients are being treated.

***The Public Awareness and Fund-raising Campaign*** has been very fruitful. Bangladesh citizens responded with donations in cash and kind. The Government of India donated 12.5 MT of baby food, 3.5 MT of medicine, and 20 tents to the BDRCS. Coverage of this disaster is now diminishing and attention is shifting to the elections on 12 June.

***The Tracing*** team, consisting of two BDRCS staff officers and four Red Crescent Youth, will remain in the disaster area for another two weeks. The BDRCS Tracing Department appealed to the general public through the media for information to help it prepare lists of dead, injured and missing persons against which it can check requests for information.

By all reports, the tornadoes relief operation went well. The assessment, planning, and response took place rapidly and in an organised manner. Although there have been reports of general disorganisation arising from the large number of NGOs responding to this disaster, the BDRCS remained focused and systematically provided aid to the most vulnerable. The operation is now being phased out. No further Information Bulletins are scheduled to be issued.

Kris Hurlburt  
Desk Officer  
Asia & Pacific Department

Jerry Talbot  
Director  
Asia & Pacific Department