

# DISASTERS UPDATE

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## TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS

### National

#### Rain leave 30 dead in Tamil Nadu

**Indo-Asian News Service**  
Thursday, December 20, 2007 (Chennai)

Heavy rain, which lashed Tamil Nadu during the past 36 hours, abated to some extent on Thursday evening but left 30 people dead due to electrocution, drowning and house collapses.

The southern metropolis Chennai and major cities like Madurai and Karur were flooded, throwing life out of gear.

Major breaches were reported in the highway connecting Chennai to the state's hinterland. One of the stretches near Madurai had a six-kilometre long traffic jam.



The water level in the Cauvery river continued to rise in central Tamil Nadu after heavy inflow due to copious rainfall in the neighbouring Karnataka.

Authorities said the water level at Mettur Dam was 105 feet - 15 feet above the full capacity. As a precautionary measure villages on the banks of river are being evacuated. The Thanjavur delta region is also flooded with sheets of water laying waste hundreds of hectares of paddy fields. The Met Office has forecast more rain for Thursday night and Friday.

#### Cold wave claims one life in Rajasthan, Churu coldest at 3 C.

**THE HINDU, News Update Service**  
Friday, December 21, 2007 : 1840 Hrs

Jaipur (PTI): A man died due to severe cold in the city, taking the toll this winter to three, as intense cold wave conditions continued across Rajasthan on Friday. The middle-aged man, said to be a beggar, was found dead on a street in Ramganj area here, police said. Two beggars had died of cold in the city on December 17.

Due to western disturbances approaching the state from adjoining north Pakistan, the mercury has risen at most places, but Churu was the coldest at 3 degrees Celsius on Thursday night, a Met official said. In Mount Abu, the state's only hill station, the mercury dipped to 3.4 degrees C.

Sriganganagar recorded a minimum of 4 degrees C followed by Piani at 4.5, Chittorgarh 7, Jaipur and Bharatpur 8 each, Udaipur 8.5, Jaisalmer and Jhalawar 9.5 each and Jodhpur 9.8 degree Celsius. The mercury would further rise giving respite from cold as the western disturbance is likely to cause an overcast sky in the state, the weathermen have forecast.

## Flood situation turns grim in Sivaganga

**THE HINDU, December 21, 2007**

*People asked to contact 1077 for rescue*



**Assessment: Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment K.R. Perikaruppan, middle, and Sivaganga Collector Pankaj Kumar Bansal, right, inspecting a damaged causeway near Singampunari on Thursday.**

SIVAGANGA: Though there was a small respite on Thursday, the flood situation in the district has continued to cause concern among the people and officials following the report of heavy downpour at Kottampatty and Dindigul district.

It is from the jungle streams of Kottampatty and its surrounding areas, floods flow into the Sivaganga via Singampunari. The flow, which was seen receding in the morning, started to increase in the afternoon, causing flooding of various villages in Thirupattur taluk. A causeway at Seelineerpatty collapsed and the structure was washed away following high connection to various nearby villages was cut off. A major breach of road at Irumeni near Devakottai on NH 210 was reported. Similarly, road stretches between Kalappur and Maragadhapuram, S.V. Mangalam and Melapatty were cut off due to erosion at various places. Several villages including Sivapuripatty, Seelineerpatty, Bharathi Nagar, Anaikaripatty, Kirunkattukottai were marooned. The Minister for Hindu

Religious and Charitable Endowment, K.R. Periakaruppan and the Collector, Pankaj Kumar Bansal visited various flood affected areas and oversaw the relief measures.

The Minister directed the Public Works Department and revenue officials to initiate immediate steps to restore the road traffic at all affected areas. Besides making temporary arrangements for restoring traffic at Seelineerpatty, where a causeway was eroded, he said a proposal would be prepared to build a new bridge at a cost of Rs.2.5 crore.

The Collector said that as per the preliminary assessment 19 houses were damaged due to heavy rain. Around 60 houses were identified as partly damaged. A team of Highways and other officials were deputed to restore the traffic on NH 210 following a breach at Rumeni.

Round the clock works would be undertaken to complete the work as early as possible. At the moment, traffic was diverted. Mr. Bansal said that the leave given to the Government officials stand cancelled. People could contact 1077, a toll free number, for rescue, if any.

## **Eco-friendly sea wall planned at Alappad**

**Wednesday December 19 2007 10:15 IST  
Newindpress, India**

**KOLLAM:** There are plans to erect eco-friendly sea wall at Alappad panchayat in the district.

The coir bags and nets carrying sea sand will be main materials of this eco-friendly wall instead of the graphite tetra poles now being used. A meeting chaired by Water Resources Minister N.K. Premachandran held at the Collectorate on Tuesday decided in principle to implement the project on an experimental basis at Alappad panchayat where there is severe sea erosion.

The project is being planned to be implemented jointly by Coir Mattings and Centre for Earth Technology with the support of IIT.

In the first phase, the project will be implemented along the 1 km stretch of Kazhukanthuruth and at the second and third wards of the Alappad grama panchayat.

Coir geotextiles and coir bags filled with sea sand will be placed on the land being formed during sea tides. Following this, trees will be planted on the shore. The Haritha Theeram project being implemented by the Forest and Fisheries departments would be integrated with this project.

There is a view that if the project has been found successful it will minimise the quarrying for sea wall purposes and also would contribute to checking global warming.

## International

### **BANGLADESH: Hundreds orphaned by Cyclone Sidr 21 Dec 2007 10:36:46 GMT**

**21 Dec 2007 10:36:46 GMT**

**Source: IRIN (<http://www.IRINnews.org>)**

DHAKA, 21 December 2007 (IRIN) - Hundreds of children, if not more, are now believed to have been orphaned by Cyclone Sidr, which devastated large parts of Bangladesh's southwestern coast on 15 November, killing more than 3,000 people and rendering millions more homeless.

"The trauma that these children suffered and the bleak future they face are nearly impossible for others to realise," Nazmul Huda of the local non-governmental organisation (NGO) Jagratra Juba Sangha (JJS) told IRIN from Sharankhola sub-district of cyclone-affected Bagerhat District.

"Their losses will never be replaced. But we need to do whatever we can to console and help these young people cope with reality," he said.

According to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), of the 8.5 million people affected, about half were children and an estimated half a million of them were under the age of five.

"I lost everyone," Mohammad Hasan, 12, told IRIN in his village of Kanchonbaria in Patuakhali District after losing both his parents and his brother and two sisters in the cyclone. "I don't know what to do or where to go," he said outside his now empty family home.

But the exact number of children orphaned by Sidr has yet to be properly assessed, with many reportedly staying with relatives and friends.

To date, JJS has opened three shelters in Sharankhola - providing food, shelter, education and care for Sidr orphans.

Huda, superintendent of the Shishu Shurakkha Kendra or Child Protection Centre project said that in addition to being provided with food and medicine, the orphaned children are given books, toys and other forms of recreation during their stay.

Three more shelter houses are slated to open in Sharankhola as the number of orphans increases by the day, he added.

## **Need for child protection**

Social Assistance and Rehabilitation for Physically Vulnerable People (SARPV), another NGO in the area, said 40 percent of the total lives lost to Sidr were children; many of those that survived were now orphans.

SARPV is particularly concerned about the plight of orphaned girls. Past experience shows that children, especially girls, in disaster-hit areas are highly vulnerable to trafficking and other forms of abuse, the NGO warned.

In a statement on 11 December, UNICEF noted similar concerns. It said initial assessments of the affected areas had revealed a crucial need for protection support for children.

Many children had lost their homes and were now displaced and feeling vulnerable; others may have also lost family members and friends.

Schools and health centres had been heavily damaged or destroyed and there was a strong need for protective environments, it said.

During emergencies, traditional care arrangements are not functional due to the breakdown of family and social structures which lead to serious child protection concerns as children become more vulnerable, UNICEF said. Key elements to promote the recovery of children, therefore, not only involve meeting basic needs but also building resilience, it said.

UNICEF's post-cyclone response in education and child protection is now taking place in nine Sidr-ravaged districts, including: Bagerhat, Barguna, Patuakhali, Pirojpur, Barisal, Bhola, Jhalokhati, Satkhira, and Khulna.

The child protection interventions will target 20,000 children, (at least a half of them are girls) in Child Friendly Spaces.

"This project intervention will help strengthen UNICEF's ongoing efforts to restore cyclone affected children's rights to quality education and ensure a protective environment to the children through provision of psycho-social support, as well as identification and reunification of separated children," UNICEF country representative Louis-Georges Arsenault, said.

## **Floods, tides up risk of coastal erosion**

<http://vietnamnews.vnagency.com.vn/> (20-12-2007)

THUA THIEN-HUE — Erosion threatens thousands of families in central-coastal Thua Thien-Hue Province.

About 50 km of the Phu Loc, Phu Vang, Quang Dien, Huong Tra and Phong Dien coastal districts have suffered the most damage from the erosion that is caused by high tides and successive floods.

Phu Loc District has suffered the worst with protective forest, roads and fields damaged.

Landslides have disrupted many of the 674 households of the district's Vinh Hai Commune 10km from the sea where sea water inundates a further 15m to 30m of arable land each year.

Vinh Hai People's Committee statistics show that high salinity has afflicted 72ha of land used for aqua-culture and 210ha used for crops.

About 50ha of protective forest has been damaged.

A sealed road parallel with the coast and inter-commune roads have also been destroyed.

People's Committee's Chairman Nguyen Thanh Hai says that sea water floods vegetable and rice crops during high tides.

The situation has worsened with the approach of the winter-spring crop because high tides are more regular.

The commune's pumping station built in 2004 has collapsed with dykes and irrigation canals also destroyed.

Neighbouring Vinh Hien commune has also suffered serious damage.

Vinh Hien Commune People's Committee Hoang Van Cau says the erosion began occurring in 1999 and has become more regular.

"Hundreds of families have lost houses and arable land," he says. "Roads, dykes and irrigation canals have been destroyed.

"Hundreds of protective trees have disappeared."

"Now, the erosion is attacking residential precincts."

One hundred Vinh Hien Commune households; 100 Thuan An households and 100 Phu Hai Commune households have been moved to safety.

Hundreds of families in Phong Dien, Phu Vang, Phu Loc, Huong Tra and Quang Dien Districts will also be helped to move.

Thua Thien-Hue Storm and Flood Prevention Committee director Phan Thanh Hung warns that the erosion has become extremely serious.

The causes are successive floods and weak dykes, he says. — VNS

## **Moderate earthquake shakes Turkish capital**

**Associated Press**

**Ankara, December 20, 2007**

A moderate earthquake with a preliminary magnitude up to 5.7 shook Turkey's capital on Thursday, seismologists said, causing damage in at least one village. There were no immediate reports of injuries.

The quake, which struck at the start of the Muslim Eid al-Adha festival, lasted for a few minutes, and caused apartment buildings and furniture to sway and chandeliers to fall in Ankara. Turkey's Istanbul-based Kandilli seismology center gave the preliminary magnitude as 5.7 while the US Geological Survey said it was 5.3.

Kandilli said the epicenter of the shallow temblor - which struck at 11:48 a.m. (0948 GMT) - was the town of Bala, some 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of Ankara. There were two smaller quakes, measuring 3.9 and 4.0, earlier in the day.

*Compiled by  
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