

DISASTERS UPDATE

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Issue No.1095

Date: 22.06.08

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS

National

Flood situation eases in West Bengal

Special Correspondent, **The Hindu**, Sunday, Jun 22, 2008

While heavy rain has been forecast, rivers are flowing below danger level

— PHOTO: AFP



Water woes: A villager carrying what remains of her hut, at Sobong village on Saturday.

Kolkata: The death toll in floods in West Bengal has risen to 27, with 18 people dying in the worst-affected Paschim Medinipur and the others in Purba Medinipur.

Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee held a review meeting at the Secretariat here on Saturday. Minister for Relief Mortaza Hussain, who attended the meeting, said that over the past week West Bengal received 750 mm of rain, which was 75 per cent of its annual precipitation.

“The situation was now a little more under control.” While further heavy rainfall was forecast, at least for now rivers were flowing below the danger level.

The rivers in spate washed away cars and the rail track caved in on major stretches, snapping rail link between the south and the east. Many trains on the South Eastern Railway continued to remain cancelled.

Mr Hossain said four columns of army personnel were assisting in relief operations although airdropping of food packets and other materials was stopped. In the two districts in Medinipur, 27 lakh people in 32 blocks were affected.

As many as 225 medical teams were working in the affected areas, where halogen tablets were being distributed to prevent the outbreak of any water-borne disease.

Altogether 1,136 relief camps were opened. While claiming that relief materials had been despatched to most of the affected areas, the Minister admitted that difficulties were being faced in the areas of Pingla, Sabong, Mukhberia, Potashpur and Bhagabangola, where water was swirling all around. In some areas in Purba Medinipur, which were located in a trough area, the flood situation aggravated after fresh showers in the morning.

To questions about relief not reaching certain areas, he said the panchayat elections proved a hurdle.

Flood situation improves in Assam

22 Jun 2008, 1321 hrs IST, PTI

GUWAHATI: The overall [flood](#) situation in Assam is improving even as the worst affected Lakhimpur and Dhemaji districts remained cut-off from the rest of the country for the tenth day on Sunday.

According to official sources, more than eight lakh people continued to reel under flood water even as there was no rainfall in the catchment areas in neighbouring Arunachal Pradesh.

Lakhimpur and Dhemaji districts continued to be cut off from the country due to a nine-metre deep breach at Ganesh Udyan on the NH-52.

The affected people are taking shelter in highlands and on national highways even as the government ordered relief and [rehabilitation](#) measures on full swing.

The first wave of flood have so far claimed 22 lives. Meanwhile the first meeting of the state disaster management authority chaired by Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi on Saturday sanctioned Rs 100 crore and Rs two crore each to the two worst affected Dhemaji and Lakhimpur districts for rehabilitation measures.

Flood situation eases

The Hindu, Sunday, Jun 22, 2008

New Delhi: The flood situation in Assam, Orissa and West Bengal eased on Saturday as rains held off and major rivers receded allowing relief measures to gain momentum for an estimated 47 lakh people badly hit.

The situation in Lakhimpur and Dhemaji districts of Assam improved marginally following stoppage of rains in catchment areas even as both the places remained cut-off.

International

Powerful typhoon batter Philippines, 61 killed

[DPA](#)

Manila, June 22, 2008

A powerful typhoon continued on Sunday to batter the Philippines, leaving at least 61 people dead and thousands homeless, officials said.

At least 30 people were killed in the central province of Iloilo, 560 km south of Manila, where several towns have been inundated in flood waters. Nine more fatalities were reported in nearby Antique province.

Typhoon Fengshen, with maximum sustained winds of 120 km per hour near the centre and gusts of up to 150 km per hour, has also left 17 people dead in the southern provinces of Maguindanao and North Cotabato.

Other fatalities in the typhoon were reported in the central provinces of Negros and Capiz, as well as in the eastern provinces of Leyte and Samar.

Coast guard officials were in frantic search of a passenger ferry, with more than 800 people on board, which ran aground Saturday off Sibuyan Island in the central Philippines.

Melanie Rtoni, a resident of Taclobo village in San Fernando town on Sibuyan island, said she saw what appeared to be a bow of a huge capsized boat about 10 to 15 metres away from the shore, but there were no signs of life.

Attempts by coast guard and navy boats to reach the area have failed due to huge waves and strong winds.

Fengshen bored down on Manila early Sunday and was expected to wreck havoc in the northern provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Zambales and Pangasinan later in the day and Monday.

Dist govt willing to fund disaster management centre

Sunday, June 22, 2008, Daily Times

PESHAWAR: District Nazim (DN) Peshawar Haji Ghulam Ali said on Saturday that the city district government would provide funds for the establishment of modern disaster management centre in Peshawar.

Addressing a certificate distribution ceremony of training on disaster management for civil defence master trainers, he asked the officials of the provincial civil defence directorate to conduct a feasibility study for the disaster management centre to be set up at the site of the directorate of civil defence and district government would earmark funds for it in the district's new budget, which would be presented soon.

He said that due to the unavailability of disaster management centre and facilities, citizens have become helpless while due to unsuitable location of fire brigade stations, fire fighters face difficulties in reaching the places of fire. He asked the Governor House to return the city district government fire brigade to the city fire brigade and also provide more vehicles to city fire brigade. He also asked the governor to establish fire brigade centres in Torkham and Bara areas of Khyber Agency as Peshawar fire brigade could

not reach there on time.

Director Civil Defence NWFP Noor Ali Khan said that civil defence department was an important part of the society and had been a victim of neglect. He said that two fire engines of the civil defence directorate worth millions of rupees were decaying due to unavailability of Rs 250,000 which were yet to be paid despite repeated demands.

The district nazim gave away certificates to the participants of training. The training was conducted from June 9-21. The master trainers (participants) were from the civil defence, Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) and NGOs. They would train school teachers who would further impart training to students.

The NWFP Schools and Literacy Department and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to implement the National Assembly resolution of 2005 to integrate civil defence and disaster management education in 9th and 10th grades and the project would be piloted in Mansehra.

District nazim also opened a newly furnished training hall of the civil defence directorate established with the GTZ cooperation. The trainers also demonstrated their skills before the participants. They were from UK Emergency Response Team (ERT)' search and rescue department.

Additional Secretary Home Masood Ahmed, GTZ principal advisor Disaster Preparedness and Management Project (DPMP) Christian Mulier and acting director general Federal Civil Defence Directorate Hanif Khattak also spoke on the occasion. staff report

Montrose-based effort to help Midwest flood victims

By Lisa Huynh

Daily Press Writer

Published/Last Modified on *Saturday, June 21, 2008 9:32 PM MDT*

MONTROSE — In a drive to bring relief to victims struck by floods and storms in the Midwest, food and supplies bound for Iowa will leave Montrose about a week from today.

Those behind the effort are looking to Montrose and surrounding communities to give what they can, and help fill a shipping container now less than a quarter full.



Jan France, left, director of Western Colorado Disaster Relief and Audra Warner, right, a

volunteer, collect food and supplies to help out the flood victims in Iowa Saturday.
(Jonathan Maness/ Daily Press)

The last day to bring donated items to 400 S. Townsend Avenue is Friday, June 27. "At this point in time, they (victims) haven't got support like this ... It makes what we're doing that much more important," said Jan France, director of Western Colorado Disaster Relief. On Saturday, France will follow the supplies in a 18-hour drive to Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

When Hurricane Katrina hit and the levees broke, what was then known as the Southwest Colorado Hurricane Relief (now the Western Colorado Disaster Relief) received an outpouring of support from area citizens. The group filled three containers in one week, France recalled. Since the floods hit the Midwest, support hasn't come as quickly, she said.

Dozens of deaths have been blamed on flooding and storms that have struck the Midwest since late May, according to published reports. By Saturday, a total of 69 Iowa counties were given presidential disaster declarations, the Associated Press reported.

France has been working with volunteers such as Audra Warner, who has donated her time to organizing donations and stacking them inside the shipping container.

"Simple truth: either you care or you don't. If you care, you'll do something, you're gonna help," Warner said. "Most people do care about others (but) I'm not really seeing a lot of that."

Everything is needed, the women said. Especially helpful would be baby supplies, such as strollers, cribs, bottles and food. Tools, electric or not, are also needed. "We take so much for granted and these people have nothing," Warner said.

Disaster victims are walking around in sewage water, which will eventually dry up, leaving sewage dust, said France. Protective gear, like masks and latex gloves or any kind of working gloves, are needed to help shield people from these conditions, she said.

With some phone calls and creative problem solving, shortly after the disasters hit, France reached people in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Her first call was to the city's Days Inn. She reached hotel sales people, who helped her set up a network of disaster response.

Montrose businesses responded to the need; several donated monetarily. Airport Storage donated a shipping container, Northside Storage donated a storage facility and Valley Crane and Equipment donated the truck, trailer, fuel and driver for the trip to Iowa, France said.

Established three years ago, the non-profit Western Colorado Disaster Relief has also helped tornado victims in New Mexico, Colorado and Kansas. Aided by all proceeds from ENCORE Furniture, the organization operates year-round to help local fire and flood victims too.

"All they have to do is bring us documentation from the fire chief that they lost their home and all (of) their possessions," said France. "They can come here and whatever has

been donated it's theirs at absolutely no cost. We do sell to the general public but we never sell to those in need what has been donated for those in need."

Western Colorado Disaster Relief — helping flood victims in the Midwest

All items need to be delivered to 400 S. Townsend on or before June 27.

Only non-perishable food, and supplies, will be collected; no clothes or appliances will be collected.

Suggested food donation items include: cereal, tuna (pop-top cans), meat products (pop-top cans), powdered milk, soups that can be eaten cold (pop-top cans), crackers, canned vegetables, juice.

Needed supplies include: mosquito spray/repellent, diapers, bars of soap, shampoo, dish washing soap, plastic utensils, toilet paper, zip lock bags, trash bags, paper plates, handy wipes, first aid supplies, flashlights and batteries and baby supplies.

Gently-used furniture items may be donated at ENCORE Furniture. All proceeds from the sale of these items will go to Western Colorado Disaster Relief, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Volunteers are also needed to help sort and box items for shipping. Those who wish to give financial support, may mail checks to: 400 S. Townsend Ave, Montrose, CO. 81401.

Heavy rainfall to continue in south China

BEIJING, Jun 22, 2008 (Xinhua via COMTEX News Network) -- Heavy rainfall will continue to hit most parts of south and southwest China in the coming few days, according to the China Meteorological Administration (CMA).

The CMA's 24-hour forecast released Saturday show that Jiangsu, Anhui, Henan, Hubei, Chongqing, Sichuan, Qinghai, and Inner Mongolia will see heavy rain, of which parts of Jiangsu, Anhui, Henan, Hubei and Chongqing will suffer rainstorms or even thunderstorms with strong wind or hail.

Vice Director of CMA Wang Shourong said Friday that in the coming 10 days most parts of China will see rain, the main precipitation areas include the Yangtze and Huaihe river valleys, Guizhou, Sichuan and the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River. Most of these areas will see 30 to 60 percent more rainfall than the average of normal years.

The CMA warned of potential floods and landslides.

Continuous downpours in south and east China this summer have caused heavy losses to life and property.

*Compiled by
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