

# DISASTERS UPDATE

[www.nidm.net](http://www.nidm.net)

Issue No.1463

Date: 25.6.09

## TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS

### National

#### Govt plays down drought fears, says plan B ready

[Rupashree Nanda](#) / [CNN-IBN](#)

 Published on **Thu, Jun 25, 2009 at 23:21**, Updated on **Fri, Jun 26, 2009 at 16:11** in [India](#) section

**New Delhi:** Drought has been the word that the Indian government is scared of uttering. However, at a meeting in which 11 of the worst affected states attended, the ministry sought to play down fears of drought.

In fact, food production this year could be nearly the same as last year even as the Bhakra Nangal dam cut off water supply to four states. Central states, southern states of TN, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Gujarat submitted their contingency plans on Thursday to deal with a delayed monsoon. Their key strategy is to be ready with alternative seeds.

Agriculture Secretary T Nanda Kumar said, "We have an excess supply of five lakh quintals of additional seeds of different varieties. If somebody needs additional seed, its available and therefore in quick time we can recapture and area which otherwise could have been lost."

July 31 is the deadline for pressing the panic button. Good rains in the last 24 hours in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa have resulted in optimistic sowing and in Uttar Pradesh, 78 per cent of paddy saplings are ready to be transplanted.

Kumar said, "At this point, we are confident that we can handle the situation if the forecast of 93 per cent of rainfall in July and 101 per cent in August come true."

However, all eyes were on the northern states that will face a rain deficit of 19 per cent which would most certainly lead to a drought.

The ministry is keeping its fingers crossed. If monsoon does not hit those states by the first of next month, they too will be called to Delhi. Agricultural secretary also cautioned against the export of foodgrains at this critical juncture.

The message from the agriculture ministry was loud and clear. There is no need to panic yet, the government is pinning its hopes on July monsoons and at the same time is not taking any chances and putting its plan B also in place.

#### Coastal Karnataka could be most affected by deficient rainfall

Staff Reporter, **The Hindu**, Thursday, Jun 25, 2009

— Photo: K. Gopinathan



***Dark clouds but no rain: The Meteorological Department is expecting the monsoon to revive shortly.***

BANGALORE: With the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) predicting below normal rainfall during this monsoon across the country, coastal Karnataka could be the most affected area in the State, according to officials of meteorological department here.

However, south interior Karnataka, including Bangalore, may not be that affected and are likely to receive the normal rainfall during monsoon, according to officials.

The IMD's predictions in Delhi show that rainfall all over the country is likely to be 93 per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA) this monsoon with a model error of plus or minus 4 per cent. Up until now, coastal Karnataka has had minus 44 per cent of the LPA, and the North Interior of the State has had below 33 per cent of the LPA.

However, even as north interior Karnataka saw consistent rainfall over the past month, coastal Karnataka has not been able to make up for its deficient rainfall, and this trend is most likely to remain according to officials at the Meteorological Department.

A. Muthuchami, Director, Meteorological Department, said that the reason for this disparity between the coastal areas and the northern interior areas of the State has been the weak monsoon current. "The coastal regions did not receive any Westerly winds, and the north interior regions had slow intensity of wind, therefore the rainfall has been less than the previous year," he said.

As far as the southern interior part of the State is concerned, it has received 2.5 times the amount of rainfall it normally receives, indicating no reason for worry for this part of the State.

Dr. Muthuchami said that Bangalore, which is part of this region, is likely to receive reasonable amount of rainfall when the monsoon revives itself. "In fact, Bangalore city, and areas surrounding it, will receive considerable rainfall in a few days' time," he said.

Bangalore city has already received 20 cm of rainfall and is likely to receive another eight cm in June, and perhaps another 11 cm in July.

## **Update on Influenza A H1N1 as on 25th June 2009**

**Thursday, June 25, 2009, PIB Press Release**

World Health Organization has reported 55867 laboratory confirmed cases of influenza A/H1N1 infection from 108 countries as on 24th June 2009. There have been 238 deaths. No further update is available.

Health screening of passengers coming from affected countries is continuing in 22 International airports. 45,316 passengers have been screened on 24.6.2009 of which 32,333 passengers were from affected countries. 224 doctors and 112 paramedics are manning 77 counters at these airports. A cumulative total of 23, 77,033 passengers have been screened.

Five new cases have been reported today. Two are from Gurgaon, one each from Delhi, Pune and Kolkata. Of the two cases in Gurgaon, one is a 19 year old male who traveled from Minnesota to London, staying there for 10 days and reached Delhi on 21.6.2009. He had fever, cough and nasal catarrh on 22.6.2009. The second case from Gurgaon is a 10 year old female who traveled from New York to New Delhi on 19.6.2009. She had fever, cough and sore throat on 21.6.2009. Both of them were under home quarantine and being shifted to health facility on testing positive. The case from Delhi is a six year old female child who traveled from Miami, USA transiting Frankfurt reaching Delhi on 18.6.2009. Both her parents who traveled with her have already tested positive and undergoing treatment. The case from Pune is a 29 year old male who traveled from San Francisco transiting Hong Kong and reached Mumbai on 24.6.2009 and further traveled to Pune. He developed fever, chills, rigor, sore throat and headache and reported to identified health facility on the same day. The case from Kolkata is a seven year old female child who traveled from Melbourne to Kolkata transiting Bangkok reaching Kolkata on 23.6.2009. She was detected at the Airport screening and shifted to identified health facility.

The indigenous positive case [66 year old female] at Delhi, covered in earlier reports, is stable.

588 persons have been tested so far of which 78 are positive for Influenza A H1N1 [Swine]. Of these, six are indigenous cases, who got the infection from the positive cases who traveled from abroad. The rest of the samples have been found negative for the novel virus. 163 out of the 588 persons have been identified through entry screening, twenty one through contact tracing and the rest were self reported. Of the 78 cases, fifty have been discharged. Rest of them remain admitted to the identified health facility.

The situation is being monitored.

## **Five new swine flu cases take India's tally to 78**

**IANS**

 Published on **Thu, Jun 25, 2009 at 21:46** in **India** section

**New Delhi:** Five people, including three children, tested positive on Thursday for the swine flu, taking the total number of influenza A (H1N1) virus cases in India to 78, health officials said.

"About 588 persons have been tested so far, of which 78 are positive for Influenza A (H1N1). Of these, six are indigenous cases, who got the infection from the positive cases who travelled from abroad," an official statement issued here said.

Of the five new cases reported on Thursday, two are from Gurgaon, one each from Delhi, Pune and Kolkata.

In Gurgaon, a 19-year-old young man, who had travelled from Minnesota in the US to London where he stayed for 10 days before reaching Delhi on June 21, was tested positive for the flu. He reported of fever and cough June 22.

The second case from the satellite town on the outskirts of the national capital is a 10-year-old girl, who travelled from New York to New Delhi June 19. But on June 21, she was found to be suffering from fever, cough and sore throat.

"Both of them were under home quarantine, but are being shifted to health facility on testing positive," he said.

In Delhi, a young girl, whose parents were tested positive for the virus earlier, was found to be infected with the flu.

The six-year-old girl had travelled from Miami in the US via Frankfurt and had reached Delhi on June 18.

In Pune, a 29-year-old man, who travelled from San Francisco in the US via Hong Kong and Mumbai, was admitted to a health facility after he developed fever, chills, sore throat and headache after reaching the city on June 24.

In Kolkata, a seven-year-old girl has tested positive. She had come from Melbourne to Kolkata via Bangkok on June 23. She was detected at the airport screening centre and was shifted to an identified health facility.

"Of the 78 cases, fifty have been discharged. Rest of them remain admitted to the identified health facility," the statement said.

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), on June 24 about 55,867 laboratory confirmed cases of influenza A infection were reported from 108 countries. There have been 238 deaths, mostly from Mexico and the US.

## **120 die in unrelenting heatwave across India**

Source: [Deutsche Presse Agentur \(DPA\)](#)

Date: 25 Jun 2009

**New Delhi\_(dpa)** \_ A searing heatwave across India has claimed at least 120 lives as officials warned that deficient rainfall may result in lower agricultural output and higher food prices, officials and news reports said Thursday.

Soaring temperatures accompanied by power outages and water shortages sparked off angry protests in the national capital New Delhi and the financial hub of Mumbai.

Fifty-eight people died in eastern Orissa, the state worst-affected by the heatwave, VN Sahu, an official at the emergency control room in state capital Bhubaneswar said on the telephone.

In northern Uttar Pradesh state, 30 people have died of sunstroke, the Deccan Herald newspaper reported. Heat-related deaths have been reported since last month.

School vacations were extended as the heat-wave toll mounted and the monsoon rains, which usually hit eastern and northern India by the second week of June, were yet to arrive.

Temperatures of more than 40 degrees Celsius were recorded in large swathes of northern, central and eastern India over the past week.

In the national capital New Delhi, daytime temperatures were hovering at 43 degrees Celsius in recent days, with weather officials forecasting no respite.

The highest temperature recorded in Orissa was in the Sambalpur region where the mercury touched 46.2 degrees Celsius.

"Twelve people died in the Khurda district alone. Most of those affected by the heatwave are the poor, workers, rickshaw pullers or the farmers," Sahu said.

Meanwhile, 17 people have died since Monday in the eastern state of Jharkhand, which is reeling under scorching heat.

In the neighbouring Bihar state, seven people died from heatstroke. Eight people died in the coastal district of Vishakapatnam in southern Andhra Pradesh which has also been in the grip of a heatwave over the past few weeks, media outlets reported.

Villagers across India resorted to invocations, religious rites and rituals to prompt delayed monsoon rains, the IANS news agency reported.

Residents of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh "married" two frogs to appease Indra, the god of rains.

Hindu priest Dev Raj Sharma, who solemnized the marriage, said there was a traditional belief that if frogs are married according to Vedic or Hindu customs, Indra, was pleased and rainfall take place within days.

India's Interior Ministry officials said they did not compile heat-related deaths, though hundreds die during the summer every year.

Indian officials have said the monsoon rains between June and September were likely to be below normal - at about 93 per cent of the average.

The delayed rains and heatwave could affect agriculture and have Indian policymakers worried at a time when they were hoping farm output could play a key role in propping up the economy affected by the global recession. dpa sk se Copyright (c) dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur GmbH

## **International**

### **Probe into Washington train crash on**

Thursday, Jun 25, 2009— **AP**

WASHINGTON: Federal investigators focused on why a computerised system failed to halt an oncoming train in a crash that **killed nine people will for the first time** on Wednesday test the automatic controls that were designed to prevent such disasters.

At the time of the collision, the train was controlled primarily by computer, but there is evidence that the operator tried to slow it down.

The crash on Monday occurred just after a train operator, who had been on the job about three months, started her shift. About 13 km down the Red Line track, another train was stopped. The trailing train slammed into a stopped one and jack-knifed violently into the air, falling atop the first. Investigators are trying to find out why the train did not stop, even though officials say the emergency brake control was pushed down and there was evidence that the operator tried to slow her car before impact.

The cars in the moving train were some of the oldest in the transit network, dating to 1976. Federal officials had sought to phase out the aging fleet, but the transit system kept the old trains running, saying it lacked money for new cars.

*Compiler*  
*AD Kaushik*