



# Disaster Watch - Nepal

A daily newsletter on disaster updates

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## Nepal wants to hold top level meeting with India

Nepal government wants to hold top level talks with Indian government to resolve the perennial problem of flooding, which has been affecting people living in border areas.

After meeting with Indian ambassador Shiv Shankar Mukherjee in Shital Niwas, Friday, foreign minister Sahana Pradhan has said, "Not only the joint committee level or the district/state level, we should hold talks at top level at central level." Talking to reporters, Minister Pradhan said that the two countries should cooperate with each other to end the perennial problem of flooding.

Dams and embankments constructed in Indian territory are blamed for flooding in Nepali side while Indian authorities pin the blame on untamed rivers coming from Nepal as causing devastation on their people.

*Posted on 11th August, 2007*

## Flood victims reject old clothes

*Merina Sharma*

The Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) is planning to stop the distribution of used clothes among flood victims as the latter have been refusing to accept garments that are already used.

Red Cross volunteers are in a fix as most of the flood victims insist on new garments, said Sangh Ratna Shakya, the secretary of the Nepal Red Cross Society in Kathmandu. Hundreds of boxes of used clothes are donated everyday by different organisations and individuals to the NRCS and thousands of boxes of such clothes are lying in the Red Cross offices in Kathmandu.

"Victims have demanded that the government provide them with new garments and not used and worn out ones," Shakya said. The NRCS has, however, come up with a fine idea. It is now sending the clothes after properly ironing and packing them. "However, as it is not possible to iron and pack all the clothes that we receive, the distribution of the clothes has become a troublesome job," Shakya said. He added that almost 75 per cent of the clothes collected are in bad shape.

Sudarshan Nepal, the officiating General Secretary of the NRCS-Headquarters, said they are planning to stop the distribution of used clothes this year. "We also felt that distributing the used clothes hurt the sentiments of the victims," he said. The garments in stock will be utilised for "other purposes," Nepal said.

Saying that they need food and cash to be distributed to the victims, he said it would be better if people donate these instead of used garments. "We burnt two truckloads of garments last year and we don't want the same to happen this year around, too, as the sentiments of those who have donated them with much affection will be hurt," Nepal said.

The NRCS has assigned six trained volunteers in all the 33 flood-hit districts along

## Loss of lives this monsoon

Baglung	24
Bajura	11
Gulmi	11
Bardia	8
Salyan	7
Mahottari	7
Rautahat	7
Ramechhap	7
Banke	6
Kailali	6
Jajarkot	5
Udayapur	5
Jumla	4
Dang	4
Jhapa	4
Siraha	3
Sindhuli	2
Dhanusha	2
Saptari	2
Morang	1
Chitwan	1
Bajhang	1
Sarlahi	1
Arghakhachi	1
Bara	1
Tanahun	1

*(As of 8th August, 2007)*

## Major Displacements

Saptari	10000 family
Siraha	6000 family
Mahottari	3700 family
Bardiya	2500 family
Parsa	2000 family
Rupendehi	1000 family
Sunsari	1000 family
Banke	750 family
Dhanusha	550 family

**Total displacement: 48000 family**

**Total affected population:**

**Around 3 lakh 13 thousand (as of 8th August, 2007)**

Sources : [Media reports/MCN](#)

## Disaster Related Reports

[DM Report \(MCN\) 2006](#)

[NRCS Bulletin 29th July, 2007](#)

[Baglung Landslides Report, 2007](#)

[Flood scenario of Saptari,2007](#)

[Report on relief, Mahottari,2007](#)

## Snapshots



Nepalese flood victim Jarina Salmani (R) poses in the ruins of her home in Nepalgunj, some 350 kilometres southwest of Kathmandu, Nepal 07 August 2007, after it was destroyed by recent monsoon floods (AFP / Janak Nepal)



An Indian in his boat in a flooded village. International aid charity Oxfam launched a one-million-pound (two-million-dollar) appeal to help nearly 200,000 flood victims in India, Bangladesh and Nepal. (AFP/Deshakal Chowdhury)

## Our Words

with volunteers of the National Disaster Response Team. These volunteers, along with over 1,000 local volunteers, are distributing relief materials to the flood victims. (*The Himalayan Times*)

*Posted on 11th August,2007*

## No readymade stuffs please , victims bemoaned

Flood-affected people in Bardia have bemoaned that the biscuits and beaten rice being provided to them as relief are causing them stomach aches and are not "enough". They have asked the local administration to provide them rice and dal.

Man Bahadur Thapa of Maohammedpur-7 grumbled that he was suffering from diarrhoea relying on just beaten rice for the past two weeks. "Noodles, beaten rice and biscuits are not enough. The children are weeping for lack of proper food. When will the government give us rice and dal?"

Another flood-hit Chandra Bahadur Budha said, "It is time the government gave us rice and dal instead of this readymade stuff. My children are also complaining of stomach aches." Bardiya Red Cross official Keshav Gautam said, "Wherever we go, the flood victims ask for rice and dal. How do we give them that? We have no rice and dal." He added the Red Cross was negotiating with donors for supplies of rice and dal but nothing had been finalised so far.

The Save The Children US, Swiss Red Cross, Plan Nepal, DFID and Save The Children Norway have furnished the Bardiya Red Cross with Rs 11 and a half lakhs. The bulk of the amount has been distributed among flood victims and only peanuts are left, said Gautam. Thirty VDCs and one municipality in Bardiya were submerged in the floods, affecting 24,000 households.

*Posted on 10th August,2007*

## WFP warns of long-term relief

The United Nations World Food Programme has warned that a long term relief and recovery efforts will be needed for many of the estimated 25 million people that have been affected by severe flooding across south Asia, with huge areas of land under water in India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

"In these three countries, as well as Pakistan, hit by a severe cyclone in late June of this year, WFP emphasised its readiness to provide emergency food assistance, if and when requested by their governments," states a press release by WFP.

In Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh, WFP has provided immediate assistance from existing food stocks. "After the floodwaters subside, millions of poor families will remain devastated from the loss of their crops, livestock and in some cases, family members," said Josette Sheeran, WFP's Executive Director. "WFP stands ready to assist with food and logistical support, and we urge donors to step forward with funding for early recovery programmes which are crucial in the wake of a crisis."

"WFP food-for-work projects can quickly help rehabilitate destroyed houses and roads, while school meals are essential to getting children back to school, and back to a normal life," Sheeran added. "To date, the only country to request international food assistance has been Nepal, where WFP has launched an emergency operation to feed 60,000 of the worst affected people for three months. This is out of a total of over 330,000 people affected in 33 out of Nepal's 75 districts. WFP estimates it will need at least US\$1.5 million in additional funding to immediately assist those affected by the Nepali floods. Resource

The regular phenomenon of water induced disaster has taken its toll in Nepal during this monsoon. The death, injured and displaced numbers, physical damages revealed so. The government is reiterating non of the victims will be left out for rescue and relief. The eruption of diseases following flood, the emergency distribution of relief packages and the rehabilitation of the victims are the major challenges to curb on. The death toll due to water and vector born diseases is ascending and seems that flood repercussions will continue.

The initiation of government, public, private sector and none theless international community to generate relief funds for the disaster victims is indeed commedable. But the dearth of relief materials is also a ground reality. The media is reporting that victims went berserk on some places accusing disparity on distribution of relief materials. Some victims reportedly are deprived of any assistance. Hence, we urge the related sector actors to consolidate scrutiny on distribution patterns to ensure appropriate utilization of available resources.

On this hour, we should join hands together for the humanitarian assistance to the ill-fated persons. We should not pass the buck to the government and the related organisations only. Being a human, it's our moral duty to express humanity to support the needed ones.

At last, we are overwhelmed with the response and suggestions from the viewers. We again request to provide available information that could be beneficial to this newsletter. Thanks ActionAid Nepal to make happen this possible.

requirements to support longer term recovery are likely to be considerably higher."

In Bangladesh, WFP has already distributed 126 tons of emergency biscuits alongside UNICEF medicines and water purification tablets. Elsewhere in the region, WFP has made small-scale interventions, as part of the immediate response, with the vast bulk of the humanitarian assistance being handled by the governments themselves. WFP has welcomed these efforts by the governments concerned, while reiterating its willingness to provide support, especially in the post-floods recovery period.

"We are pleased to see governments taking a leading role in the response. Nevertheless, we are prepared to offer assistance to South Asian nations experiencing heavy flooding," said Tony Banbury, WFP's Regional Director for Asia. "In the past we have supported these governments in building capacity to respond to natural disasters. It's great to see them increasingly put this enhanced capacity to direct use." (AFP)

*Posted on 10th August,2007*

### **Four workers buried**

Four rural road workers gave up their lives when landslides buried them, in Jumla. The mishap happened yesterday at Dhalikhola forest of Bumramadi VDC. The deceased were identified as Bir Bahadur Bhandari (25), Kashi Bhandari (25), Krishna Raut (30) and Karnabir Buda (40). *(Posted on 9th August,2007)*

### **1,600 Flood-hit Residents to be evacuated**

Plans are afoot to shift 1,600 residents of Holiya and Betahani of Banke district who are under the threat of the swollen Rapti river to a secured location. A total of 1,302 families of some areas in Betahani and Holiya will be evacuated and relocated to save them from land erosion and inundation. The Uchuwa area in Jhora jungle of Betahani VDC ward no-6 is being considered a safe place.

Floodwaters from the Laxmanpur dam inundate the two villages every year, damaging houses and destroying crops. A high-level technical committee that will study the flood situation was sent to the areas on Tuesday following demands and pressure from the flood-hit people .

The committee is expected to prepare a report in a few days and a detailed planning would be done after that. *(Posted on 9th August,2007)*

### **Flood-hit affected by diseases**

Hundreds of flood victims sheltering in schools and community forests of Kailali are suffering from viral fever and conjunctivitis. Of 337 victims displaced from Bhajani, Thapapur and Lalbojhi VDCs, sheltering at the Bhajani-based Mohanyal Higher Secondary School and Mohanyal Community Forest, 150 are suffering from viral fever and conjunctivitis.

They complained that relief materials are insufficient and are having noodles and beaten rice. "We have no food and are living by drinking and selling cow and buffalo milk," a flood victim Dal Bahadur said. A nursing mother Madhur Pariyar's condition is miserable due to lack of sufficient food and pure drinking water. Of the 600 victims displaced from Thapapur, over 100 are suffering the diseases like viral fever and conjunctivitis.

## Highlights

For the demand of relief materials, flood victims of Mahottari are regularly demonstrating in district head quarter Jaleswor.

32 districts of Nepal, out of 75, are affected by flood and inundation, according to the Home Ministry.

The lawmakers of Banke and Bardia, worst flood hit districts, asked the government to think about the impact of dams and barrages constructed by India along the border.

Staffers and the management of Spice Nepal Private Ltd, provider of Mero Mobile, have dispatched relief materials worth NRs. 426000 for flood victims.

Rainfall and flood destroyed seventy five percent of vegetable crops in Rupandehi.

in Mahottari, Madhesi Maitri Kendra, a civil society in the district working for the welfare of flood victims, postponed providing free-of-cost meals to victims, citing fatigues of their volunteers and lack of funds.

Armed Police Force (APF), Nepal handover NRs 2.5 million for disaster victims on 2nd August.

55 VDCs of Mahottari is affected from flood. Properties and infrastructures worth NRs 70 million has been lost.

Dharampur VDC of Jhapa suffered a loss of NRS 30 million.

In Sunsari, district hospital and local health posts are facing an influx of patients suffering from viral fever.

Home minister advised the local administration to form an all sided team to carryout relief and rescue operations.

Flood victims of Banke accused administration on being partial in relief distribution.

Flood victims of Sunsari criticized local bodies for distributing inadequate relief materials.

Though the Red Cross distributed medicines to them, victims said that it was insufficient. Four health camps are slated to organize at Bhajani, Thapapur and Dhansinghpur VDCs. *(Posted on 9th August,2007)*

## Nepal, India barrage war

*Anirban Roy, Hindustan Times*

The Laxmanpur Barrage has emerged as a bone of contention between India and Nepal. Heavy rainfall during the last three weeks has submerged large areas in Nepal's Terai region and political leaders blame India for the inundation.

As the issue figured in the Nepalese parliament, Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula rushed to Nepalgunj with a group of senior leaders and promised the flood victims in Banke and Bardiya districts that the issue would be sorted out.

Nepal's Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala met Indian Ambassador to Nepal Shiv Shankar Mukherjee and discussed the issue. The talks between Mukherjee and Koirala comes a day after the Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar requested Manmohan Singh to hold talks with the Nepal government on the "flooding caused in Bihar by the rivers in Nepal." *(Posted on 9th August,2007)*

## Flood victims complain of lack of aid, slow delivery

Nepalgunj (IRIN) - Thousands of families displaced by floods in southwestern Nepal are gradually returning to their homes in remote villages but government aid is still negligible, flood victims bemoaned.

"The government needs to provide more relief and find a long-term solution. Giving us only rice and dry food is not what we consider real assistance," said Rampyare Harijan, a displaced person returning to his village after 10 days of living in a makeshift shelter in Nepalgunj in southwestern Nepal.

Many displaced and affected persons like Harijan are frustrated over the government's tardiness in delivering aid. Harijan's house was completely destroyed by raging floods and he lost all his rice and vegetables.

He said flood victims needed immediate help to rebuild their houses and receive additional support for clothing, food supplies and clean drinking water. "We need proper housing so that we won't have to suffer like this," said another flood victim, Balkrishna Chapain, who preferred to return to his flooded Sitapur village than live in a tent by the roadside in Nepalgunj. The road to Sitapur has been partially washed away, so the only option is a three-hour walk from Nepalgunj.

"We are now depending on our neighbours and relatives from nearby villages to help us with shelter and money to rebuild our houses," said another displaced villager, Dabal Bahadur Subedi.

## Over 330,000 affected

Since the torrential rains began on 10 July, floods and landslides have killed dozens and displaced many more in both hilly and low-lying parts of the Terai region of Nepal. In addition, increasing health problems like fever, acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea, vector-borne diseases and snake bites have been causing serious concern, according to the latest report by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Nepal.

5000 displaced families of Saptari are severely suffering from hunger and shelter for the last five days.

Civil Society Committee would be formed at district level to identify and distribute relief materials.

Danda dam and embankment unilaterally made by the Indian government inundated 6 VDCs of Rupandehi district.

Rainfall is significantly higher this year than 2006, according to Meteorological Forecasting Division.

Lawmakers blamed Indian dams for floods in the contiguous areas of Nepal.

## Asia Watch

### Flooded South Asia calls for food aid

**(AFP, August 8)** India battled on Wednesday to bring food and drinking water to millions of flood victims as South Asia's swollen rivers recede leaving a death toll of around 1,900 and a trail of destruction and fears of epidemics. The United Nations and charity Oxfam said millions of dollars in aid were needed to get relief supplies to some of the 28 million people displaced across India, Bangladesh and Nepal by the worst monsoon-triggered flooding in decades. In India's Bihar state, more than 12 million people have seen their homes and farmland partially or totally submerged after the worst flooding in 30 years.

Health experts are voicing fears of disease outbreaks, and the main hospital in the state capital Patna reported scores of patients turning up with symptoms of waterborne viral diseases such as hepatitis.

"People are being treated wherever they can lie down and frankly we don't know what we will do as more are being brought in everyday," a doctor at the hospital told AFP. India's ruling Congress party chief Sonia Gandhi and home minister Shivraj Patil visited Bihar Tuesday to assess losses from the floods that inundated 1.1 million hectares (2.7 million acres)

### Government aid

"We are planning to help victims to rebuild and repair homes in the next few weeks," said Narendra Raj Sharma, chief district officer in Banke District. He said the government's priority was to provide food and health care but the sheer number of victims was the problem.

"It's quite difficult to carry out assessments of aid needs for the affected population due to a lack of roads and lack of access," said Sharma. He said the government had contributed around US\$770,000 this week to help with relief aid. Also, six medical teams had been formed by the Ministry of Health and Population for dispatch to 18 districts most vulnerable to epidemics, said officials.

The UN agencies, as well as several international and local aid agencies, have been actively providing financial assistance and relief support in a bid to rush help to the victims, said aid workers. In UN fundraising, OCHA reports that donors are so far being approached for about US\$ 3 million, largely for UNICEF and WFP activities. *Posted on 8th August*

### House panel criticized govt role

Members of the Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources and Means (PCNRM) Tuesday instructed the government to hold constructive talks with the Indian government on inundation-related issues.

Parliamentarians criticized the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Water Resources and other government agencies for failing to take the initiative for bilateral talks with their Indian counterparts to address the issues involved. There are bilateral committees including the Joint Committee on Water Resources (JCWR), the High Level Technical Committee (HLTC) and a Standing Committee on Inundation Problems (SCIP) to jointly address the water-related issues of inundation, embankments and others.

The meetings of these committees which are supposed to be held every six months, have not taken place for the last three years. The members said the government should take the initiative this time to hold the talks as the last JCWR meeting took place in Delhi. Minister of State for Water Resources Gyanendra Bahadur Karki, however, informed that during his India visit, Indian ministers had agreed in principal to activate the committees. Responding to the queries, Minister for Foreign Affairs Sahana Pradhan said the issue should become part of the national agenda. "From this year, even the Indian side has complained against Nepal. So the eight political parties and the government should make it a major part of their agenda and come up with a national policy for solution," Pradhan said. *Posted on 8th August*

### Work with parties: Ministry

Umesh Mainali, Secretary at the Home Ministry, informed the parliamentary committee that the ministry had instructed the local bodies to work with the all-party mechanisms in the districts before distributing relief packages.

"We have instructed the chief district officers to coordinate with all the parties on the ground," said Mainali. He also informed the World Food Program was ready to provide foodstuff for 60,000 people (10,000 families) for a month. However, the government had requested them to provide the rations for 90 days. *Posted on 8th August*

of farmland. The state, one of India's poorest, has asked the government for two million tonnes of wheat and rice to feed its floodaffected, including two million people still living in the open. "We have seen for ourselves the massive destruction caused by the floods and the centre (national government) will do everything to mitigate the sufferings of the masses," Patil told reporters in Patna.

National authorities have put the estimated losses to the state at about 38 million dollars. Parts of Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and Assam states were also submerged during the rains, affecting another 6.5 million people, although officials said the situation had greatly improved in northeast India's Assam.

India's national disaster management agency said Tuesday 1,428 people had died of monsoon-related causes since the start of the season in June. That figure did not include deaths from numerous boat accidents in Bihar late Monday, bringing the toll to around 1,500. In Bangladesh the number of dead reached 300 and the military-backed government has appealed to political parties, wealthy citizens and foreign countries to help rush food supplies to nine million flood victims. River waters were receding quickly, Bangladesh's flood monitoring agency said, but inundated areas reported acute shortages of food even as officials said 8,000 tonnes of food had been distributed since late July. In Nepal, at least 95 people have died in landslides and floods since the beginning of June, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. More than 330,000 people have been affected, mostly in the terai, it said Tuesday.

Nepal said relief teams with food and medicines were having a difficult time reaching those most in need, with bad roads further damaged by the rains.

## Flood and landslide affected more than 3 lakh population

According to preliminary assessment carried out by Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) total 313,150 people reportedly affected throughout the country. The assessment has highlighted immediate shelter, clean drinking water and food needs. Health issues appeared in five districts; Rauthaut, Dhanusa, Bardiya, Banke and Kailali and potential to appear in other affected district, if logging continued for more days.

The reports of NRCS have envisaged renovation of houses, re-storing public infrastructure, providing basic HH items, addressing livelihood options and providing staple food as long term needs. Government has requested WFP to feed 10000 families for three months. Water and insect related health problems are being reported in some Districts. Temporary shelter, ready-to-eat food and clean drinking water is demanding issue and primary need of the affected families.

*Posted on 7th August, 2007*

## Epidemics still hold grip

Flood and landslide victims are now under the grip of epidemics, including Typhoid, influenza and diarrhea. The flood and landslide victims Monday staged protest programmes at various places demanding medical support.

At least 48,000 families were displaced across the country due to the monsoon rain across Nepal since July 10.

Following a diarrhoea outbreak in Achham district, at least five persons have died and more than 200 have fallen sick, Monday. According to the district administration office, Karna Bahadur Baik of Dhurmakhad-4 and Karna Bahadur Buda of Nata-8 died of the disease this morning. Remaining of the deceased are yet to be identified. *Posted on 7th August, 2007*

## Four more died due to flood

Four more persons died due to floods in Jajarkot, Bardia and Morang districts in the last two days. Hari Bahadur Shahi and his son Krishna Shahi of Daha VDC-7, Jajarkot, were swept away by the flooded Challekhola on Sunday. The incident occurred when Hari Bahadur went to the river to rescue his son who was drowning.

In Morang, 81-year-old Manamaya BK died on Saturday night after she was swept away by a stream at Kerabari VDC. Similarly, in Bardiya a six-year-old flood victims boy of Baspur in Manaun VDC-8 died of dysentery.

*Posted on 6th August, 2007*

## Ministers took stock of relief efforts

Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula and Minister for Health and Population Giriraj Mani Pokharel visited Banke and Bardiya districts yesterday separately for inspection to take stock of rescue and relief efforts in those flood affected areas.

There were about a dozen lawmakers of those districts with the ministers. The lawmakers asked the government to think about the impact of dams and barrages constructed by India along the border.

Similarly, flood victims of Bhujhawa and Rampur in Nawalparasi district picketed DAO demanding relief materials. After inspecting flood affected areas in the district, parliamentarian Debendra Raj Kandel claimed that the dams made by

India in the border inundated some of the VDCs in Nawalparasi.  
 Posted on 6th August, 2007

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### **Flood victims affected from dysentery, cholera in Bardiya**

Dysentery and cholera have gripped the flood-affected people in Bardiya district. One person died of cholera on Sunday, the district public health office said.

The Bardiya district chapter of the Red Cross said cholera and dysentery are sweeping Manaun VDC across the Karnali river. Bardiya Red Cross acting chief Mahesh Gautam said a six-year-old boy of Baspur in Manaun VDC-8 died of dysentery. Gautam said that hundreds of people have fallen ill because of cholera and dysentery there.

No team of health workers has been able to reach the area, it was difficult to estimate the number of ailing persons. "The situation is very bad, locals told us over phone that the entire area is in the grip of cholera and dysentery. They have been repeatedly calling up to ask when health teams will reach there," said Gautam, adding that he was helpless as there was no team of health workers at hand.

Medicines also have not been sent to the affected area for want of health personnel. The stock of medicine was also depleting fast. Also, access to the submerged VDC across Karnali River is difficult. Assurances were pouring in from all quarters about replenishing the stock of medicines, but no medicine has been supplied so far.

Diarrhea and fever have become rampant in Sarlahi and Saptari districts.

### **Building housing govt offices swept away**

Landslide triggered by incessant rain and floods led to the collapse of a building housing four government offices and a Red Cross wing in Phoolkhark VDC of Dhading district. The detritus was then swept away by a raging torrent.

A health post office, the VDC office, the district post office, a police post and the Red Cross office in Phoolkhark VDC-2 were hit by the landslide. All the offices were located in the same building. The extent of damage has been assessed at Rs 10 lakh.

Postal worker Hom Bahadur Banda who was present in the post office was injured when the landslide hit the office building. Red Cross sources said no human casualty occurred in the landslide that hit the building at 10 pm last night. More than 2,000 people in the VDC have been deprived of drinking water after the flood and landslide washed away the water pipes bringing water to Phoolkhark and Salyan VDC. *Posted on 5th August, 2007*

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