

# INDIA

## Cyclone Yaas

### CRISIS IMPACT OVERVIEW

- On 25 May, a severe cyclonic storm over the west-central Bay of Bengal moved northwestwards and intensified into a very severe cyclonic storm. On 26 May, the storm continued to move northwestwards and crossed the north Odisha coast, about 20km south of Balasore. The very severe cyclonic storm recorded a maximum sustained wind speed of 130–140kmph, with gusting reaching 155kmph (IMD 26/05/2021).
- The storm caused very heavy rainfall in Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, and Kendrapara districts in Odisha and Medinipur of South 24 Parganas in West Bengal (IMD 25/05/2021). At 11:30 on 26 May, the cyclonic storm was centred over the north Odisha coast, about 15km south-southwest of Balasore. At 12:30 on the same day, it weakened into a severe cyclonic storm over north Odisha (IMD 26/05/2021).
- On 26 May, tidal waves approximately 1–2 meters higher than the astronomical tide inundated low-lying areas of Balasore, Bhadrak, Medinipur, and South 24 Parganas districts. These tidal waves later subsided (IMD 26/05/2021). On 27 May, the cyclone moved northwestwards and further weakened into a deep depression east of Ranchi in Jharkhand state (IMD 27/5/2021).
- The storm affected around 10 million people in West Bengal and 1.7 million people in Odisha (UNICEF 28/05/2021). Over 2.2 million people were evacuated to relief camps in both states (DMD 01/06/2021).

### ANTICIPATED SCOPE AND SCALE

- Over 900 houses in Odisha were completely damaged, and more than 20,000 houses in West Bengal sustained some level of damage (DMD 01/06/2021; OCHA 26/05/2021). Such damage will likely delay displaced people from returning to their houses.
- Flooding rainwater damaged around 167 hectares of crops in Odisha, as well as 221,000 hectares of crop fields and 71,560 hectares of horticulture in West Bengal (DMD 01/06/2021; The Federal 01/06/2021). Flooding also destroyed more than 2,000 hectares of shrimp farms in West Bengal (IntraFish 01/06/2021).
- The tides damaged several fishing boats along the coast (Hindustan Times 27/05/2021). Such damage is unlikely to have an immediate effect on people's livelihoods, as the Government has banned fishing activities during the breeding season in April–June (Down To Earth 15/04/2021).

### HUMANITARIAN CONSTRAINTS

- The storm has caused power distribution interruptions in several areas. Over 800 roads were damaged in Odisha, and 40 telecom towers in West Bengal were affected (DMD 01/06/2021). Loss of connectivity and road inaccessibility will hinder access to hospitalisation for COVID-19 patients during or after the cyclone (The Times of India 23/05/2021).
- The power supply was disrupted in 14 of the 23 districts in Bengal state (India Today 27/05/2021). Power was restored in most districts as at 1 June (DMD 01/06/2021).
- The national disaster response force dispatched 4,800 disaster workers equipped with tree and wire cutters, emergency communication equipment, inflatable boats, and medical aid supplies (Al Jazeera 26/05/2021).



## KEY PRIORITIES

11.7 million

PEOPLE AFFECTED

+20,000

HOUSES DAMAGED OR  
DESTROYED

High risk

OF DISEASE  
OUTBREAK

AND COVID-19  
TRANSMISSION

### NATIONAL RESPONSE CAPACITY

- Disaster Management Division
- National Disaster Response Force
- Palli Unnayan Samity
- Sabuj Sangha

### INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE CAPACITY

- Oxfam
- ACTED
- Save the Children
- UNICEF
- Islamic Relief
- Plan International
- Christian Aid
- SEEDS India
- Action Aid
- Odisha Inter Agency
- Group SITREPs
- West Bengal Inter
- Agency Group SITREPs

## SECTORAL NEEDS

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### Health

The diversion of resources to contain the spread of COVID-19 has left other essential medical issues unattended. The demand for antiviral medication has resulted in a severe shortage of necessary drugs for other patients, including HIV patients (*The Wire Science* 03/05/2021; *The BMJ* 25/05/2021). The health infrastructure did not sustain any damage following the cyclone. Before the cyclone made landfall, preemptive measures were taken – including providing adequate power backups for hospitals, labs, and vaccine cold chains – to ensure the continuity of health services (DMD 01/06/2021).

### Shelter

Over 6,000 relief shelters in Odisha and 3,000 relief shelters in Bengal are hosting evacuees (DMD 01/06/2021). Nearly 1,200 rescue shelters have been sanitised according to the COVID-19 safety norms, and health teams have been deployed to these shelters (*BBC* 26/05/2021). Shelters in Bengal are hosting over 650,000 people and are overcrowded. More shelters are needed to allow people to practice social distancing. While food and safe drinking water are available at relief shelters in Odisha, information on the services provided in Bengal is unavailable (DMD 01/06/2021).

### WASH

WASH facilities in evacuation camps are limited, and the facilities in affected communities are inundated with people in need. There is a critical demand for WASH services in the affected areas (UNICEF 28/05/2021).

### Food insecurity

Food insecurity levels are high in Odisha and moderate in West Bengal; rural areas are experiencing the highest levels of food insecurity (IFPRI 25/10/2019). The ramifications of the COVID-19 lockdown have increased the level of food insecurity. The pandemic has disrupted the regional and national food supply chain, affecting food availability and prices. More than 42% of the South 24 Parganas population and 86% of the Bhadrak population live in rural areas (*Census 2011* accessed 01/06/2021). These populations are most affected by the rise in food insecurity (DW accessed 01/06/2021).

### Protection

The Dalit and Scheduled tribes are marginalised groups comprising around 23% of the population of West Bengal and nearly 16% of the population of Odisha (*Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner* accessed 02/06/2021). These tribes are widely discriminated against and remain economically disadvantaged, earning 21% and 34% (respectively) less than the national average (*IndiaSpend* 15/03/2021). A wide range of violations is practised against Dalit and Scheduled tribe members – including rape, murder, abuse, and social and economic boycotts (*Indian Journals* 26/10/2020). The caste groups also experience discrimination in relief distribution (*The Kathmandu Post* 17/10/2020). They are at risk of facing similar discrimination in obtaining assistance during the current crisis.

## AGGRAVATING FACTORS

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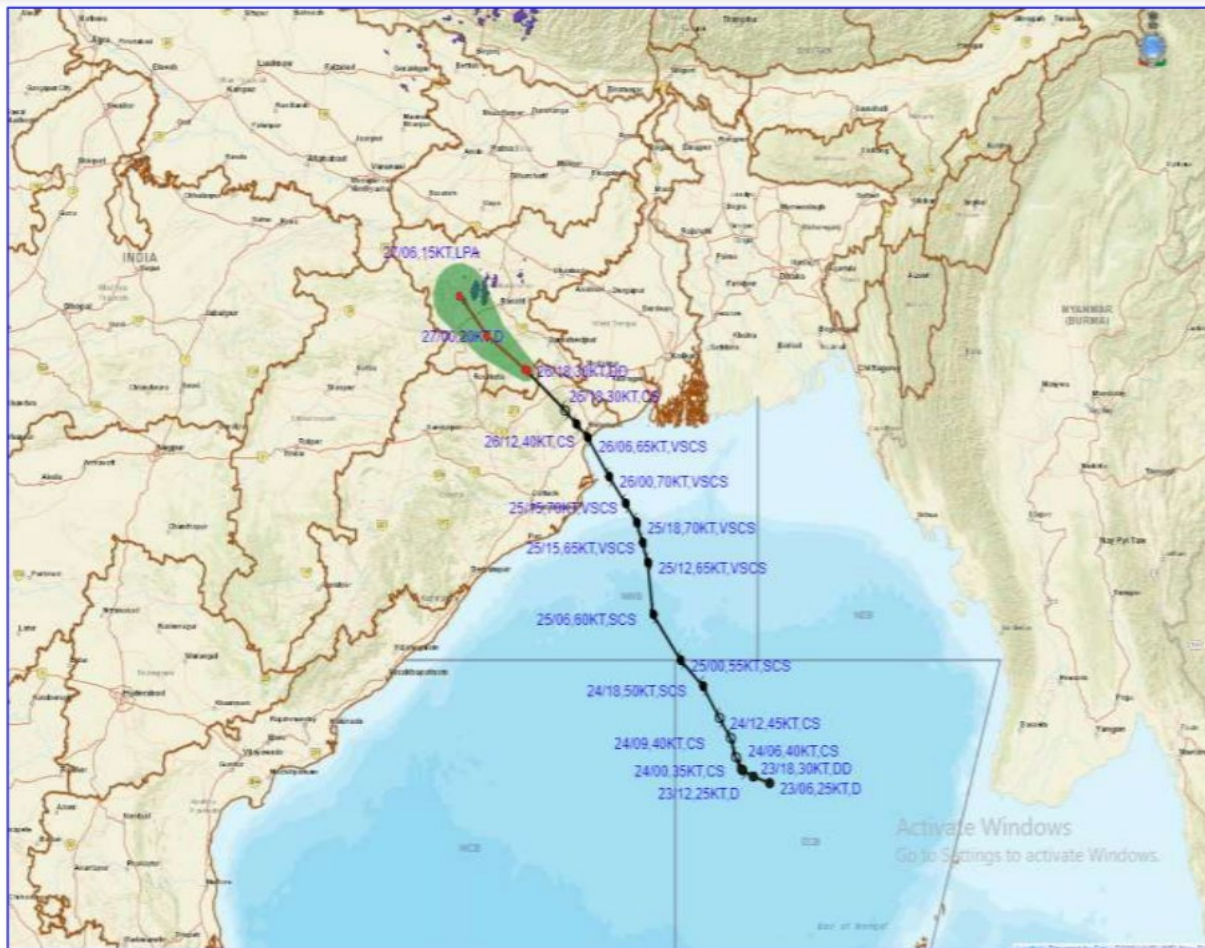
### COVID-19 and disease outbreaks

On 31 May, Odisha reported over 9,500 new COVID-19 cases. Although the positivity rate was 14.2% as at 1 June – a reduction from the 16.6% reported in the previous week – the number of infections remains high (*The Times of India* 23/05/2021). In Bengal, 10,137 new cases were reported on 31 May, with a 17% positivity rate (*The Hindu Business Line* 31/05/2021). These numbers are not reflective of reality, as the cyclone disrupted testing abilities in the affected areas (*The Times of India* 23/05/2021). More than 1.7 million people have been evacuated from Odisha (OCHA 26/05/2021). As a result, maintaining social distance and adhering to the COVID-19 preventive measures will likely be difficult. Stagnant water increases the risk of transmitting waterborne diseases, and crowded camps and temporary shelters increase the risk of vector-borne and airborne disease outbreaks (*The Hindustan Times* 21/05/2021).

### Livelihood

Around 70% of the population in Odisha and 66% of the population in West Bengal rely on agriculture as their main source of income (*Directorate of Horticulture* accessed 01/06/2021; *Deshmukh et al.* 12/02/2015). The flooding of crop fields following the cyclone disrupted agricultural activities during the rice harvest season. This disruption further hindered the livelihoods of the populations in the already poverty-stricken states of Odisha and West Bengal (*Mint* 03/12/2019; DMD 01/06/2021; *Reuters* 25/05/2021). The damage sustained by shrimp farms rendered them unusable for the remainder of the year, and shrimp farmers are in need of assistance (*IntraFish* 01/06/2021).

## CYCLONE YAAS ROUTE



Source: IMD 27/05/2021