

Situation Report

RIVERS UNDER 3 MAJOR BASINS ARE ON RISE:

- **Flood situation likely to aggravate further in NE Bangladesh**

Current Situation:

Due to heavy downpour in and outside country since the last few days and subsequent embankment failures in some places, thousands of people at several pocket areas of north and north-eastern districts have become flooded.

Some of the flooded pockets (i.e., Dupchachia and Kahalu of Bogra, Choudogram of Comilla and Sonagazi & Parshuram of Feni) are considered as 'so called flood free zones' as people in these areas merely experiences the havoc of floods. Due to living inside the embankment, a false sense of security has been developed in the mind of the people which made them unprepared to cope up the disasters.

The water levels of most of the rivers under three major river basins (Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna) are on rise except of the South-eastern Hill basin. Needless to say, **continuation of rising water in the major basins together has only one meaning and that is a severe flood ahead.** Media reports alleged that India has opened up all the gates at Gazal Doba which caused swelling the river Teesta, Brahmaputra and their tributaries and inundating the vast areas.

As per FFWC forecast, flash flood situation is likely to aggravate further in north-eastern region

The main flood hit districts of the country, at this moment, are Sylhet, Sunamganj, Hobiganj, Moulavi Bazar, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur, Bogra, Sherpur, Gaibandha etc.

Forecast Messages!!!

- The amount of rainfall may be reduced for 2-3 days as monsoon becomes weak. But, heavy and continuous rainfall may return after this short interval.
- Due to continued heavy rainfall over the north-eastern part of the country, the prevailing flash flood situation in north-eastern region is likely to deteriorate further.
- Out of 62 monitoring stations, 46 stations recorded rise, 10 stations observed fall, and 5 stations not reported.
- The Surma at Kanaighat, Sylhet and Sunamganj, the Kushiya at Amalshid and Sheola, the Manu at Manu Rly Br. And Moulvi Bazar, the Khowai at Habiganj and the Gumti at Comilla and Debiddar are flowing above their respective danger levels this morning.

Source: Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) and Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), 18 June 2007

The affected people at Dupchachia and Kahalu of Bogra have taken shelter mainly on the embankment and high ground elsewhere. The mud built houses (fully 1,085 and partially 2330) in this area have been damaged. They are badly in need of shelter, food and other non-food support.

Suggested immediate actions:

- Immediate repairing of broken places and systematic maintenance of the flood protection embankments to avoid further tragedy
- Stockpiling and/or mobilizing the resources (in terms of logistics, goods and human resources) for emergency response
- Alerting the DMCs at Union, Upazila and District levels to minimize the losses from possible disasters
- Dissemination of awareness messages that helps household and community preparedness
- Preparedness measures by the MFIs to stop the micro-finance activities during the emergencies

Commentary: 'Criminals should not go unpunished'

Floods due to embankment failure have become a common phenomenon since the last few years. But, no exemplary legal actions against the unscrupulous corruptors who were responsible for the loss of lives and properties are evidenced. It looks as if were the ultimate fate of the ill fated victims.

Due to lack maintenance, the flood protection embankments become fragile at this time of the year that they can not bear the pressure of the onrush of water and people has to pay for this.

Though GoB allocates budgets for the maintenance of the embankments every year but if we look back, a wide spread anomalies, (it was vividly exposed in the media), was taken place in the name of maintenance work. The concerned state departments and politically biased responsible contractors were actively involved in these discrepancies.

There is no excuse that can be considered valid in minimizing the punishment of such misdeeds. Since the resource allocation is there and assigned departments are also there then why such unexpected tragedies again and again every year?

It is no less than a criminal activity. Then why the criminals are gone unpunished every time?

Information sources:

Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC)

Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD)

Member Organization-CARE Bangladesh, GUK, RDRS

Associate member SKS Gaibandha

Media reports