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Information bulletin India: Cyclone THANE

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Indian Red Cross Society, with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has determined that external assistance is not required, and is therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this point of time.

[<click here to view the map of the affected area, or here for detailed contact information>](#)

The cyclonic storm THANE crossed the northeast districts of Tamil Nadu on 30 December 2011 between 06:30 and 07:30 am. It has been projected to be slotted under the 'very severe' cyclonic storm category I to have hit the southern states of India to date. The impact has been two-fold for the coastal districts of Cuddalore and Puducherry Union Territory (UT) with continuous strong winds and rain lashing disrupting civil life. Continuous rainfall has been reported in the neighbouring state of Kerala. Initial assessment reports show that around 200,000 houses have been fully or partially damaged, thousands of trees up-rooted, and roads have been blocked due to water logging. Electricity supply and communication lines have been cut off in many parts of Cuddalore district and Puducherry UT and have not been restored yet. Additionally, preparatory early warning initiatives taken by the Tamil Nadu state government officials as well as trained Red Cross volunteers in Cuddalore district helped evacuate people from low lying areas which has resulted in less human casualties.

The government machinery as well as Red Cross volunteers have geared up the relief efforts immediately after the cyclone struck.

The situation

Cyclone THANE has hit the coast of Tamil Nadu, making landfall between Puducherry and Cuddalore districts. Puducherry Union Territory (UT) and Tamil Nadu state has witnessed heavy rainfall and strong winds. The landfall happened very close to the coastal district of Cuddalore, southeast of Puducherry. As a result, very heavy rainfall has been lashing through northern Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Rayalseema.

The cyclone has damaged more than 200,000 thatched houses in Cuddalore district resulting in uprooting of trees, poles and thatched roofs. People from low lying areas have been evacuated. School buildings in



Early warning dissemination by Indian Red Cross Society volunteers in coastal villages. **Photo:** Sun TV(Tamil News Channel).

Chennai have been turned into temporary shelter homes. So far, there have been no confirmed reports on the height of the waves and rise in sea level. However, the entire city is on high cyclone alert.

Regardless of all the preparatory measures taken by the state and district administration, assessments have showed the following damages to civil life, especially Cuddalore district:

- So far, 47 casualties have been reported in Tamil Nadu, of which 31 are reported in Cuddalore district.
- In Thottampattu village, located 6 km from the coast in interior Cuddalore district, out of the 400 families residing in the village, over 50 homes have been wiped out.
- Death count for cattle is 36 in Cuddalore district.
- Approximately 200,000 thatched huts are damaged by the high winds. This figure has been officially confirmed by the government.
- 70 per cent of trees were uprooted causing disruption to the telephone and electricity lines and road transportation.
- Boats and nets were damaged and washed away due to heavy wind across all the coastal areas between Tiruvallur and Nagapattinam districts of Tamil Nadu.
- Re-construction of roads and restoration of water supply, electricity and telecommunication would take a week's time. A total of 47 electricity sub-station have been affected due to wind, of which 18 resumed services and the remaining is yet to resume services.
- 50,000 acres of paddy and agricultural crops were damaged in many places.
- The cyclone has resulted in extensive damage with the loss being estimated at over INR 2,000 crores (CHF 358 million).

In Puduchery two districts, namely Karaikal and Puducherry, are the most affected by cyclone. A total of 3,600 families from 25 villages have been affected. The government has mobilised its resources to extend relief to the affected families.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) Cuddalore district branch started field level interventions even before the cyclone struck. Trained Red Cross volunteers in coordination with the district administration visited the coastal villages and disseminated early warning and evacuation messages.

A joint team of IRCS national headquarters and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) country office will soon visit Tamil Nadu to carry out assessments.

There has been electricity and telecommunication failure in the district due to strong winds and continuous rain. The situation worsened and created havoc as people could not contact their relatives to inform them of their situation. In effect to this, Red Cross volunteers helped the local populace to contact their relatives and family members through the Red Cross telephone network in the district branch and communication facilities.

Due to the failure of electricity, water supply to households has also been disrupted. Drinking water supply has been affected. IRCS has been proactive in hiring two water tankers as an alternative arrangement to supply water to cyclone-affected communities. More than 100,000 (20 litres per family) litres of water has been supplied to the affected families.

As part of immediate response to the flood affected communities, around 15,000 food packets were distributed by the Red Cross volunteers. IRCS Chennai state branch utilizing its own resources has been able to mobilised 1,000 family packs which is presently being distributed in Cuddalore district. Additionally, IRCS national headquarters is dispatching 1,000 and 500 family packs (kitchen set, dhoti, saree, towel, bedsheet, mosquito net, etc) to Cuddalore and Pudducherry district branch respectively from its Mumbai warehouse.

National disaster response team (NDRT) and national disaster water and sanitation response team (NDWRT) members from Tamil Nadu along with district disaster response team (DDRT) members were deployed and are already in the field assisting Cuddalore district branch in their relief operation.

The assessment of affected areas, distribution of non-food items, distribution of food packets, supply of drinking water and family news services are some of the activities being carried out by the Cuddalore district branch.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
 2. Enable healthy and safe living.
 3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.
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