



SITUATION REPORT CYCLONE AILA

OVERALL SITUATION

As of 1 June, the population affected in 18 districts in West Bengal rose to **6.6 million** according to the official Government of West Bengal report. In two districts – North and South 24 Parganas, population affected crossed over 1 million in each district. The human death toll was reported as **126** and damaged houses were over **1 million** in the state. The government has set up **765 relief camps** and **84 medical camps** in the most affected districts.

The Inter-Agency Group in West Bengal has been meeting every 72 hours to coordinate response to the impact of Cyclone Aila. On 1 June, Sphere India held a meeting in New Delhi to discuss how humanitarian agencies at the national level could complement the efforts of the IAG in West Bengal.

DISTRICT MAP OF WEST BENGAL





DAMAGE DETAILS

Damage details in West Bengal as of 1 June 2009: (GoWB Report)

SN	District	No. of Blocks affected	No. of ward/ municipality affected	No. of villages affected	Population affected	No. of human lives lost	No. of cattle/ livestock lost	Cropped area affected (in ha)	Estimated damage of crops (in Rs. Lakh)	No. of houses damaged	
										F	P
1	Cooch Behar	15	6	1,453	295,356	1		26,786		5,353	13,046
2	Jalpaiguri			133	16,500			75		710	1,223
3	Darjeeling	8	4	425	950,000	26	40			4,500	12,000
4	Uttar Dinajpur			1,430	321,120			43,370		14,339	20,144
5	Dakshin Dinajpur	8	2	305	21,702					1,518	2,966
6	Malda			3,501	270,000	2				15,000	35,000
7	Murshidabad	4		130	18,675	3				3,020	4,512
8	Nadia	17	1		308,250	4		21,667		5,900	10,477
9	North 24 Parganas	20	9	1,967	1,255,074	27	2,196	121,501	2,127	76,184	66,925
10	South 24 Paraganas	14	7	1,737	1,190,321	34	1,443	4,371	2,457	116,486	126,644
11	Kolkata					5					
12	Howrah	14			80,820	9				11,910	24,643
13	Hooghly	18		810	600,028	5		9,206		19,648	45,385
14	Bardhaman	10	5		200,000	4				7,447	24,670
15	Birbhum	10			200,000	2				850	1,300
16	Bankura	14	2	5,187	97,500	1	1	410	150	10,752	13,632
17	Paschim Medinipur	29	7	6,310	628,545		6			37,537	79,348
18	Purba Medinipur	25	5	2,964	1,058,534	3	27	9,223	3,301	29,781	64,889
	TOTAL	206	48	26,352	6,657,515	126	6,713	236,609	27,125	360,935	546,804



GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The Chief Minister of West Bengal visited Sunderbans victims on Sunday, 31 May. Distribution of relief aid is ongoing, but with immense logistics difficulties in the cut off villages of the Sundarbans area.

Relief efforts in West Bengal as of 1 June 2009 (GoWB Report):

SN	District	No. of persons rescued	No. of Relief Camps	No. of persons in Relief Camps & Shelters	No. of Medical Camps	No. of Gruel Kitchens
1	Cooch Behar					
2	Jalpaiguri					
3	Darjeeling	4,122	39	4,000	10	39
4	Uttar Dinajpur					
5	Dakshin Dinajpur					
6	Malda					
7	Murshidabad					
8	Nadia					
9	North 24 Parganas	135,873	204	205,964	6	19
10	South 24 Paraganas	107,042	522	168,020	65	341
11	Kolkatta					
12	Howrah					
13	Hooghly					
14	Bardhaman					
15	Birbhum					
16	Bankura					
17	Paschim Medinipur					
18	Purba Medinipur	7,531			3	
	TOTAL	254,568	765	377,984	84	399

UN RESPONSE

The [United Nations Disaster Management Team](#) has been collating information on the impact of Cyclone Aila. The team is meeting internally to discuss UN response.

UNICEF:

- On 1 June, UNICEF Officer-in-Charge, Kolkata Office and Chief, Emergency, New Delhi Country Office met with the Minister and Principal Secretary of the Disaster Management Department, West Bengal. UNICEF briefed on its current and planned activities, which include distribution of supplies, advocacy efforts, and the planned assessment mission. As per UNICEF's current knowledge of the situation, which coincided with government's advice, UNICEF will focus its key interventions on the three most affected blocks i.e. Sandeshkali 1 and Sandeshkali 2 (North 24 Parganas) and Gosaba (South 24 Parganas). Some interventions will go beyond the focus area. These priorities may be modified as per the evolving situation.
- Upon UNICEF's preliminary Rapid Assessment on 27 May, UNICEF plans a multi-sectoral rapid assessment mission. The mission will take place 4 - 6 June and will focus on most affected blocks of South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas. The team will be composed of programme specialists from New Delhi and Kolkata. The final report is expected by 8 June. The findings and recommendations of this mission will help determine the plan of action for UNICEF.
- West Bengal Inter-agency Group is planning a joint multi-sectoral assessment mission in the affected areas. UNICEF will participate in this mission. Efforts are made to coordinate the UNICEF and inter-agency mission so as to avoid overlaps in terms of geographical area of coverage, etc.



- ✚ UNICEF, through its partners, such as Ram Krishna Mission Lokshiksha Parishad (RKMLP) and 12 cluster organisations, has been moving its pre-positioned emergency supplies for about 10,000 affected families. These items include water jerry cans, halogen tablets, family hygiene kits, ORS packets, etc. The distribution is accompanied by programme commensuration material. Comprehensive communication and social mobilisation plan has been drafted and will be finalized upon the completion of the planned UNICEF mission.
- ✚ UNICEF is coordinating its response with members of the state-level Inter-Agency Group and the Disaster Management Department, Government of West Bengal.
- ✚ Upon current assessment and as per requests from the state government and NGO partners, UNICEF has initiated purchase of additional quantities of 18 MT bleaching powder, 600 bottles of Halozone Tabs (4mg each), and 100,000 Jerry Cans (10 liters each). Other procurement is planned for this week for various commodities in all sectors. UNICEF is about to signed small-scale funding assistance agreement with 8 local NGO partners for coordination, distribution and monitoring of UNICEF supplies at the filed level; the same partners – all members of Inter-agency Group of West Bengal - will be engaged in other programme activities.

UNICEF communication strategy: UNICEF's first web story on cyclone Aila is online on global site today, and will be posted on Indian page too. See web link: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/india_49856.html

A photo-essay is online on India water portal; see web link: <http://www.indiawaterportal.org/blog/2009/06/01/cyclone-aila-gulatis-images-from-the-disaster-zone/>
Similar photo essay will be posted on UNICEF India website.

Other web stories and UNICEF photo feature on cyclone Aila are under preparation.

WHO:

The Public Health Engineering Department of the Government of West Bengal has requested WHO to provide the following items:

- ✚ Bleaching powder – 50 MT
- ✚ Halogen tablets – 500,000
- ✚ Jerry cans (10 lts) – 20,000
- ✚ ORS – 50,000
- ✚ Water tanks – 250 Nos.

NGO RESPONSE

Red Cross and Red Crescent Action:

- ✚ The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) national headquarters has already established links with the IRCS West Bengal state branch and the disaster management centre at state branch level has been alerted.
- ✚ The Secretary General of the IRCS has reviewed the situation after the cyclone hit West Bengal and necessary directions have been given to the National Society's disaster management unit which is closely monitoring the situation and is in touch with the chairman of the IRCS West Bengal branch.
- ✚ IRCS volunteers are also involved in search and rescue operations, distribution of relief items and are also working with the district medical teams.
- ✚ IRCS assessed its disaster preparedness stocks available with different warehouses and the items were released on the basis of assessment reports and requirements from the state branch. A total of five water and sanitation units are stored in the IRCS Salt Lake warehouse in Kolkata and two units are ready for deployment if needed.
- ✚ The national disaster response team (NDRT) has also been alerted and will be mobilized if the situation worsens and national-level intervention is required.
- ✚ Presently, IRCS national headquarters is releasing non-food items including 5,000 pieces of tarpaulin, 2,000 pieces of saree and 1,000 pieces each of gents' dhoti and children's garments, as requested by the West Bengal state branch. The total value of the relief items is approximately INR 2,950,000 (CHF 67,500), and all items are being sent from the IRCS Salt Lake warehouse in Kolkata.



IAG West Bengal:

The 3rd IAG West Bengal meeting was held on 1 June in Kolkata. Please see the attached meeting minutes of the 2nd IAG meeting on 29 May along with the geographical mapping and assessment findings matrices.

The IAG is planning to organize meetings at the district level: IAG South 24 Parganas District level meeting will be held on Saturday, June 6 at Kumarakalli near Basanti at 1.00 p.m. to share experiences from the field and to plan for future thematic works by different NGOs working in South 24 Parganas; and the IAG North 24 Parganas District meeting will be held on Thursday, June 11th at Basirhat. The next state IAG Meeting will be on Tuesday June 16 in Kolkata.

Sphere India, New Delhi:

On 1 June, Sphere India held a meeting in New Delhi to discuss efforts to complement the response of the IAG. Please see the attached matrix that maps the sectoral presence of agencies that plan to work in Aila affected areas.

The West Bengal IAG was discussing the possibility of an inter-agency multi-sectoral assessment mission. In order to identify participating agencies in this mission, at the Sphere India meeting in New Delhi, participating agencies were identified for sector-wise for the multi-sectoral assessment team composition. The participating agency would be responsible to cover the travel and logistics of the participating team member, who could be either locally based or from some other office.

The Sphere-URS Common Assessment Format is most likely to be used for the multi-sectoral assessment. However, members felt that the tool needed to be strengthened on analysis and qualitative information. The Sphere India team is preparing the TOR for the Assessment which they will be circulating later today.

MEDIA REPORTS

Buddhadeb visits Aila-hit areas: West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee faced angry protests on Sunday May 31 against alleged inadequate relief from sections of victims of the storms brought about by Cyclone Aila while visiting some of the relief camps sheltering those rendered homeless in the Gosaba area of South 24 Parganas district. It is one of the regions worst-hit by the calamity on May 25. At some places, Mr. Bhattacharjee stepped out of his security ring to reach out to people and listen to their grievances. He reportedly admitted that supply of relief and drinking water to certain parts fell short of what was required. He assured the victims that all steps would be taken to provide them sufficient relief. The Chief Minister instructed the local health authorities to expedite supplies of medicine and take necessary measures to avoid the outbreak of enteric diseases. The number of medical teams working in the area would have to be increased, he said. Meetings were held with the local block and district authorities where relief operations and work related to restoration of breached embankments in the vast areas ravaged by the calamity were reviewed. The State government, which has sought Rs. 1000 crore from the Centre's National Calamity Contingency Fund, would submit a memorandum containing an account of the damage caused within the next two days. Trinamool Congress chief and Railway Minister Mamata Banerjee, who has demanded that all Central assistance be sent directly to the panchayats, than be routed through the State government, said: "The money should go to the grassroots administration. The zilla parishad is now more powerful than the district administration." (The Hindu)

Valuable cyclone Aila data lost forever: Valuable data on cyclone Aila is lost forever. A weather monitoring station at Contai in East Midnapore, which was supposed to track the devastating storm as it progressed northwards, failed to work. The reason: its power supply lines had been disconnected and sensor wires apparently chewed off by dogs. Weathermen said the data from the station could have provided valuable clues to why the storm was so devastating. Installed by Jadavpur University's School of Oceanography, the Contai station was one of the four in East Midnapore. The other are at Digsha, Haldia and Kolaghat. Each station has an automatic weather monitoring (AWM) equipment that can monitor and track storms, recording their movement and data. Every twist and turn of the storm is recorded along with its wind speed. "Virtually everything that one needs to know is recorded. The AWM is a wonder machine that gives a minute by minute account of the disturbance. We needed to collate this data with those collected at the other three stations. This would have given us a complete picture about the storm as it progressed in its path after having raged through Kolkata. But the information is lost," said Gautam Sen of the School of Oceanography. Sen played a leading role in installing



the instruments in East Midnapore and was in charge of the centres. Installed with central government funds, the centres were launched in 2008. The Contai unit is protected with fences. But it remains a mystery how the power disconnection went unnoticed, said Sen. "It is even more intriguing how the sensors were chewed of f by dogs. Whatever be the case, the bottom line is that the data are lost. We have collected valuable information from the Digha centre. Now, we can't relate that to the Contai data. The whole exercise of tracking the storm has now been rendered ineffective," added Sen. While the Union government has been informed about the incident, School of Oceanography is planning to shift the Contai centre. "We can't afford to lose vital information like this. This is an opportunity lost, for you don't have Aila -like cyclones every month," said Sen. (Times of India)

SOURCES & CONTACT DETAILS

Sources:

- Indian Meteorological Department (IMD)
- UNDP Orissa office
- UNICEF Briefing Note No. 3
- WHO India Office
- IFRC Information Bulletin No. 2 (29 May 2009)
- IAG meetings
- Sphere India meeting
- Maps of India

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