



CARITAS BANGLADESH SITUATION REPORT (SITREP)

TITLE: Deadly flash floods leave millions stranded in north and south eastern 11 Districts of Sylhet and Chattogram divisions in Bangladesh

LOCATION: A total of 77 upazila (Sub- District) under 11 districts (Feni, Cumilla, Khagrachhari, Noakhali, Chattogram, Moulvibazar, Habiganj, Brahmanbaria, Sylhet, Lakshmipur and Cox's Bazar) in Bangladesh.

DATES COVERED: 20-23 August 2024.

SITREP NUMBER: 04

SUBMITTED BY: Disaster Management Sector, Caritas Bangladesh (CB)

SITUATION OVERVIEW



A woman and her child wade through floodwaters in Feni, one of the worst-hit areas. Photo: Zakir Hossain Chowdhury/AFP

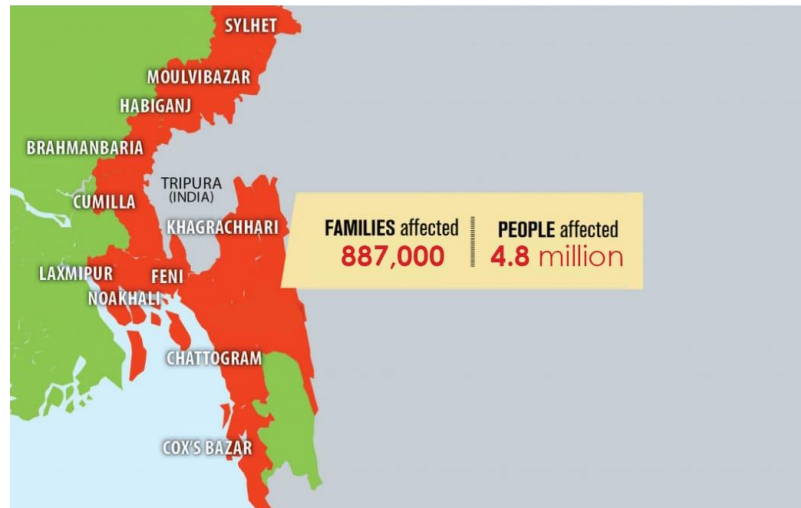
More than 4.8 million people of 887,000 families under 584 unions and municipalities of 77 upazila in 11 districts of Bangladesh are suffering from the devastating flood triggered by torrential rains, with hundreds of homes under water.

In Bangladesh, July and August floods are not unusual. However, this year in August 2024, the scale and intensity in the affected districts have been unusually severe. Typically, such areas do not experience this level of flooding, nor does the situation deteriorate so rapidly. This flood unfortunately new to this area specially Cumilla, Feni and Noakhali. As these areas are not normally affected by flood, thus the preparedness both at households and communities are very low, even there is no or less shelter in these areas where people can shift at time of need. Furthermore, the early warning messages with appropriate action for the communities were ineffective due to absence of trained community volunteer as well as the fully functional disaster management committees at lower level. These areas specially Feni, Cumilla and Nowakhali was last hit by flood in three decades ago (1988). The water has risen so quickly in some places that people had no time to reach shelters and even they were not prepared to face such event. Furthermore, due to new interim government in Bangladesh and the instability in the responsible offices, the incident command system yet to functional as expected.



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According to Dr. Samarendra Karmakar, former director of the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, a low-pressure system formed over the Bay of Bengal recently, lingering over Bangladesh for the past three to four days and still persisting to some extent. “In recent years, low-pressure systems usually pass further south, but this time it is affecting Bangladesh directly, with the axis of the monsoon remaining over the country, resulting in heavy rainfall. He also said that excessive rain is occurring in India's Assam,



Meghalaya, and Tripura, which is impacting Bangladesh. Bangladesh is the main outlet for this water, and it's coming with such force that it's sweeping away everything in its path.

While severe floods occurred in the Brahmaputra, Ganges, and Meghna basins in 1988 and 1998, the situation in the affected districts has never been as dire as it is now, Samarendra added. “I haven't seen so much water in the last 20 years. Everything in my house is wrecked because the water has risen to waist level,” said Mohammad Masum, Feni district resident.

The deadly floods stranded Feni, Cumilla, Khagrachhari, Noakhali, Chattogram, Moulvibazar, Habiganj, Brahmanbaria, Sylhet, Lakshmipur and Cox's Bazar districts since August 19. According to the local elderly people of Feni, Noakhali, Cumilla and Khagrachhari districts, they are experiencing such devastating flood after more than three decades since 1988.

According to the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre, the eastern part of the country recorded the highest ever rainfall in 53 years in the three days from 19 August. The flood situation turned severe within a very short period due to relentless heavy monsoon rainfall, upstream water surges and lack of paths for water to recede. Additionally, geopolitical and upstream water management issues have doubled up the adverse situation.

However, SOS forms have not yet been prepared by local government at upazila and districts. Based on the available data, Caritas Bangladesh is in process to document the impacts as always from the ground level.

Highlights of the impacts of flood

- At least 15 people died, and many are still missing. Among the 15 people, four died in Cumilla, one in Feni, four in Chattogram, one in Noakhali, one in Brahmanbaria, one in Lakshmipur and three in Cox's Bazar districts. Md. Redoy Ahammad (19) has died by flood water at Rajnoger Upazila, Moulvibazar.
- 9,180 hectares among, 530 hectares of *pucca* Aush paddy and 44 hectares vegetable field fully damaged in Moulvibazar.
- Nearly 11% of mobile towers in the 10 flood-affected districts of Bangladesh are out of service, with 92% of towers in Feni district alone non-operational.
- Road and rail communications between Dhaka-Chattogram route have been stopped as different parts of rail lines and highways are under floodwater.
- Roads and embankments in hundreds of locations have sustained significant damage.
- Thousands of shelters (mud houses), tube-wells, ponds, crop lands, latrines, livestock and poultry have been damaged.



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Feni District

Feni is the most flood hit district in recent memory. The local government administration put top priority of saving the lives of the 350,000 people trapped by the water in the townships in three Upazilas in the district.

Nearly 95 percent of the Fulgazi, Parshuram, and Chagalnaiya Upazilas are under water. Roads, ponds and crop lands have been submerged in the flooding. In some areas, the water level has reached the roofs of the houses. There are no electricity lines and the roads are cut off. In most places, mobile networks are also unavailable. 24 boats of the Army and Coast Guards are engaged in flood rescue operations. The BGB, Fire Service, and volunteers have joined the effort too. From Wednesday night to Thursday morning, about 30,000 people were rescued and taken to shelters.

More than 50 villages in the Sadar Union, Anandapur, Munshirhat, and Amjadhat Union have been flooded. Similarly, over 50 villages in Parshuram's Mirzanagar, Chithalia, Bakshmahmud, and municipal town areas have been inundated. Several villages in Chagalnaiya's Pathan Nagar, Radhanagar and Shuvopur Unions are waterlogged.



Evacuation of Bangladesh Navy and coast guard in Feni.

Cumilla District

Six deaths were reported in the Comilla district in the last three days due to continuous rain and worsening flood situation. The deaths occurred in various areas including Salahuddin intersection in Comilla city, Laksham, Chauddagam, and Nangalkot upazilas.

According to the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), 320 millimeters' of rainfall were recorded in the region over since 19-23 August, with 52 millimeters' recorded alone in the last 24 hours still 6:00am on 24 August. The water level of the Gumti crossed the danger mark on 23 August 2024 and is now flowing 10 to 15 centimetres above it. Low-lying areas in Cumilla are already submerged, and crops in the char areas near the riverbed have been inundated, raising concerns of a potential crisis of food rains in the early winter season. The heavy rainfall and overflow from the Gumti have caused flooding in Adarsha Sadar, Burichang, Brahmanpara, Debidwar, and Muradnagar upazilas, according to the Water Development Board.

Residents of Cumilla city, Cantonment, and Adarsha Sadar upazila are on high alert as the Gumti dam faces the risk of breaching or overflowing. The river's embankments are under severe pressure, causing flooding in more than 50 areas, including Chanpur, Tikkarchar, Dumuria, Kamarkhara, Banashua, Babur Bazar, Palpara, and Bhatpara in Adarsha Sadar Upazila. Many residents have lost their belongings as floodwaters inundated homes and disrupted the regional road network, leaving millions in the district homeless.

The flooding extends beyond the district headquarters, affecting most upazilas, including Chauddagam, Laksam, Nangalkot, Homna, Manoharganj, Titas, Burichong, and Chandina, where many houses are submerged. In Chauddagam alone, at least 70,000 people are waterlogged, and another 35,000 are trapped in Nangalkot Upazila.

Noakhali District

In Noakhali, the situation is similarly grim as floodwaters continue to rise with heavy rainfall and tidal surges. Over a million people are now stranded, with many areas severely affected. Kabirhat Upazila Nirbahi (Executive) Officer, Md Sarwar Uddin reported that a sharp increase in rainfall and water levels today compared to the previous day. He said that around 2,50,000 people in the upazila are now stranded by the water.



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Senbagh upazila is one of the worst-hit areas, particularly in the border-adjacent unions of Chhatar Paiya, Kesharpar, and Nabipur. The Upazila Nirbahi (Executive) Officer, Jisan Bin Majed said, "Around 1,00,000 people in nine unions and the Senbagh municipality are stranded." Schools have been converted into shelters to accommodate the displaced. In Companiganj upazila, approximately 3,00,000 people are stranded across one municipality and eight unions. Begumganj upazila has also been severely impacted, with around one million people affected. Mr. Munshi Amir Faisal, WDB executive engineer in Noakhali, reported that the district experienced 1,020 millimeters' of rainfall in the past month, the highest in 20 years.

Chattogram

Heavy flooding has affected 96,000 people from over 20,000 families across 31 unions in Sitakunda, Mirsharai, and Fatikchhari upazilas in Chittagong. Of those affected, approximately 35,000 remain trapped by floodwaters. Chittagong district administration Staff Officer Md Fahmun Nabi said that the recent floods have severely impacted the three upazilas, affecting nearly 95,900 people from 20,175 families.

Low-lying areas of Chittagong's **Fatikchhari** upazila have also been inundated by heavy rains and hill streams. The Halda and Feni rivers in the upazila and the Dhurung, Lelang, and Sarta canals are flowing above the danger level. Dantmara, Narayanhata, Bhujpur, Paindong, Harualchari, Suabil, Lelang, Sundarpur, Fotikchhari Municipality, Nazirhat Municipality, Rosangiri, and Samitirhat union are submerged. The main roads in Narayanhat are impassable because of waterlogging, and emergency service centers have been opened by the upazila administration to ensure the safety of those who are in high-risk areas. Hundreds of acres of newly planted Aman rice, nurseries, and monsoon vegetable fields have been submerged.

In Fatikchhari upazila alone, 3,175 families have been waterlogged, impacting around 15,900 residents across 13 unions. In Mirsharai, 60,000 people from 12,000 families are stranded in 12 waterlogged unions, while in Sitakunda, 20,000 people from 5,000 families across six unions remain marooned. A total of 239 shelters have been opened, and 137 medical teams are on duty. In total, 1,725 people, including 617 men, 620 women, and 25 people with disabilities, are currently sheltered, along with 62 animals, including 37 cows and 25 goats. Abdul Berek, assistant meteorologist of the Patenga met office, said that 157mm of rainfall was recorded in the last 24 hours.

Meanwhile, officials at the Kaptai Hydroelectric Power Plant reported that the water level of the Kaptai Lake has risen to 103 feet (MSL), up from 101 feet the previous day. The danger level is at 108 feet, and the current water level remains five feet below that threshold.

Khagrachari Hill District

Over 100 villages have been drowned in the nine sub-districts of Khagrachari due to continuous rain and severe floods, this is the biggest flood since 1988. Approximately 10,000 families are stranded due to the floods. The low-lying areas of the Dighinala, Matiyanga, Khagrachari Sadar, Mahalchari, and Panchhari sub-districts are the most severely affected. Individuals impacted by the flooding are taking shelter at educational institutions and other safe places. Makeshift tents have been set up on various roads to shelter livestock.

Thousands of families in at least 20 villages along the banks of the Chengi River, such as Ganjapara, Bangalkathi, Bottali, Chakmapara, Muslimpara, Mehedibagh, Kaladaba, Ruykhai Choudhurypara, and Khobong Puriya, are waterlogged. The Bangladesh Army, Fire Service and Civil Defense, Red Crescent Society, and various volunteer organizations have started rescue operations.



Khagrachari sadar upazila under water



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Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Habiganj districts

Sylhet Moulvibazar and Habiganj have been affected by floods due to heavy rains and water from upstream. About 300,000 people are affected by flood water in these areas. Baralekha, Juri, Kulaura, Komolganj, Rajnagar and Moulvibazar Sadar upazilas of Moulvibazar district are the most affected by this flood in Sylhet division. Due to heavy rains and upstream flows, the waters of Surma, Kushiara, Khoai, Dalai and Manu rivers have flowed above the danger level. The dike of the Manu River broke at three places and the water entered through Tilagaon union of Kulaura upazila and affected Komolganj and Rajnagar upazilas. Besides, 9180 hectares of *Aman* paddy fields, 530 hectares of ripe *Aush* paddy field and 44 hectares of vegetable gardens were completely damaged. Besides, houses, households' items, roads, safe water sources, latrines are extensively damaged.

RESPONSE FROM GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH

- The government established 3,160 shelter centers, where 188,739 people have taken shelters.
- For health service, 637 medical teams have been deployed to provide essential healthcare services to the flood-affected areas.
- To support those in need, the ministry has distributed Tk 35.2 million (USD 300,000) in cash, 20,150 tonnes of rice, and 15,000 food packets.
- Bangladesh Navy and Coastguards have been deployed for evacuation of all affected people who were trapped by flood water. BGB, Fire Service and Civil Defense and Bangladesh Army also joined to the rescue and evacuation works in
- The interim government has welcomed the people's eagerness to extend their assistance and cooperation and said the interested can contribute by sending money to the bank account of "Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund".
- **Considering devastation and subsequent impacts and needs, NGO Affairs Bureau of Bangladesh government has called an emergency meeting this morning with all national and international NGOs working in Bangladesh and requested for active participation in the humanitarian response for the affected people along with government efforts.**

CARITAS RESPONSE

- CB has already reached 11,000 people at most affected five upazila (sub-districts) in Khagrachari, Cumilla, Noakhali and Lakshmipur districts with dry food, drinking water and cooked food.
- Volunteers and staff members of CB, local Implementing Partner (Zabarang) and local churches have evacuated more than 5,000 people to 12 shelters (including 10 cyclone shelters and 2 primary schools).
- Five teams of CB are at the ground supporting local governments and communities in evacuation, distribution of foods and other lifesaving materials. The same teams are also collecting information of loss, damage and needs from local affected communities.
- CB's local offices are providing power supply to the shelters.

COORDINATION

Directors of Executive Office and Chattogram Region have participated national emergency coordination meeting arranged by NGO affairs bureau. They have been requested to cover severely affected areas with emergency and early recovery supports for the affected families.

Assigned personnel of Chattogram and Sylhet region are actively communicating and sharing all information of loss, damage and response with local government offices and other actors. Concerned Central Office staff are participating at national level coordination meetings of



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Government's NGO Affairs Bureau, Start Fund Bangladesh and different national clusters (Food Security, Displacement, Shelter, WASH).

Central Disaster Management team has participated in raising Alert B0-56 of Start Fund Bangladesh with requirement of at least GBP 1 million for Feni, Noakhali, Khagrachari, Cumilla, Chattogram, Moulvibazar and Habiganj districts.

Staff members of Central and Regional disaster management teams as well as local implementing partner are sharing all updates through frequent online calls and WhatsApp groups.

GENERAL COMMENT

The active actors including government agencies and NGOs could manage below 30% loss and damages information as most of the affected areas are still under water.

According to needs assessment working group (NAWG) in Bangladesh and ground team members of CB, evacuation support, emergency shelter, drinking water, non-food items (NFIs) including Candle, lighter, water jerry cans, tarpaulin etc.; the provision of cooked food and food packages, Mobile Latrine, addressing protection issues including reducing gender-based violence (GBV) etc. are top priorities of the affected families. CB will cover the above emergency assistance through emergency response interventions.

CB is conducting an in-depth Needs Assessment through close coordination of other local actors and government. Based on the findings and gaps of government, NGOs and other actors, CB will take necessary preparation to participate against any call for proposals of Institutional donors, INGOs and UN agencies for mid to long term recovery programs.

For emergency lifesaving assistance to severely affected families, CB will mobilize at least GBP 20,000 through participating at Start Fund Alert B0-56 for Khagrachari and expected around USD 100,000 from CRS to cover immediate needs for the affected people in Feni, Cumilla and Noakhali districts.

However, CB will require at least USD 1.5 million for emergency, early recovery and mid-term rehabilitation programs. Therefore, CB is revising its already developed a new Emergency Appeal (EA) for the required fund from CIMOs and other partners.

Some News Links:

<https://www.thedailystar.net/environment/climate-crisis/news/floods-ctg-sylhet-divisions-44-lakh-marooned-3684721>

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/355724/gomti-river-water-rises-103cm-above-danger-level>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2024/8/23/deadly-floods-leave-millions-stranded-in-bangladesh>

<https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/cffc9fcc22d>

<https://www.voanews.com/a/bangladesh-floods-claim-15-lives-affect-more-than-4-4-million-/7754825.html>

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/355708/96-000-affected-in-chittagong-flood>



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MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

Photographs of impacts of flood in different districts.



Situation in Nuner Chari Area of Khagrachari District



Many roads in Khagrachari have become blocked due to landslides caused by heavy rainfall



Waterlogging Situation in Char-Abdullah of Kamalnagar Sub-district



Inundation Situation in Feni City Areas



Situation in Shaberhat Union of Kamalnagar Sub-district, Lakshmipur



Situation in Nijhumdwip Union of Hatiya Upazila, Noakhali District



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Many Houses Are Completely Submerged in Matiranga Sub-district of Khagrachari District

Situation in Avha Para, Matiranga of Khagrachari District



Fire Service Station Also Flooded in Khagrachari District

Bird's-Eye View of Khagrachari. Photo: Collected



Caritas Bangladesh staff are distributing dry food at Madhya Char, Kalakopa, Nomanabad, Kamalnagar, Lakshmipur.

Caritas staff are helping vulnerable people reach safe shelters and providing rescue operations in Fatickchari.



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Caritas, along with its local partner Zabarang, is distributing dry food to the affected families in Khagrachari



Caritas is delivering dry food by boat to people living in the remote hilly areas of Khagrachari



Many cyclone shelters in the Feni Sadar sub-district were partly submerged due to the flooding.



Caritas staff are conducting FGDs with the affected people at Char Poragacha Union in the Ramgoti sub-district



Flood situation in Fatikchari Sub-district of Chattogram



Due to landslides, houses were damaged in Rangunia



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