

## Jammu and Kashmir State devastated by worst flood in 109 years



Torrential rains have caused massive destruction and severe distress in the state of Jammu and Kashmir with several fatalities and large numbers displaced. Several houses, especially in low-lying areas, have been washed away or entirely damaged. More than 2500 major and minor roads have been damaged, numerous footbridges washed away and more than 100 motorable bridges damaged. There has been a major communication and power breakdown due to transformers and towers being damaged. Relief operations by the Army, Indian Air Force, National Disaster Management Authority and other agencies have rescued over 2,37,000 people who are in relief camps or in the process of being evacuated from the state, although about 150,000 people still remain stranded. Over 7 lakh people have been displaced.

The initial estimates of the damage to the state's economy, by industry body Assocham, state an immediate loss of Rs 5,400-5,700 crore. This loss will further augment over the long term with sectors like tourism suffering a huge blow. 1,200 villages in Kashmir and 1,100 villages in Jammu are affected by floods. In Kashmir, 400 villages were completely submerged while 300 villages in Jammu were completely submerged. Official estimates indicate 280 people have lost their lives; but death toll is likely to increase as the water recedes, as more bodies are feared to be trapped beneath debris. According to Joint Need Assessment coordinated by Sphere India, 1,949,790 people have been directly affected (tangible and intangible effects) and another 8,186,273 indirectly affected in Jammu & Kashmir state.

The heavy rains having eased in the valley, access routes are gradually being restored. The Jammu-Srinagar national highway has opened up after being closed for 13 days but the traffic is being strictly managed with priority to relief supplies going from Jammu to Srinagar. The rescue operations need to be followed up with immediate relief measures to prevent any further anguish for the victims.

Trucks full of people are coming from inundated areas to places where adhoc relief camps/community kitchens have been setup by local Mohalla Committees. Drinking water, food, clothes and

### Relief needs

Material support is required for:

- Medicines and first-aid
- Tents, tarpaulins
- Blankets, warm clothing
- Water filters/purifiers
- Food grains
- Baby food
- Hygiene kits
- Torch/batteries, candles and matchboxes, solar lamps
- Buckets and mugs

medicines are urgently required in these camps. Relief supplies are being flown in as of now. Water level has started receding but people trapped in water logged residential areas are reportedly depending on soaked rice and surface water for survival and risk of waterborne diseases like diarrhoea is extremely high. Ensuring timely availability of medicines at this point of time will prevent a lot of agony. With the water level going down, people in some areas are reluctant to live at camps, instead preferring to stay on higher levels of their homes, although delivering relief to such locations is very difficult. People are desperately trying to get in touch with their family members and relatives, without much success. Grief, panic can be sensed in the tensed atmosphere.

Vehicles have run out of fuel as there is no further supply. Offices, schools, banks and business establishments are closed. People are finding it hard to cope with life as they are facing the worst ever crisis, which Kashmir has witnessed during the past 109 years. There is severe crisis of drinking water in the inundated areas. Private drinking water wells are unfit for use due to contamination with flood water. It will take a lot of time even after the flood water subsides to declare water sources safe for use. Till then lot of water purifying tablets, filters and water boiling will be required. Health officials are monitoring cases of diarrhoea and measles at the relief camps.

*Natipora needs relief immediately. IMMEDIATELY. People are literally crying for food.*

- #JKFloodRelief

*People in Tengpora, Firdousabad, Batmaloo and Bemina are dying. No food, no medicines.*

- Syed

*No relief agencies are reaching materials to us. Some people travelled to Srinagar and obtained some materials. It is not possible for all the families. Please help.*

- Rafiq (Banpora, Budgam)

In rural areas the flood has been extremely devastating. Entire villages have been washed away or buried under debris from landslides. Landslides and inundation have also caused major damage to crops and orchards apart from damaging the irrigation and water supply system. Livestock, the lone source of livelihood, of many nomadic communities residing in the upper reaches has been washed away. The floods have literally taken away everything—livelihood, homes and for some even their families. Relief interventions by large civil society organisations, local CSOs, government departments are yet to assume full force, as their offices are water logged and the communication networks for several areas are yet to be restored. Several agencies are still in process of restoring contact with staff members and field offices.

Winter is approaching, which will further accentuate the misery of the affected people, unless they are provided support immediately. Access conditions are the major bottleneck. It is not possible reach a place by one mode of transport - one has to take a vehicle/public transport, trek to cross water logged areas via surrounding hilly terrains, get another vehicle on the other side, wade through waters to reach locations. Certain water-logged areas can only be reached by boats. Five task forces comprising 5700 personnel of Border Roads Organisation are working to restore the road connectivity.

## Our efforts:

Pragya has ground staff in Jammu and Srinagar who are conducting needs assessments and gathering information on the status and relaying updates on emergency needs for use by relief agencies. The Pragya team members are also part of Inter Agency Coordination efforts that are underway at the national capital and in Srinagar division. The field staff are taking part in rapid need assessment process.

Pragya has also started sending in emergency relief supplies, beginning with a consignment containing water purification tablets, medicines, blankets, food grains, milk powder, baby food, torches and hygiene kits. Emergency relief material is being dispatched to Srinagar with support being provided by domestic airlines (Indigo and Jet Airways), and to Jammu by road. We are also organising local procurement through our staff at Jammu. Several tonnes of material has been sent by air. Pragya staff in Jammu and Srinagar along with team members of local grassroots partners are organising material distribution at different relief camps, community kitchens, medical camps. Mobile Health Unit of Pragya is being geared up for addressing health concerns in the district. **More details** at: <http://pragya.org/doc/PragyaOutreachJK.pdf>

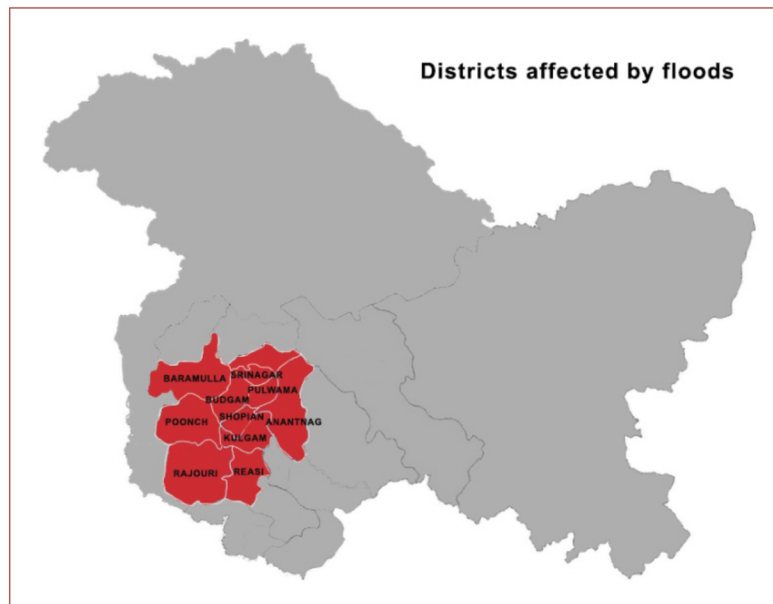
We are currently looking at immediate relief. We would continue to work on health and Water & Sanitation related interventions in the long term.

## District-wise situation update

### Kashmir division

• **Srinagar district:** The river Jhelum had breached its embankment at several points. 30% of the city including two hospitals in Srinagar and 390 villages were submerged in water, and another 1,225 partially submerged. Power and communications are still down in most parts of the city. Residency Road and other major roads, parts of Rajbagh, Jawahar Nagar, GogjiBagh and WazirBagh areas had been flooded and still remain so. Badamibagh Cantonment, Indira Nagar, Shivpora, Sonawar, Hari Singh High Street, Mehjoor Nagar, city centre Lal Chowk, Natipora, Maharaja Bazar, JehangirChowk, Batmaloo, Bemina, Qammerwari, Shaheed Gunj, Zainakote, Kakasarai in Srinagar town and the roads leading to the Civil Secretariat, the valley's lone children's hospital and the Tourist Reception Centre were also under water. Government is operating water pumps, but water levels in Srinagar city are still very high at certain locations.

2,37,000 civilians are reported to have been rescued till now by the Army and other agencies. The Army had to rescue many of its own personnel and their families caught in flood waters in its headquarters at Badamibagh Cantonment in Srinagar. Boats have been flown in from Delhi to Srinagar's worst-affected areas - Indranagar, Shivpora and Rajbagh. Some people had managed to flee to safer location,





many others were trapped on terraces and higher ground. Marine Commandos (MARCOS) had been deployed to rescue people from submerged houses. However, with the water level receding bodies of people trapped in their houses are being found. Many people are hesitant to move back to their partially submerged houses due to fear of such bodies in the neighbourhood. According to official sources, there were nearly 15,000 tourists in the city when the disaster struck. There are reports of major damage to crops, orchards and water supply systems.



Srinagar currently has 50 relief camps catering to 12000+ people. Relief camps are operating in Marriage Hall – Santnagar, Chanapora, Rambagh, Bemina, Tengpora, Hyderpora, Bhagat Gurdwara, Palpora, Batamaloo Shrine, B.B. Cantt, Old Airfield, Zeishta Mata Mandir, Shankaracharya Temple, Hotel Grand Mumtaz – MA Road, Hotel Broadway – MA Road, Gurudwara – Kathi Darwaza, Masjid - Gulshan Nagar, Masjid - Barzulla. Migrant workers from Bihar were reportedly stranded at Sattunagar, Barbarshah Afghan Hotel without food & water.

There is urgent need of medicines. Children in the camps are suffering from health issues, psychological distress and there is no information about when school or some sort of learning provisions can be restored. Child friendly spaces are the need of the hour in overcrowded camps. Apart from relief camps in Marriage Hall – Santnagar, Bhagat Gurdwara etc where sanitation facilities are available, remaining camps urgently need temporary solutions for water & sanitation. Hygiene kits and disinfectants are immediately required.

• **Anantnag district:** In this district, as per preliminary assessments, 120 villages have reportedly been affected, of these, 56 have suffered severe damages. There are 2 relief camps operating in the district housing about 3000 people. There have been reports of people being stranded in different locations. 14 families in Kokernag comprising of 96 family members were rescued at MatiBidhar and shifted to safer locations. Many villages remain marooned and inaccessible. Relief camps are operational in Avantipur and require assistance for food, warm clothing and medicines.

• **Baramulla district:** Total 538 villages in the district have been affected, of these, 267 are highly affected. 12 villages are submerged or inaccessible. There are 37 relief camps operating in the district. 150 families from flooded villages were moved to Government Degree College in Sumbal. Seven labourers, trapped by flood waters of Ferozepur stream in Kunzar (Tangmarg) area of Baramulla district, had been rescued by police.

• **Pulwama district:** The river Jhelum has had a major breach at Kandizal affecting 70,000 people. Nawpora in Pulwama partially affected but accessible for rescue operations. 150 sheep have reportedly been washed away. Number likely to increase as more information comes in. Tral Pulwama has relief camps providing temporary shelter to hundreds of disaster hit families and require urgent material support. Pampore area in Pulwama



district is still under water. People have left their homes and are staying close to the main road, which is currently above water level.

• **Ganderbal district:** There is little information available on the status in this district. Officials had reported that a youth who got trapped in flashflood in River Sindh at Ganderbal district was rescued after in a joint effort of police, army and Fire department.

• **Kulgam district:** Many villages remain marooned and inaccessible. Residents are in need of essential goods. The damages have not been wide spread as compared to other districts, with 70 villages in the district affected, of these, 8 are identified as highly affected. The affected villages in Kulgam include: Adigam Devsar, Ashthal, Chehllan, Mirhama, Tengbal, Begam, Domchakoo, Okey, Hadigam, Mohipora, Nillow, Chancer, Modergam, Lirrow, Pariwan, Sehpora, Gadihama, Odoora, Gopalpora, Pambai, Kakran, Paniipora, Nursinghpora, D.H. Pora, Boh, Logowpora, Ahmedabad, Ledgoo Rambhama, Nehama, Checki Watoo, Pahaloo, Laisoo, Pranhall, H.M. Gura, Manigam, Hanjipora, Nowpora, Akhran, Tankipora, Bona Devsar, Qaimoh, Bhan, Mutalhama, Khrewan, Chadder, Mah, Rampora Redwani, Wanpora, Udipora, Kalipora, Matibugh, Yaripora, Khanpora, Turigam, Devbugh, Batpora, Kaladrang, Kujar, Damidullah and Mashipora. There is one operational relief camp in the district currently, catering to 500 people.



• **Budgam district:** In Humhama (Airport Road), water has receded but it is still hard to pass through. Relief shelters have been operational in Chattargram area of Budgam district and require immediate assistance in terms of emergency food supplies and other essentials.

• **Shopian district:** Many villages remain marooned and inaccessible. The Rajpora Shopian Police along with the civil administration managed to rescue about 400 people and their cattle from villages Rakh Litter, Wachi and Zainapora. Livestock, the lone source of livelihood, of many nomadic communities residing in the upper reaches of Shopian district has been washed away. As per information available till now, 9 villages are affected in the district including 4 that are severely affected. These include: Wachi A, Wachi B, Melor, Darbagh, Hurpor, Aglar, Safanagri, and Wandina village. 2 of them are currently submerged and inaccessible.



## **Jammu division**

• **Rajouri district:** Reports from the Rajouri district in Jammu mention that the relief material that was flown in is yet to reach the affected villages. In Rajouri, more than 200 school buildings were damaged. While 49 school buildings are fully damaged, 153 have suffered cracks in the heavy rains. Devastation can be gauged from the fact that three class rooms of Government Higher Secondary School Saaj got buried in mud due to flash floods, said Chief Education Officer (CEO) Rajouri Pardeep Sharma. 44 members of a marriage party perished after their bus got washed away (in Rajouri district).

• **Poonch district:** There were reports of people being stranded in different areas in Poonch district. According to local sources 1500-2000 people have been displaced. The main electricity lines and 12 towers have been damaged but efforts are on to switch to the old power lines as a temporary measure. Food, clothes and blankets are needed for the flood hit families. 2602 residential houses have got fully damaged, 130 roads and 84 bridges have got washed away while 202 schools have either been declared unsafe or have got fully damaged in Poonch district during the recent flash floods



• **Reasi and Udhampur districts:** The scale of destruction in Reasi and Udhampur districts was on the same lines as the Kashmir Valley but provision of relief and rescue measures in the former has been relatively much slower. A number of hamlets in far off places in Reasi and Udhampur districts, where hundreds of human lives got perished, thousands of livestock got killed besides scores of houses and road links got damaged due to flash floods and landslides are yet to get a helping hand.

The miseries in rough terrain of Bhamaga area of Reasi Assembly Constituency, which consists of 8 panchayats of Block Reasi in District Reasi and 12 panchayats of Block Pancheri in District Udhampur, is unfolding horrifying tales of miseries and mass destruction with each passing day.

Five people had reportedly died in the storm and heavy rains in Momankot area of Reasi district. Further details in terms of damage conditions are not available. Two more units of Army and NDRF had been airdropped to Pancheri in Udhampur where 30 people are missing after a landslide hit the area.

• **Jammu district:** Flood waters had entered in Qamarwari, ShaheedGunj, Zainakadal and Kaksarai areas of Jammu. Preliminary need assessment in Gujjar Nagar (1000 people) and Karim Nagar (2500) have brought out the need for utensils, gas/stove, food, drinking water, warm clothing, rain gear, torch, candles, medicines etc. Communication networks are functional and local level procurement is possible in Jammu. Jammu town is also approachable by road.

Unprecedented heavy rains and flash floods have caused massive damage to the school buildings across Jammu division where all the educational institutions reopened after remaining closed for a week due to the inclement weather. More than a thousand school buildings were damaged in the nature's fury and a number of them have virtually turned into ruins while more reports of damage are still pouring in from remote areas

More updates at: <http://pragya.org/floodsinJandk.php>

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