

NEPAL FLOOD 2017



MEDIA MONITORING
15 August 2017

Cover Photo: The misery of a family: Dev Kumar Sada, uncle of flood victim Kamal Sada, carrying and leaving the boy's dead body into the Koshi River at Kulari Village in Saptari district, Nepal, 13 August 2017. Kamal died due sickness from continuous exposure to rainfall and flooding at his remote village. Photo by Narendra Shretha.

The photos were originally published in European Pressphoto Agency, in Nepal it was carried out by Kantipur Daily.

Photo: <http://kantipur.ekantipur.com/printedition/news/2017-08-15/20170815062605.html>

This Media Monitoring report is produced by HERD INTERNATIONAL (www.herdint.com). HERD INTERNATIONAL team collected various stories by conducting media monitoring of national and international news portals. The collected stories were recorded in a spreadsheet i.e. Microsoft Excel detailing the date, title, sources and links to the story. This study involves a three step process i.e. information finding, information recording and analysis.

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The situation is getting further worse even after five days of the disaster. According to the [government](#), death toll have reached 11 and 35 are said to be missing. Thousands have been displaced as the flood has affected thousands of houses.

The damaged highways and joining roads have not started functioning which has added more pressure to carry out the relief work. 31 districts have been affected by the disaster. Thousands of people have vacated their houses in the affected areas fearing of the flood and have moved to safer place.

The attention of the national and international media has been turned to this disaster. This media monitoring has gathered the news published in national and international news portals. This coverage has concentrated over the current scenario of the areas affected by flood and landslides.

Increasing challenges

Biratnagar airport has [shut down all air services](#) as the runway has completely been covered by mud and sand. It is reported that it will take four more days to resume air service but it would be ready for helicopters by Tuesday. As many as 150 Nepal Army personnel have been deployed to clear the airport with the help of a fire engine. Passengers have been facing serious problems after a dozen of flights from Biratnagar were cancelled.

According to the news published in [Nagarik Daily](#), the flood victims of Banke, Bardia, Dang and Kailai are awaiting relief. Locals are yet to be rescued in many parts of the district. Despite the Home Minister inspecting the flood affected area and army helicopter being operated, rescue of flood victims was yet to take place. Families of around 46 houses are trapped on the terrace and have been waiting to be rescued in Khairichandanpur of Bardia district in the west. They have been awaiting help for the last two days. The victims saved themselves from being swept by flood but are now struggling with hunger.

According to the news published in [Annapurna Post](#), the relief package that the Ministry of Commerce and supply had prepared, is stuck at the godowns. The package wasn't sent as there was no demand from the District Disaster Committee according to Prem Rai, Secretary of Ministry of Supplies. The package will be sent once the demand is done.

Former Prime Minister and senior CPN-UML leader [Jhalanath Khanal](#) said that Indian dams that have been built in breach of international law along the Nepal-India border have caused flooding on the Nepali side. He pointed that the government should engage in bilateral talks to find out a long-term solution as flood waters inundate Nepali land every year. He asked the local authorities to provide relief to the victims as the floods have caused huge damage. He also criticized the government for sluggish response to the disaster and said government should focus on providing emergency aid to the flood and landslide victims.

The flood has not just affected the people but also the animals of Chitwan National Park. A [rhino died](#) while being swept away by flood in Rapti River; two other rhinos were rescued alive. The locals said that they spotted many animals like wild boars, chital and chitri being swept away by flood.

Government's effort

A team under the leadership of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba [visited Sunsari](#) on Monday afternoon. The team inquired about the loss of lives and physical property caused by flood in the area and directed the Army personnel and local administration to help the affected people.

Home Minister Janardan Sharma on August 14, instructed government secretaries to ensure that relief materials for victims of floods and landslides were [distributed only through government channel](#). Sharma directed the secretaries to adopt one-door policy in relief distribution, arguing that if relief materials were distributed through non-government channels, the materials might not reach all those affected by floods and landslides. Now the donations would have to be deposited at the Prime Minister Disaster Relief Fund for distribution.

Following the instruction a Relief Collection Coordination Committee was formed under Kedar Neupane, joint secretary at the MoHA. Relief materials collected will be kept at godowns of Thapathali-based Nepal Food Corporation office and godowns of World Food Programme at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu. Minister Sharma also directed bureaucrats to prepare details of property losses incurred by individuals and the government in the recent natural disasters.

On 14 August, the government officials of Sunsari and Saptari [inspected the Koshi Barrage and spurs](#) amidst the rumour that the Koshi River crested following the incessant rains in the eastern Nepal is at a risk of bursting. The teams reached to a conclusion that presently there seemed no immense risk of dam and spurs explosion and the river would pose no further threat to the life in Sunsari and Saptari if the current water flow remained as it is.

Although the government has been making policies and collecting relief funds, the delay in the relief distribution have made the victims struggle to survive. Authorities have yet to reach out to the victims with relief materials even as floodwaters recede in Rautahat, according to the news published in [The Himalayan Times](#). Though relief materials were dropped from helicopter at some places, it was just a trickle keeping in view the size of population affected by the monsoon fury.

On 15 August, Minister for Water Supply and Sanitation Mahendra Yadav and Minister for Agricultural Development Ram Krishna Yadav [inspected a dozen flood affected places](#) including Pulchok, Musahari Tol, Mujeliya, Laxminiya in Janakpur Sub-metropolitan City.

Minister for Health Giriraj Mani Pokharel has said that [relief packages](#) would be distributed to the flood-affected people soon. The minister had also done aerial and onsite inspection of the flood-ravaged areas as Bardibas, Loharpatti, Singhayhi, Ramgopalpur and Matihani in Mahottari district. He informed that priority would be given to repair and reconstruction of the roads, water supply projects, power supply, irrigation facilities and health infrastructures damaged by the flood.

To provide the relief materials security personnel walked [10 hours carrying relief materials](#) through slippery and landslide-prone roads toward Falelung Rural Municipality of Panchthar district in the eastern part of Nepal. Relief materials were distributed to flood-displaced 41 families of Memeng and five families of Ektin villages. A team of 70 security personnel of Nepal Army, Nepal Police and Armed Police Force, led by NA Captain Jeevan Gurung, carried the relief materials on their backs and made their way over very difficult terrain to reach the displaced victims. Likewise, medical teams of Nepal Army have also been deployed keeping in mind the possibility of outbreaks of diseases in the displaced settlements.

The government had directed District Administration Office Kathmandu to [make package through relief fund allocation](#). According to Home Ministry, relief have been provided to 12 flood affected areas namely Jhapa, Sunsari, Saptari, Sarlahi, Dhanusa, Mahottari, Bara, rautahat, Dang, Banke, Bardiya and Kailali with the help of private helicopters.

Relief funds

The [government](#) has decided to provide Rs 100,000 to the family of deceased and Rs 12,000 to those displaced. As of now, the cash distribution to the victims has been difficult due to ongoing monsoon. The employees of the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD) and bodies under it would contribute around [Rs 12 million](#) for the rescue and relief works. The amount will be deducted from their salary. Five days salary of the secretary at the Ministry, four days salary of the joint-secretary, three days salary of the under-secretary and officer level employees, two days salary of the non-gazetted first and second class officers and one day salary of the classless employees would be deducted. The amount would be deposited in the Prime Minister's Disaster Relief Fund.

The [Chinese government](#) has expressed grief over the loss of life and property due to flood and announced that it will provide USD 1 million as an emergency assistance. The announcement was made by the Chinese vice-premier of the state council, Wang Yang in Kathmandu.

Former King Gyanendra Shah says he is sad to know about the loss of lives and property in recent floods and landslides in various parts of the country. It has been shared that the [Himani Trust](#), will launch a relief campaign soon. The lawmakers from [Maoist centre \(MC\)](#) announced that they would provide a month's salary to the flood victims. A meeting of the central committee board also demanded the government to provide emergency relief to the flood victims.

[Student unions](#) affiliated to various political parties have decided to launch a joint campaign to mobilise their members in rescue and relief activities in the wake of recent floods and landslides in 26 districts. They also established a joint relief fund with Rs 350,000. The meeting also called lawmakers and government staff to contribute their salary to relief activities.

The decision of the government to run the relief programmes itself has created confusion among various bodies. According to the news published [Myrepublica](#), some people are voluntarily collecting relief materials in major cities and the private sector is also interested to provide relief materials promptly. But the absence of needs assessment and the direction to channel support through the government channel has created confusion.

According to Confederation of Nepali Industries (CNI) President Hari Bhaka Sharma the home ministry has given them a list of essential medicines, dry foods like noodles and beaten rice, and drinking water and water purifier, among others but the ministry is silent on the required quantity. He said, “there is no assessment of the needs and we do not know who will receive the support that we hand over to the government”. CNI has announced to provide goods worth Rs 5 million to the flood victims. It plans to hand over the goods to the government very soon.

Federation of Nepali Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), is also collecting relief materials from its members. Shekhar Golchha, senior vice president of FNCCI said that they have no idea on the quantity of relief materials is needed because needs assessment has not been done.

Expressing sorrow to the loss, [Chure Bhawar Rastriya Ekata Party Nepal](#) directed all its district committees, sister organizations, all central office-holders, members and well-wishers to be engaged in the rescue and relief of the flood-affected people.

Risk of epidemic

Water and Sanitation Ministry has said that about 35 thousands family are [deprived of pure drinking water](#) in the flood affected districts and the number is likely to rise. The problem has increased after the water sources were damaged by the disaster. The Ministry has asked concerned agencies to do everything that is needed to tackle the problem. It further appealed to NGOs/INGOs to supply pure drinking water to the displaced people and families.

The [Ministry of Health](#) informed that it has prepared for the possibility of the disease outbreak in the flood affected area with medicines and health worker. Ministry has said there may be the possibility of snake bite in the flood affected area and is also prepared for this. Additionally, MoH has also pointed on the possibility of disease outbreak such as diarrhoea, cholera, cold among others. It has said that the medicines and the human resource are ready. Another big challenge might be controlling mosquito bite, MoH pointed.

According to the news published in Naya Patrika, the health workers have distributed necessary medicines in Raptisunari and Khajari rural municipality of Banke. All the health institutions of Saptari is well prepared and the District Public Health Office will be provide 24 hours service. Necessary medicines have been provided in Bardiya.

According to the news published in [Gorkhapatra](#), the people in rural and urban areas affected by flood in Saptari district are becoming unhealthy. They have started suffering from diseases like typhoid, fever, respiratory problems, common cold and skin itching problem. In many areas of Saptari Rajbiraj, Hanumanagar, Sambhinath municipality, Tilathi Rural Municipality, Barsain, Sarkarpur, Bidebarsain, Rupani, Kancharup Municipality Sakardahi, Joginiya, Bhardaha, Inaruwa, Kirpura, Daluw and Belahi, outbreak of various diseases have begun. The locals have complained that no health workers and doctors have been seen in the health post and there is no medicine.

[Nepal Ambulance Service](#) has decided to mobilize two ambulances with paramedics in flood-hit districts. The ambulances will have essential emergency medicines and three emergency medicine technicians in each ambulance to treat flood-hit people on the spot. Ranjit Acharya, vice president of Nepal Ambulance Service informed that the ambulances will be ready to move to affected areas by Tuesday evening but they are waiting for the government direction on where to mobilize them.

Conclusion

With thousands of people living together in the makeshift tents, the risk of disease outbreak has increased. News related to victims of the flood suffering from various diseases like diarrhoea, cholera, respiratory and skin related problems has come in rise. The lack of clean drinking water is likely to make the scenario further worse. There is a need to speed up and provide necessary health facilities. Although MoH is ready with necessary medicines and human resource, reaching the site on time should also be prioritised.

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