

Indian Red Cross relief to AILA victims

June 8th, 2009

According to media reports, turbulence triggered off by AILA resulted into the swelling of seawater that has entered many parts of Sundarban Islands. Atleast 87 points have been identified since June 6th 2009 due to full moon high tides. The high tide has also pushed up the river water level by about four feet above the normal level, submerging mangrove forests and inundating low-lying areas.

A large number of carcasses of domestic animals, poultry birds and innumerable roofs of thatched huts were seen floating in the tidewater.

This has happened after cyclone Aila that tore through the state on May 25th, leveling houses, uprooting trees, snapping power cables and leaving a trail of destruction in 13 of West Bengal's 19 Districts. So far 137 deaths have been reported, nearly 60,000 houses suffered damages and it has affected over 8.7 million people.

Red Cross action

One watsan unit with a capacity of 4000 ltrs/hr sent by NHQ, IRCS has already been installed at Basanthi block of South Pargana district and is providing drinking water whereas the second unit could not be installed, so far, as the potential water sources are highly polluted with carcasses. Consumables/ spare parts and trained volunteers have been provided to run these units.

The Indian Red Cross Society has decided to send another two water treatment plants having a capacity of 4000 ltrs/hr and three hand operated water sanitation units with a capacity of 70-80 litres per hour.

The Secretary General of IRCS is regularly monitoring the situation by holding daily review meetings of disaster management department and is in constant touch with IRCS West Bengal State Branch' Chairman and Secretary.

The State branch is carrying out relief operation in 24 South Pargana District whereas in 24 North Pargana and Purba Medinipur the district branches are themselves distributing the relief material. The relief material has been sent by the National Headquarters valued at Rs. 29.50 lakh. Red Cross volunteers are supplementing Government efforts by distributing bleaching powder disinfecting for flood-affected areas in the districts. Apart from this, IRCS West Bengal State branch has started a medical camp where doctors are treating the patients. Halogen tablets and tarpaulin sheets are being provided to the Purba Medinipur district.