

SIDR Cyclone Bangladesh 2007

UN SIT REP # 1

Dhaka, Bangladesh 17th of November 2007

Situation

A super cyclonic storm (category 4) moved north through the Bay of Bengal and hit southern Bangladesh at 7:30 pm on Thursday with wind speed reaching 220 km/h. It continued northward causing extensive damage, especially to the country's southwestern districts. Tidal surge of 10-15 feet above normal has been reported. As the storm moved into central Bangladesh it was downgraded to a Category II tropical storm and currently weather is calm.

Early official reports from the 17th November indicate a death toll of 1070, with a large number of missing and thousands injured. As communication is disrupted and some areas still inaccessible, the number of fatalities is likely to increase. Many structures have been damaged or destroyed, damage to crops is extensive, and many roads are damaged or blocked by debris. The cyclone caused severe reduction in power production, resulting in a near countrywide blackout through much of the weekend, with further disruptions to telecommunications and water supply. Electricity is returning from Saturday morning onwards.

Government of Bangladesh Response

Preparation efforts before the storm is judged to have contributed to a significant reduction in the loss of life and destruction of property. Measures included evacuation of around 3 million people, the use of over 2,000 cyclone shelters, and stockpiling of foods, medicines and other relief equipment. Before the cyclone made landfall, radio and loudspeaker announcements were advising the population to seek refuge in the shelters.

The Chief Adviser has allocated 95,000,000 taka for relief and house construction in 11 districts. Deputy Commissioners are procuring and collecting sufficient amount of dry food to face the current situation. So far, MoFDM has allocated 3,000 tons of rice in 14 districts, and an additional 3000 pcs food items and family kits have been sent to Hironpoint, Dublarchar, Kuakata and Pathorghata. 12 Air Force helicopters and 5 Navy gunboats are involved in rescue and relief operations, in cooperation with local administration. 732 medical teams are working in the affected areas.

As the cyclone hit on Thursday evening, the Government called a meeting of the Disaster and Emergency Response group. A large number of UN agencies, NGOs and some donors participated. The Government emphasized that the humanitarian community should coordinate closely with central and local Bangladesh authorities. A new meeting of the Disaster and Emergency Response group is likely to be convened for Sunday morning.

UN Response

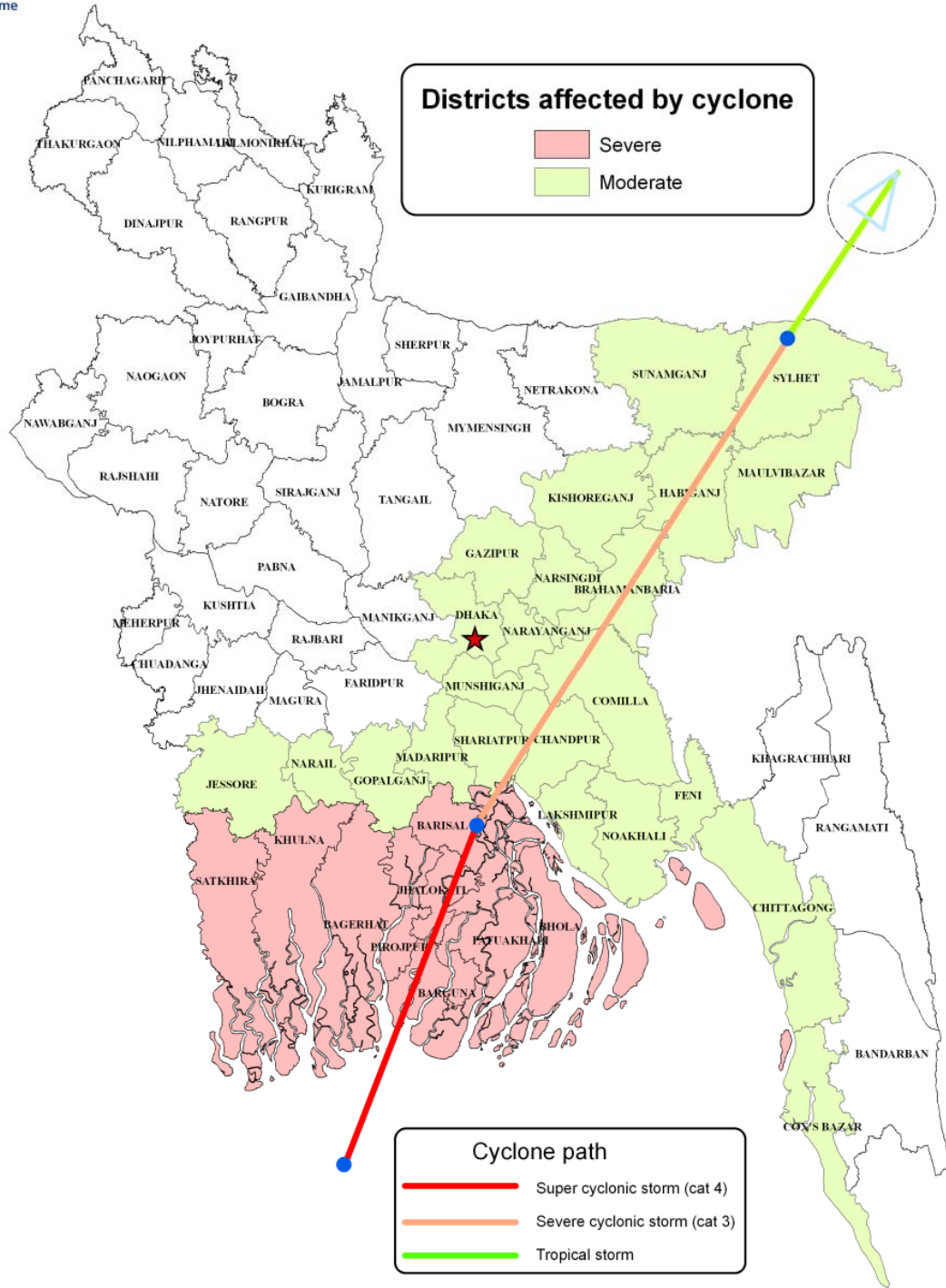
The UN provided support to the Government preparedness efforts by prepositioning relief items together with relief and assessment teams across Southern Bangladesh. A team of 12 experts has left Dhaka to assist with assessment in affected areas not yet covered. The UN is distributing 208 tons of high-energy biscuits to help 850,000 cyclone victims. 240,000 packets of water purifying powder are reaching 48,000 families. Shelter materials (thick polyesters) will also be distributed to 18,000 households whose houses have been destroyed. Partners will start distribution of dry food (flattened rice and molasses) to 70,000 affected families from Sunday. Medical officers have been made available to assist Government response, including 4 for coordinating central response. 50,000 USD has been made available for water and supplies and transportation. More relief will be made available following initial determination of needs.

The UN Disaster Management Team met on Friday to coordinate response and assessment, and to take early stock of the situation. A mission from UN OCHA Regional Office has arrived in the country to assist with the CERF funding process. UN Heads of Agencies are visiting the worst affected districts Monday to gain first hand knowledge of the suffering of the cyclone victims.

Conclusion

The situation is still evolving, and damages are being assessed. Needs are great, and swift action is required. More precise data on damages and need will be available in the coming days. At the moment it seems more assistance is needed at least for non-food items, food aid, nutrition, water and sanitation and shelter.

Cyclone SIDR:2007



The names, boundaries and information on the map does not imply official UN endorsement

Source: Cyclone data, position etc: Tropical Storm Risk Tracker
web address: <http://tsr.mssl.ucl.ac.uk/>
Date: 16.11.2007