



WFP Bangladesh Report on

EARLY WARNING and
MONITORING

Issue 8

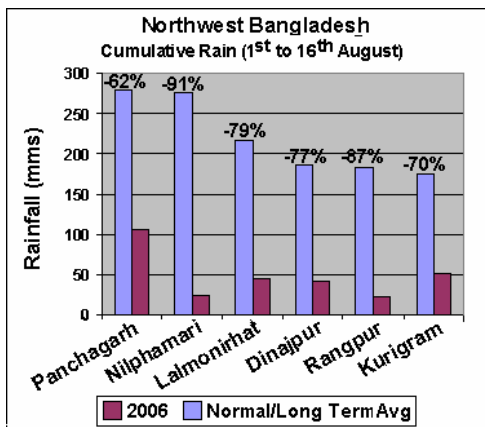
18 August 2006

HIGHLIGHTS

- § Rainfall was significantly below average for most of the country during the first 10 days of August.
- § The recent low rainfall pattern is a continuation of a longer seasonal trend. The 2006 Monsoon rains have been unusually light for Bangladesh, as compared to previous years.
- § River levels have generally declined during August. Less water is draining into Bangladesh from the upstream basins of Northeastern India, where rainfall has also been deficit.
- § The Southwestern districts of Jessore, Satkhira, and Khulna differ from much of the rest of the country in that a serious water logging situation prevails.



Dekadal Percent of Normal Rainfall (1-10 Aug 2006)



RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION/
MONSOON SEASON

Rainfall during the 1-10 August was much below average for most of the country. Rainfall during the first half of the month (1-15 August) was 40% below the long term average, according to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD). Regional deficits were particularly high in the Northwest Rajshahi division (-55%) and the Southeast Chittagong division (-58%). The upstream basins of Northeastern India, including much of Assam, Meghalay, Sikkim, and parts of West Bengal have similarly experienced abnormally low Monsoon rains.

A recent report from WFP's Regional Office in Rangpur confirms the unusually dry conditions in the Northwest, highlighting inadequate rainfall, low river levels, and high temperatures. Close monitoring continues.

Rainfall data reported by the Flood Forecasting and Warning Center (FFWC) is consistent with the reports above. Numerous FFWC stations in the extreme Northwest show recent rain much below the long term average. Deficits range from -62% to -91% (see graph on the left) for the stations of Panchagarh, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Dinajpur, Rangpur, and Kurigram.

Low rainfall and low river levels are an issue of concern as Bangladesh moves forward with its Aman rice cultivation season. The Aman harvest accounts for roughly 50% of national rice production. While the impact of deficit rainfall will only be known with certainty during the November /December Aman harvest period, the current situation clearly warrants close monitoring.

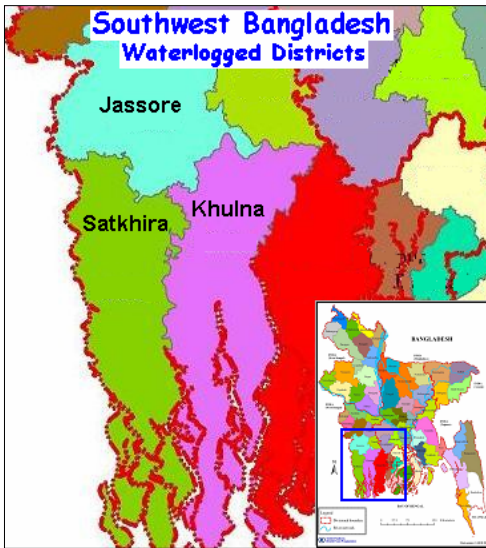
Map Source: www.pecad.fas.usda.gov/cropexplore/imageview.cfm

Disclaimer: The data and views expressed in this report do not represent the official position of the United Nations, the World Food Programme, nor any other United Nations member state.



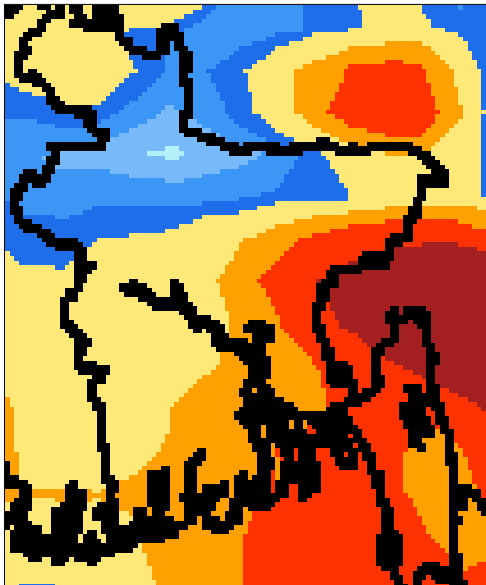
FLOOD SITUATION MONITORING

Water-logging problems persist in the low-lying Southwestern districts of Jessore, Satkhira and Khulna. Long existing underlying causal factors reportedly include poorly designed or poorly maintained flood & water management systems. River channels have been heavily silted for years and drainage mechanisms are not functioning adequately. In addition, heavy rains during the 2nd half of July have exacerbated the problem this year, leading to reports of deteriorating living conditions in recent weeks.



Numerous NGOs including Uttaran, Oxfam, Islamic Relief, Concern, and Action Aid have recently assessed and reported (or are planning to report) on the situation. WFP’s Regional Office in Jessore has also been monitoring the affected areas and population. According to these sources, thousands of families have been affected and are in need of assistance. Both short term relief assistance, and longer term recovery assistance are reportedly needed. The GoB has responded already with both food and cash assistance, although there is some concern that significantly more assistance is needed. Longer term sustainable solutions are ultimately required to avoid similar water logging problems in future periods.

The Disaster and Emergency Response/DER group (a multi stakeholder forum focusing on disaster preparedness and response) will hold a meeting on the 23rd of August to discuss the situation. The meeting will be used to promote information sharing, consensus building, and coordination amongst DER members.



RAINFALL FORECAST

The rainfall forecast for the period 18th thru 24th August is depicted on the map in the lower-left. Cumulative rainfall for the 7-day period is predicted to range between 30-100 mms. for much of the country. Southeastern Bangladesh including the Chittagong Hill Tracts region, is forecast to receive comparatively heavier rains.

The data used to generate the rainfall map originates from the US based NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) Climate Prediction Center (CPC). More detailed information is available from the CPC website at:

<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov>

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This Report is also available on the LCG DER Website at:

<http://www.lcgbangladesh.org/subGroup.php?q=1&s=1>

