

September 2018



AAPDA SAMVAAD



**KERALA
FLOODS**



Visit to NDRF's 8th Battalion in Ghaziabad

A team of senior officials of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) visited the 8th Battalion of NDRF in Ghaziabad on August 1, 2018.

The unit made a presentation and gave a live demonstration of Urban Search and Rescue operation besides displaying its advanced equipment. Officials also visited the newly constructed area of the Battalion.

Kiren Rijiju reviews Nagaland flood situation

The Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Shri Kiren Rijiju, visited flood and/or landslide-affected areas of Dimapur and Kohima districts in Nagaland on August 5, 2018 to review the situation as well as the measures taken by the State Government and various Central Government agencies.

Shri Rijiju was accompanied by a team of officers from NDMA, MHA, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways and NDRF as well as the State's Chief Minister Shri Neiphiu Rio, Home Secretary, Director General of Police and other senior officers.

The team undertook an aerial survey of the situation and held a review meeting afterwards.



Shri Rijiju assured that the Central Government will continue to provide all possible assistance to the State Government to cope with the situation.

Relief efforts for Kerala

NDMA organised a meeting to facilitate the coordination between Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)/Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Kerala to ensure the coordination of relief efforts for the State.

Shri Puneet Kumar, Resident Commissioner, Government of Kerala, briefed the participants on the exact requirements of relief material. He also emphasised upon the need to reach out to those affected persons who were not in relief camps.

Urging everyone to work as a team, NDMA said that NGOs would play a major role in recovery, reconstruction and providing psychosocial support to the victims.

Later, a team of experts from NDMA also visited the State to assess the situation and make recommendations. NDMA also constituted a team of experts on Landslides Management, which visited the major landslide sites in the State, examined the possible causes and suggested remedial measures.

Four new NDRF Battalions

The Union Cabinet on August 9, 2018 approved the raising of four new battalions of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to strengthen the country's disaster response set up. This will help reduce the response time given the vast geographical area of the country.

Two battalions will initially be raised in the Indo-Tibetan Border Police and one each in Border Security Force (BSF) and Assam Rifles. Later, these will be converted into NDRF battalions and will be positioned in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and the National Capital Region.



The NDRF is a specialised force that was raised in 2006 for specific tasks of relief and rescue during disasters or other threatening situations. It currently has 12 battalions, each comprising a little over a 1,000 personnel.

The Force has so far undertaken more than 3,000 operations across the country. It also played a stellar role in the Nepal Earthquake of 2015. Its heroic efforts in the Kerala floods this year have been widely appreciated.

Meetings on Thunderstorm & Heat Wave Risk Reduction

NDMA conducted a meeting of the expert committee to review the progress made so far on heat wave on August 27, 2018. The expert committee reviewed the National Guidelines on Prevention and Management of Heat Wave 2017 and discussed emerging issues that need to be addressed to reduce heat wave risks. The need to further improve reporting - focussed efforts for some of the most affected cities to help develop the same - was discussed.

Representatives from the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme-National Centre for Disease Control (IDSP-NCDC), Bihar State Disaster Management



Authority (BSDMA), National Resources Defence Council (NRDC), Indian Institute of Public Health (IIPH) and Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology attended the meeting.

The Authority also conducted a meeting of the expert group for preparation of NDMA Guidelines on Thunderstorm, Lightning, Squall and Strong Wind on August 23, 2018.

Training on Landslide Risk Mitigation

NDMA in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology - Mandi conducted a five-day training programme on 'Landslide Mitigation and Detailed Project Report (DPR) Preparation' from August 27 to 31, 2018. The training programme, held at IIT-Mandi, aimed to train various stakeholders for better landslide mitigation and DPR preparation to reduce impact of landslides on human lives and properties.



Speaking during the valedictory session, Lt. Gen. N. C. Marwah (Retd.), Member, NDMA, underlined the need to focus on the preparedness and mitigation of landslides. He also emphasised upon the need for indigenous research and technologies to address the problem of our difficult terrain and provide low-cost solutions to meet local requirements.

The programme brought together key groups, including geo-technical engineers, civil engineers, geologists, disaster managers, etc., which work towards developing, adopting, implementing and enforcing mitigation measures in their concerned States.



KERALA FLOODS

An extraordinary monsoon season. Lots of rain. Landslides, collapsing structures, falling trees, disrupted communication, ... A flooded Kerala battling a one-in-a-hundred years situation.

More than 54 lakh people were affected across all the 14 districts of the State. Chief Minister Shri Pinarayi Vijayan described the situation as unprecedented. There was no time to lose. While the State machinery was working 24X7 to mitigate the impact of the disaster, the Centre too left no stone unturned to bring respite to its people in Kerala.

The Armed Forces, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), Coast Guard, and stakeholder Ministries and Departments of the Central Government worked hand-in-hand to smoothly conduct the rescue and relief operations. While more than 2,80,000 persons were evacuated, more than 14 lakh people were brought to around 5,600 relief camps. Essentials such as food packets, clothes, bedsheets, blankets, candles, matchboxes, mosquito repellents, chlorine tablets, etc. were distributed. Medical camps were set up; essential medicines were made available.

On August 18, 2018, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi conducted an aerial survey of the flooding situation, lauded the people for their fighting spirit and promised continued support from the Centre. He announced a financial assistance of



NDRF personnel braves flooded bridge to save child

Amidst videos of despair and devastation in flood-affected Kerala, a video that showed an NDRF personnel running across a bridge carrying a child in his arms as waves swept the bridge immediately afterwards emerged as a ray of hope for a flood-hit people.

The child was suffering from high fever and had to be taken to a hospital. Kanhaiya Kumar, who was deployed in Idukki district for the rescue and relief operations, said he did his job and wasn't expecting that it would bring him so much applause. "I would like to thank people who showed love and respect for this act," he added.



Rs. 500 crores to the State in addition to the 100 crore announced by the Union Minister of Home Affairs. This is just advance assistance and the Centre would release additional funds once the assessment of damages is completed as per procedure.

Besides, the Prime Minister also announced an ex-gratia of Rs. 2 lakhs per person to the next of kin of the deceased and Rs. 50,000 to those seriously injured from the PM's National Relief Funds (PMNRF).

Earlier, Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh as well as Minister of State, Home Affairs, Shri Kiren Rijiju had visited Kerala to review the

flood. An Inter-Ministerial Centre Team (IMCT) also visited the affected areas from August 7-12 to assess the losses.

Meanwhile, on the directions of the Prime Minister, the National Crisis Management Committee held regular meetings beginning August 16, 2018 to take stock of the situation, preparedness, rescue and relief operations and directed that immediate and continued assistance be provided to Kerala to meet this crisis.

In addition, the Centre has announced various measures such as building of damaged houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY); additional



Pregnant woman airlifted to safety

A pregnant woman, stranded on the roof of her house in Alapuzzha district, was successfully airlifted by the Indian Navy and taken to a hospital where she later gave birth to a boy.

On a distress call by the family to help the woman whose water had already broken, the Navy quickly sent a helicopter to the woman's rescue. At first, a doctor was lowered to assess her situation. She was then airlifted and taken to a hospital.

The Indian Navy posted a video on Twitter, the social networking site and wrote, "A pregnant lady with water bag leaking has been airlifted and evacuated to Sanjivani. Doctor was lowered to assess the lady. Operation successful." It later tweeted again to share the good news.

5.5 crore person days under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS); and assistance by national agencies such as National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), NTPC and Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. to assist the State in restoring highways and power, etc.

Various State Governments also came forward to lend a helping hand to Kerala.

As the rains stopped and water receded, the State witnessed a spurt in communicable diseases. Given the exigency of the circumstances, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare relaxed norms to ensure that all the needed support and assistance - doctors, public health teams comprising Public Health specialists, Microbiologists and



entomologists, emergency medicines, sanitary napkins, chlorine tablets, Doxycycline given the increase in the number of cases of Leptospirosis - is made available.

As Kerala moves beyond initial rescue and relief, the needs on the ground have changed. The quicker the State restores essential services and rebuilds itself, the quicker the people will be put on the path of recovery. Needless to add, all of us should strive to leverage this opportunity so that Kerala is built back better and the risk of losses from similar floods in the future is avoided. •

RELIEF & RESCUE MEASURES

- Insurance companies directed to hold special camps for assessments and timely release of compensation to the affected families/beneficiaries under Social Security Scheme
- Directions issued for early clearance under Fasal Bima Yojna to agriculturists
- National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to repair damaged national highways on priority
- NTPC and Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. (PGCIL) to help State Government in restoring power lines
- Interim financial assistance of Rs. 600 crores (Rs. 500 crores announced by the Prime Minister and Rs. 100 crores announced by Home Minister)
- Ex-gratia of Rs. 2 lakhs per person to the next kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 to those seriously injured from the Prime Minister's National Relief Funds (PMNRF)
- Building of damaged kutchha houses on priority for villagers under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana
- Additional 5.5 Crore Person days sanctioned in the labour budget 2018-19 under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS)
- For Search And rescue operations, deployed
 - ✓ 58 Teams of NDRF (almost 1300 personnel) and 435 boats
 - ✓ Five companies of Border Security Force (BSF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and Rapid Action Force (RAF)
 - ✓ Army, Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard
 - ✓ A total of 38 helicopters
 - ✓ Ten columns and ten teams of Engineering Task Force (790 trained personnel)
 - ✓ 20 Aircraft for ferrying resources

SANJAY KUMAR ON KERALA FLOODS



Unprecedented monsoon rains in Kerala this year caused the worst flooding the State has seen in more than a century. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) deployed 58 teams in the State thus making it the Force's biggest rescue and relief operation so far, bringing succour to the flood-affected people. Shri Sanjay Kumar, Director General, NDRF, talks about the role his people played in Kerala.



Q. What were the focus areas during the operation?

A. Even as news about the incessant rains and consequent flooding began to trickle in, NDRF pre-positioned its teams and continued to increase their number as the situation worsened. A total of 58 teams were deployed across 10 districts primarily to rescue and evacuate people. NDRF saved more than 550 lives directly and evacuated around 18,000 people. We also provided medical assistance to the sick and needy victims. Our people worked 24X7 to track the incommunicado and inform their family and friends about their safety.

The incessant rains led to landslides, collapsed buildings/structures, falling trees, etc., especially in central Kerala. Our personnel worked tirelessly to improve the situation arising out of these events as well.

Once the rescue and evacuation phase got over, NDRF personnel helped the local administration in distributing relief material and restoring essential services so that the rehabilitation work begins at the earliest.

The situation was very challenging as almost the entire State was affected; however, with the

dedication and determination of our people, we ached it. The Force has won laurels from multiple quarters for the service that it provided to Kerala.

Q. India is prone to multiple hazards. NDRF teams are pre-positioned at various locations depending upon the vulnerability profile of the region. How does this pre-positioning help?

A. NDRF has a permanent regional response centre in Thrissur district of Kerala. The teams stationed there were the first ones to be deployed in Kerala. Additional teams were called in from different battalions as a standby given the fast deteriorating flood situation. On the request of the State government, we deployed 58 teams in Kerala to ensure that the entire operation is managed smoothly.

Q. You were a member of the National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) which held regular meetings in New Delhi to assess the situation. Please tell us the role it played.

A. The NCMC was in constant touch with the Govt. of Kerala to understand the State's requirements of resources – life-saving equipment, specialised resources such as diving teams, medical assistance, relief material, etc. - to ensure continued, adequate and timely assistance. The Committee also ensured coordination among all stakeholders, which led to smooth conduct of the entire operation.

Q. NDRF has so far trained lakhs of people in disaster response. Please briefly talk about the aim of this capacity building initiative.

A. The affected community itself is the first responder in any emergency situation. Community's involvement is equally important in reducing disaster risks as their awareness and compliance of safety measures plays an important role in reducing disaster risks. It is, therefore, important to build the capacity of our people. In addition, there is a need to augment the capacity of the official machinery.

NDRF in collaboration with the State Governments conducts training programmes for strengthening the State Disaster Response Forces (SDRFs) as an effective second line of response. To complement their activities, NDRF also trains other

agencies such as police, Home Guards, Fire Services, National Cadet Corps, youth wings, etc. to act as first responders.

At the community level, we run awareness programmes in collaboration with the local administration, right up to the gram panchayat level. These programmes are designed according to the vulnerability and risk factors of their geographies. NDRF also runs school safety programmes. Schoolchildren show enthusiasm, learn quickly, practice drills and also act as agents of change in their families, neighbourhoods and communities.

NDRF also conducts mock exercises on different disasters. These exercises are also tailor-made according to the requirements of the participating agencies; say, for example, an exercise on fire safety and chemical leakage in a manufacturing plant.



Besides, NDRF also works continuously to upgrade its equipment, capacity and mobility so that it can reach out to the people swiftly, and help save lives and reduce economic losses. The Force regularly does familiarisation exercises and resource mapping in vulnerable areas to ensure smooth operations in case of an emergency.

Q. What should people do to enhance their resilience?

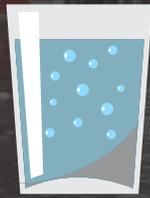
A. Awareness is of utmost importance. People should make themselves aware of their disaster risks and accordingly prepare themselves to tackle an eventuality. All of us should work together to build a disaster resilient society.

* Adapted in English (Original interview to News Services Division of All India Radio in Hindi)•

FLOOD SAFETY



Don't use contaminated food



Don't use contaminated water



Use boiled water



Eat freshly cooked/dry food



Wash hands with soap regularly



Maintain hygiene and cleanliness



Use mosquito nets/repellents



Dispose of garbage properly



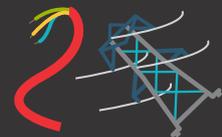
Don't let children/pets near flood water



Use proper footwear



Don't allow water to stagnate



Stay away from open wires, fallen power lines, etc



Use disinfectants



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