



SPO
Strengthening
Participatory
Organization

اداره استحکام شرکتی ترقی

Trail of Tragedy -3

Chronology of Disaster in Sindh 2011

(25th August -15th October)



Contents

Acronyms.....	1
Acknowledgment	2
Chairperson’s Note.....	3
Chief Executive’s Note.....	4
Chapter -1_News Items	5
Chapter-2_Articles.....	194
Pakistan is Again Hit by Devastating Floods	195
Effects of Climate Change	198
The Emergency the World Forgot	201
Rains Wrought Havoc on Historical Sites	205
Strange Ways of the Islamic Republic	209
Pakistan Must Turn to Aquaculture	213
Flood-hit Dalits Facing Hunger and Prejudice	216
Chapter-3_Editorials.....	218
When Water Hits.....	219
Stormy Days	220
Open Skies.....	222
Disaster in Sindh.....	223
The Flood Muddle	225
No let-Up	226
Crop Losses in Sindh.....	228
Disaster Management	229
Endless Pain.....	230
The Peanuts Fund.....	232
Chapter-4_Opinion	234
Non-stop Rains	235
Calamity-Hit Farmers Seek Debt Write-Off.....	236
Disaster After Disaster.....	238
Shortage of Milk	240
Chapter-5_Letter to the Editor.....	241
Floods: Coming to the Aid of Victims	242
Trees, Floods and Protection of Dams	244
Funds Collection	245
Sindh floods: Problems with Relief Work.....	246
Misery of Kaloi.....	247

Millions Displaced After Floods	248
Rain-Hit Sindh: No Relief Despite Funds	249
Floods: Nawabshah in Bad Condition.....	250
Chapter-6_SPO's Response	251
Humanitarian Response	252

Acronyms

NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
PDMA	Provincial Disaster Management Authority
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LBOD	Left Bank Outfall Drain
RBOD-I	Right Bank Outfall Drain
MNV	Main Nara Valley
NNS	National Nutrition Survey
SIDA	Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority
WFP	World Food Programme
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UN	United Nations
Nadra	National Database and Registration Authority
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
TLCs	Temporary Learning Centres
WHO	World Health Organization
IOM	International Organisation for Migration

Acknowledgment

It is acknowledged that this chronology of disaster related to the floods in Sindh in 2011 has been compiled using the online archives of two major national newspapers: Dawn at www.dawn.com and The News at www.thenews.com.pk. SPO presents this chronology through the courtesy of these two media outlets. However, this data does not represent a hundred percent coverage of the disaster and response that have been reported.

The articles, editorials, news items and letters to Editors, included in this chronology are related to heavy Rains, Floods, Human security, Vulnerable Groups, Food Security, Livelihood and Aid & Aid effectiveness covered by the media from 25 August 2011 to 15 October 2011.

SPO does not take the responsibility either for the authenticity of contents of news stories included in this report, or for the treatment of the flood disaster by the media. Most of the news items have been copied and summarized from the news stories published in the above mentioned newspapers.

SPO acknowledges the contribution of compiler and Editor Nusrat Zehra and Emergency team who pains takingly traced the trail of disaster chronology.

Chairperson's Note

Disasters have emerged as a major challenge for Pakistani society, particularly during last one decade. The country has faced high magnitude earthquakes, cyclones and floods. The frequency of disasters is alarming and calls for enhanced role of all stakeholders. As a part of civil society, SPO has been doing its modest contribution in disaster response activities through out Pakistan. Apart from relief operations, SPO has also been engaged in creating mass awareness, producing informative documents and undertaking advocacy initiatives on the issues pertaining to natural disasters. This document is a valuable contribution of SPO in this direction.

I sincerely hope that this chronology of flood disaster of 2011 would provide valuable information to all stakeholders.

Dr. Tufail Muhammad Khan
Chairperson, SPO

Chief Executive's Note

Pakistan suffered from another flood disaster in the second consecutive year. This year Sindh province was badly devastated by abnormal rains. According to the latest figures of the NDMA, 466 people died during the flood. 34,000 villages were affected and 1.6 million houses were damaged which affected more than 9 million people. Rural economy in the province is ruined as cropped area over 2.1 million acres was damaged and more than 116,000 cattleheads were perished. According to the UN, the floods have wiped out 73 percent of standing crops, 36 percent of livestock, and 67 percent of food stocks in the 13 worst-affected districts of Sindh. Scale of damages surpassed the damages of 2011 floods.

Research and documentation of disasters is one of the priority areas of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Department of SPO. This document is aimed at documenting various developments of the flood disaster of 2011. Information was gleaned from leading national newspapers to compile chronology of the flood disaster. Key information on this disaster has been documented in this publication which would hopefully be a useful reference document for researchers and civil society groups.

We look forward to your feedback and guidance on this publication.

Naseer Memon
Chief Executive

Chapter -1

News Items

August 25, 2011 (the News)

Flood victims still in agony in absence of aid

The government aid collected in the name of poor and destitute victims of the recent rains has not managed to reach the deserving as hundreds of victims, who have taken shelter in school buildings and roadsides across the district, wait helplessly for aid for the last 15 days.

Sources said that government godowns are full with plenty of costly relief goods which reached here. The Shaheed Benazir Bhutto auditorium is full of daily use items, from plastic mats to camps, from mineral water bottles to rice, milk powder and cans of anti-septic solutions. Yet, widespread protests by victims families at dozens of relief camps are being reported daily, demanding at least meals twice daily and water for their children.

The callous and indifferent attitude of local government functionaries has forced hundreds of families to live in an atmosphere where water-borne diseases, skin diseases, chest infections and gastroenteritis are spreading while snakebite cases are also being reported in many areas where no proper treatments or medical facilities are available.

Sources also revealed that there is no shortage of relief goods coming directly to the district administration from the PDMA (Provincial Disaster Management Authority), NDMA (National Disaster Management Authority), Sindh government, local philanthropists and business community. However, the apparent mismanagement has deprived thousands of poor shelterless families of their right. Sources divulged that the district administration has given certain quantity of ration bags of relief goods as a quota to a local MNA and an MPA of the ruling party.

“The consequences are obvious as these members of parliament distributed relief items either to their voters and personal peasants, irrespective of whether they are really needy or not,” sources in district government said adding that until there is no check and balance or proper monitoring system, we might expect more serious scandals of huge misappropriation in distribution of relief goods.

In a meeting convened by the district authorities headed by DCO Ghulam Hussain Memon, and attended by philanthropists, local business

community and NGOs, the majority of NGOs with international reputation outright refused to provide relief goods to the district administration. They said they would rather distribute these items through their own volunteers and witness the distribution. One woman Harki Kolhi and her relative Partab told this scribe that snakes had bitten both of them in the leg in the last three days but they had nothing other than basic remedies to help them.

Meanwhile, EDO Revenue Muhammad Bachal Rahupota, when contacted for the first time, said that 102 medical teams were working in the rain-affected areas across the district and over 8,000 ration bags have been distributed among the victims.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Dr Zafar Qadir after his visit of the affected areas has said that over a million people were affected and displaced from their dwellings due to recent flood and heavy rainfall in lower Sindh and Mirpurkhas district. Besides Badin and Tando Mohammad Khan districts some parts of Tando Allahyar, Umerkot and Tharparkar were also affected. He said that 31 persons died in the incidents of roof collapse in the province. He further added that over six lakh acres of land had been inundated by the rain water in the affected areas of district Mirpurkhas. He said that Rs 30 million had been provided to District Government Mirpurkhas for distribution of relief goods among the affected people.

He said that a number of Katcha and well-built houses had been damaged and 60 to 70 percent standing crops had also been destroyed in recent heavy rainfall in the affected areas.

He said that survey of losses would be conducted after draining out the rain water from the affected areas.

MNA Mir Munawar Ali Khan Talpur has said that the Irrigation and Drainage departments were responsible for heavy devastation in lower Sindh as breaches were developed in Mithrao and Jamrao canals and in drains of LBOD due to serious inefficiency of officials of these departments. After visit to affected villages he said government had constituted an inquiry committee, headed by Sindh chief minister, to fix responsibility for negligence and careless working. He said that Irrigation department officials had released irrigation water in the LBOD drain that

had capacity of 4,500 cusecs, as a result of which 16,000 cusecs water was flowing, causing wide breaches in the LBOD drains.

He said that breaches had caused more devastation in Jhuddo, Digri and Mirpurkhas talukas. He said that relief goods and ration were being distributed among the affected people. DCO Mirpurkhas Ghulam Hussain Memon on the occasion said that according to a survey, 32,000 houses were destroyed in district Mirpurkhas and Rs30 million was yet to be provided to that district for distribution of relief goods among the victims. He said that about 316,000 persons were under the open sky while 32,000 affected were living in relief camps in the district and were being provided ration.

He said that Rs2million had been provided to the Health department for providing more medical facilities to the victims and 36 mobile teams of the department were working in the field to provide treatment to the affected people.

August 25, 2011 (The News)

Govt releases Rs748 million for flood victims

The Sindh government has released Rs748 million to be distributed among the remaining flood victims whose homes had been devastated in 2010.

Meanwhile, Chief Secretary Sindh Raja Muhammad Abbas advised the Rehabilitation Department to speed-up relief efforts for those people affected by the heavy rains during the monsoon season this year.

Addressing a high level meeting of Administrative Secretaries, NADRA & Bank's officers at his office, Raja Abbas stressed the need for coordinated efforts to provide Watan Cards and other necessities to the flood victims. Secretary Rehabilitation informed the meeting that 690,936 heads of affected families have been provided with Watan Cards. Of these, 53,782 Watan cards are in the payment process, while payments worth Rs.11.668 billion have been made available to 636,909 families.

August 26, 2011 (The News)

Rains lash Larkana, Indus to witness medium flood

Larkana received intermittent rain marking the beginning of a new monsoon spell, while the Flood Forecasting Division (FFD) predicted medium flood in the Indus River in next 24 hours.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department said the monsoon likely to remain active in the country during the next seven days, producing widespread rains with isolated heavy falls in different parts of the country. Widespread rain/thundershowers, with isolated heavy falls, were expected in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Kashmir. Scattered rain/thundershowers with isolated heavy falls were expected in Sindh and eastern parts of Balochistan during next four to five days. Heavy falls might cause urban flash flooding in the said areas. The flooded areas of lower Sindh will receive more rains/thundershowers during the current week.

The FFD said medium flood was expected in Nara, Dadu,, Right Bank, Kherthar and Balochistan canals in next 24 hours which might inundate areas of Ghotki, Kandhkot, Shikarpur, and Larkana districts. It said moderate to high intensity rainfall had been reported in the upper catchments of the Indus River in Sindh. Consequently, a flow of 160,000 to 190,000 cusecs was likely to arrive at Hyderabad from Wednesday night to Thursday morning. The low-lying areas above areas, particularly the Badin sector including Thatta, might be inundated, the FFD said, asking the authorities concerned to adopt precautionary measures in these areas.

August 25, 2011 (The News)

Emergency response to flooding

The approach adopted by the National Disaster Management Authority's (NDMA) disaster risk reduction (DRR) wing has confused humanitarian organisations which are hesitant to respond to emergency situations in Sindh's rain/flood-affected districts.

It has learnt that international aid agencies have received a message from the NDMA, asking them to continue their early recovery projects they launched in the 2010 flood-affected areas and refrain from involving them in the recent rain and flood emergency in Sindh's districts, which have experienced wide displacement and destruction.

The NDMA's DRR spokesman, Ahmed Kamal, told that they had adopted the 'bottoms-up' approach in which district disaster management authorities (DDMAs) were responsible to cope with any emergency in their respective areas. "If the DDMAs feel incapable in terms of lack of funds or resources, they have to approach the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA). Similarly, if the PDMA feels difficulties they have to approach NDMA for funding or any help they may need to deal with disasters. At last NDMA will look into its resources. In case we do not have more funds we then have to launch appeal to INGOs for help," the NDMA official said.

He said they have contingency plans in which the government bodies are optimistic that they could tackle the matter. The NDMA officials believe that presently there was no huge loss for which they should launch appeal to world aid agencies for help. He could not explain the exact volume or nature of the loss and their assessment or as to how the NDMA, PDMA and their subordinate district bodies were responding to the recent emergency, which had displaced hundreds of families, living in the open in different districts, Badin, Mirpurkhas, Tharparkar, Tando Mohammed Khan and others.

In this regard, the information gathered by The News reveals that several local NGOs had designed various projects of launching relief and development works in the affected areas. However, due to irresponsible approach by the NDMA and PDMA the international aid agencies are waiting to receive any signal from the government in this regard. The government bodies claim that they are providing food, ration, water and health facilities to the people, but, NGOs activists say that the situation on the ground in the affected districts is quite different.

Contrary to this Masood Lohar, National Coordinator, UNDP-GEF SGP, Pakistan launched an appeal to the UNDP partners that the Sindh Government has now formally allowed the NGOs and UN Agencies to start

working in the Flood-affected areas especially Badin. “This is now confirmed by the Sindh Minister for Rehabilitation. It is already too late and the situation is worse because the rate of dewatering is negligible. He asked GEF partners to immediately share the affected union council list with concept so that those should be shared with UN OCHA for their assessments,” he said.

Younus Marri, Manager, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), associated with Pakistan Fisherfolk’s Forum (PFF) said there is confusion at government side. He said Sindh Ministry of Rehabilitation is a separate body. PDMA is responsible to monitor the situation and coordinate with NDMA and DDMA. The NGOs want to help the government under the strict monitoring system of the government bodies. But the question is that why the state bodies themselves are reluctant, he said, adding that there is no assessment by the NDMA, PDMA and DDMA about the loss of agriculture, houses and other infrastructure. The government should realise its responsibility and launch relief work and then may work for further rehabilitation of the displaced people.”

There is complaint that the government officials are providing less food stuff and water to the families at registered relief camps. The people are afflicted with hunger and health problems but the authorities concerned have nothing to come to their help with in Badin and Mirpurkhas districts.

The main cause of the disaster following rain was the breaching to drains, which carry waste into the sea.

Former Irrigation engineer Nazeer Memon, criticizing the design of LBOD— which is the main cause of the disaster— said due to controversy the then Pakistan government changed the map of Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) and moved it to the sea, diverting its earlier designed flow. Otherwise, in the original map the design was to end the drain (LBOD) in the major Shakoor Lake, comprising 300 square kilometres, which forms the border with India.

About 96 square kilometres of the Lake comes under Pakistan while major part of the lake falls in the Indian part. To avoid the controversy with the neighboring country, the government of Pakistan at that time changed design of ending drain channel to lake and moved it to the sea where it was impossible.

August 26, 2011 (Dawn)

Rivers in medium flood

Widespread rains in different parts of the country raised water levels in rivers.

The Sutlej was in medium flood at Ganda Singhwala and it was expected to remain so for a day. Rivers Indus and Kabul were also expected to be in low flood at Kalabagh and Nowshera because of rains over their respective catchment areas.

Met office said the trough of westerly wave moved to northern parts of the country from northeast Afghanistan and moist currents from the Arabian Sea were penetrating into sub-mountain areas of Punjab and Kashmir up to 5000 feet.

Scattered thunderstorm/ rains with isolated heavy falls were also expected over Sindh and Balochistan.

August 28, 2011 (Dawn)

Rains wreak havoc on chilli crop in Umerkot

The recent heavy rains have all but destroyed the chilli crop, which was once available in abundance at the 'Mirchi Mandi' in Kunri Town of Umarkot district. Although there are no official figures to gauge the level of destruction, it is fairly apparent that the rains have adversely affected all growers, sharecroppers and the related workforce.

At least 3,000 workers used to earn daily wages through this trade and the market would receive around 10,000-12,000 bags everyday. But the rains have spelled disaster for the farmers and workers, severely affecting the livelihoods of hundreds of families. The chili produced and sold in the region not only contributes to domestic consumption, but also helps generate foreign exchange.

Traders work on open grounds to dry the chili and the painstaking process takes around 10 days. They added that last year, the price of their product was around Rs8000 per mound, but that amount could surge to between Rs12,000 and Rs15,000 due to the shortage of the crop. The market

doesn't only attract local traders, but others from Karachi, Hyderabad and even the Punjab.

The per acre cultivation cost, including the purchasing seed and fertilizer ranges from Rs35,000—45000. The production per acre is up to 30 or 40 mounds on an average. Traveling by road passing through the areas affected by the rains, it was observed that standing chilli crops in the wide areas of Mirpurkhas, Umerkot and Badin districts had been destroyed. There was no hope for farmers, who were living in the open air, without any form of assistance or aid.

August 29, 2011 (Dawn)

New monsoon system may cause flooding

The Pakistan Meteorological Department warned that a strong weather system developing over central India could cause widespread heavy rains in Pakistan in the coming week. Heavy to very heavy rains are likely to generate severe flooding in lower parts of Sindh and flash floods in local rivers/nullahs of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and eastern Balochistan.

The system, it said, would affect Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from Sunday to Thursday; and Punjab from Sunday to Saturday, adding that heavy rains might cause flash floods in local rivers/nullahs of Punjab, particularly in Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Gujranwala and D.G. Khan divisions.

Lower Sindh will be affected from Monday to Tuesday. Widespread rain and thundershowers with isolated downpour are expected from Wednesday to Saturday in most parts of the province, including Karachi. Heavy rainfall may cause severe flooding in Sindh, particularly in lower parts of the province.

The Met department advised Sindh irrigation officials to reduce water flows to canals during the coming week to avoid flooding and called for close monitoring of the Left Bank Outfall Drain to avoid breaches.

August 30, 2011 (Dawn)

Rains may flood Karachi, Hyderabad: NDMA

The National Disaster Management Authority warned on Monday that there were chances of urban flooding in Karachi and Hyderabad in the coming days because of global warming and the fast-changing weather and monsoon patterns.

Briefing newsmen on the `flood situation during the current rainfalls`, NDMA Chairman Zafar Qadir said the weather patterns had changed and heavy rains might inundate Karachi and Hyderabad in the next few days.

He said the climate change had an impact on the monsoon pattern because it was shifting westwards closer to Indus basin, drifting away from the Indian state of Rajasthan.

According to scientific calculations and weather forecasts, he said, `high to severe monsoon` was expected along the areas of Indus basin in the next 20 years.

Regarding NDMA`s preparedness for the likely urban flooding, Mr Qadir said: "We are prepared for the extreme weather conditions and all our units in Karachi and Hyderabad are on alert to meet any challenge."

He said the federal government had refused to accept any assistance from international donors because there was a question mark over the transparency of spending.

August 30, 2011 (The News)

Met Office warns of heavy rains in country

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) advised all authorities concerned to remain alert from August 30 to September 3, as widespread heavy monsoon rains are expected in the country which may cause severe flooding in lower Sindh during the period.

In an advisory issued by the Met Office here, Director General of PMD Arif Mehmood said that monsoon currents were continuously penetrating the

upper parts of the country that might cause scattered rains in Upper Punjab Bahawalpur, Hazara divisions and Kashmir.

He advised the irrigation authorities of Sindh to reduce the inflows into the canals of Sindh during the coming week and close monitoring of Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) was also advised to avoid the possible breaches due to heavy rains in the coming week, he added. In the Punjab, Hazara, Malakand, widespread rain, thundershowers with isolated heavy falls are expected during the next 24 hours.

September 3, 2011 (Dawn)

Rains wreak havoc in parts of Sindh; 52 die

Heavy rains battered vast swathes of the countryside in Sindh during the first three days of Eid, killing 52 people, breaching canals and flooding vast stretches of farmland. The spell came as a bolt from the blue for the countless still living in makeshift shelters after last year's floods rendered them homeless.

The rain spelt misery for many farmers as it devastated cotton, rice paddies and vegetable crops.

The relentless spell wiped out a big number of villages after breaches in canals and saline drains left them at the mercy of the rampaging waters. Thatched houses collapsed, rendering thousands of the poor shelterless and forced to seek refuge in relief camps.

The irrigation network did not escape nature's fury and suffered breaches at a number of points. Sehwan taluka bore the brunt of the onslaught with breaches at eight places.

Ten people died in Benazirabad, eight in Umerkot, five in Naushahro Feroze, four each in Dadu, Tando Allahyar and Mirpurkhas, three each in Shikarpur and Sanghar, two each in Khairpur and Tharparkar districts and one in Hyderabad city.

The rains wreaked havoc in Benazirabad district, leading to death of 10 people and injuring over 20 others. Four people died and two were injured in Dadu district when roofs and walls of their houses collapsed on them during heavy rains over the last couple of days.

The rain damaged irrigation network and led to breaches in Dhamrah Wah, Rajwah, Mado Shakh, Saeedpur Shakh, Langhano Shakh, Noorja Shakh, Daim branch and Bambha Shakh in Sehwan taluka, which flooded 30 villages and crops of paddy, cotton and vegetables on thousands of acres.

Five breaches occurred in Sim Shakh near the villages of Sultan Bhatti, Qaim Khoso, Khali Charo, Chandkai Mahessar and Karam Chandio, inundating 20 villages and paddy crop on over 5,000 acres.

Over 400 thatched houses collapsed in Dadu, 200 in Johi, 300 in Bhan Syedabad and 300 in Sehwan town and three to four feet rainwater stagnated in different parts of the towns. Hill torrents in Khirthar mountains range filled Nai Gaaj and seven other Nais (natural rainwater drains) to the brim and cut off Tando Rahim, Fazal Jamali, Hassan Rodhnani, Razi Khan, Laiq, Sawaro, Chhinni, Ahmed Birhamani, Golo Faqir, Qasim Rodhnani, Shahik Rodhnani from Johi town.

Thousands of cattle were also killed during heavy rains.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Zafar Iqbal said that the authority was taking adequate measures to provide relief to flood- and rain-stricken people of Sindh.

He said the NDMA had already dispatched thousands of tents and food packets and it would distribute 50,000 more food packets among the affected people in Sindh.

He said the food packets had been arranged by district and provincial governments.

September 3, 2011 (the News)

66 killed as heavy rains lash Sindh

Heavy rains in several districts of Sindh for the last four to five days have killed around 66 people, including nine children, and devastated crops, livestock and disrupted the communication system, according to officials of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA).

Rains have affected over two million people in 15 districts out of a total of 23 districts, said the PDMA's Director Operations, Sajjad Haider. He said that Mirpurkhas, Badin, Tando Mohammed Khan, Benazirabad (formerly Nawabshah) and Khairpur districts were the most affected.

Out of the total deaths, 27 including eight children were reported in Mirpurkhas alone. He said that most of the deaths were caused by the collapse of buildings, electrocution and contaminated water.

Haider said the Army has been requested to remain alert for rescue and relief operations as the Met office has forecast further heavy rains in Sindh during the next four to five days. The ISPR representative said that looking at the intense rains; the Army has taken precautionary measures. Troops are ready to meet any eventuality in the shortest possible time.

The officials said heavy rains would likely adversely affect Kamber-Shahdadkot, Dadu and Jamshoro districts due to the hilly terrain while in lower Sindh, Badin might face adverse situation in the next few days when the LBOD (Left-Bank Outfall Drain) would discharge rain-water of Benazirabad, Sanghar and Mirpurkhas districts into it.

Minister for Rehabilitation Haji Muzaffar Shujra told that Badin and other districts of lower Sindh were already devastated by heavy rains recently but the last four-five days have caused destruction in Benazirabad and Dadu districts. He said three breaches occurred in different canals in Benazirabad that had been plugged.

He said over Rs800 million have been released for relief of the affectees.

DDO Revenue, Badin, Dadlo Zuhrani told this scribe that a grave situation would emerge in the district when LBOD would discharge rain-water into it in next few days. He apprehended that if rains continued, it might bring destruction beyond imagination. He believed that at present, the situation was manageable as less rains was reported in Badin during last few days.

Meanwhile, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah said that the rains have destroyed the province beyond imagination as crops sustained significant losses.

In a statement issued from the CM House, he said that rains have already affected lower Sindh but it now appeared that whole province have been affected. He said the government was making efforts to prevent further destruction and the revenue officials have been instructed to conduct assessment of the destruction caused to crops. He warned that negligent officials would be taken to task. Shah said he has held an emergent

meeting with the heads of the concerned institutions and would visit the affected areas within next few days.

A spokesman for the Irrigation Department said that all canals are already closed at head. No breach has been reported in any main canal. However, three breaches occurred in channels in Rice Canal division, seven breaches occurred in Southern Dadu Division and two breaches occurred in Shahbaz Division Sehwan. All breaches were closed. All the drains were under tremendous pressure, over maximum/over design discharge was passing through the drains. The situation was being closely monitored. However, one breach was reported in Nawabshah Drain and 2L Sub-Drain of Nawabshah Main Drain in Sanghar district that were being plugged and hopefully completed shortly, said the Irrigation Department's handout.

Legislators were critical of the government's inadequate efforts to meet eventuality. NPP, a government ally, legislator Arif Mustafa Jatoi who hails from Naushehroferoz district said that he did not see the government's response. He said there were no machines to drain out water from the cities. He said crops of cotton, sugarcane and other have washed away. He said Moro has been devastated. Another citizen told on phone that a natural-lake has created from Qazi Ahmed to Moro and onwards in the area spread over around 40 kilometers. He said Sakrand, Moro, Qazi Ahmed, Shahpur Jahania and Daulatpur appeared to be the worst affected areas where lakes have been created on both sides of roads.

Residents said that Wapda had made their life miserable as there was no electricity for last four days and it appeared that the power utility did not exist. The chief minister after his visit to the rain-hit areas, suspended six TMOs in Khairpur, declared emergency in the area and called in the army in Tando Muhammad Khan.

He said that first spell of rain had played havoc in southern Sindh and added that all departments were when busy in the rehabilitation of these affected people and then the downpour in the northern parts of Sindh started. The chief minister said that he had received complaints of the rain affected people about the negligence of the officers and he assured them of justice and action against such officers was being carried out. He said that he had asked MPAs and MNAs to visit the rain-affected people and involve all their capacities for rehabilitating and relief of the people.

He said that the assessment of the damages is underway and the DCOs have been asked to recommend their districts for the calamity-hit status and then the Sindh government will on their reports announce financial assistance and exemption of the levies.

Downpour in the most parts of Sindh including Sukkur, Khairpur, Ghotki, Shikarpur, Badin, Naushahro Feroz, Tando Allahyar and other parts of Sindh played havoc and submerged hundreds of villages and agricultural crops. Communication systems were paralysed and many electric pylons collapsed causing suspension of power.

Reports said that due to the heavy rains, hundreds of houses collapsed which caused the death of 36 people in Mehar, Johi, Moro, Naushahro Feroz, Tando Allahyar and other parts of the Sindh have been killed due to the collapsed of houses and in other rain-related incidents and so far as 75 people have been reported to be injured.

Torrential monsoon rains continued on the fifth consecutive day throughout the district Hyderabad, causing flooding in many localities and disrupting power supply.

The Met office recorded 27.5mm, while registering a maximum of 28.5 C and the lowest minimum 24.0 C. The Met office forecast that rains, thunder showers, moderate and rather heavy downpour could take place in the district. The office also said that the renewed spell of the monsoon rains would last till September 6.

The District Coordination Officer of Hyderabad already announced the cancellation of all kinds of leaves of the officers and employees of District Government Hyderabad, Hyderabad Development Authority (HDA) and Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) so that the staff of departments concerned might drain out rainwater and facilitate citizens. But flooding could be seen in each taluka of the district as poor arrangements were made, despite many assurances of the DCO Hyderabad.

Meanwhile, the heavy downpour lashed Jamshoro and 40 villages were seriously affected due to the flooding. However, 20 power poles fell and 70 percent of the areas were deprived of power.

Heavy flow of rainwater washed away the rain nullah in San and around 40 villages were flooded in Tehsil Manjhand, while the railway track from Kotri to Larkana was inundated with water, suspending rail traffic in Laki Shah Saddar.

Meanwhile, a man was electrocuted due to heavy rains in the limits of the Hyderabad police station. Separately, a man was killed as the roof of his house collapsed due to heavy rains at Sakiath Goath in Matiari.

The rain continued for two days and life remained paralysed in Thatta city, surrounding areas and Katchi Abadis due to accumulation of rain mixed sewerage due to failure of drainage system. The drainage channel near Thatta city was flooded causing inundation of several villages. People faced grave difficulties.

Rain continued intermittently in all parts of the district especially coastal areas and continued till the filing of this story. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah has declared Shaheed Benazirabad (Nawabshah) district as calamity-hit after heavy rains lashed the district for the last two days.

The chief minister visited the district where he announced a grant of Rs20 million and 20 truckloads of ration for the district.

Responding to the MNA's request, the chief minister announced Rs30 million drainage schemes for Nawabshah and Rs20 million for Dorr area. Moreover, he also pledged funds for laying asphalt road on the bypass of Nawabshah.

September 4, 2011

Rain brings misery for 2m in Sindh

The Sindh government has said that an initial survey from the first spell of rain revealed that about 9,367 villages in 27 talukas and 155 union councils have been affected and over 2.4 million acres of land, including 0.62 million acres of crop land, flooded.

Almost 50 people were killed and 262 injured. About 600,000 houses were damaged and over two million people affected.

Addressing a press conference at the CM House, Information Minister Sherjeel Memon said initially the government had allocated Rs5 billion for relief and rehabilitation work after wide spread rains in the province.

He said that the decision was taken at a meeting presided over by Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah. This was the second meeting about the relief measures to be undertaken in the affected areas.

Provincial Minister for Disaster Management Muzaffar Shujra and PDMA chief Sualeh Farooqui were present on the occasion.

He said the government would issue Watan cards to the head of the family on which the Sindh government would pay Rs10,000 and the federal government would be requested to sanction equal amount to pay each affected family.

He said the first rain spell started on August 10 and according to initial record in different districts the rains were recorded from 100mm to 550mm and the most affected districts from the rains were Tharparker, Badin and Benazirabad districts.

The minister said Army and Navy troops were carrying out relief work and assisting people to shift them to secure places in Badin and Benazirabad districts.

He said from the rains so far total 85 people lost their life, including 39 in the ongoing spell.

He said the government had formed committees to monitor relief work and supervision on the pattern of the committees set up last year which met the challenge to look after the relief work for the affected people of the unprecedented floods.

Mr Memon said the committees headed by the minister from the district would comprise MPAs, MNA, Senator and DCO concerned.

Besides, he said, the PDMA had also constituted monitoring and field teams to look after relief work in different districts to send immediately required relief material.

In this connection a control room was also set up in its office which would be remain functional 24 hours.

Mr Memon said the chief minister, the ministers were also visiting the affected areas to ensure timely relief measures where the health department had also taken necessary precautionary measures, including mobile medical camp for treatment and provide necessary medicines.

The minister said keeping in view the magnitude of the calamity the government has appealed to NGOs, civil society organisations, philanthropists and traders to come forward to assist their brothers in this hour of need like they played their role in mitigating the sufferings of the flood-affected families last year.

September 4, 2011 (The News)

Rains continue to flood parts of Sindh, Balochistan

Intermittent rains continued to flood parts of Sindh and Balochistan as the death toll rose to 85.

Nine people including women and children were killed in different rain related incidents in Mirpurkhas, Umerkot and other areas of Sindh.

According to reports the second spell of heavy rainfall which started from August 30 continued to pour down causing flash floods.

Thousands of domestic cattle were reportedly killed in different districts of Sindh due to continuous heavy rainfall and floods in lower Sindh districts.

Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Dr. Zaffar Qadir said about 50 persons were killed in lower Sindh districts, according to details officially available.

He said that teams of NDMA had gone to the affected parts of Sindh including Mirpurkhas, Tharparkar, Badin, Hyderabad and other districts where a new spell of heavy rain has continued.

Hundreds of people including rain affectees and representatives of various NGOs and workers took out protest rally and also staged sit in outside the local press club to protest against what they called failure of NDMA to provide ration and other items to all flood affected people in the province.

However, the DCO said that a rescue operation has been conducted in Village Sain Dad Alyani where water had entered the village after a breach in Puran Canal near Naokot.

As a result about 250 people were stranded in the village. DCO Mirpurkhas Ghulam Hussain Memon along with SSP Mirpurkhas Riaz Ahmad Soomro arrived there along with 100 police personnel and started rescue work in the village.

The rescuers pulled out the stranded people from the village and shifted them to safer locations.

A large section of local roads which connected different parts of Sindh has come under rain and flood water completely and scores of small cities and towns were disconnected with communication system of the major cities.

Pakistan Army, Pakistan Navy and Rangers personnel were busy in rescue work in the flood and rain affected areas of Lower Sindh districts.

There is a dire need of tents, food ration, blankets, medicine in the flood and rain hit districts of Sindh where 90 per cent displaced persons were spending days under open sky.

September 04, 2011 (the News)

Rains death toll in Sindh rises to 85

The Sindh government formed committees at the district level to supervise relief operations in the rain-hit areas and decided to give Rs20,000 to each affected family.

The provincial government also reserved Rs5 billion for relief and rehabilitation initially. These decisions were taken in a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Sindh Syed Qaim Ali Shah at the CM House.

Information Minister Sharjeel Memon giving a briefing to media after the meeting said that around 85 people have died in rain-related incidents in the province so far. He said such heavy rains had hit the province after gap of 10 years, which had devastated Thar, Badin and Benazirabad districts and adversely affected other districts. He pointed out rains were recorded upto 550mm in certain areas. Despite this, no breach was reported in

main canals. However, four breaches occurred in minor canals and equal number in Left-Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) and the both have been plugged. He said the committees would be led by ministers and legislators to look after the relief operations in which the opposition's legislators would also be made members to ensure transparency. He said on pattern of Watan Cards of Super Floods of 2010, such cards would also be issued to rain-hit families. The Sindh government would provide Rs10, 000 while equal amount was expected from the federal government.

Talking about scale of destruction, the information minister said rains have affected 27 talukas and 155 union councils, destroyed 9367 villages and damaged 24 lakh acres lands. He said over two million people have been adversely affected while over five lakh houses have been destroyed.

In order to prevent outbreak of diseases, health department has taken steps and mobile medical teams have been sent to the affected areas while a control room has been set up at the office of Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA). He said monitoring teams have also been set up. Memon explained that the help of Army and Navy has been sought for Badin and Benazirabad districts so far, which were the most affected. Around 878 relief camps have been established in different districts.

Syed Qaim Ali Shah in capacity of PPP Sindh President has also directed the party at district level to set up relief camps. The provincial government urged NGOs, civil society and business community to come forward and help the rain affected people.

To a question, the information minister denied allegations that the legislators and politicians were interfering and hindering the efforts of the NGOs in relief operations. He clarified that it was not their policy that the relief should be directed through the government channel. He admitted that the PDMA had taken insufficient efforts in first phase of the rains in Sindh province that devastated six districts but added that the media should give better ideas for helping the people instead of merely criticizing.

He said district administrations have been directed to conduct survey of the damages. Memon said that the relief camps would also be established in Karachi to mobilize philanthropists here.

September 4, 2011 (the News)

Over 2.5 million displaced by rains in Sindh

More than 2.5 million people had been displaced by the current spell of rains for last four days and around 50,000 houses completely destroyed, reports said. Heavy downpour in most parts of the province, including Sukkur, Khairpur, Bhirya City, Moro, Shikarpur, Ghotki, Naushehroferoze, Tando Allahyar and other districts, had added to the miseries of the people. The standing crops, which were the source of income for the people, were completely destroyed.

The Sindh government, instead of providing quick relief and rehabilitation to the rain-affected people, was busy in holding indoor meetings in AC rooms. The water level in the canals caused breaches, which submerged the houses and ready crops. The communication system in hundreds of villages was suspended and the people even deprived of the drinking water.

The district coordination officers declared emergency in their respective districts but never took up precautionary measures to handle the situation and were only interested in declaring their districts as calamity-hit areas to get huge funds.

The reports added that the non-governmental organisations, instead of helping the rain-hit people, were seen busy in project designing to get funding from the donor agencies. The affected villagers were seen selling out their cattle on low rates to get some bread and butter.

The ministers, elected representatives and even the DCOs, were engaged in the media projection and gaining cheap publicity instead of reaching out to the affected people and providing them relief. The rain victims want food and shelter first and not compensation, for which announcements were being made. They need medicines because Malaria and Diarrhoea are rampant and taking lives due to poor health conditions.

The havoc caused by recent rains continued on the fifth consecutive day in district Dadu, as 200 more houses collapsed taking the tally to 1,200, while five more people, including three children, died due to rain-related incidents. According to the figures of the Agriculture Department, more

than 30,000 acres of the cultivated land was destroyed due to heavy rains in the Kheerthar Mountain.

The water level in the Manchar Lake and Indus River at Dadu Moro Bridge has also increased rapidly. Around 200 houses in Dadu, Johi, Kachho, Khairpur Nathan Shah and Mehar collapsed while five more people were killed due to roof collapse. More than 30,000 acres of land cultivated with cotton, onion, red chilies, tomatoes, etc were totally destroyed. However, Dadu DCO Dr Niaz Abbasi issued a press note, stating that more than 600 families have become victim to heavy rains and they have been shifted to 115 relief camps, established by the district administration. Two more 20-foot wide breaches also developed at two points in at Kawro Shakh and Pir Gunio Shaikh villages resulting in inundation of more five villages and hundreds of acres of cultivated land.

September 5, 2011 (the News)

21 Sindh districts devastated by rains: CM

Sindh Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah has said 21 districts of the province were severely affected by the recent torrential rains.

Presiding over a meeting to review the devastation by rains in the Tando Allah Yar district, CM said the federal government, on the recommendation of the Sindh government, was seriously considering that it should make an appeal to the United Nations (UN) for help to the rain victims in the province.

Keeping in view the devastations, the chief minister declared the Tando Allahyar district as calamity-hit area and announced Rs 20 million grant for the relief and rescue operations in the district.

He said the Sindh government has spared Rs 5 billion from its development budget of Rs160 billion to provide relief to the rain victims in Sindh, “but the losses from the rains were more than calculations and we have recommended to the federal government for more funds and for an appeal to the United Nations in this regard.”

He said earlier, the federal government was reluctant in appealing to the United Nations but it was now considering the Sindh governmentís

request as more rains have taken the matter beyond the approach of the provincial government.

Qaim said that to date, 46 rain-related casualties have been reported, while standing crops in millions of acres and peoples in millions have been affected. He said the Badin district and other parts of coastal areas were worst affected as compared to other districts.

The chief minister said the district relief committees, comprising the DCOs and public representatives, have been constituted for each district to ensure transparent utilisation of relief fund and monitoring the survey work. He said that the provincial minister belonging to the district concerned would act as the head while the DCO to perform as secretary of the committee.

The CM said the Sindh Government has decided to provide Watan Cards to each rain-affected family and Rs10,000 would be provided to each card holder and he has also recommended the federal government to give matching grant to the victims.

He said President Asif Ali Zardari was very concerned about the rain devastation and has directed to provide ample relief to the rain victims, adding though all the district governments had established relief camps in their areas where all facilities, including food, medicines and drinking water, were being provided to the victims but some victims at their own will were residing on the banks of canals, at roadsides.

He advised such victims to come to the relief camps and avail government facilities. He directed the officer concerned to prepare the PC-I for laying a new drainage system in Tando Allahyar and assured that the Sindh government would provide funds for repair of broken roads in the district. Earlier, the chief minister was briefed by the DCO who said that over 0.15 million people have been affected due to torrential rains in the district, out of which 25,292 people have been encamped in 89 relief camps. The DCO said that more than 4,000 houses have been damaged completely while more than 17,000 were partially damaged.

He further informed the CM that around 1,30,285 acres of cultivated land have been affected out of which crops on 73,081 acres have been totally damaged.

September 5, 2011 (The News)

Qaim announces Rs10,000 for each rain-hit family

Chief Minister Sindh Syed Qaim Ali Shah has announced Rs10,000 as relief amount to each rain victim family and assured more financial assistance from the federal government also.

He was talking to media while visiting the rain-affected areas of Mirpurkhas district. The chief minister said, as per the directions of President Asif Ali Zardari, he is trying to redress the grievances of each and every rain victim. Subsequently each provincial minister of Sindh government has been directed to help rain victim families in their respective areas.

Qaim said the Sindh government has taken serious notice of media reports about the wide-scale deaths of cattle and animals in the rain-hit areas and warned that if situation persists, stern action would be taken against the respective district officers of live stock department. He further told that many TMOs (Tehsil Municipal Officers) in the province have been placed under suspension for their failure to drain out rain water from residential areas while the fate of other TMOs will be decided in next few days as enquiries against them are underway.

Meanwhile, Zahid Bhurgari, a member of the Nara canal area water board warned that the water level of LBOD spine at RD317 is continuously rising and in case of any breach, Noukot town might inundated within minutes time. He said that he and his team are trying to save the Noukot town on self-help basis, but district administration is totally indifferent to the situation despite their hue and cry.

September 5, 2011 (The News)

Govt official, 16 others held for snatching relief goods in Mirpurkhas

The Mirpurkhas police have arrested and lodged an FIR against a senior government officer and 16 others on the charge of snatching relief goods meant for rain victims.

The Satellite Town Police said the cases of trying to snatch relief goods, interfering in official duty and riots were registered against 17 people, including Director Colleges Prof Abdul Aziz Panhwar, who was leading the unruly group of people. Police said after a few hours, all the accused were released on bail. On the other side, the government agencies have initiated a probe against alleged misappropriation and mismanagement of costly relief goods.

Sources revealed that there were credible reports that the relief goods intended for poor rain victims, were distributed among irrelevant people, including the police and revenue officials as well as those recommended by local influential people. When asked for comments, Mirpurkhas DCO Ghulam Hussain Memon boldly admitted that he himself ordered for distribution of some relief bags among policemen, revenue officials and even to some media men because, they are also poor people.

Meanwhile, torrential rains that continued intermittently also added to miseries of thousands of homeless rain victims staying at roadsides or in school buildings. Mosquito attacks and snake-bite incidents further worsened the already deteriorating situation. Water borne diseases have broken out among helpless rain victims, especially in children and women. Besides, diseases were also reported in cattle and several deaths are being reported daily. The dwellers and rain victims were compelled to sell their animals at very nominal prices. They complained that the district administration focused all their relief efforts only to the areas belonging to the ruling party's members of parliament, whereas rest of population had been left at the mercy of cyclonic rains and possible floods in their areas. Hundreds of villages and standing crops of cotton, chilies, sugarcane and vegetables on thousands of acres had inundated under 4 to 5 feet water. According to the Mirpurkhas DCO, the situation of LBOD banks are **critical** and breaches might occur any time. He said, the LBOD banks are being closely monitored round the clock, however, if the situation further worsened, Pak Army and Navy may be called for help in rescue efforts. At least five critical points at the LBOD banks have been identified, and work to strengthen these places is under progress, the DCO added.

However, Director Nara Canal Ghulam Mustafa Ujjan came up with totally opposite point of view, saying that situation was totally under control and normal, as the LBOD spine still has two feet capacity to hold rainwater. He

claimed that even five more torrential rains like previous ones, cannot cause any critical situation in the LBOD spine drain.

September 5, 2011 (The News)

All measures being taken to help victims: chairman NDMA

Chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Zafar Iqbal Qadir has said that the organisation is providing relief to flood and rain-stricken people of Sindh.

He told a television channel that the NDMA had dispatched tents, medicine and food packets and other essential items to the areas which have been severely hit by rains and floods. He said that 50,000 food packets would be distributed among the victims. He said that about 4,000,000 to 5,000,000 people had been affected in the recent heavy rains.

The NDMA chairman said that 150,000 affected people had been provided accommodation at relief camps. Zafar Iqbal said that all the relief activities were being carried out on the special directives of the president and the prime minister.

He said “we are providing all facilities to the people affected by rains and floods in Sindh.” He said that federal government is fully supporting the efforts of NDMA to help the flood-stricken people.

To a question, he said that Army and Navy are also present in the calamity-hit areas to help rescue the people. He added that two teams comprising experts would be sent to the rain and flood-affected regions for collecting data of damages of properties, crops, and other infrastructure. He stressed the need for reviving drainage plan in the districts and cities to avert heavy damages in future.

September 5, 2011 (The News)

‘Federal, Sindh govts providing relief to victims’

The federal and provincial governments have taken adequate measures for providing relief to rain and flood affected people of the Sindh Province.

This was stated by Ghulam Qadir Chandio Member of the Sindh Assembly (MPA), while talking to Pakistan Television. He said that the steps were taken on the directives of the president to help the flood-ravaged people.

The MPA of Benazirabad said that the Army and Navy personnel were shifting the people to safer places and taking other relief measures to help them. Ghulam Qadir said that heavy rains that hit many parts of the country, including Sindh had destroyed crops, houses, swept away animals and inflicted extensive damage on property of the people.

The provincial minister said that recent heavy rains played havoc in most parts of the Sindh including Benazirabad. Replying to a question, he said eight people were reportedly killed during the calamity caused by rains and floods. To a question, he said that rescue teams had been dispatched to the flood-hit areas to provide relief to the people.

September 5, 2011 (Dawn)

Widespread rain to continue as new monsoon low nears

Eastern Sindh, Southern Punjab and Balochistan`s Kirthar Range will continue to face widespread rain with heavy to very heavy showers at isolated places, as the second monsoon low came closer to Pakistan.

The monsoon low, which was spotted over the Indian state of Chhattisgarh a few days ago, moisture from the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal and a westerly wave have been generating widespread rains, especially in Sindh since Aug 28.

The continuous rains have generated urban flooding, claimed lives of over 50 people and destroyed crops over a vast area of land, especially in Sindh.

The first monsoon low from India had generated devastating rains in the country, mainly in Sindh, in mid-August.

Another nine lives were lost in rain-related incidents in Lower Sindh following torrential rain. Flood Forecasting Division chief Riaz Khan said the system was expected to generate widespread rain, heavy to very heavy at times, during `the next at least 36 hours`. It moved over southern Rajasthan which is adjacent to Mirpurkhas division in Pakistan. It will

directly affect Mirpurkhas, Hyderabad and Sukkur divisions (Sanghar, Umerkot, Mitthi, Thatta, Badin, Ghotki and Nawabshah districts).

The monsoon activity begins in Pakistan in the first week of July and ends by September 15. This year it began in the last week of June.

The flood division reported that the Indus River was in low flood at Guddu and Sukkur, but Mr Khan said the situation was not alarming. Urban and flash flooding being generated by incessant rains, particularly in Sindh and adjacent Balochistan, were posing real threat to human life and property, he said.

September 6, 2011 (Dawn)

Flood relief efforts in Sindh All available stocks of tents to be procured: NDMA

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani were informed that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) would immediately procure the entire stock of tents available in the market to provide temporary shelter to flood-hit people of Sindh.

NDMA chairman Zafar Qadir informed that 15,000 available tents would be purchased and over 10,000 manufactured for distribution in flood-affected areas.

About ration packs distributed by the NDMA on behalf of the federal government, he said so far 600,000 packs had been dispatched, adding that the federal government had provided 8.5 million aqua tablets and one million hygiene kits in flood-hit areas.

He said that 40,000 mosquito nets, 40,000 blankets and 10 rescue boats had also been provided by the federal government through the NDMA to the provincial government for relief operations.

He said that 25,000 jerry cans, 10,000 buckets, 35,000 plastic sheets and 8,000 water coolers had been distributed so far.

He further said that 100 hand spray pumps had been purchased by the federal government to prevent water-borne diseases.

Later, speaking at a press conference, Mr Zafar Qadir said rains and floods in Sindh had affected four to five million people and left 132 people dead.

He said around 690,000 houses had been damaged, 250,000 of them completely. He said standing crops on 1.7 million acres of land had been destroyed. A loss assessment survey will soon be carried out after water in flood-hit areas receded.

Answering a question, the NDMA chief admitted that the distribution mechanism needed improvement, but rejected allegations of corruption in distribution of relief goods.

He said the NDMA had posted its officers in all affected districts to monitor the distribution process. He said the distribution of relief goods and management of relief camps was the job of provincial governments concerned, adding that the federal government had so far spent Rs1.5 billion on relief efforts and by the end of September the amount would reach around Rs7 billion.

He said the government was procuring foodstuff for flood-hit people from the Utility Stores Corporation and Canteen Stores Department to their full capacity, but because of the level of demand it had now been decided to involve private vendors and thus in the next two days the NDMA would be able to supply another 50,000 ration bags per day.

September 06, 2011 (The News)

6,000 villages inundated in Khairpur

Monsoon rains in Pakistan have killed 136 people in a month and destroyed crops and houses in the flood-prone south of the country.

According to provincial government officials, some 2.2 million people have been affected and 300,000 displaced, said Sajjad Haider Shah, an official at the disaster management authority in Sindh.

He said most of the victims were killed as a result of falling roofs, drowning in floodwaters and water-borne diseases. "Since August 11, when the first spell of rains started, 46 people were killed while 90 more have died since August 27," Shah said.

“The victims include women and children whose details are being gathered,” he added. Two senior Sindh government officials confirmed that more than 100 people had died as a result of the rains. The first spell of rain mainly affected seven southern districts of the province, while second spell has hit the entire province, except its capital Karachi, said Shah.

APP adds: As heavy rain lashed several parts of the Sindh province, the number of people affected is rising. The situation has worsened in Badin while, according to reports, in Khairpur district, 15 more villages have been inundated. After overnight rain, the situation once again deteriorated in Badin and five villages were inundated.

Meanwhile, 6,000 villages have been inundated in the Khairpur district and according to DCO Abbas Baloch, over one million acres of farmland has been destroyed, reported a private news channel. The Army has been called out to Faiz Ganj while the communication network of several areas has been disrupted. Over 50 villages have been inundated in Thatta.

The hardest-hit area in Ghotki is Obaro where several feet deep water has accumulated. Roads leading to Dadu have been closed and this has led to an increase in prices of food items. Meanwhile, the water level at one dam in Jamshoro has risen drastically and has overrun a rail track, inundating over 200 villages.

The spread of gastroenteritis in the rain-affected areas claimed the lives of more than 15 people, including children and women. In the rain-hit areas, including Badin, Naushahro Feroz, Tando Muhammed Khan, Sukkur, Obaro, 15 more people died whereas hundreds of others have been hospitalised in local hospitals.

The victims said that even with the ongoing rain, the risk of death due to diseases would be considerably less if the authorities drained out the four-to-five feet of standing rainwater from their areas. They said that mosquitoes carry viral infection from the stagnant water, spreading malaria and other diseases. The victims demanded that the Public Health Department should ensure the fumigation of the rain-affected areas as well as in the relief camps.

It has learnt that in the Nara town of Khairpur, disease in the cattle has led to a major loss of source of income of the people living here. The Animal Husbandry Department was not bothered to visit the areas to vaccinate the remaining cattle, villagers said. Hundreds of cattle have already died here.

Revenue Minister Sindh Jam Mehtab Hussain Dahar distributed relief goods among the victims in Ghotki. Provincial Minister of Revenue, along with MNA Mian Abdul Haq and DCO Ghotki Zahid Ali Abbasi, visited the rain-hit areas of Obaro and Ghotki. The minister also distributed relief goods among the victims and assured them of financial support.

Dahar said that District Management, Ghotki, had provided him details of the rain damages, which will be brought to the notice of CM Sindh. Meanwhile, DCO Ghotki briefed him that eight people have been killed and 12 injured by heavy rains in Ghotki district, besides 666 villages have been affected, 2,000 houses completely ruined and 3,000 houses damaged. He said 30,000 people were affected by the rains. He informed the minister that the district government had allocated Rs50,000 for each death by rain and for the rehabilitation of houses of the victims.

After heavy rains lashed Naushahro Feroze, an additional 10 villages have been inundated. Around 8,910 affected persons of 1,363 families have been shifted to 60 relief camps established by District Government.

Meanwhile, hundreds of affected persons staged a protest on the National Highway against not providing them food, tents and medical facilities. As a result, the traffic remained suspended for an hour.

Two cases of dengue fever were also reported in Mehrabpur Taluka, according to EDO Health Mazhar Heesbani.

The Hyderabad district received light, but intermittent showers for the eighth straight day. Officials of the Met office, Hyderabad, were not available for forecast. However, the Met office of Karachi forecast for Hyderabad that widespread rains, thunder showers and heavy to very heavy downpours could be expected for the upcoming 24 hours in the Hyderabad district. The office also said that the renewed spell of the monsoon rains would last till September 8.

Residents of different localities in the Hyderabad district staged a protest against long power breakdowns and low voltage. They chanted slogans against the Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (Hesco), torched old tyres and empty crates of mangoes, and blocked main roads in their respective areas.

Meanwhile, the Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Qaim Ali Shah, has said that more than three million people have been displaced/affected due to torrential rains in Sindh and added that the farming community was the worst affected among them.

He said that after providing shelter, food and health facilities to rain victims, reclamation of agricultural land by draining out standing water was the top priority of the Sindh government.

He was speaking at a press conference and then addressing PPP workers' meeting at Tando Muhammad Khan on Monday evening, a press release issued by the Information Department said.

The Sindh CM, along with Sindh Minister for Irrigation Jam Saifullah Dharejo, Sindh Minister for Rehabilitation Muzaffar Shujra and Adviser to the CM Mohammad Siddique Abu Bhai, visited Tando Muhammad Khan to review the rain losses and meet the rain victims and notables. He said that remission of land tax and water charges had been given to the farming community of the calamity-hit areas and recovery of provincial loans had also been postponed.

He said that in addition to the provision of Watan Cards, his government was also planning to reclaim farmland by de-watering and would also provide soft loans to farmers, enabling them to cultivate their next crops and stand on their own feet.

He said that only in Tando Muhammad Khan, at least 250,000 people and 50,000 families had been affected. As such, Tando Muhammad Khan had already been declared as a calamity-affected district.

Referring to the briefing made by DCO Tando Muhammad Khan Syed Barkat Ahmed Rizvi, the Sindh chief minister announced Rs20 million as additional grant for relief works in Tando Muhammad Khan and said that Rs30 million had already been provided to the district administration.

He also asked the PDMA to provide 10,000 tents and medicines to the district administration, TMK, and asked the officers to put up PC-I for laying efficient drainage system in Tando Muhammad Khan.

The Sindh chief minister said that the menace of encroachment over the drainage system was the main hurdle in drainage flow. However, he said that efforts would be made to remove encroachments and de-silt the drainage system to avoid any adverse effects on the farmland.

Owing to the critical situation of the LBOD spine, the district administration has called the Army to tackle with any untoward situation. Heavy traffic has been banned on the bridge of the LBOD canal connecting Noukot and Mithi, after it was declared dangerous as water in the canal was pushing up at the bridge top.

The chief minister Sindh, Syed Qaim Ali Shah, visited the rain-affected areas of Jhudo, Digri and Noukot and expressed dissatisfaction on non-provision of sufficient relief goods and medicines to rain victim families.

In Thatta city, Civic conditions are extremely deplorable following the recent rains. The main Shahi Bazaar and almost all roads and streets are inundated with sewerage mixed rainwater

Meanwhile, growers have lost their standing crops, including vegetables, cotton and paddy. Several poultry farms have been damaged, causing losses of thousands of rupees to farmers.

Several fish farms were also overflowed, causing losses to fish farmers. People have invited the attention of higher authorities and assistance to them.

September 7, 2011 (Dawn)

Rain damages 300,000 houses, says MPA: 98pc cotton crop in Nawabshah destroyed

98 per cent standing crop of cotton on 452,000 acres has been destroyed throughout Shaheed Benazirabad district during the recent rainfall and almost 300,000 houses damaged.

MPA Ghulam Qadir Chandio has said, while talking to reporters after a press conference addressed by Chairman of Baitul Maal Zamrud Khan.

He said that almost 50 per cent of standing crops of sugarcane and banana and 300,000 houses were also severely damaged. Thirteen people died in rain-related incidents whereas a large number was injured, they added.

They further said that the total rainfall recorded during a few days starting from Aug 29 reached 350mm, whereas the total rainfall during the last fortnight was more than 430mm which was not less than a natural disaster.

Ghulam Chandio and Zamrud Khan said that some 17,176 ration bags and 5,973 tents were distributed among rain victims in various parts of the district. They said that 100 rice bags of 50 kilograms were also distributed in relief camps established in the four talukas of the district whereas medical aid was provided to 17,000 patients in medical camps established in the rain-hit areas.

Some 30 pumps were being used to drain out water from roads and important buildings, they added, help from the City District Government of Karachi for relief works has also been taken.

September 8, 2011(The News)

Situation worsens as more rains lash Badin

National Assembly Speaker Dr Fahmeda Mirza said that heavy rains played havoc in Badin district and forced people to leave their homes besides completely destroying all the crops in the area.

She said that emergency has been declared in Badin, while Navy and the Army were busy in rescue and relief work. She said that initially people were not ready to leave their houses which led to more damages. She said that overtopping of the Left Bank Outfall Drains (LBOD) played havoc in Badin along with heavy rains. She said that 100 percent population as well as crops in Badin has been affected by continuous rains.

She dismissed allegation of unfair distribution of relief goods and said goods were being provided to the victims without any discrimination. APP report: The situation in Badin district has become worst as it received 100mm more rain in last 24 hours. The teams of Army and Navy have been called in for relief and rescue work by the district administration.

Speaker National Assembly Dr Fehmida Mirza has set up camp office at the district headquarters to monitor relief activities. The Army and Navy personnel are busy shifting stranded people especially from coastal belt to safer places. The district administration has set up 142 relief camps at different points to accommodate more than 40,000 displaced people. Keeping in view the situation, Dr Fehmida Mirza has appealed to the donor agencies and NGOs to donate tents, food items and bottled drinking water for the rain-hit people. She also presided over a meeting and asked Nadra to complete process of making Watan Cards within next 10 days so that financial assistance could be provided to rain victims.

September 8, 2011 (Dawn)

Zardari reviews relief work; Rain-hit people assured of help

President Asif Ali Zardari said that no effort would be spared by the government to provide relief to the flood-affected people and rehabilitate them at the earliest.

Speaking to different groups of people affected by the natural disaster at the Zardari House in Nawabshah (Shaheed Benazirabad District), he called upon the well-to-do and the affluent to assist the government in carrying out this task.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah and MNA Faryal Talpur were present during these meetings, presidential spokesperson Farhatullah Babar told Dawn.

President Zardari, who reached there earlier in the day to witness and get first-hand account of the widespread devastation caused by the flooding in Sindh, took an aerial view of Kazi Ahmad, Sakrand and Daur towns in the Benazirabad district.

Mr Babar quoted President Zardari as having directed the chief minister, who accompanied him during the visit, to monitor the situation personally and ensure that the affected families got relief and rehabilitated.

Mr Zardari will also be informed about the scale of damage to the crops, property, livestock and the communication network. He has already directed the National Disaster Management Authority and the federal and

the provincial governments to utilise all resources to provide relief to the affected people.

The President was informed that cooked food was being provided to the affected families. The president directed the Baitul Mal chief to ensure that flood-affected families in far-flung areas also got the relief.

September 8, 2011 (DAWN)

Rain disaster in Sindh; Govt to launch international appeal for help

In view of the enlarging magnitude of disaster caused by heavy rainfall and flash floods in Sindh, the government has decided in principle to launch an international appeal to cope with the enormous challenges it faces in providing relief to the affected people.

Official sources told Dawn that incessant rains were making the calamity worse. And an imminent resource gap had forced the authorities to think in terms of seeking international help.

They said a formal appeal was likely to be made within the next three days.

National Disaster Management Authority chairman Zafar Qadir said at a press conference that Mitthi area in Tharparkar district alone had received a rainfall of 300mm in 12 hours, posing a threat to the adjacent areas. Badin district also received considerable rainfall.

“The situation is alarming. It is an enormous challenge as the physical infrastructure to manage the draining of water has totally collapsed,” he said.

Mr Qadir said a joint assessment team of the United Nations and NDMA would be going to the rain-affected areas to meet major stakeholders, including political leaders, lawmakers and social activists. The team would find out what sort of state intervention was required.

He said that in view of the gravity of the situation a meeting between representatives of the economic affairs division and the UN officials took place.

Answering a question, the NDMA chief said that up to five million people had been affected and some 130,000 people were currently living in tents. He conceded that there were people living under open skies but said their number was negligible. He said these people were not ready to be evacuated to safe places.

Mr Qadir said there was no food shortage in the affected areas. He said the number of tents sent so far to the affected areas by the NDMA alone was 43,000 and another 18000 were in the pipeline.

September 9, 2011 (DAWN)

Rain-hit Sindh villagers suffer from negligence

Sitting on a borrowed cot under the open sky on the side of a link road that terminates in his village, the elderly Bheeko Kohli describes how he has gone hungry for the past three days. Crying, he points to a small quantity of wheat lying on the ground that is now too wet to be consumed.

Behind him lies a cotton crop that is rotting in floodwaters in Ghulam Rasool Shah Jillani village of Tando Allahyar district.

Bheeko is a farm worker, but not all landowners have helped their workers financially during this time. As in other natural disasters, many of the rural poor have been left to fend for themselves.

Their fragile homes, made of thatched straw, have collapsed. Escaping to higher ground, living under the open sky or braving the conditions of crowded relief camps — if they can reach them — are their only option.

The cattle they cherish, the source of their livelihood, are without shelter too and vulnerable to theft, lack of fodder and to disease because of the unavailability of medication.

According to the National Disaster Management Authority, 4.9 million people have been affected by this summer's rains in 22 districts of Sindh.

Last year, it was flooding along the right bank of the Indus that resulted in displacement of millions of people and massive losses to the agricultural sector.

The damage from this year's monsoon has been mainly in left-bank districts where no contingency plan seems to have been in place. The situation has been worsening with each passing moment because rainfall has been continuing unabated, in some areas for 48 hours.

"its chaos," says Dr Irfan Gul Magsi, a former provincial minister from Tando Allahyar. "People are quarrelling among themselves to divert water from their lands to others. The government is missing from the scene while the rains are devastating everything."

The Left Bank Outfall Drain and other drains branching out from the Indus are flowing to their full capacity and in some areas are overflowing. The provincial irrigation authorities have simply been unable to cope with them.

"It is beyond our capacity to control the situation," admits a senior official of the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority.

"We have asked district administrations to evacuate people located around surface and saline water drains."

Locals also blame the authority for failing to clear the LBOD and other drains of weeds and silt over the years.

With water overflowing from them at various locations, roads connecting towns and cities are under water. It is hard to differentiate between roads and the riverine plains along them, which have begun to resemble marshes.

In Tando Allahyar, a relatively fertile district, lush green fields of cotton, paddy, vegetables and fodder have been washed away. Sugarcane has a greater chance of survival, but if water remains stagnant in fields canes will start to rot. Evidence of this can already been seen in the roots, which have started turning black.

This year, Sindh was set to have a bumper crop of cotton. But according to the province's agriculture department, 55 per cent of its cultivated area is now submerged and Sindh stands to lose about two million bales of cotton.

The aftermath of downpours has also exposed the claims of the NDMA and Provincial Disaster Management Authority of being prepared for disaster mitigation.

Notwithstanding these organisations' claims that they have provided relief, the affected population is facing a serious shortage of food and tents despite forecasts of heavy rain.

Improvised tents pitched by the population dot the scene in rain-affected districts. Furious rain victims are blocking railway crossings and main roads, demanding relief goods and lambasting revenue officials for denying them tents.

Conditions in relief camps are not much better. Around 2,000 people are housed in one camp located at the Government Degree College in Tando Jan Mohammad in Mirpurkhas. Livestock, women, children and cooking facilities share single rooms, and ration is almost finished.

Women have delivered babies without health facilities or drugs. There are no doctors, but at least four pregnant women need prenatal check-up, and lack of privacy has left them in an uncomfortable position.

September 09, 2011 (The News)

President Zardari assures govt's full support to flood victims of Sindh

President Asif Ali Zardari assured government's fullest support to the flood victims of Sindh for food, shelter and relief and vowed to rehabilitate them at the earliest here on Thursday.

Asif Zardari, who had an overnight stay at Benazirabad, brushed aside security and protocol and walked through the knee-high flood waters in the main bazaar of the town to meet the stranded people and assured that they would not be left alone in their hour of need. Despite rain and their hardship the people rushed out into the streets, waved, cheered and shook hands with the President.

On the occasion, women and children standing on the rooftops and balconies waved and raised slogans of 'Jeay Bhutto', 'Jeay Benazir Bhutto' and appreciated him for being with them at a difficult time.

The President was briefed about the measures being taken for the 4.9 million flood-affected people in Sindh and informed that equipment was being deployed on a massive scale to drain out the water.

The President was also informed that the floods had inundated around four million acres of land, of which 1.7 million acres had ready crops, also informed that the floods had affected 0.8 million people in Benazirabad alone. It damaged on a large scale crops and farms; including 80 per cent of banana, dates, chilli, sugarcane and destroyed cotton crop that would produce 2.3 million bales. The floods also destructed 690,000 houses, he was told.

Zardari, accompanied by Chief Minister Sindh Syed Qaim Ali Shah and local authorities visited various localities. He shook hands, offered the people solace and said they would be provided all possible assistance and would be rehabilitated as soon as the flood waters recede.

He directed the local and provincial authorities to ensure that the farmers were provided relief on priority.

The President also had an aerial view of the flood-devastated areas of Mirpur, Jhaddo, Kot Ghulam Muhammad and Nohkot.

The President was also briefed about the scale of damage and measures being taken to evacuate the people still trapped, the relief camps set-up to provide shelter, food and healthcare to the displaced people. He was also informed about the vast scale damage to the crops, property, livestock and the communication network.

September 9, 2011 (DAWN)

Devastation caused by rains: President urges UN to launch aid appeal

In view of the devastation caused by continuing monsoon rains in Sindh, President Asif Ali Zardari called UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and urged the world body to launch an international appeal for humanitarian assistance to the rain-affected people of Pakistan.

According to President's Spokesperson Farhatullah Babar, the president who visited the affected areas apprised Mr Ban of the massive devastation and people's misery.

He said damage to standing crops, particularly cotton, had also been colossal.

The president stressed the need for an urgent UN appeal for international humanitarian assistance.

Mr Zardari was informed that floods had inundated around four million acres of land, with standing crops on 1.7 million acres.

Accompanied by Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah and local officials, the president visited various localities and directed the local and provincial authorities to provide adequate relief to farmers on a priority basis. He also asked them to send medical teams for families stranded in different areas.

September 10, 2011 (Dawn)

New spell of rain in Sindh forecast

Another monsoon weather system developed over eastern India has started moving to southern parts of Pakistan and may generate a fresh spell of rains in Sindh, south Punjab and eastern Balochistan.

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department, these areas may receive rains of moderate to heavy intensity.

The current spell of monsoon rainfall is weakening and is likely to subside during the next 36 hours after scattered rains in Sindh.

Meanwhile, the weakening monsoon low over Sindh caused rain in different parts of the country, especially in Sindh.(done)

September 10, 2011(The News)

UN-Sindh govt hold talks for relief of 4m rain-hit people

Chief Minister Sindh Syed Qaim Ali Shah said that there is an acute need of food, shelter, medicines, clean drinking water etc as the heavy

downpour has badly affected 21 districts out of 23 in the province, rendering four million people homeless and killing 195 persons.

Talking to a seven-member delegation of the United Nations who called on him at the Chief Minister House, Qaim said there was state of calamity in many districts, and there is a need of a lot of efforts and relief for the affected people. The provincial chief executive said that most of the people were not in camps and they were with cattle. He informed that one million tents were needed. Livestock and cattle have also been lost. He said the precious lands were under water due to which the crops had been destroyed completely. He said that this loss was not only the loss of province, but a loss to the country. Qaim urged the United Nations to come forward and extend complete support and assistance for the affected people.

He appreciated the role of the United Nations with regard to assistance and cooperation for flood relief measures last year. The Resident Coordinator, United Nations (Pakistan) Timo Pakkalar termed the situation in Sindh province as serious and said that they were working with the federal and provincial governments for relief measures. He said that it was the mission to respond with commendable efforts under the presently available resources.

He fully assured that the UN will play its role for extending assistance to affected people. Ms Yasmeen and Andro of the United Nations delegation termed the rains as similar to last years floods and assured that UN was ready to cooperate with more support.

It was emphasised that urgent measures and coordinated efforts will be accelerated so that affected people are assisted properly. National Disaster Management Authority Chairman Zafar Iqbal Qadir informed that the federal government has decided to assist the people of Sindh province and added that tents available have already been dispatched, while the other required tents were being procured in bulk from suppliers. He said that 80,000 ration bags have so far been supplied and 40,000 more bags will be sent in the affected districts soon.

Provincial Disaster Management Authority Director General Saleh Farooqui informed that the authority has so far released 34,217 family ration packs, 1,390,000 bags of flour, 35,000 packs of Dal Channa (pulses),

242,440 bottles of mineral water, 1,200 bottles of six-liter mineral water, 39,000 packs of sugar, 20,750 packs of Ghee oil worth Rs100,500,442.

As far as non-food items were concerned, 14,322 tents, 5,000 plastic mats, 11,000 mosquito nets and 100 jerry can worth Rs114,437,120 have also been supplied to all districts, he said. Besides, the Relief Department has also supplied 1,000 family ration packs worth Rs1,500,000 and 9,097 tents, 9,800 plastic mats, 525 mosquito sprays, 3,230 water purification units and 1,500 jerry cans worth Rs111,465,500 for the rain-affected people.

The meeting was attended by Sindh Minister for Rehabilitation Haji Muzaffar Shujra, Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, Chief Secretary Sindh Raja Muhammad Abbas, Senior Member Board of Revenue Sindh Shazar Shamoon, Additional Chief Secretary (P&D) Malik Israr, Secretary Finance, Secretary Health, Naveem Gotem of the UN, Secretary to CM Sindh Alamuddin Bullo and others.

September 11, 2011 (dawn)

Gilani urges nation to help the flood-stricken

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani has appealed to the nation as well as political and democratic forces to support the government's efforts for relief and rehabilitation of the people affected by floods in Sindh.

In his address to the nation on TV and radio, the prime minister urged the international community to extend a helping hand for the flood-hit people. He appealed to political and democratic forces to cooperate with the government in helping the distressed people in Sindh by keep their political differences aside.

"Rains have caused 141 deaths, inundated over four million acres of land, displaced about four million people and damaged 700,000 houses," he said.

"The country has faced many disasters in recent years, starting from the devastating 2005 earthquake in Azad Kashmir and northern areas. This was followed by the wave of terror in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the worst flood in the country's history last year." He praised the nation for facing these challenges bravely and the armed forces, civil agencies and NGOs for utilising all possible resources for relief and rehabilitation efforts.

Mr Gilani lauded the support and assistance extended by the international community to offset the losses caused by the 2010 floods and said: “Today I am addressing you when torrential rains have caused widespread devastations in Sindh.”

President Asif Ali Zardari has already appealed to the international community through the United Nations for help in meeting the challenges posed by the floods in 21 districts of Sindh.

“The support of international community is unavoidable,” Mr Gilani said. “The affected people are living under the open sky.

International relief and donor agencies should pay immediate attention in this regard.”

The prime minister expressed the confidence that the international community would consider “our request sympathetically and extend support to save precious lives and early rehabilitation of the affected people”.

He said the recent rain in Sindh was 142 per cent more than the average rain in the region and initially hit Badin, Mirpur Khas, Tando Muhammad Khan and Tando Allahyar districts. The second spell of rain caused severe devastation in Benazirabad, Umarkot, Khairpur, Jamshoro, Naushero Feroze and Tharparkar districts.

About 4,000 relief camps have been set up.

“We are utilising all possible resources for relief efforts and all tent manufacturers in country have been asked to produce 100,000 more tents in three weeks,” the prime minister said, adding that 100,000 ration packs would be distributed daily among the flood victims.

September 12, 2011 (the News)

No need to seek global help for flood relief, says Nawaz

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief Nawaz Sharif has said although heavy monsoon rains had taken a heavy toll on Sindh, there was no need to make a global appeal for flood relief.

Addressing a press conference at the residence of former provincial minister Dr Irfan Gul Magsi, he said rains and floods wreaked devastation on a large scale, but there was no need to seek global help yet.

He said “We retain a nuclear capability. We are capable of doing so much but we are used to begging before foreign countries in times of natural disasters,” he added.

Nawaz said all political parties should be united and sit together to help out the flood affected people in interior Sindh. He said he had no personal agenda except to visit the affected district.

Nawaz said despite the forecast of the Met office, there were no proper arrangements to avert natural disaster. He said he had urged the government to grant Rs100,000 each to victims, but the government had announced Rs25,000. (done)

September 12, 2011 (Dawn)

UN agencies prepare to help rain-hit Sindh

The communities in southern Pakistan that have been pummeled by monsoon rains which have claimed the lives of almost 200 people and destroyed or damaged nearly one million homes in an area still recovering from last year’s catastrophic floods have started receiving help from UN humanitarian agencies, says a press statement.

An estimated 4.2 million acres of land have been inundated by floodwaters caused by torrential rains during the annual monsoon season, with Sindh province the hardest hit and Balochistan also badly affected.

About 200,000 people have been displaced and require immediate assistance.

The UN and Pakistan have begun a rapid needs assessment in Sindh, with stress on shelter, food, water, sanitation, hygiene and healthcare.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said overall needs remained “huge” and reported that nutrition and promoting an early recovery in affected areas would be key challenges.

Timo Pakkala, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan, said that after “seeing first hand today the devastation and vast amount of flood water in Sindh, now is a crucial time to stand in solidarity with the people of Pakistan, and build on the lessons learned from the recent 2010 floods response to support the government of Pakistan in their ongoing monsoon relief efforts”.

September 12, 2011 (Dawn)

Pakistan floods test cash-strapped government

Pakistan’s cash-strapped government, still struggling to help victims of last year’s epic floods, could face another major test as monsoon rains sweep across Sindh province in the south.

“The situation in Sindh is already serious and there will be more flooding and more problems because of these rains,” said meteorology department official Arif Mehmood.

“We have alerted all relevant government agencies dealing with the flood situation.”

Flooding has killed about 200 people, destroyed or damaged nearly one million houses and flooded 4.2 million acres of land since late August , according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

At least 400 people, mostly women and children, have fled flood-hit areas to the city of Hyderabad in Sindh, without any assistance from the government, in scenes reminiscent of last year’s natural disaster.

Prospects for further flood damage would put Pakistan’s civilian government, already battling Taliban militants, allegations of widespread corruption and growing public anger over power cuts, under immense pressure.

Pakistan’s far more decisive military, which has ruled the country for more than half of its history, took charge of rescue and relief operations during last year’s floods, while the government was heavily criticised as slow and ineffective.

Still, more than a year later, over 800,000 families remain without permanent shelter, according to aid group Oxfam, and more than a million people need food assistance, mostly in Sindh.

Pakistan's weak economy may soon be squeezed by floods again.

Pakistan may also have lost up to two million cotton bales, or about 13 per cent of its estimated crop, due to heavy monsoon rains during harvesting in major cotton producing region Sindh, government and industry officials said.

Last year, the cotton output fell to 11.70 million bales against a target of 14 million bales due to 2010's floods.

The losses in the cotton crop were among the reasons Pakistan's economic growth that year slipped to 2.4 per cent from the original target of 4.5 per cent.

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani has already appealed for international help to cope with the latest floods.

One-fifth of Pakistan was then submerged in water — an area the size of Italy — and the government faced \$10 billion in damages to irrigation systems, bridges, houses and roads.

September 13, 2011 (Dawn)

Sindh in distress after unrelenting rain

Unprecedented intermittent heavy rains lashing Sindh since Aug 10 continued to play havoc in southern region of the province with heavy downpour in Hyderabad.

Rainwater flooded houses in parts of Latifabad and Qasimabad continued till filing of this report at 11pm, making the picture ominous.

Residents of these areas told that the situation was worsening with each passing moment as rains continued unabated. People started saying Azans from their homes and mosques to seek mercy of Allah Almighty to stop incessant rains.

In Badin district after heavy pressure developed into LBOD, the saline water further weakened the surface of sub-drains which had already devastated a vast area and brought many villages in its lap and threatened the population with further devastation.

A 5-R drain that falls into LBOD developed a breach near Khuda Bux Chandio village, inundating four more villages of Badin taluka. As many as 350,000 people of different union councils of Badin and Tando Bago talukas are facing the imminent danger of breaches as water level has continued to rise in LBOD, spreading fear among the people of the area. The people have been asked by the administration to move to safe places, but they have not been provided conveyance. Khoski is one such habitation.

Out of a population of more 10,000, only 25 per cent families had left their homes, more than 250,000 marooned people in some 15 villages were looking for rescue.

Meanwhile, rain raised the water level in Amir Shah Sim Nala and Karo Goonghro, multiplying the misery of flood victims of Tarai, Kario Ghanwar and other areas of Shaheed Fazal Rahu taluka.

The Sindh Minister for Information, Sharjeel Memon, visited Tarai union council along with a media team. He told journalists that federal and provincial governments had allocated Rs7 billion for rain victims till the rehabilitation work is completed while the process of issuance of Watan Card would be completed within 10 days and Rs20,000 will be provided through Watan Cards to the needy.

Meanwhile, the Corps Commander of Karachi, Lt-Gen Zaheerul Islam, inspected the rescue operation being carried out by the Pakistan Army in Badin district. He went to Saman Sarkar through a motorboat and visited Pangrio, Khalifo Qasim and Khoski camps.

In Mirpurkhas district, intermittent rains in Jhuddo and Digri talukas raised the water level in Puran Nullah to one foot near Jhuddo town while land link of Jhuddo with Mirpurkhas stood disrupted.

No relief goods could be distributed among affected people in Jhuddo.

Some 85 per cent of the people living in Jhuddo have moved to safe places, mostly on foot. Soldiers have been pressed in to rescue stranded villagers with the help of boats.

Except for four policemen of Jhuddo police station, all other staff has migrated to safe places. The area has been without power.

Relief camps of Jhuddo had been vacated as most of the affected people have migrated to other areas due to non-availability of doctors, staff, relief ration and other facilities in camps.

The incessant rain has compounded the misery of flood-hit people in Mirpurkhas as torrents swamped more places. The administration has declared emergency in the city due to the growing pressure of water outside the city and overflowing of LBOD in the Khaan area.

The district administration has called out the army for relief work and personnel of law-enforcement agencies are helping other departments to save the city by strengthening dykes and banks of the drain of LBOD in Khaan area.

Around five feet of water was standing in low-lying areas and the Mirpurkhas administration has failed to drain it out. Most of the affected people have moved to safe places on self-help basis.

There was no planning to drain out stagnant rainwater from the city.

Hundreds of PTCL telephones went dead after water entered underground cables. Knee-deep water was stagnant in civil hospital, creating serious problems for the people coming to the emergency ward.

Most of the pumping machines were busy draining out water from bungalows of VIPs and only a few machines deployed to drain out the stagnant water proved inadequate.

In Shaheed Benazirabad district at least four people were killed whereas several others were injured in rain-related incidents.

The rain multiplied problems of rain-hit people as well as the business community as the level of water already accumulated on roads and bazaars rose to an alarming level. Business activities which were suspended in last week of August were still suspended, causing huge losses to traders.

An official of Met office said that the city received 37 millimetres of rain in two hours whereas there was forecast of more rains in next two days.

In Umerkot district, four people died in different camps due to rise in gastroenteritis cases while more than 180 people were hospitalised during one week.

After recent rains and displacement of more than 400,000 people in the district, 200,000 are still living in self-established camps. In these camps due to consumption of contaminated water scores of people have suffered gastroenteritis and other diseases.

Two children, two-year-old Bhesham Lal and one-year-old Asghar Khoso, died of gastroenteritis at Nohto rain-affected camp, Jethanan Bajeer, 30, of Umerkot died due to cholera. A boy, Sajid Palli, died of gastroenteritis at Raja Rasti.

September 13, 2011 (The News)

218 killed in Sindh flooding: NDMA

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) chairman Dr Zafar Qadir has said 218 people have lost their lives and 495 have been injured in the flash floods triggered by downpours in Sindh.

He said this while addressing a special briefing organised by the Foreign Office for members of diplomatic missions and international organisations in Islamabad. Dr Zafar said 23 districts of Sindh, 4.5 million acres of land and 5.3 million people had been affected, and 1.7 million acres of crop area had been damaged. "While the government has mobilised all national resources, the severity and magnitude of floods have created a humanitarian emergency requiring support from the international community," he added. Qamar Zaman Kaira, member of the Prime Minister's Flood Relief Committee, Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir and EAD Secretary Wajid Rana also briefed the diplomatic corps and members of international organisations.

Kaira said the nature of this year's floods was more dangerous than those of 2010. "In the next stage of rehabilitation, assistance will also be required for infrastructure development, rebuilding destroyed houses, and

means of livelihood. Provision of waterproof tents is a priority,” he said, adding: “Winter shelters, medicines, sanitation equipment and support for the restoration of basic health and education services are also needed.”

Timo Pakkala, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, also briefed the meeting about his visit to the affected areas. He appreciated the substantial national efforts undertaken by federal and provincial governments and the Red Crescent. He said floods were extensive and despite all efforts by the government, international assistance was required. He underscored the sense of urgency to address the needs of the affected areas and the importance of focusing on shelter, food and health. He called upon the international community to provide urgent support.

The foreign secretary drew attention towards appeals made by President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani and thanked the diplomatic community for their participation in the briefing. He also thanked friends who had already announced flood relief assistance. He assured that the government would facilitate humanitarian relief effort received bilaterally and through multilateral channels.

The federal government has agreed to provide Rs500 million to the Sindh government for flood relief against the demand of billions of rupees. A top official of Gilani’s cabinet said initial assessments of damage were underway and were a prerequisite for moving ahead with an urgent appeal by the United Nations. “President Zardari had made a telephone call to UN Secretary General and requested a flash appeal which is likely to be made by the UN after accomplishing all required procedures.”

Agencies add: World Food Programme (WFP) spokesman Amjad Jamal told AFP that the agency had provided food packages to more than 600 families in Badin. “This is the first UN food response after Pakistan’s government’s appeal. We will expand this programme to half a million people in coming days,” he said.

China said it had pledged \$4.7 million for urgent humanitarian assistance and its ambassador on Monday handed over a cheque for \$50,000 to the disaster management authority. Separately, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) have launched a preliminary emergency appeal for \$12 million to provide urgent relief and medical support to the victims of the devastating floods.

According to PRCS, the IFRC has launched a 10.6 million Swiss francs appeal to support the Pakistan Red Crescent Society's (PRCS) relief operations in the affected areas. The IFRC appeal will enable the Red Crescent to help another 105,000 people over the coming four months in the worst hit districts of Badin, Mirpurkhas, Khairpur, Nawabshah, and Dadu in Sindh province.

Meanwhile, an ISPR press release says army troops deployed for rescue operations in Southern Sindh (Laarr, Thar and Naaro) have geared up efforts.

September 13, 2011 (The News)

Two die, 25 hurt as heavy rains lash Hyderabad Schools closed for one day

Torrential monsoon rains lashed Hyderabad district, flooding many localities from two to three feet, disrupting the power supply and killing two people. Twenty-five others were also injured due to heavy downpours.

The Met office recorded rains of 50mm. The Met office forecast that scattered rains, thunder showers, heavy to very heavy falls could continue in the district.

The rainwater inundated several areas including Gari Khata, Paretabad, Phuleli, Dadan Shah, Sarfraz Colony, Saddar, Liaquat Colony, Hali Road, Masan Road, Kacha Qila, Cloth Market, Pinjrapole, GauShala and Latifabad nos 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. The continuous and heavy downpour also disrupted power supply in many localities.

The DCO and Administrator of the Hyderabad district announced a one-day holiday in government and private schools.

September 13, 2011 (The News)

NA prorogued sine die due to floods

Owing to the floods in Sindh, the late monsoon session of the National Assembly was prorogued sine die just after it started. The House was to hold an informal debate on the law and order situation in Karachi.

Opposition leader in the National Assembly Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan on a point of order reiterated the demand for the formation of an inquiry commission on allegations made by Dr Zulfiqar Mirza against MQM chief Altaf Hussain and Interior Minister Rehman Malik over the alleged conspiracy to break up Pakistan.

September 14, 2011 (the News)

Over 50 killed as rains wreak havoc in Sindh

Torrential rains and floods wreaked havoc in Sindh, including Karachi, killing over 50 people in separate incidents.

At least five people lost their lives as the metropolis received 140 millimetres of monsoon rain causing a virtual civic catastrophe in the city. A man was killed while four others sustained injuries due to the collapse of a house in the Kati Pahari area of Orangi Town. Two people were killed as they came under the debris of a wall in the Wahid Colony area of North Nazimabad, police said.

According to media reports, two people died of electrocution in the Burns Road area near Akhbar Market. Routine life came to a standstill as several localities were virtually submerged by the rainwater.

A number of business centres, banks, public and private offices and educational institutions in the city could not function at all as people could not reach their workplaces due to the absence of public transport.

Apart from people working for emergency and essential services, it was a virtual public holiday for the rest of Karachiites. A few could enjoy the rainfall at their homes while a majority of them suffered prolonged breakdowns of electricity as the system of the Karachi Electric Supply Company collapsed in a majority of areas.

The main business district in the southern part of the metropolis presented a look of a natural calamity as all its roads and streets could not be accessed due to the rainwater mixed with overflowing sewage. News channels kept on airing updates about the situation on the roads, storm water drains and low-lying areas in the city as spells of rain continued intermittently throughout the day.

Spell of rain badly affected the sewerage and drainage systems of the city. Afterwards, spells of drizzle and light showers continued, causing problems for civic agencies to drain out the accumulated rainwater.

A maximum 140mm of rain was recorded at the Meteorological Department's observatory at the PAF Base Faisal while this measurement was followed by 131mm of rain recorded at PAF Base Masroor.

Heavy rains in Khairpur, Naushahro Feroze, Nara, Badin, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Dado, Nawabshah and its adjoining areas inundated more than hundred villages and claimed over 40 lives. An evacuation warning to the residents of Highorino has been issued. It has been decided to shift the rain-hit people to Karachi and Hyderabad. The district management authorities completely failed to help in the rescue and relief of the rain victims.

Reports said that the spell of torrential monsoon rains after a pause of few hours resumed and played havoc with the lives of people. The heavy downpour also suspended the rescue and relief operation. The reports said that saline Nallahs over topped and water gushed towards hundreds of villages, also submerging thousands of acres of the seasonal crops.

In various incidents of house collapse, electrocution, drowning, more over 38 people, including children and women, were killed. In Housri, eight people were killed when their house collapsed. In Bhit Shah, three children died due to the collapse of the roof of their house.

Meanwhile, two women drowned in rainwater in Tando Bagho, while four bodies were recovered from a pond of rainwater. In Moro, two women and in Majhand, three including two women were killed in a house collapse incidents.

In Thatta, three more people including two women became victims of the rainwater. In Golarchi, six people were killed in separate incidents house collapse. In Sanghar, two brothers were killed due to collapse of a wall. Reports said that Jungshahy-Thatta bridge damaged which suspended the inland communication of the people of both towns. Mass migration from the rain-affected areas continued.

The Hyderabad-Thatta road has been closed for traffic. The Pakistan Army and Navy were busy in relief and rescue operations however that too was

insufficient.

Rains here started in Naushahro Feroze in morning and continued throughout the day, adding to the plight of the people already facing severe difficulties in the wake of relentless rains.

More than 30 villages came under water in various areas of the district while three women lost their lives in separate rain-related incidents. The rains and floods have caused mass devastation in the district and its effects are expected to last as health experts fear the spread of waterborne diseases on a large scale.

Meanwhile, unknown people made two cuts in the Phull-Padidan link road at two points after the increase of rainwater in the area of Phull union council

Heavy rains that lashed Thatta inundated to knee-deep water mixed with sewerage due to failure of a proper drainage system. All roads and street were inaccessible and citizens experienced great difficulties to reach their homes. The main Shahi Bazaar was also inundated to knee-deep water. All shanty towns became inundated up to three to four feet water. Power failure added to the miseries of the people.

Rain was also reported from other parts of the district including coastal areas. Meanwhile, the National Highway between Thatta and Hyderabad was also submerged and traffic was suspended. Several vehicles were stranded in the rain besides the highway. The district administration has decided to give cuts in the KB Feeder Upper near Onghar town so as to drain the rain water in it and to save the National Highway and restore traffic.

Heavy downpours caused a colossal loss as rainwater entered houses and shops and destroyed goods inside worth millions of rupees throughout the three Talukas of the Hyderabad district. Moreover, three men died from electrocution and 27 others were injured in rain related incidents here.

Three out of the four Talukas in the Hyderabad district were the most affected areas, where residents spent their entire night without sleep as they were busy saving their goods from rainwater. After passing many hours, rainwater from 3-4 feet was standing in Latifabad and low-lying areas of Qasimabad and Hyderabad Rural, while many localities of Hyderabad City were deprived of power supply from 15 to 20 hours.

The Met office recorded rains of 153 mm in Hyderabad in one day. The office also said that the renewed spell of the monsoon rains would last till next day.

Moreover, three men, including Abdul Shakoor, Abdul Siddique and unknown person, were electrocuted in different localities in the district. 27 people were injured in various incidents of collapse of roof and walls of house in certain areas.

Meanwhile, residents of Latifabad No 2 and Goath Mohabbat Machi staged protest demonstrations against the Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) separately at Auto Bhan Road Latifabad as officials of the Wasa failed completely to drain out the accumulated rainwater from their respective localities after the passage of 15 hours.

APP adds: The team leader of the United Nations' Emergency Flood Response Dr Salman Safdar has informed that the UN had mobilised 4,000 volunteers from its humanitarian affairs sections for rescue and relief work in Sindh, specially in Badin.

Safdar said the UN would stand with Pakistani people in their time of need. "We will provide food and shelter till their rehabilitation," he said. He said that the UN has committed to Pakistan government to provide help in health, food, shelter and water and sanitation.

District Government Badin has demanded of the UN and the government to provide Rs 400 million for relief and rescue operations, 200,000 tents, ration bags for 200,000 families for three months, 500 decanting pumps for draining stagnant water from the cities, villages, 150 boats, mechanised, supply of drinking water in canals and ASV/ARV medical cover.

The focal person for relief and rescue Agha Wasif demanded early help to save human lives. Meanwhile, EDO Finance and Planning Mohammad Saleem Rajput briefed the NGOs and the international community representatives for extending help. He asked the NGOs to register with the NDMA.

Wing Commander Thar Ranger, Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Rasool and sector Commander Hyderabad Col Saeed Ahmed visited the rain affected

areas of Badin, Kadhan, Khoski, Shadi Large and Shaheed Fazil Raho. They inspected relief and rescue work carried out by Rangers.

Also, Sindh Minister for Livestock Abid Hussain Jatoi said that 12,299 cattle-heads have died and millions of displaced by the prevailing monsoon rains. He said that such a large scale displacement of animals has not occurred in the last 100 years.

Talking to official media here, the Livestock minister said that his department had prepared a contingency plan to meet the situation, under which as many as 269 veterinary relief camps and 45 mobile veterinary relief camps had been set up since August 12 providing treatment to the animals in 23 rain-affected districts. He said that some 1,554,671 animals had been provided treatment in 23 districts till September 11.

September 14, 2011(the News)

US begins flood relief efforts in Sindh

In response to the September 9 appeal by President Asif Ali Zardari, the United States has begun providing assistance to flood victims in Pakistan, says a press release.

Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Marc Grossman spoke to Pakistan's ambassador to the United States Husain Haqqani on phone to confirm the US commitment to flood relief efforts. According to Grossman, the US Embassy in Islamabad had issued a disaster declaration for Sindh and was already providing immediate flood assistance through current partners on the ground.

Approximately, 346,500 people will receive immediate food assistance through the USAID-sponsored rations, while 5,500 families will receive emergency shelter and non-food items through USAID grant partners. The US government will sponsor medical services through mobile health units and medical units in camps for 500,000 internally displaced persons.

According to US officials, the US government, as one of the largest international assistance donors, will also contribute to the provision of an additional 8,000 tents, 17,000 shelter kits, and food rations for 71,000 families through international partners such as the International

Organisation for Migration (IOM), UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and World Food Program (WFP).

September 14, 2011 (The News)

Senators show solidarity with flood victims

Showing solidarity with the rain affected people of Sindh, members of the Senate not only extended donations but also called upon philanthropists and well-off community to generously help those who have been rendered homeless due to the recent unprecedented rains and floods in Sindh Province.

The special committee meeting which held here at the Parliament House was presided over by Acting Chairman Senate Mir Jan Muhammad Khan Jamali, and later by Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, chalked out a viable plan of action to provide relief to the people in the calamity hit areas.

The committee underlined the need for expediting relief activities. Special committees were also constituted for fund raising, procurement and distribution of relief goods to the flood-hit. Senators stressed that coordinated efforts were required in the relief and rehabilitation activities as the magnitude of destruction is very high, even beyond calculation.

They also appealed to the international community to help mitigate the sufferings of the people rendered homeless by the devastating floods. It was observed that food items, medicines, potable water and tents were urgently required.

A number of senators also donated a decent amount to the Senate emergency relief fund.

September 14, 2011 (The News)

Sindh urges foreign countries, NGOs to help rain victims

Sindh Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah said that there was an urgent need for cooperation among foreign countries, philanthropists and NGOs to provide relief as well as assistance to people whose lives have been

devastated by the recent rains, adding that the provincial government cannot handle this Herculean task on its own.

This was stated by the chief minister at a 'motivational campaign' for the rain victims. Shah said that instead of giving cash, those organisations and philanthropists that wanted to help should provide relief goods.

He said that out of the 23 districts of the province, 21 had been affected, while the only two that remained were the cities of Karachi and Hyderabad. Shah said that around five million people were living without shelter after the rains wreaked havoc in their areas. Three-hundred people have also been killed in the relentless downpours, while a hundred-thousand livestock perished.

The chief minister added that standing crops of rice, cotton and vegetables on more than 51,000 acres had been fully damaged, while the infrastructure of roads, buildings and other facilities was totally destroyed. Shah declared that the Government had earmarked five billion rupees for relief measures. He said his government initially provided Rs10,000 per family to repair their damaged houses, while a similar amount would soon be given by the Federal Government.

He appealed to foreign diplomats, philanthropists, businessmen, traders, NGOs and wealthy individuals to come forth and help the affected people on humanitarian grounds. Shah urged them to supply tents, food items, medicines, clean drinking water and other essential commodities on an urgent basis.

Earlier, Director General Provincial Disaster Management Authority Saleh Farooqui provided details of losses and a report of relief as well as rehabilitation work for the rain-affected people.

September 14, 2011 (The News)

Nadra delays issuance of Watan Cards

The National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) has been assigned once again to assist the flood victims through the issuance of Watan Cards so that they could get Rs20,000 each as announced by the government, but the process has not yet been started.

Sources say that confusion on the part of the Sindh government over the release of funds is delaying the assistance.

Nadra had previously taken some good steps to issue Watan Cards. However, there were some claimants who kept alleging that they had not been issued with the funds.

In some cases, despite the issuance of the Watan Cards, the people had failed to collect the funds due to some technical faults or a shortage of funds.

Sources claimed that those deprived of the funds were still living in relief camps in Razaqabad, Super Highway, Labour Square near the Cantt Station and other places.

Most of the victims who could not be given the funds are illiterate and have even lost their Computerised National Identity Cards (CNICs) or are not recognised as the head of the affected family.

There was a condition that the head of the family would receive the funds, but in the case of death of the head, the other senior members of the family had to face many legal problems, the sources said.

On the other hand, some of the representatives of the flood victims had alleged that some of Nadra employees were demanding bribes for the issuance of Watan Cards, the said.

September 14, 2011 (Dawn)

Cloudburst cripples Karachi

Monsoon rain crippled Sindh and its capital and the government came under pressure to provide relief for about 300,000 people left homeless by floods.

Twenty-nine people died, including seven in Karachi, in rain-related incidents in one day.

The government faces a new crisis as rains which have killed 226 people sweep through the province.

Floodwaters have destroyed or damaged 1.2 million houses and flooded 4.5 million acres since late last month, disaster management officials and Western aid groups say.

In Karachi, few people made it to work or school and more rain forecast raised the possibility of extended disruptions.

Many streets were impassable, cars were stuck and several fuel stations were inundated.

“We have recorded 50-100mm (two to four inches) of rain in Karachi and the situation is pretty bad. It can turn even worse,” said Mohammad Hussain Syed, the city’s district coordination officer.

Many banks were also closed in Karachi.

The city was paralysed as all business activities remained suspended and educational institutions were closed due to flooding in different parts of the city following the latest spell of rain in which at seven people lost their lives in rain related incidents.

The road leading to the city’s main financial district, I. I. Chundrigar Road, was up to knee deep in water. The picture in the wholesale business areas of Joria Bazaar was not different as water had seeped into many shops.

The city’s market alliance had announced a closure of markets in view of the flooding.

The administration appeared absent from the scene as Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry summoned the Karachi DCO to his chamber following the breakdown of his official car on the M.R. Kyani Road.

“In many areas the flooding has completely cut off villages. So we can’t even reach those people. We have asked the army’s engineering corps to help move these people,” Sindh Minister for Rehabilitation Muzafar Ali Shujra told Reuters.

As a violent downpour continued to lash several districts, the situation in Mirpurkhas became most desperate as two breaches threatened a ring-dyke raised recently.

In Mirpurkhas city, water is mounting pressure on the newly-constructed ring dyke in Khaan area because saline and rainwater were flowing

towards the city, spreading panic. A few breaches developed in the dyke in Khaan area.

Four feet of water inundated the Hyderabad railway track, suspending traffic between Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas.

Rainwater has accumulated on the premises of the grid station in Mirpurkhas.

Construction of a sand dyke around the grid station was started to save it while two heavy pumping machines were installed to drain out the water.

The SDO of the grid station, Mr Ramesh, told reporters that if machinery at the grid station was damaged, power supply would be suspended for a long time to Mirpurkhas, Tharparkar and Umerkot districts. Grid stations of Tando Jan Mohammad and Naoko have already been flooded.

In Badin, almost all sub-drains and field drains again started flowing in the reverse direction.

The small drains not only washed crops away and inundated a large number of villages, but also flooded relief camps, adding to misery of the people who had taken shelter there.

A large number of people living in flooded villages are looking for an early rescue.

More than 25,000 people are marooned in the Pangrio area as all the link roads have been washed away. Over 1,000 workers of Jamat-ud-Dawa were engaged in rescue operation.

Johi town was the worst affected as one to two feet rainwater was standing in streets and houses. Khirthar Mountain received heavy rain, which went down to Nai Gaj, a hill torrent. The flow of other seven streams has severed the land communication of over 40 villages of Kachho belt.

Mirpurkhas received the highest rainfall—190mm (more than seven and a half inches).

According to the Met office, the province would to get more rains, though with lower intensity. Some of the Sindh cities which got heavy rains were Hyderabad with 158mm, Sakrand 125mm, Tando Jam 119mm, **Dadu**

115mm, Mithi 100mm. The Army and the Navy continued their relief and rescue operations, providing shelter, food and medical treatment.

September 15, 2011 (Dawn)

Sindh's anguish refuses to go away; 13 more die

Thirteen people, mostly women and children, died in rain-related incidents in Tando Allahyar, Naushahro Feroze, Sanghar and Mirpurkhas districts .

Three children drowned in stagnant rainwater and a 15-day-old girl died of diarrhoea at a relief camp in Tando Allahyar. Ms Shakal Solangi, of Ahmedabad colony in Naushahro Feroze, and Allah Wasayo, of Lal Bux Solangi village, were killed when their houses collapsed.

A little girl, Pari, drowned in stagnant rainwater near Bhirya town, and Ms Kariman Bheel, Ms Ganga and Ms Subhani died of gastroenteritis in Sanghar. Two children died of gastroenteritis in Qaiser Khan Leghari village and one in Jhuddo town, Mirpurkhas.

Army personnel have been posted along Puran Nullah, a rainwater drain in Mirpurkhas, to help remove encroachments and ensure an uninterrupted drainage of rainwater from the city. Mirpurkhas DCO Ghulam Hussain Memon said that after the deployment of troops water was flowing without any hurdle. He said half of the stagnant water was expected to be drained out in two days. People face great difficulties wading through three to four feet water flooding the roads and streets. A serious threat to Mirpurkhas city was averted after plugging of a 30-foot breach in LBOD drain near Khaan area.

A shortage of milk and vegetables persists in the city because of large-scale destruction of crops and death of cattle heads.

Some of them complained that no ration had been provided by the government for a week. They alleged that some other families living nearby had been given ration, drinking water, tents and other things on the orders of influential people.

Nara Canal Area Water Board director Ghulam Mustafa Ujjan said that a five-kilometre-long ring dyke was being strengthened with the help of 19 excavators to save Mirpurkhas city from floodwater.

He said the floodwater flowing to Khaan area would be released into the LBOD.

Civil society leaders, Asghar Narejo and Kanji Rano Bheel, accused the district administration of misappropriating relief goods and other aid.

They said that a large number of people had been affected and thousands of katcha and pakka houses collapsed, but the government failed to provide relief to them and drain out water from towns and villages.

They alleged that despite directives of the chief minister, the administration had failed to remove encroachments from Puran Nullah, near Jhuddo, and Digri towns.

They urged the government to take measures to distribute ration, drinking water, tents and other essential goods among the affected people and provide them accommodation in other government buildings, instead of schools.

About four to five feet of water was standing in rural areas adjoining Digri and Kot Ghulam Mohammad and three to four feet water in residential areas of the two towns.

Mir Zafarullah Talpur, president of the Mirpurkhas chapter of Sindh Chamber of Agriculture, accused the administration of ignoring Tando Jan Mohammad taluka and nearby villages where a number of stranded people needed to be evacuated to safe places. He said no ration had been provided to affected people in the taluka, which faced a shortage of food. He urged the chief minister to take note of the situation.

About 85 per cent of the people in Jhuddo taluka have moved to safe places. About 2,000 people are still stranded in the villages of Qaiser Khan Leghari, Digo Mori, Faqeer Ghulam Haider Leghari, 13-Mile Mori and Dajero Mori in the taluka.

Sindhri and parts of Hussain Bux Mari talukas are less than three to four feet of water.

In Dadu, a 1400-foot portion of the dyke of Nai Gaaj Nullah (rainwater drain) gave in to torrents caused by heavy rains. The surging waters swamped 10 villages and partially flooded 210 villages in Kachho area.

In Sanghar, a breach which developed a week ago in a saline water drain has so far flooded a housing society, Shahan Shah Colony, Royal City and Al-Mansoor Colony. More than 90 per cent of the populace has moved to other areas and almost all others are waiting for rescue teams.

September 15, 2011 (Dawn)

The rain-hit save whatever they can

Pakistani soldiers in inflatable rescue boats peered across kilometres of flooded farmland and spotted a man wading through waist-deep water desperate to move his goat to high ground.

For the past two weeks, Keval has spent 12 hours a day moving his family's livestock from his inundated village to the small town of Pingri in southern Sindh.

The goats are the only thing he has managed to save from raging waters which swept away his house and belongings. Like many other flood victims, he awaits help from the government.

"My house was destroyed," said the construction worker, whose family is stranded. "The government has not done anything for us. They are not around."

The scene, being played out in many parts of Sindh, was a troubling reminder of floods which ravaged much of Pakistan in late July and August last year. The leaders were slow to respond, leaving the military to take charge of rescue and relief efforts, along with international aid agencies.

Threat of diseases

Victims of the calamity are at growing risk of potentially fatal diseases, aid groups warn. The director-general of the Sindh Health Department, Hafeez Memon, said there were 2,000 confirmed cases of malaria and the number was likely to rise.

Entire villages are submerged. Only roofs of houses or the tops of trees are visible. Some people who thought they had found shelter were suddenly uprooted by raging waters again.

In a vast expanse of water that swallowed up houses and farmland in one area, only part of a blue and white tent was visible.

Some people were able to reach the one road that leads to Pingrio, which is flooded in some sections and is surrounded by water on several sides. Some 900 people have taken shelter there in tents run by a charity which also provided relief in last year's floods.

Many victims are still struggling to come to terms with what has happened. "The flood was over my head," said Alam, a 31-year-old tenant farmer with four children. "It came suddenly in the middle of the night while we were sleeping.

September 15, 2011 (Dawn)

UN plans to launch humanitarian response

With the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) expected to launch a '2011 humanitarian response plan' for the rain-stricken in Pakistan, Oxfam said, it was mounting an emergency initiative to reach out to the affected people.

"This is the second year of flooding in Pakistan and many of those affected had not fully recovered from the 2010 mega floods," Oxfam, an aid and development agency, said in a statement.

UN sources told that the response plan would be based on life-saving relief operations to meet immediate needs of the affected population.

The appeal for international humanitarian assistance will be launched either in Geneva or New York.

Food security, emergency shelter and wash clusters have been activated. Nutrition and early recovery and community restoration clusters have also been included in the activities to further strengthen information gathering and operational planning.

Joint missions comprising UN resident coordinator, NDMA and OCHA have toured the affected areas of Sindh and Balochistan and submitted their reports to the humanitarian country team.

According to the sources, the scope of rapid response plan would be extended to the notified districts of Sindh and Balochistan.

Four clusters — food security, wash, health and shelter — will be initially rolled out. Cluster needs assessments and cluster response strategies will include nutrition, protection and early recovery and community restoration activities. Additional clusters could be rolled out on the basis of findings of the rapid needs assessment. Additional logistics and coordination clusters will also be launched at the same time.

In order to complement the government's response, UNOCHA has decided to immediately start the international humanitarian response, alongside the preparation and needs assessments and response plan.

A special humanitarian country team has been formed within the UN system on the request of the government for international assistance for the monsoon emergency.

The OCHA's new situation report says that coordination arrangements are being carried out in partnership with the government. The OCHA and NDMA are managing the inter-cluster coordination at the national level. At the provincial level, PDMA and OCHA will co-chair the inter-cluster coordination.

According to Oxfam, there is an urgent need to provide immediate life-saving relief to millions of affected people.

Large swathes of land are underwater and people are desperately awaiting relief. "People have lost their crops, homes and livestock for the second time — and have been pushed from the last year's disaster to this one," said Neva Khan, the country director of Oxfam in Pakistan, who visited some of the worst-affected areas in lower Sindh.

About 5.3 million people have been affected, 4.2 million acres of land flooded and 1.59 million acres of standing crops destroyed in Sindh.

Oxfam will supply clean water and sanitation to nearly 850,000 people affected by the floods. It is already supplying water to two worst-affected districts of Sindh — Sanghar and Mirpurkhas. Rescue and evacuation operations are being carried out in Sanghar, Tando Allahyar and Umerkot districts.

Oxfam also has plans to help people get access to food and is developing projects to help them earn a living. It has urged donor governments to respond to urgent basic needs of affected women, men and children.

“The crisis is multiplying each passing day. The international community needs to expedite its response to ensure that millions affected get the help they need as soon as possible,” said Neva.

Meanwhile, UNHCR has sent thousands of tents and other relief goods to the affected communities in Sindh and Balochistan.

These include 10,000 tents, 20,000 plastic sheets and 10,000 kits of household items.

September 15, 2011 (Dawn)

Senators pledge Rs10m donation for rain-hit

Senators from almost all political parties did more than just talk in the upper house as they collected donations to help the rain-hit people of Sindh.

But the activity was not devoid of rhetoric. Every donation was announced religiously and greeted with praise from the members, particularly by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Ishaq Dar as well as by Kazim Khan of the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), who presided over the session in the absence of both the chairman and the deputy chairman.

Senator announced that a sum of Rs10.44 million had been committed by the members and that this amount would be utilised to provide relief to the flood-affected people under the supervision of the senators themselves through different committees.

A parliamentary expert and a senior journalist, who have been covering the parliamentary proceedings for over two decades, termed the recent session simply a waste of time and resources, saying that the session was being run only as part of the fund-raising campaign. “It will be interesting to compare the allowances the senators and the employees of the Senate Secretariat will earn besides other expenses on the present session and the money they donated for the flood victims,” commented the expert.

September 15, 2011 (Dawn)

Prices of greens soar as rains hit supply

A suspension in the supply of green vegetables from flood-affected areas of Sindh coupled with the recent spell of heavy monsoon showers in Karachi are likely to keep their prices up over the next few days.

While consumers have some relief as far as prices of tomatoes and onions are concerned due to their uninterrupted supply from Balochistan, they are unlikely to find a drop in the rates of green vegetables any time soon.

September 15, 2011(TheNews)

Govt's bad image main hurdle in foreign flood help

The regime's image and perception of being one of the most corrupt governments in the world, is likely to scare away international donors and world capitals from paying cash and offering the assistance that Pakistan requires for the devastating floods that have hit Sindh.

Sources in the Finance Ministry say the government appeal for donations for flood victims in Sindh has not yet been responded to, both nationally and internationally, in a noticeable manner.

The response is so unenthusiastic that even after four days of the prime minister making a televised appeal to the nation and the international community, hardly anything has been received in cash in the prime minister relief fund.

"It is too early to ask for the amount received in the fund," a government spokesman said but expected that the people of Pakistan and the world community would offer all possible assistance to the flood affected in Pakistan.

"You need to highlight the positive things that would help us to do what we want to do and achieve," the spokesman responded when asked if mounting corruption and bad governance are not the major factors for the donors', whether local or international, reluctance to offer the required assistance.

However, official sources in the government seriously fear that the bad reputation of the rulers is the major source of concern in the donors' mind. These sources said as against the current floods in Sindh, the devastation caused by the 2010 floods was far more as it had affected almost all the provinces, killed around two thousand, displaced more than 20 million people and badly damaged the infrastructure besides destroying tens of hundreds of houses.

The 2010 floods cost the country more than US\$12 billion but despite all this the international community offered peanuts to Govt's fund. Against this huge loss, the government relief fund until recently had received merely around US\$21 million from the world capitals for the assistance of 2010 flood affectees.

According to the official statistics the world capitals with the exception of the likes of Afghanistan and Algeria, have shown little or no trust in the government of Pakistan to assist more than 20 million flood affectees of 2010.

Such is the credibility of the government that out of a total US\$697 million assistance that the world capitals had committed to spend through the government of Pakistan, hardly US\$21 million was deposited in the government relief fund. Most of these countries even preferred to help in kind.

The government figures available on the finance ministry's official website till April-May this year reveal that a total of US\$3.042 billion foreign assistance for the flood affectees was committed. Out of this amount US\$2.34 billion was committed to be spent through the United Nations or other international agencies and non-governmental organizations whereas the remaining US\$696 was committed to be spent through the government of Pakistan. The total committed assistance included a soft loan of US\$243 million.

Amongst the major donors, the US committed US\$571 million but opted to spend all this amount through international agencies, USAID etc. Not even a single dollar was donated by Washington to the government relief fund. Britain, which had pledged US\$216 million, also did the same and did not contribute even a single penny in government's account.

The Turkish government committed US\$53 million besides raising a total of US\$142 million through a fund raiser. Turkey seemed to have maximum faith on the government as it contributed the most i.e. US\$10 million for the government relief fund.

The Saudi Arabian government had committed US\$100 million besides pledging US\$23 million on behalf of Saudi Fund for Development and another US\$242 million public fund relief raised from the people of Saudi Arabia. Out of this US\$365 million only US\$5 million was delivered through NDMA.

Japan committed a total of US\$519 million but did not give any amount in the government relief fund. Iran too committed US\$100 million but it too avoided to deposit any amount in the government fund.

After Turkey, which contributed US\$10 million in the government relief fund, the Asian Development Bank was a major contributor with US\$3 million contribution. Afghanistan gave US\$2 million for the government relief fund and emerged as the third largest foreign contributor having faith in the government's fund.

Other countries, which contributed in the government fund included Algeria with US\$1 million; Bhutan with US\$0.10 m; Brunei with US\$0.73m; Indonesia US\$1.7m; Korean private sector companies US\$0.94m; Maldivian philanthropists US\$0.27m and Morocco US\$1m etc.

September 15, 2011 (TheNews)

No let-up in Sindh floods

Unprecedented rains and floods continued to cause widespread devastation in interior Sindh with Unicef saying up to 2.5 million children have been affected by the severe floods and more help must reach them fast before the situation worsens.

The BBC reported that nearly six million people have been affected due to rains in these areas. Intermittent rains continued in Badin, Jamshoro, Hyderabad, Umarkot, Sanghar, Badin, Tando Muhammad Khan, Tharparkar and Mirpurkhas. the Badin-Tando Road is inundated and water about four feet high is standing in Mirpurkhas city and some key buildings

have been inundated. Low-lying areas in Hyderabad, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas and Nawabshah have also been inundated because of the recent rains.

The local administrations in Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas and Nawabshah had announced closing educational institutions while gastro and other waterborne diseases are increasing in Mirpurkhas.

Heavy rains inundated hundreds of more villages and farms in a number of places in interior Sindh, officials said. In Sindh alone, many hundreds of thousands of families have been affected across 22 out of 23 districts. Nearly one million homes have been destroyed or damaged, causing population displacement, with many stuck or stranded along roadsides. "Children are the most vulnerable in any emergency. In this disaster, many are experiencing the devastating effects of a flood emergency for the second time in a year. Their coping mechanisms were already weak and their vulnerabilities high," said Unicef Pakistan representative Dan Rohrmann.

"We are witnessing vast devastation across huge swathes of Sindh province. The key areas of concern for children right now include access to health and nutrition, safe drinking water and protection. At the beginning of an emergency like this, it is critical that children are reached with life-saving interventions and helped to return to a sense of normalcy," said Rohrmann.

"The flood waters, apart from driving children and families from their homes, have contaminated wells and other sources of drinking water, compromised sanitation and hygiene, and are contributing to a rise in water-borne diseases, such as diarrhoea. There are immediate needs to reach children with clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene messages as well as provide additional health services to prevent disease outbreaks," he added.

Meanwhile, in Naushero Feroze, influential people created breaches in streams to save their lands, leaving several villages submerged and people stranded, reported a private news channel. According to reports, influential landowners in Union Council Phal breached streams from different locations to save their lands from being inundated but in the process flooding 12 other villages and many roads, and forcing poor

people to migrate to other areas. Hundreds of people are stranded in Mirpur Bhatoro town of Thatta and awaiting help.

The flood-affected people have now started agitating against authorities for the provision of ration. According to them the government was providing 'lip service' and making hollow claims.

Meanwhile, people of 15 villages of Talhar Tehsil staged a demonstration and sit-in at the Aareesar bus stop and blocked the Hyderabad-Badin main road to protest against the non-provision of ration. They also took out the funeral procession of PPP MNA Ghulam Ali Nizamani. Rain-affected villagers of some other villages also staged a demonstration for ration near the airbase and at Leghari bus stop.

The minority community people of village Malanhor Kanji and some other surrounding villages of Tharparkar district also staged a demonstration outside Mithi Press Club seeking government help.

A report from Shahdadpur Tehsil of Sanghar district said 13 union councils of the tehsil are under rain and saline water that has destroyed 2,000 villages, forcing villagers to migrate to safer places. No authority has initiated rescue and relief operation despite the recent visit of Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah who had announced Rs20 million for relief operation. The Utility Stores have been closed in all flood-affected areas of Sindh.

About 2.7 million cotton bales worth Rs3.5 billion have been destroyed during recent flash floods in Sindh province. Cotton Development Commissioner, Khalid Abdullah, told APP that the cotton crop was grown in 23 districts across the province.

The remains of Mohan Jo Daro were also damaged in ongoing monsoon rains, a private TV news channel reported. The remains were severely damaged while rainwater also accumulated on several areas of the historical site.

In another incident, a young boy died of electrocution on Jinnah Road. He was identified as Bahadur Ali. Karachi again received light drizzle and showers. Although life is getting back to normal after two days of torrential rains, citizens are still worried about the forecast of more rain. Meanwhile, Iran's Deputy Interior Minister Ali Abdullahi said that his

country would donate \$100 million aid for the reconstruction of the recently flood-devastated areas in Pakistan. Talking to a private radio channel, the deputy interior minister said the assistance would be spent on constructing hospitals, mosques and Imam Bargahs in the flood-affected areas. He added that in the coming days Iran will send one hundred and ten tonnes of emergency aid material for flood affected areas of Pakistan.

The Federal Flood Commission said the River Indus was flowing in low flood at Kotri Barrage with rising trend, whereas all other main rivers Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Sutlej were flowing normal.

September 16, 2011(The News)

UN chief promises aid to flood victims

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon promised to provide aid to flood victims in Sindh within a few days, expressing his grief over the loss of life and damage caused by floods in Sindh.

Addressing a press conference at the UN headquarters, he said he had talked to President Asif Ali Zardari and discussed the situation.

He said UN officials had already visited affected areas and made an assessment about the needs and nature of help for flood victims. He said damages were as extensive as last year's floods and situation was serious. He did not say whether the UN had planned to launch any appeal for help from the international community.

September 16, 2011 (TheNews)

Relief work under way, says Qaim

Sindh Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah said the relief work in the rain-affected areas was under way on a large scale with the help of the United Nations, friendly countries and the Centre and expressed the hope that the situation would return to normalcy very soon.

This, he said, while talking to the media persons, PPP workers and the rain-affected people during a visit to Badin, along with the members of the National Assembly's Parliamentary Committee on Relief.

Soon after arriving at the Morjhar Mirza Farm in Badin, they visited Phuleli-Guni Outfall Drain in Tarai and were briefed about the devastations caused by the heavy rains and overflow of the drains in district Badin. Later, they visited a relief camp at the Government Elementary College Badin where about 200 victims are being looked after.

Talking to the media, Qamar Zaman Kaira said all resources available with the government would be utilised for the welfare of the people, especially for those who have been affected by heavy rains in Sindh. During the visit at a relief camp, the CM and Kaira asked the rain victims about the facilities being provided to them by the administration.

September 16, 2011 (Dawn)

NDMA warns against projects on fault lines and in flood plains

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) warned against approval of mega projects situated on seismic fault lines and in flood plains. It said that ignoring the disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategy aggravated the impact of natural calamities.

Briefing members of the Senate, NDMA's member for operations Brig Sajid Naeem said the authority had sent a DRR checklist to the Planning Commission. He said that before starting work on any project its impact on the environment and its disaster risk factors should be weighed carefully.

He said that absence of a "river act" and non-implementation of the "canal act" were the main reasons for the high toll during calamities in Pakistan. People had built houses along river embankments and suffered as a consequence during rainy seasons.

He told the members of the upper house of parliament that disaster management plans were in place but poor implementation often led to chaotic situations.

He said that people in flood-prone areas were not ready to leave their homes during the recent floods despite repeated warnings.

He said that during last year`s floods, total losses were estimated at \$10 billion while aid of \$5 billion was disbursed amongst the affected people.

He said an amount of \$3 billion was required for pre-flood preparedness to ensure minimum damage during flooding.

The NDMA official observed that rivers had not caused the ongoing calamity because it was caused by rains. He put the official death toll at 248. He said NDMA had established some 2656 camps for 495115 people in flood affected districts of Sindh.

He said the government of Balochistan had not notified any area as affected by floods so far and thus the NDMA had not set up any relief camp in the province. This enraged senators from Balochistan who lambasted NDMA for what they called sheer discrimination towards Baloch people.

Brig Naeem pointed out that the total annual budget of NDMA was not more than Rs70 million. However, it had Rs413 million available with it which was being spent on ongoing relief activities in the affected areas.

He said the distribution of 100,000 food packets among flood-hit people, sufficient for a family of seven people for 15 days, would start on Friday (today).

A majority of the Senators declared that the data provided by the NDMA official was inaccurate. They said the authority had failed in assessing the nature, intensity and volume of the disaster.

They were of the opinion that the NDMA had not learnt any lesson from the last year`s floods. (done)

September 16, 2011 (Dawn)

LBOD design blamed for Sindh`s woes

A joint report of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco) has blamed the design of Left Bank Outfall (LBOD) spinal

drainage for inundation of large swathes of land in Tando Mohammad Khan, Badin and Mirpurkhas districts and displacement of a large number of people in rural Sindh.

According to the report, the runoff water does not find any inlet into the LBOD. The rainwater either overtops the banks of the drain or farmers breach them to drain their fields because of the disadvantage of lower riparian.

The design of LBOD spinal drainage has become controversial because of devastation caused by floods in parts of rural Sindh. It is a man-made fault which is responsible for the devastation.

The design does not take into account the current flows of water and, as a result, the excess water overflows the banks of the drain and floods fields. The latter, which are carrying crops, are then breached by farmers to let the water out. This has led to the inundation of large areas in Tando Muhammad Khan, Badin and Mirpurkhas.

The LBOD spinal drain with a capacity of 4,600 cusecs was designed to carry 2,000 cusecs to Shakoor lake and the remaining 2,600 cusecs to the Arabian Sea through Badin.

Suparco says that change detection based on multi-temporal and multi-resolution satellite imagery was used to ascertain the location of breaches, their sizes and damage to other infrastructure. Various base layers such as settlements, irrigation network, roads, railway lines and bunds were overlaid on flood extent map for assessment of infrastructural damage and mapping.

The LBOD design has come under severe criticism by politicians belonging to rural Sindh. Speaker of the National Assembly Dr Fehmida Mirza, who belongs to Badin, recently said the current devastation was because of inherent fault in the design. According to the Suparco report, several breaches in protective bunds of canals have also been noticed in Sindh. The most prominent breaches have been identified and delineated in Badin, Mirpurkhas, Umerkot, Tando Muhammad Khan, Thatta, Tando Allah Yar and Sanghar.

The stagnant runoff water damaged a large number of cotton and rice crops in Mirpurkhas, Benazirabad, Sanghar, Ghotki, Tando Muhammad

Khan, Tando Allah Yar, Badin and other districts. However, rice crop benefited from rains in some districts and losses are expected to be offset by gains in other areas. The overall impact on rice crop is expected to be positive.

Sugarcane crop is almost 11 months old in Sindh and height of the crop flooding is 6-8 feet. Generally, sugarcane crop is not damaged by flash floods. Some damages can accrue by lodging and uprooting of the crop. However, the sugarcane productivity is likely to increase because of availability of additional water from rains.

Kharif vegetables are at the fag end and major harvests have already been made. The damage on this account is, therefore, ignorable.

Rabi vegetables are being sown. Vegetables like onion and tomato may have to be re-sown in the flood-affected areas. Chillies in Kunri may be affected by prolonged flooding.

Official land utilisation statistics show that the cultivated area in Sindh is 4.89 million hectares. The net shown area over a year is 2.81 million hectares and fallow area is 2.08 million hectares.

This is almost a ratio of 60 per cent cropped area and 40 per cent fallow area. However, Suparco assessment suggests that cropped area is 70 per cent and fallow area 30 per cent.

September 16, 2011 (Dawn)

UN steps up aid to flood-hit Sindh

The United Nations said on Friday that it was stepping up aid to Pakistan, where monsoon floods have killed 270 people, affected over 5.5 million others and destroyed 1.1 million homes.

The UN's children agency said it would distribute 200,000 litres of water to 40,000 people daily and deploy 40 more water tankers in coming days, in a bid to ensure access to clean drinking water and avert diseases.

Water shortage is a key problem in Pakistan where many are suffering from acute diarrhoea after drinking contaminated water, said a World Health Organisation spokesman.

The WHO, which has assessed the health situation in the 22 districts affected by the floods, noted that the supply of clean drinking water had been disrupted in almost all the flood-hit districts.

The provision of purification tablets and cholrine was therefore a must, it noted.

“In addition, tankers... are needed for the supply of clean drinking water to the affected populations,” it said.

The UN’s food agency meanwhile said it aimed to provide emergency aid to about half a million people by the end of September, and plans to scale up deliveries to reach 2.2 million by October.

It has begun distribution rations to people in the worst-hit districts, starting with southern Badin, where 82 per cent of the communities have no access to healthcare facilities.

The World Food Programme added that it was currently using stocks within the country to meet the crisis, but that it would need donors to step up in order to replenish the supplies.

Pakistan was hit by the worst floods in its history in 2010, with 21 million people affected.

Tens of thousands of people still live in refugee camps, a year after the floods which wrought \$10 billion worth of damages.

September 17, 2011 (Dawn)

PM briefed over Sindh flood situation

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani was briefed about the situation of floods in Sindh as he started his two-day tour to supervise relief activities in the province.

Prime Minister Gilani was informed that NDMA and local authorities were busy in providing relief material to the people affected by the floods.

Chief Minister Sindh Syed Qaim Ali Shah and Governor Punjab Latif Khosa were also present during the briefing.

September 17, 2011 (Dawn)

\$330m sought for flood relief

The UN-led humanitarian community in Pakistan is seeking \$337 million from donor countries for an emergency response plan to support the government in addressing the needs of flood-affected families in Sindh.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Ocha), the joint strategic plan in support of government's priorities and relief interventions has been prepared on Pakistan's request.

A report released, says \$155 million has been allocated for food security, \$45 million for health services, \$65 million for shelter and non-food items, \$70 million for sanitation and hygiene and over \$2 million for logistics and coordination.

Food assistance will be provided for up to 2.2 million affected people and about \$30 million will be spent on emergency livelihood support.

Ocha says the plan follows a standard flash appeal and focuses on critical needs of the severely affected families in food security, clean drinking water and purification materials, sanitation and hygiene, emergency health services, tents and shelter kits, cooking sets, mosquito nets and other non-food items.

The second phase of the rapid response plan will be based upon data collected for needs assessment.

The plan will be revised within 30 days to reflect additional assessments and include early recovery strategies for the affected people, the report says.

The response plan will cater to 5.4 million affected people in Sindh and Balochistan.

The report the food security situation in the country is likely to be affected by the significant loss of crops, agricultural land and livestock.

Compounding the challenges to delivery of aid are access issues due to damaged infrastructure and continuing heavy rain. Infrastructure has been destroyed making it impossible to reach certain areas by road.

In addition, the security situation in some of the affected areas remains unpredictable, Ocha says.

While the national and provincial disaster management authorities will lead the relief and recovery activities, the humanitarian community has been asked to cover gaps where the needs exceed the government's response capacity.

According to UN assessment, it is expected that people will continue to be displaced from their homes in the short term as more areas are impacted. While some are housed in government shelters, more seek higher ground along bunds and roads.

In Balochistan, nine districts have been notified as affected, the report says.

The experience indicates the tremendous challenges posed by ever-changing monsoon patterns instigated by climate change, the report says.

According to preliminary information gathered by the NDMA, 1.6 million acres of crop area have been destroyed, causing loss of rice, vegetables, cotton and sugarcane just prior to the harvest. The survival and health of animals in affected areas is at risk.

Meanwhile, South Korea has decided to provide emergency assistance worth \$200,000 in relief goods.

The European Commission announced that 10 million euros would be provided in emergency relief.

Aid agency Oxfam warned that "the clock is ticking and with each passing day human suffering is multiplying and sufficient resources are urgently required to meet the critical need for water and sanitation".

Of the affected people, 32 per cent are women and more than 100,000 of them are pregnant and highly susceptible to diseases, Oxfam country director Neva Khan said.

The agency said millions of affected people were living in extremely unhygienic conditions without access to clean drinking water and basic sanitation facilities, which if not addressed would lead to an outbreak of water- and vector-borne diseases like acute diarrhoea, dengue, malaria and hepatitis.

The International Organisation for Migration appealed to the international community for funding to help at least 274,000 families affected by the floods. These vulnerable families would be left without emergency shelter unless the international community steps in, it said.

September 17, 2011 (Dawn)

Flood-hit families to get Rs20,000 cards

The government is introducing a new compensation programme for the rain-hit areas of Sindh under which a new 'Pakistan Card' will be distributed among the affected families.

The help of the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) has again been sought and it has prepared the computerised Pakistan Cards for providing Rs20,000 to each affected family.

"We will start distribution of Pakistan Cards within three days," Nadra's Deputy Chairman Tariq Malik told Dawn on Friday. He said the cards would be distributed in seven districts badly hit by rains and floods.

"We will distribute Pakistan Cards on the basis of Nadra's database in those districts which have been hit completely by the floods and rains but in partly affected districts, compensation will be given on the basis of a survey being conducted by the Sindh government and Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA)," he said.

It was learnt that the government had deposited some amount in banks for the compensation to be drawn by the card holders.

"The Sindh government, Nadra and the PDMA have teamed up to roll out a cash relief programme in notified calamity-hit areas in Sindh," Mr Malik said.

The debit or ATM card will be given to each calamity-hit family after validation by the PDMA and biometric verification by Nadra to ensure transparency in cash disbursement.

“We can start issuing Pakistan Cards in Badin district’s tehsils of Golarchi, Tando Bagho, Talhar, Matli and Badin; Kazi Ahmed, Daulatpur, Daur, Nawabshah and Sakrand in Shaheed Benazirabad district and Digri and Hussain Bux Mari tehsils in Mirpurkhas as the software application, communication network, computers, printers and biometric technology for verification as well as banks cash disbursement counters (ATMs) have been installed there,” the Nadra official said.

He said Nadra had mobilised its mobile registration vans in rain-hit areas for those affected people who did not have computerised national identity cards. The service will be provided free of cost.

The Pakistan Card will have a cash tab of Rs20,000 in two instalments of Rs10,000.

Nadra has set up special offices for issuing and processing Pakistan Cards in Badin, Tando Mohammad Khan, Thatta, Tando Allah Yar, Mirpurkhas, Tharparkar, Umerkot and Shaheed Benazirabad.

Virtual accounts for verified flood survivors will be created by partner banks. All affected individuals will be able to withdraw the cash through ATMs or POS machines at the registration centres.

The list of beneficiaries is validated by the PDMA in collaboration with the district administrations.

The Nadra deputy chief said the Pakistan Card was different from the Watan Card issued for last year’s flood victims. “We have provided cash compensation of Rs34 billion to 1.72 million people hit by last year’s floods. The last instalment of the 2010 flood compensation package is yet to be distributed,” he said.(done)

September 17, 2011 (The News)

No immediate end to monsoon rain spell: expert

Any immediate end to disastrous monsoon season, especially in some parts of Sindh, is still not in sight as top weather experts opined that it would take some more days to assess when this unusually prolonged rain spell would come to an end.

Director General of Pakistan Meteorological Department Arif Mehmood told this correspondent that last severe rainfall flooding in Sindh was occurred in July 2003, but this time the devastating rains of 1150 mm in Mithi, Mirpurkhas 676 mm, Diplo 779 mm, Chachro 735 mm, N. Parker 792 mm, Nawabshah 547 mm, Badin 512 mm, Chhor 456 mm, Padidan 381 mm and Hyderabad 249 mm during the four weeks period have created unprecedented flood situation in Sindh.

“When there would be no rain in any part of Sindh for five days then we can say that monsoon rain spell has ended in this region’ he said.

Dr Qamar Zaman Chaudhry said the pattern of recent extreme weather events in Pakistan is a clear indication of increase in frequency and intensity of such events that are in line with the international climate change projections.

“It was also forecast that in Pakistan climate change would be causing considerable increase in frequency and intensity of extreme weather events coupled with erratic monsoon rains causing frequent floods and droughts, and increased temperature would result in enhanced heat and water stress conditions, particularly in the arid and semi-arid regions,” he said.

September 17, 2011(The News)

Gastroenteritis outbreak feared as dozens of cases reported from Gadap

Following the unprecedented monsoon rains in Sindh and Karachi a few days back, the number of people with water-borne diseases, especially gastroenteritis, has increased sharply and hundreds of patients, mostly

children, were brought to hospitals with abdominal diseases during the last two days.

Gastroenteritis or stomach flu is a viral or bacterial infection, caused by a number of viruses and bacteria that grow manifold during or after rains and the symptoms include diarrhoea, vomiting and nausea with abdominal cramps. In Pakistan, unclean drinking water is one of the major causes of the disease, said Dr Shahid Ahmed, a gastroenterologist.

September 17, 2011(The News)

Poor farmers to bear brunt of price hike, fear traders

Leading traders and businessmen fear shortage of vegetables and fruits next month due to heavy rains and flooding in Sindh that may subsequently cause a price hike.

“Villagers, who have lost their sources of living and farm produce, are already under immense financial pressure. Now they will not be even able to buy essential food items,” said Ziauddin, Vice-Chairman of the Hyderabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI).

There is no safe area in Badin, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Tando Allahyar, Tando Mohammed Khan, which are the main producers of vegetables. Local traders and shopkeepers either have shut their businesses or have been displaced and are looking for safer grounds. “There is no safe route to supply vegetables to major markets. Though the business community is facing a tough situation, the poor will be the bigger losers in this devastation,” he said.

The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), which is collecting information about losses caused by rains, claims that over 1,595,052 acres of land have been destroyed.

Hyderabad, the hub of trade in Sindh, is no longer receiving vegetables and fruits from the affected areas. Traders have refused to buy more fruits like apples and grapes from Balochistan because of a decline in consumption. According to Ziauddin, demand for fruits has decreased alarmingly. Not only this, traders may bear the cost of transportation of other essential items.

“It will be too early to figure out the exact loss to fruit and vegetable traders,” he added.

Urban centres of Sindh, including Hyderabad and Karachi, usually receive vegetables from interior of Sindh. Now these cities would likely import vegetables from Punjab.

Seventy percent of sugarcane is reported to have been destroyed. Sugar mills, oil mills and ginning factories in the affected areas will not be able to receive raw material. Banana is another seasonal fruit which has been severely affected.

Mohammed Usman Shaikh, Vice-President Federation of the Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FPCCI), said “This will cause increase in the cost of daily use items. If the affected areas do not supply vegetables and raw material to the industries, factory owners may face higher costs to buy items from the Punjab and other parts of the country.” He said small growers and sharecroppers will be major losers in the devastation.

The flooding has caused a massive economic impact on the affected areas, shutting down trade centres and devastating crops. The residents who are being evacuated will not be able to return to their homes until the flood waters recede. Water levels are expected to stay high in many areas for at least next two-three months, which may affect the sowing of major wheat crops in the affected areas. Presently several roads are cut off. Displaced people are still looking panicked because of facing miserable situation while being evacuated or walking through flood water to reach safer places. (done)

September 17, 2011 (The News)

Corps commander, CM discuss flood situation

The Corps Commander of Karachi, Lt-Gen Muhammad Zahir-ul-Islam, called on Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah to review the situation in Sindh after heavy rains.

The corps commander informed the chief minister that he had visited the rain-hit areas and directed the armed forces to help the affected people.

He said that the provincial and district administrations and the Jawans of navy and air force were fully engaged in relief and rehabilitation efforts, particularly in the lower Sindh areas of Badin, Tharparkar, Tando Muhammad Khan, Tando Allahyar, Thatta and Mirpurkhas. The chief minister said that the province had suffered a lot owing to the heavy rains, appreciating the role of armed forces in helping the affected people.

September 18, 2011 (Dawn)

Thousands trapped in flood-hit Sindh

In Pakistan's fertile south, a grim-faced soldier found himself in a standoff with 100 flood-stricken kooerprotesters demanding help for their communities marooned by the surging water.

"We won't leave until you come with us to save our families," a defiant Ali Mohammad, 27, told the soldier. "Hundreds of our villagers are trapped in the flood waters but we can't find anyone to help us rescue them." A year after Pakistan's worst ever floods, the lush southern lands of Sindh are inundated once more, and angry villagers were desperate for help for their families who had escaped several feet of floodwater by sitting on their roofs.

A heated argument ended with a promise that the army would return to help the thousands of marooned residents in Tando Allahyar district, one of the areas worst affected by the deluge.

"We are going to save people in another town – this delay will risk their lives," the soldier said.

Official figures show the floods have killed nearly 300 people and affected 5.8 million since monsoon rains began — leaving hundreds of thousands living under open skies on hills and along highways.

The number affected is far lower than the 21 million hit by the record floods in 2010, when nearly one billion dollars was given in foreign aid and civilian authorities were accused of a woeful response to the disaster.

Now with Sindh province – worst-hit last year – again swamped and the response not keeping pace Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani has

cancelled a visit to the UN General Assembly in New York to see the aid effort in progress.

Islamabad also asked the UN to issue a fresh international appeal for flood donations.

Fewer relief camps have been set up this year and many victims have erected makeshift huts using bamboo, shawls and sheets.

Visits to Tando Allahyar, Badin, Mirpurkhas and Sanghar districts in Sindh showed scores of towns and villages submerged under rainwater that overflowed from drains and canals and swept down from neighbouring mountains.

One rescue worker, Suleman Abro, said the scale of the disaster was once again too much for authorities to handle. "There are places where military, navy and international organisations are rescuing them, but the effort is too limited as the scale of disaster is much larger," he said.

In the desert district of Thar, residents cut off from transport links by the flooding told AFP by phone that their homes had been inundated, forcing them to climb nearby sand dunes to stay on dry ground.

The UN's food agency said it aimed to provide emergency aid to about half a million people by the end of September, then scale up to reach 2.2 million next month, as it appealed for foreign donations to help assist all those in need.

The World Food Programme said it had begun handing out rations in the worst-hit districts, starting with southern Badin.

But many are also facing dire shortages of clean drinking water, leading to outbreaks of acute diarrhoea, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

The UN's children agency said it would distribute 200,000 litres of water to 40,000 people daily and deploy 40 more water tankers in coming days, aiming to ensure access to clean drinking water and avert disease.

A boatman in Sanghar's Khipro town said the navy had only four rescue boats available in the area, and all were being used around the clock.

“We have rescued 5,000 people in four days. There are still many people inside,” he said.

September 18, 2011 (Dawn)

Rain-hit man shot dead at MPA’s factory

An MPA and member of the district relief committee was booked along with his two guards for murder after a youth was shot dead outside his factory where relief goods to be distributed among rain-affected people had been stored.

A large number of the rain-hit people had gathered outside the Al-Rehmat Cotton Factory in Jhol town and started taking away the relief goods stored in a godown of the factory.

The guards tried to stop them but failed. The guards then allegedly opened fire, killing a youth. The 15-year-old deceased was identified as Ghulam Hussain.

MPA Rana Abdul Sattar, of the PML-Functional, owns the factory. He is a member of the district relief committee organised by the Sindh government to ensure distribution of relief through elected representatives in a fair and transparent manner.

The Jhol police registered an FIR against Rana Sattar and guards Yar Mohammad Kharal and Ali Jan.

September 18, 2011(Dawn)

1.3 million houses damaged by floods, PM told

Over 1.388 million houses have been damaged, standing crops on two million acres destroyed and at least 6.506 million people affected by heavy monsoon rains and flooding in various parts of Sindh. About 31,960 villages have been affected.

This was pointed out by Sindh Chief Secretary Raja Mohammad Abbas and Provincial Disaster Management Authority Chairman Saleh Farooqi during a briefing given to Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani at the Nawabshah

Airport. The prime minister visited a relief camp set up by the air force near the airport.

Badin has been the most affected district where 382,562 houses have been damaged and over one million people affected.

Mr Abbas and Mr Farooqi informed the prime minister that an area of 5.938 million acres had been affected. A total of 342 people have lost their lives and about 607 suffered injuries in rain-related incidents across the province. They said the government had set up 2,737 relief camps in the flood-affected districts where 482,899 people were being provided necessary facilities.

They said that so far 717,882 ration bags had been distributed among the affected people in various relief camps. They said relief agencies were facing problems in installation of tents because several areas were still under 6-7 feet of water. They said that initially people in seven affected districts would be provided financial help through the Sindh relief cards.

The prime minister asked members of a parliamentary committee, set up by him to monitor relief work, to address complaints about distribution of relief goods by holding meetings with elected representatives of the affected districts and PDMA officials.

About the cancellation of his US visit, he said it was because of people and when they were in trouble what benefit he would get by visiting the US. He said it was government's duty to provide relief, rehabilitate people and save them from troubles and diseases.

Speaking to the affected people in Seraiki at the camp, Mr Gilani said he was sad that people were homeless because of heavy rains. He said it was a natural disaster and the government was making all-out efforts to rehabilitate the affected people at the earliest.

He said the Baitul Maal, NDMA, PDMA and Sindh government were providing food, tents, water and other essential items to people at relief camps and other affected areas. He said the government was also trying to provide financial help to the rain-affected people and he had asked the agencies concerned to send medical teams to the affected areas.

Mr Gilani later visited Sanghar and Hyderabad.

September 18, 2011 (Dawn)

Lives of one million children at risk

Save the Children Fund has expressed fears that lives of one million children are at risk from diseases in flood-affected areas of Sindh.

The charity that works for children`s rights says the children are at an increased risk from malaria, diarrhoea and other water-borne diseases.

The organisation has launched a major emergency response and reached 16,200 people with vital aid supplies and is scaling up its efforts to reach one million people.

Director of the charity for Pakistan David Wright said in a statement that the lives of children in Sindh were at risk from both malaria and new floodwaters contaminated by sewage from several major towns. Families made homeless by the current flooding are already living in filthy conditions. At several camps about 100 people are sharing a single toilet. Many children in Sindh are already weak and malnourished; malaria or waterborne diseases can kill them within days.

The organisation is distributing mosquito nets, soap and food and providing emergency healthcare and shelter to the affected families. Meanwhile, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies announced that they would help the affected families for the next four months and distribute food, shelter materials and household items and provide emergency healthcare and support for water and sanitation.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) announced that it was moving rapidly to deliver urgently needed reproductive health services to the flood-affected people as part of a coordinated UN humanitarian response.

The UNFPA estimates that at least 1.2 million women of reproductive age are among the five million people affected by heavy monsoon rains and floods across Pakistan. At least 115,000 are pregnant. Everyday nearly 400 women go into labour; at least 60 have life-threatening pregnancy-related complications that require urgent medical assistance.

Certain districts, now submerged, had high malnutrition even before the floods. The women who were already severely anaemic will be even more prone to complications of pregnancy and delivery. With the continuing rains and stagnating water, pregnant women and newborns living in the open are increasingly exposed to malaria and dengue.

The UNFPA is collaborating with humanitarian partners to deliver reproductive health and protection services to women and adolescent girls.

Supplies to cover the reproductive health needs of 600,000 people for one month have been dispatched to Sindh and are being distributed in seven severely affected districts where the number of women is the highest. The Fund is mobilising more medicines and essential supplies to reach the affected communities.

It said 25 mobile service units were being moved to seven of the most affected districts in Sindh — Badin, Khairpur, Mirpurkhas, Nawabshah, Umerkot, Tando Mohammad Khan and Tando Allahyar. These vehicles are equipped to provide primary healthcare, basic emergency obstetric care and services responding to gender-based violence. Support will be scaled up to provide comprehensive obstetric services through health facilities in the second phase.

“UNFPA ensures that women are able to deliver safely even in times of disaster. While our role remains the same whether in emergency, early recovery or development, in a humanitarian crisis our work becomes even more urgent as the vulnerability of women and girls is increased,” said Rabbi Royan, the UNFPA country representative in Pakistan.

September 18, 2011 (Dawn)

UN launches \$357 million appeal for flood-hit Pakistan

The United Nations and Pakistani government appealed for \$357 million in foreign donations to urgently help more than seven million people swamped by a second year of catastrophic floods.

Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani also visited relief camps of the flood survivors at Nabi Sar area in Sindh.

Addressing on the occasion, he said the government would provide emergency assistance of Rs20000 to each affected family.

He said the government would also help in reconstruction of damaged houses for the victims.

Gilani accepted that the damages from the rains and floods in Sindh were colossal but reassured that the government would try its best to assist the affected people.

He further said that a proper drainage system would be installed in the areas to save the areas from flooding next year.

Gilani has cancelled a visit to the UN General Assembly in New York to oversee aid efforts.

One year on from the country's worst-ever floods that left more than 21 million people in need, Pakistan's southern plains have been inundated again, with some parts of Sindh province swamped with more water than last summer.

Thousands of people are stranded on hills and roofs, with the government unable to meet more than 30 per cent of funds needed for emergency rescue and relief efforts, it said in a joint news conference with the UN in Islamabad.

The UN said its assessment showed that nearly every district in Sindh province had seen flooding, as well as five districts of neighbouring Baluchistan province, killing 342 people and injuring 633 others so far.

The \$357 million appeal is only to garner initial "life saving assistance to the most affected people" said the UN's humanitarian coordinator in Pakistan, Timo Pakkala.

"We need to look to also paving the way for some kind of a recovery for them. The water needs to be removed," he said.

Nearly half a million people are living in temporary relief camps, with 1.35 million homes affected by the floodwaters.

Hundreds of thousands of families needed help to recover from lost livestock or crop farming incomes, while only one quarter of Sindh's population currently has access to markets, the UN said.

As much as six million acres (2.4 million hectares) of land is under water, including two million acres of arable land. Sindh's fertile lands are the country's breadbasket.

The government's response to the 2010 floods was panned for being late and insufficient, and this year's disaster has raised questions over whether better flood-proofing since then could have prevented a second year of upheaval.

Information Minister Firdous Aashiq Awan denied the government was at fault, blaming the disaster on climate change and insisting authorities were working to their maximum capacity.

"Today my fellow countrymen are unfortunately once again passing through great hardship due to unexpected and unprecedented monsoon rains," said Awan.

"The government of Pakistan has tried its level best to cope with the situation by itself," but required foreign help "due to the sheer scale of the disaster and the huge number of vulnerable people" she said.

Further assessments of recovery needs would be carried out over the next 30 days to assess how much further aid the floods would necessitate, she added.

The UN said it was working with Islamabad to get visa approval for foreign aid workers to come and help with the relief operations.

The UN's food agency is scaling up its response to reach 2.5 million with food handouts next month.

Many victims are also facing dire shortages of clean drinking water, leading to outbreaks of acute diarrhoea and other waterborne disease, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

The UN's children agency says it will distribute 200,000 litres (50,000 gallons) of water to 40,000 people daily and deploy 40 more water tankers in coming days, aiming to ensure access to clean drinking water and avert disease.

September 18, 2011 (Dawn)

NBP opens account for PM's relief fund

The National Bank has announced opening of an account (696969) for the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

According to a press release, the bank has contributed Rs 25 million to the fund for rain-hit victims.

Donations can be deposited in any branch of the bank in Pakistan or overseas.

The NBP has set aside Rs 50 million for the establishment of medical camps across Sindh. Every medical camp is capable of treating at least 1400 patients, the press release added.

September 18, 2011(Dawn)

China pledges support for flood-hit people

Consul General of China Zhang Jianxin called on Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah and reiterated his country's support for the flood-hit people of the province at this critical juncture.

He expressed sympathy for the huge loss of life and public property due to the heavy rains in Sindh, saying that the people of China were with the people of Pakistan in their hour of trial.

He said that the government and the people of China would extend their assistance to help Pakistan deal with the situation. As a token of solidarity with the flood-affected people, the consul general also presented a cheque for Rs400,000 contributed by the staff of the Chinese consulate to the Sindh chief minister.

September 18, 2011 (Dawn)

Sindh has diverted uplift funds to relief work: Khuhro

Sindh Assembly Speaker Nisar Ahmed Khuhro said that a survey of losses caused by recent heavy rains was essential before declaring an area like Hyderabad calamity-stricken.

Talking to journalists after attending a briefing by Sindh Minister for Fisheries Zahid Ali Bhurgari and district government officials on rain losses and relief activities in Hyderabad, Mr Khuhro said that the government was making sincere efforts to help the rain-affected people.

He urged PPP workers and office-bearers to cooperate with the district administration to help the affected people. The Sindh government had diverted funds from development schemes to fund relief activities, he said.

He urged civil society, NGOs and philanthropists to help mitigate people's sufferings.

The district administration was short of machinery to drain out stagnating rainwater from Hyderabad, which was a large city, he said, urging the administration to acquire more machinery.

Mr Bhurgari informed the speaker during the briefing that the survey was being conducted to assess losses and expressed hope its report would be received within a week.

He said that 11 people had died so far in different rain-related incidents and heirs of four deceased persons had been paid a compensation of Rs200,000 each.

Four to five feet water had accumulated in low-lying areas and flow of Wadhu wah had been reversed in order to drain out water from some areas of Qasimabad, he said.

Mr Bhurgari said that rains destroyed five union councils and devastated 85 per cent of crops in the UCs. About 8,000 flood-affected people from other areas had been accommodated in relief camps in vegetable market, Mehran school, Zeal Pak school and Hussainabad, he said.

Saylani Trust had provided cooked food worth Rs180 million to the flood-affected people in relief camps during last year`s floods. This year also, the trust had promised to provide food to 40,000 rain-affected people, he said.

He said that secretaries of all 52 UCs of the district had been provided machines to carry out anti-mosquito spray in their areas. Four large spray machines had also been handed over to TMAs, he said, adding the fumigation would continue for 15 days.

Mr Bhurgari said that 30 per cent of rainwater stagnating in different areas would be drained out within a couple of days.

Hyderabad DCO Ahmed Bux Narejo said that Qasimabad taluka was more vulnerable to rains than the rest of the city, which received 513 mm of rain from Aug 10 to Sept 12.

He said the rain affected 400,000 people and, according to a survey, crops of cotton, rice and sugarcane standing on 72,000 acres had been destroyed.

The DCO said that 4,000 houses had been damaged and 12 relief camps had been set up for the rain-affected people coming from other districts.

Sindh Excise Minister Mukesh Kumar Chawla, PPP leaders Abdul Jabbar Khan, Mir Fateh Talpur, Ms Hina Dastagir and EDO (revenue) Asif Memon and other officers were also present on the occasion.

September 18, 2011(The News)

Every displaced person to be resettled: PM

Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani has said the government will ensure that each person displaced by the recent rains in Sindh gets rehabilitated.

He said, "The flood-affected people are my brothers and I have become prime minister with your support."

Gilani expressed these views on Saturday at a relief camp set up here by the Pakistan Air Force on the first day of his two-day visit to the flood-affected areas of Sindh.

Addressing in Seraiki language to flood-affected people, he said that he had cancelled his foreign tour and come to see his brothers and sisters who were in distress.

The prime minister said relief and rehabilitation is the responsibility of the government and it would perform its duty, while the opposition was busy in just issuing statements. “The government knows very well what to do,” he said, assuring all facilities would be made available at each and every relief camp.

He said that current monsoon rains caused floods and people were displaced due to a natural calamity but, he added, the government was with them at this time of agony.

Gilani said all departments of the government were playing their due role and the rehabilitation of the affected people was our priority.

He said the flood recovery process comprised two phases; first shifting of the affected persons to relief camps, providing them food and health facilities and secondly the rehabilitation.

With Sindh Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah and other elected representatives of the province besides him, the prime minister said “When you are in trouble we cannot sit idle. I have come to meet you and we will remain with you till the last person is rehabilitated.”

Earlier in a briefing here at the Zardari House by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) about the relief and rehabilitation activities, Gilani was informed that recent rains and floods destroyed around 1,300,000 houses throughout Sindh, 32,000 villages have gone under water, total of 5.6 million people were affected, while 345 people lost their lives.

The prime minister directed the authority for all out relief assistance and said that he would personally visit each district of the province and monitor the relief work.

Punjab Governor Latif Khosa, MNA Faryal Talpur, National Assembly Flood Relief Committee members Raja Pervez Ashraf and Nazar Muhammad Gondal and Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Memon were also present on the occasion.

Later, Gilani, along with Latif Khosa and Qaim Ali Shah, had an aerial visit of flood-affected areas of Hyderabad and Badin.

Earlier, the prime minister discussed with MNAs Faryal Talpur and Azra Fazal Pechuho at the Zardari House the flood situation in Sindh as well as the pace of relief measures being taken.

September 18, 2011 (The News)

'Rains affect 200,000 in Dadu district'

About 200,000 people have been affected owing to the recent rains in Dadu district.

This was stated by the District Coordination Officer (DCO), Dadu, Dr Niaz Ali Abbasi.

At a briefing held here on Saturday, he said that 15,000 mud houses were also damaged in the rains. Dr Abbasi said that tent villages have been set up at the Degree College Juhi, Dadu, Mehar and Khairpur Nathan Shah to accommodate the rain victims.

He said ration is being supplied daily to 5,000 affected people and survey is being carried out for more affectees.

He said Juhi-Haji Khan road which was damaged due to water coming from Gaj Nallah, has been restored. Work is also continuing to restore Juhi Wahipandhi road. He said medical and survey teams have been dispatched in Wahipandhi area. Dr Abbasi said that he had an aerial view by helicopter and that the situation is improving and under control.

September 18, 2011(The News)

Nadra to launch Pakistan Card in flood-hit areas

Deputy Chairman Nadra Tariq Malik has said that the authority has made preparations for the issuance of Pakistan Card to each flood affected family for getting financial support of Rs 20,000.

Talking to a radio channel, he said Nadra has set up offices with the cooperation of DCOs in respective areas.

Tarik Malik said initially the operation of Pakistan Card will be started in the worst-hit districts of Badin, Benazirabad and Mirpurkhas from Monday. Giving detail of Nadra offices, he said Nadra opened offices in tehsils Golarshi, Tandu Baghu, Talhar, Mathri and Badin of district Badin, while Dhoor, Nawabshah and Sirtam of district Shaheed Benazirabad. Likewise, Nadra offices have been opened in Dagri and Hussain Bakhsh Marri of Mirpurkhas. He said every affected family will be provided Rs20,000 in two installments.

September 18, 2011 (The News)

Floods wash away bonds of slavery

Thousands of peasants working as bonded labourers since generations have taken rains and floods as a blessing, as they are now free to leave the inundated private jails of their landlords.

The rains and floodwater have inundated Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Tando Allahyar and Badin districts, which are the centres of bonded labour in Sindh.

These bonded labourers, who had been living under the control of rich landlords for several years, breathed a sigh of relief after floods, as they had no property left behind while leaving the inundated grounds.

At least two million bonded labourers, after being trapped under debt, are forced to work for landlords in Sindh.

Above 7.1 million people — the vast majority of them small farmers — were affected and 824,000 were displaced after heavy rains caused flooding in the low-lying areas of Sindh.

Thousands of villagers are still stranded in flooded areas as land routes have been cut off due to standing water. Several families can be seen travelling in search of safer locations.

Unlike others, the bonded labourers had nothing to lose in the flood except slavery. They left the private jails along with their women and children for the prospect of a brighter future. The landlords are not in a position to stop them as they have lost their power symbols in the

flooding. However, it's not yet clear how these farmers would hide themselves from their landlords after the water recedes.

Giving another side of the story, Eidan Noonari, President Kiln Workers Union, Sanghar, said that a powerful kiln owner had forcibly shifted around 70 such families from his two kiln units near Shahpur Chakar in Sanghar to an unknown place.

Seeing the floodwater streaming to the area, the kiln owner feared it may inundate his unit, so he shifted his workforce. "There is no news, so far, where these poor people have been shifted to. The kiln owner has similar units in Hyderabad, Sukkur and other areas of the country, but we are in dark about the future of these people," Noonari said.

Last year's floods displaced around 200,000 families in Sindh. Many of them refused to return to their area after the floodwater receded, as they did not want to return to days of slavery. Thousands of them still live in Karachi and other urban centres of Sindh.

September 18, 2011 (The News)

This year's floods caused more devastation: expert

The biggest challenge after rain devastations is the time period the floodwater will take to recede which may delay the rehabilitation of the affected people, said a senior official of UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO).

In an exclusive interview with The News, FAO's Senior Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordinator Luigi Damiani said there was a marked difference between last year's and this year's flooding. "It is an unusual pattern of rains; this year's rains were unpredictable," he said.

He said the drainage system could not cope with the amount of water, thus the rainwater could not be drained into the sea. "Yes, we call it climate change," he said while responding to a question. "The quantity of water received is abnormal. It is 10 times higher than the capacity of the drainage system," he said.

“This year’s flooding was caused by rainwater. It’s something that came from the sky. There was no way out,” he said. “Last year, it was like a river flowing from north to south.”

Damiani said silting was one of the major causes of concern last year. “Although it’s not the case this year, the impact of the latest flooding would be worse on farmers because it is affecting the low-lying areas.”

He termed it an emergency situation, adding that the army was doing a commendable job. “It provided immediate relief. Of course, it was not enough. So the private sector and the UN were called in. There are several actors, but army’s role is critical.”

According to him, cotton and rice crops, and to some degree sugarcane, were the worst sufferers in the flooding. “Vegetables have been completely washed away,” he added.

Dr Faizul Bari, FAO’s National Emergency Coordinator who was accompanying Damiani, said the damage could be compensated by providing seeds and fertilizers to farmers for Rabi crops while medicines and fodder should be provided for the livestock.

Bari said FAO was still assessing the damage caused by flooding. “An estimated 0.5 million acres of land has been affected, while about five million people have been displaced in Sindh.” Damiani said 8,000 animals died due to flooding while five million were affected.

September 19, 2011 (Dawn)

Rs5bn raised last year still lying unused

The government, through the United Nations, has launched an appeal for \$356 million international assistance for the people of rain- and flood-affected areas despite the fact that it has not utilised Rs5 billion collected for flood victims last year.

According to sources, the fund set up for collecting donations last year still has Rs5 billion and despite efforts made by the National Disaster Management Authority the government is reluctant to release the amount for relief and rescue operation.

Bureaucratic hitches are said to be the main reason behind non-utilisation of the funds.

When contacted, former NDMA chairman Gen (retd) Nadeem Ahmed confirmed that an amount of Rs5 billion not used so far was lying with the government and because of bureaucratic hitches it was not being provided to the authority to expedite its operation in the affected areas.

“I brought the issue to the knowledge of decision-makers but the funds were not released,” he said.

The government, the NDMA and the UN launched an appeal to the international community, on Sunday, seeking \$33.2 million as rapid response to the disaster so that the money could be spent on water and sanitation, food and shelter.

An official said the funds collected earlier had not been released because disaster management had become a provincial subject after the 18th Amendment.

According to official figures, more than eight million people have been affected by the heavy monsoon rains and the death toll has reached 250.

Meanwhile, the Speaker of the National Assembly has written a letter to Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani suggesting that the NDMA should be wrapped up because of what she called its ‘poor response’ to rescue and rehabilitation needs in Sindh.

Dr Fehmida Mirza said the NDMA had not reached the flood-hit areas even a month after the disaster. “The NDMA is earning a bad name for the government and, therefore, it should be wrapped up,” she said.

She said people in the affected areas were not blaming the NDMA but the political leaders for their plight.

Mr Gilani also expressed dissatisfaction over the performance of the NDMA and lashed out at its chief during a visit to Nawabshah on Friday.

However, a source in the NDMA said Gen (retd) Nadeem had told the speaker during a meeting last year that funds were available with the government and should be spent to provide relief to people.

NDMA spokesman Irshad Bhatti said the authority was not ready to cope with the disaster this year because the meteorological department had forecast 10 per cent less rains in Sindh. “And some of the districts hit by the floods were not mentioned in the forecast.”

The spokesman agreed that the government had made a delayed call to the international community for help and said the NDMA had provided the help it could. “We have provided 150,000 tents, 150,000 water treatment tablets, 60,000 mosquito tents and two water treatment plants to each affected district,” he said.

He said it was not the responsibility of the provincial governments and PDMA’s to provide rescue and relief goods to the affected people.

“The basic duty of the NDMA is to coordinate among different stakeholders like NGOs, philanthropists and foreign donors to generate funds and their utilisation is the responsibility of the PDMA’s,” the spokesman said.

Another NDMA official said that after last year’s floods some protection measures had been suggested, including raising the canal embankments at an estimated cost of Rs48 million but it had not been done and now the government had spent over Rs2 billion on rescue and relief work.

Had the suggested measures been taken, the destruction caused by the current floods could have been minimised, he said.

The official said a fund set up by Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority for the victims of the 2005 earthquake also had Rs800 million which is not being used to help the flood-affected people.

September 19, 2011 (Dawn)

Gilani declares Tharparkar calamity-hit district

Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani declared Tharparkar as a calamity-hit district and appealed to the international community and political parties of the country to extend assistance for relief and rehabilitation of the rain- and flood-affected people.

Speaking to people during a visit to relief and medical camps in Naukot Fort, he said each affected family would be given Rs20,000 through Watan Card. Members of the Hindu community also lived in Naukot and were like brothers and equal citizens of the country, he added.

Talking to journalists at Nabisar in Umerkot, Mr Gilani directed the Sindh government to remove encroachments from the river bed.

He directed the Finance Ministry to release Rs1.53 billion immediately to provide relief to flood-affected people. Presiding over a meeting in Hyderabad late on Saturday night, he said the amount was in addition to Rs500 million that had already been released.

HEALTH CONFERENCE: While addressing flood-affected people in Umerkot and Mirpurkhas, Prime Minister Gilani announced convening a National Health Conference in Lahore to discuss and formulate a national plan for combating dengue virus which claimed another six lives.

Chief Ministers of the four provinces will attend the meeting. Sri Lankan health experts already in Lahore have been invited to the conference.

September 19, 2011 (Dawn)

UN launches \$356m flood relief appeal

The United Nations launched an appeal to raise \$356 million which would be spent initially on 91 projects in flood-affected areas of Sindh and Balochistan.

The appeal was launched by UN's Humanitarian Coordinator Timo Pakkala at a ceremony where Minister for Information and Broadcasting Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan was the chief guest.

The initiative titled Rapid Response Plan 2011 aims to urgently help more than 7 million people swamped by a second year of catastrophic floods.

One year on from the country's worst-ever floods that left more than 21 million people in need, the country's southern plains have been inundated again, with some parts of Sindh swamped with more water than last summer.

Thousands of people are stranded on hills and roofs, with the government unable to meet more than 30 per cent of funds needed for emergency rescue and relief efforts, Ms Awan said at the joint news conference with the UN officials.

The UN said its assessment showed that nearly every district in Sindh had seen flooding, as well as five districts of Balochistan, killing 342 people and injuring 633 others so far.

The \$356 million appeal is only to garner initial “life saving assistance to the most affected people” said Mr Pakkala.

Nearly half a million people are living in temporary relief camps, with 1.35 million homes affected by the floodwaters.

Hundreds of thousands of families needed help to recover from lost livestock or crop farming incomes, while only one quarter of Sindh’s population currently has access to markets, the UN said.

As much as six million acres of land is under water, including two million acres of arable land.

The government’s response to the 2010 floods was criticised for being late and insufficient, and this year’s disaster has raised questions over whether better flood-proofing since then could have prevented a second year of upheaval.

Ms Awan denied the government was at fault, blaming the disaster on climate change and insisting authorities were working to their maximum capacity.

“Today my fellow countrymen are unfortunately once again passing through great hardship due to unexpected and unprecedented monsoon rains,” she said.

“The government of Pakistan has tried its level best to cope with the situation by itself,” but required foreign help “due to the sheer scale of the disaster and the huge number of vulnerable people”, she said.

Many people in flood-affected areas are also facing dire shortages of clean drinking water, leading to outbreaks of acute diarrhoea and other waterborne disease, according to the World Health Organisation.

Representatives of diplomatic community, UN organisations, government departments, National Disaster Management Authority and others were present on the occasion.

The Rapid Response Plan was launched on the appeal made by President Asif Ali Zardari after his visit to the flood-affected areas when he phoned UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for generating relief funds from the international community.

September 19, 2011 (Dawn)

UNHCR seeks \$33m to assist flood victims

As part of the United Nations' consolidated appeal for Pakistan's flood emergency, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has sought \$33.2 million to assist rain-affected people in Sindh and Balochistan.

Mengesha Kebede, UNHCR Representative in Pakistan, said that funds would be used to distribute among the flood-hit people 75,000 tents, 75,000 kits of household relief items and plastic sheets which could be used as emergency shelters.

The supplies will benefit an estimated 525,000 people, many of whom had just started to recover from last year's devastating floods.

These items will be distributed in the districts of Badin, Tando Mohammad Khan, Mirpurkhas, Benazirabad, Dadu, Jamshoro and Thatta in Sindh.

In Balochistan, relief goods will be provided to affected families in Kalat, Nasirabad, Jaffarabad, Lasbela, Pishin and Qilla Abdullah districts.

The UNHCR will also distribute jerry cans, buckets, mosquito nets, kitchen sets, sleeping mats, quilts, blankets and soap and other needed items, Mr Kebede said.

In both Sindh and Balochistan, the distribution of emergency family tents and relief items is being carried out through provincial and district authorities as well as implementing partners.

September 19, 2011 (The News)

UN launches \$356 million appeal for flood-hit Pakistan

The United Nations launched an appeal to raise \$356 million under its Rapid Response Plan 2011, which will be spent initially on 91 projects in the flood-affected areas of Sindh and Balochistan.

The Rapid Response Plan 2011 was launched by Humanitarian Coordinator of the United Nations, Timo Pakkala, at a ceremony where Minister for Information and Broadcasting Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan was the chief guest. Representatives of the diplomatic community, UN organisations, government departments, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and others were present on the occasion.

The Rapid Response Plan has been launched on the appeal made by President Asif Ali Zardari after his visit to the flood-affected areas of Sindh when he asked UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to generate funds from the international community to help the victims. It is an initial plan for emergency needs, which will be reviewed after a month to assess actual needs once complete destruction and damage data has been compiled from the affected areas.

Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan addressing the launch ceremony of the Rapid Response Plan and said unprecedented heavy rainfall had affected 23 districts of Sindh and five districts of Balochistan. She said the situation was further compounded due to a number of breaches in all irrigation channels and the Left Bank Out Fall Drain.

She said 342 precious lives had been lost due to the floods while 633 persons were injured and millions of people were vulnerable to different diseases, particularly acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea, malaria and infections. "More than 7.1 million people have been directly affected out of which 491,000 people have been accommodated in 2618 relief camps," Dr Firdous said.

As many as 1.3 million houses have been damaged and over 6 million acres of land including 2 million acres cultivated land has been affected, she added. The minister said heavy damages to property, infrastructure, agriculture and livestock had been reported, but the actual damages would be ascertained after detailed damages and needs assessment was carried out.

She said the government of Pakistan, under the dynamic leadership of President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, had so far mobilised approximately 166,000 tents, over 869,000 family food packs and a large number of other relief items including blankets, mosquito nets, water purification units, medicines and jerry cans etc.

She said, “The government had tried its best to cope with the situation by itself but due to the sheer scale of the disaster it came to the conclusion that the situation exceeds the capacity of any single stakeholder.”

She said in view of this President Zardari requested UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to supplement the government’s efforts. The minister hoped that the people of Pakistan would receive similar generous support as had been extended by friends and international community in the past for the Rapid Response Plan of \$356 million. “We are confident that the Rapid Response Plan jointly launched by the Pakistan government and the UN will receive the required funds from donors,” she added.

The minister said the Pakistan government together with the UN would ensure transparency and accountability in the utilisation and delivery of assistance to the affected people in a most efficient manner.

Dr Firdous said Pakistan was prone to hydro meteorological disasters but the frequency and intensity of such disasters had increased in the recent past, primarily due to climate change experienced all over the world. The minister said a well placed three-tier disaster management system consisting of district, provincial and national disaster management authorities had been evolved by the government.

Referring to the issue of visas and permission to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international community to reach flood affected areas, the minister assured that the government of Pakistan was facilitating the donors in this regard.

Humanitarian Coordinator of United Nations, Timo Pakkala said the Rapid Response Plan was basically for 91 projects identified initially to provide shelter, food, medicines and clean drinking water in the affected areas. He said the UN had already started supplying food, shelter, medicines and other basic needs of life to the flood affected areas without waiting for the funds to be generated.

Pakkala said this plan was for the initial response to the victims and would be reviewed after 45 days to revise the needs and demands of the people of the affected areas. Giving some details, he said, with the present resources of the Pakistan government, only 30 percent shelter could be provided to the homeless victims.

He said out of 5.44 million affected people there were 2.60 million women and 1.96 million children, while 1.8 million people had been displaced and 1.0 million houses had been damaged. He said 64 percent people in the flood-affected areas were without clean drinking water while 67 percent food stock had been destroyed. He said 70 percent crops in the area had been damaged while 280,000 families had lost their livestock.

To a question, Timo Pakkala said so far no country had announced its pledge under the Rapid Response Plan 2011 and that some of the countries had already announced their donations before. He clarified that it would be up to the donor countries if they wanted to contribute directly on a bilateral basis or through the Rapid Response Plan.

He said the Rapid Response Plan was meant to provide immediate relief and after its revision, a fresh plan would be prepared for reconstruction, rehabilitation and improvement of other basic facilities to the flood victims.

September 19, 2011 (The News)

Large-scale flood devastation beyond comprehension: PM

Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, who has concluded his second whirlwind visit of the rain and flood affected areas of interior Sindh, in which he covered seven districts of the province, expressed displeasure over the performance of the local administration in handling the catastrophic situation.

“Negligence of the administration will not be tolerated any further and the problems of the people must be resolved by using all means,” the prime minister said in Naukot in front of the historic fort in the heart of the Thar desert where thousands have taken refuge under the open sky. He declared all of Tharparkar a calamity-hit area and appealed to the international community and political parties to extend full assistance for the relief and rehabilitation of the rain and flood victims.

“We are facing allegations of corruption from childhood,” he said, assuring that foreign aid, when received, would be distributed in a transparent manner. He said the damage caused by the floods on such a large scale is beyond comprehension.

Addressing displaced people holding flags of the PPP outside a medical and relief camp, the PM announced that each affected family would be given Rs20,000 through the Watan Card. Gilani reminded the gathering that the minorities and women are part of his constituency since the Hindu community is in a majority in the area. “The minorities of Pakistan are like brothers and equal citizens of Pakistan,” he said.

The prime minister said no one could stop natural calamities and it was very painful that heavy rain and flood had left a large number of people homeless. He said the government is determined to help the flood victims and the PPP-led governments in Sindh and centre are striving hard to provide every possible assistance to the affected persons. “We share the grief of the victims and will not leave them alone,” he assured.

The Pakistan Army has also been asked to supply and distribute food items, medicines and other relief goods to the affected people through helicopters. Assistance will also be provided to the rain affected people through Bait-ul-Mal and Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), he assured.

Prime Minister Gilani visited Umerkot, Mithi, Mirpur Khas and Nawabshah before proceeding to Lahore where he will attend to the victims of dengue fever.

Addressing the flood and rain victims in Mirpur Khas, the prime minister repeated his appeal to the international community to join hands with Pakistan to help the seven million people of Sindh hit by floods in the

months of August and September. “The magnitude of disaster is much beyond the capacity of Pakistan,” the premier said. “The federal and provincial governments of PPP will not leave people in the lurch. The government has devoted all resources for the rescue and rehabilitation of the affected people with dignity and honour,” he added.

Dr Kathumal Jeevan, a Hindu member of the National Assembly from the area, pointed out the problems of the minority community and the prime minister assured that he would personally supervise relief and rehabilitation work in the worst hit districts of Tharparkar, Umerkot, Badin, Sanghar and Mirpur Khas through the Flood Relief Committee. Prime Minister Gilani told the crowds at different places that they would continue to get ration bags, medicines, tents and other necessities of life till their comprehensive rehabilitation.

The prime minister said army helicopters will be used to drop ration bags where road connectivity has become impossible due to water and areas are practically cut off.

The prime minister said he was extremely saddened when he saw his brothers, sisters and children confronted with the aftermath of the natural disaster, but assured that the governments, both federal and provincial, were with them.

In Umerkot Prime Minister Gilani termed the loss of crops in Sindh a tragedy and announced that the government will give relief to the affected growers in the form of pesticides and fertilisers for Rabi crop.

Talking to media at Nabi Sir Thar, a peripheral area of Kunri, district Umerkot, Gilani said the federal and provincial governments are making all out efforts to provide every possible help to flood and rain affected people in Sindh. He called upon NGOs, donors and international community to help the flood victims and also directed the Sindh government to remove encroachments from the river bed.

He also called upon the authorities concerned to find a solution for the Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD). Gilani said a strategy is also being devised to cope with malaria and dengue viruses. He said he had issued instructions to his ministers and members of the Relief Committee to figure out the losses after thorough and accurate calculations. He said the

federal government got involved in relief and rehabilitation activities after it was assessed that the scale of damage was beyond the capacity of the provincial government. He also assured transparency in the management of international funds.

Premier Gilani visited different sections of the relief camps and interacted with affected families including women and children. He inquired about the availability of basic facilities at the camps. Earlier, MNA Nawab Yousuf Talpur briefed the prime minister about damages caused by the heavy rain and flood in district Umerkot.

Prime Minister Gilani directed Federal Minister Syed Naveed Qamar to inspect the banks of River Indus and its distributaries and ensure strengthening of protective embankments. He directed the federal minister to review the position of breaches caused by the flood in the protective embankments. Naveed Qamar assured the prime minister that all out efforts would be made to strengthen the embankments.

Addressing the flood-affected people at Banisar camp, the premier said the government would redress the grievances of flood victims at the earliest and assured full compensation after damage assessment.

The prime minister started the day in a high-level meeting with the senior officers of the province in Hyderabad where he directed the Ministry of Finance to release Rs1.53 billion immediately to meet the urgent requirements of the relief operation. He said this amount is in addition to 500 million rupees released earlier.

September 19, 2011 (The News)

Foreign aid for flood victims should not be made controversial'

Punjab Governor Latif Khosa has said the issue of foreign aid for the flood-hit population of Sindh should not be made controversial and the world is ready to help Pakistan in the hour of need.

'The perception that the world is not ready to help Pakistan this time is not true,' he said while addressing a press conference.

He said Iran had already helped Pakistan and other countries had also come forward for the purpose like the past. He stated that some of our friends wanted a third-party evaluation of the loss and Nadra had been assigned the task to prepare the lists of flood-hit people.

‘The response from foreign nations is good,’ said Latif Khosa.

To a question, he said the passion of the nation at the time of need was remarkable, adding that whenever the situation demanded, whether it was the earthquake of 2005 or the issue of IDPs in 2009, the nation played its due role. He appealed to the philanthropists to come forward and play their role to help the flood-hit people of Sindh.

September 19, 2011 (The News)

Floods pauperizing the poor

The family of 12 was relieved when an army boat rescued them from floodwaters a week ago. But the hardships have only piled up at a makeshift camp.

The few family possessions saved from the roaring waters have been sold to buy food. The children have picked up potentially fatal diseases but can't afford to rest. And the government is nowhere to be found.

"The children have been begging in the market to get food, and from the passing cars," said Ahmed Junejo, one of almost 2 million people displaced by floods, which have ravaged Sindh province in the south.

Like many flood victims, the Junejo family is resigned to the fact they will have to fend for themselves.

Country's cash-strapped government has been slow to respond to the floods, which have killed over 300 people and damaged or destroyed about 1.2 million houses since monsoon rains triggered the crisis in late August.

It's a repeat performance of last year, when authorities failed to ease the suffering of millions hit by epic floods in July and August, prompting the military to take charge.

Some 800,000 families hit by that calamity remain homeless.

The army is active again, traveling across kilometers of flooded farmland in boats to rescue people who have just the clothes on their backs.

But that hasn't eased the anxiety of families like the Junejos, who are stuck on barren land beside a petrol station.

They lost about 20 goats, which were used for milk or food and were their only assets.

Prime Minister appeals for help

President Asif Ali Zardari was widely criticized for trips to Britain and France last year when country was battling floods that killed about 2,000 people and made 11 million homeless.

Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani, who has been visiting flood victims, said the government could not ease the latest crisis on its own.

"The floods from the rains are beyond anyone's expectations. People's livelihoods, their livestock, crops, and businesses are destroyed," he told Reuters in the town of Nawabshah after touring flood-hit areas.

"I appeal to all people, chambers of commerce, the business community and the international community to come forward."

Sindh, the second biggest province, was already suffering long before the floods of 2010 or this year hit.

It had levels of malnutrition almost as critical as Chad and Niger, with hundreds of thousands of children at risk, according to the U.N. Children's Fund.

"This catastrophe, at the moment, considering the already poor health and nutrition status, is really extremely seriously for the people. I want to emphasize urgency of getting assistance to them," Timo Pakkala, United Nations Resident Humanitarian Coordinator, told a news conference in Islamabad.

He launched an appeal for \$356 million for a rapid response plan for three months. Aid groups have warned of a growing risk of fatal diseases.

September 20, 2011 (Dawn)

Zardari sets up cell to monitor relief

President Asif Ali Zardari directed the provincial government to focus its efforts on saving human lives in rain- and flood-affected areas by ensuring an uninterrupted supply of food and safe drinking water to the flood-affected people till their rehabilitation.

At a briefing on the flood situation and relief and rehabilitation activities in Sindh, Mr Zardari said that no excuse would be tolerated for any slackness by top government officials in the supply of food and water to rain and flood victims.

Briefing journalists about the meeting, president's spokesman Farhatullah Babar said the president had directed senior government officials in each affected district to supervise and coordinate distribution of relief goods received from the government, international agencies, local and foreign NGOs and philanthropists.

For the purpose, 15 senior officers of the provincial government were designated for the most-affected districts with a directive that these officers would be personally responsible for ensuring smooth operation of rescue, relief and rehabilitation of flood-hit people in respective districts assigned to them.

A special control room has been also set up in the Bilawal House to keep a watch on relief activities.

The room has been linked to all DCOs and the president will be able to hold video conferences with provincial government officials and DCOs and personally monitor relief and rehabilitation activities. "I will be monitoring the monitors," the president was quoted as saying.

Mr Babar said the president had planned to stay in Karachi for some days to personally monitor flood relief activities.

Stressing the need for saving lives by ensuring food and water availability, the president said that if needed, helicopters and boats might be leased from other countries for the purpose.

The president said the next priority should be draining out stagnant water and ordered that discharge capacity of existing drains and nullahs be enhanced and all obstructions removed by deploying heavy machinery already available with different departments.

The president was informed that more than 7.5 million people had been affected by rain and floods and standing crops on over 2 million acres had been damaged.

About 74 per cent of cotton crop and 26 per cent of rice crop and overall 47 per cent of major crops have been destroyed.

The damage to cotton, rice and sugarcane crops has been estimated at Rs156 billion.

The president ordered that a permanent solution be found for draining out water from Badin which had been experiencing the problem for a long time.

He also stressed the need for drawing up alternative plans for draining out water from lower areas of the province to prevent its accumulation.

The meeting was informed that a relief package had been prepared by the provincial government which had sought 50 per cent contribution from the federal government to cope with the disaster.

September 20, 2011(Dawn)

Senators criticise govt's flood response

A number of senators, including some from the ruling coalition, criticised the government for having been caught unprepared despite forecasts of above-normal monsoon rains.

Taking part in a debate on devastations caused by rains in Sindh on a private members' day, the senators questioned the role of the National Disaster Management Authority in dealing with the catastrophe.

They were of the view that because of last year's mismanagement and corruption, the international community this time was reluctant to provide help for the affected people.

Earlier, Haji Adeel of the Awami National Party stressed the need for building small water reservoirs not only to prevent floods but also to provide water for irrigation.

He alleged that most government officials were corrupt who waited for a disaster in order to get an opportunity to make money. Citing the example of dengue fever, he said the officials did not take timely preventive measures and now they were minting money by supplying spurious drugs and substandard anti-mosquito spray.

He asked the prime minister to provide at least Rs5 billion to 6 billion from his discretionary fund of Rs29 billion for flood relief.

PPP's Saeeda Iqbal said the NDMA officials in a briefing failed to provide complete information about the flood situation in Sindh.

September 20, 2011 (Dawn)

Rains a boon for Manchhar Lake, apex court told

Like last year, nature has come to the rescue of Manchhar Lake this year as heavy monsoon rains over Sindh have washed away contamination and restored for the time being the major source of fresh water supply to the lake.

“The calamity of rains has saved Manchhar Lake once again,” Additional Attorney General K.K. Agha told a Supreme Court bench comprising Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, Justice Tariq Pervez and Justice Ghulam Rabbani.

The bench had taken up complaints regarding rising pollution due to disposal of effluent from MNV (Main Nara Valley) drain now converted into RBOD-I (Right Bank Outfall Drain) that deprived thousands of fishermen of their source of livelihood.

Environmentalists believe that rising pollution is leading Manchhar Lake, one of Asia's largest freshwater lakes, towards a painful death.

Some reports suggest the oldest inhabitants of Sindh called Mohanas usually live on boats and rely on fishing, bird hunting, net making, boat making and farming but the alarming level of toxic particles in the lake has forced them to abandon their profession.

Sindh Chief Secretary Raja Mohammad Abbas suggested in a comprehensive report that catchments areas of the lake, like Lukhy Range and Kaccho area spread over Sindh and Balochistan, experienced adequate rainfall during the current monsoon season. It has restored the major source of fresh water supply to the lake and filled it up to 116.5 feet with fresh rainwater, its maximum level being 117 feet.

“The nature has resolved the issue of contamination of water of the lake for a considerable span of time probably for at least a year,” the report claimed. The attorney general assured the court that he would request the federal government to release the first tranche of Rs1.3 billion out of the Rs5 billion allocated for completion and commissioning of RBOD-II.

Since RBOD-I is also in the close proximity of Haleji Lake, it poses a direct threat to the wetland, once called a birdwatchers` paradise. The lake is already under severe stress because of inadequate water.

Earlier, the federal government had accepted Sindh government`s request for Rs5 billion to develop RBOD-II and had suggested re-appropriation from other ongoing projects.

In response, the Sindh government referred the matter back to it for reconsideration stating that re-appropriation would mean putting constraints on other projects which were equally important. Alternatively it put a request of release of Rs1.3 billion as first quarter.

Engineering experts believe that the extension of RBOD-II to the sea from Sehwan is the only viable solution for the disposal of effluent from RBOD-I. The project was conceived in late 1990s at a cost of Rs29 billion. Sixty per cent of the work has been completed but subsequent work was suspended when fund releases were curtailed to Rs1.5 billion.(done)

September 20, 2011 (Dawn)

FAO warns of challenge to food security in Sindh

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of United Nations has feared that major losses the heavy rains have caused to cash crops like cotton, sugarcane, rice and vegetables will pose a serious challenge to food security.

FAO has conducted a rapid needs assessment in flood-hit Sindh to prevent further losses of livestock and help agriculture resumption.

More than 70 per cent or 1.6 million acres of standing crops have been destroyed and nearly 14,000 farm animals lost in the disaster. The unattended carcasses are posing a potential threat of disease outbreak for both animals and humans, FAO warns.

The cotton crop has already been affected the most, and now the standing water is posing a serious threat to sugarcane and rice fields. Damage to fish and poultry farming are another setback to food security as initial count shows 1,000 fish farms and 800 poultry farms have been severely affected.

The UN body says the season to plant Rabi crops is due to begin in five weeks but there is limited scope for extending help to ensure sowing in order to provide food for early 2012.

Meanwhile, Oxfam has called on the international donor community to expedite its response in order to provide `critical and life-saving` relief to the flood-affected people. The international aid agency warned that as the number of affected people continues to rise, deaths could increase and future of millions of people could be destroyed if funding remains slow.

“The lives of those affected by floods are hanging in the balance. Millions still don’t have access to food, water, sanitation, shelter and healthcare. Pakistan cannot afford a slow response to this disaster. Time is of the essence if the situation is to be controlled. Every ounce of resource available, including those stocked up in warehouses, must be mobilised now,” said Neva Khan, Country Director of Oxfam in Pakistan.

“The number of deaths is increasing each passing day. Hundreds of thousands of people still remain trapped in floodwaters, awaiting rescue. Those who have managed to escape literally have to fight to get hold of the relief supplies being distributed. The amount of aid available is simply not enough. The government and international humanitarian and donor community must gear up their response,” said the Oxfam official.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and its partners in the cluster of aid agencies providing emergency shelter have also appealed to international donors for \$67 million to help at least 274,000 vulnerable families. The `Shelter Cluster` response, if funded, will complement the government’s commitment to provide 150,000 tents for families displaced by the natural disaster.

It will include tents, plastic sheets, ropes, tent poles, sleeping mats, blankets, kitchen utensils and other life-saving survival items for at least

274,000 impoverished, displaced farming families, many of whom have lost to flood all of what little they had.

September 20, 2011 (The News)

Zardari to monitor flood relief from special control room

President Asif Ali Zardari nominated 15 senior officers of the provincial government to monitor the situation in flood-affected districts in Sindh.

The president gave these directions during a briefing in Karachi. A Special Control Room, directly connected to all the DCOs, was set up in the Bilawal House on Monday to monitor the activities of relief monitors.

From the control room, the president will be able to hold videoconferences with provincial government officials and the DCO and monitor the progress at any time. "I will be monitoring the monitors," the president remarked.

Meanwhile, the president's spokesperson, Farhatullah Babar said that the President had given directions to set up the special control room during his visit to the United Kingdom and the facility had already been put in place.

President Zardari warned that a highest priority be given to saving human lives in the flood-affected areas by ensuring that food and safe drinking water were supplied without interruption.

The next priority should be draining stagnant rainwater.

Farhatullah Babar said the president also directed that senior government officials be nominated in each affected district to supervise and coordinate the distribution of relief and rehabilitation aid received from the government, international agencies and local and foreign NGOs and philanthropists.

The president said all stakeholders, local representatives, political leaders, MNAs and MPAs should also be involved in this exercise.

Babar said that more than 7.5 million people have been affected while

crop area of over 2 million acres had been damaged, causing a loss of Rs215 billion.

About 74% of cotton crop and 26% of rice crop had been destroyed, he said.

The meeting was informed that a relief package had been prepared by the provincial government for immediate implementation and urged that 50 percent of the package cost be borne by the federal government.

The President directed that the relief package plan be referred to the Federal government.

The president also appealed to traders and industrialists to play their role in order to provide relief to flood and dengue affectees.

Speaker National Assembly Dr Fehmida Mirza and Makhdoom Amin Fahim also made a presentation on flood damages in different parts of the province.

September 20, 2011 (The News)

International donors urged to give funds for 274,000 displaced families

As thousands continue to flee their homes in the face of rising floodwaters in southern Sindh, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and its partners in the 'cluster' of aid agencies plan to appeal to international donors for funding to help at least 274,000 families.

The appeal, expected to be launched this weekend, follows Pakistan's urgent request for international assistance last Thursday and the subsequent deployment of hundreds of cluster teams to assess the extent of the destruction, the numbers of people displaced and their immediate needs.

"Our role is to support the Pakistani government's massive effort, led by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), to provide people whose homes have been destroyed with emergency shelter and other essential non-food relief items," says IOM Emergency Advisor for Asia Brian Kelly.

“The government says that it can provide 150,000 tents. Based on our preliminary estimates, that means that at least 274,000 vulnerable families will be left without emergency shelter, unless we - the international community - step in,” he adds.

Emergency shelter cluster aid is expected to include thousands of plastic sheet-based shelter kits. While tents can provide better protection in the short term, plastic sheet is cheaper, more versatile and can be more useful in the longer term when displaced families return home and use it for waterproofing new shelters and rebuilt homes, says Kelly. The IOM has already released to local partners for distribution 18,400 shelter and non-food relief item kits.

September 20, 2011 (The News)

PN relief operation Madad (East) continues

Pakistan Navy continues its relief operation Madad East in calamity struck areas of Sindh. During last 24 hours, over 1000 personnel have been treated by PN medical teams. PN relief teams are actively conducting relief activities in Pangrio, Tando Bago, Jhudo, Shaheed Benazirabad and Mirpurkhas.

September 20, 2011 (The News)

Long-term strategy to lessen floods damages urged

There is a need to devise a long-term strategy to lessen the damage caused by the recurring floods every year by relocating people as the donors cannot help the affected people again and again, said Caritas Internationals Secretary General Michel Roy.

While addressing a press conference, he said that need of the hour was to work towards community preparedness. The climate across the globe is changing and communities have to be prepared to reduce the risk in case of any disaster, he said.

He said that floods were the natural disaster which could not be controlled but what could be done is to make long-term strategies to deal with such disasters. We have donated one million rupees to National Disaster

Management Authority (NDMA) to devise a strategy for community preparedness against floods, he said.

He said Caritas Pakistan has so far distributed 700 food packages and tents in Sindh and Punjab besides establishing free medical camps. Caritas is committed to continue its humanitarian services until the affected population is rehabilitated completely, he said.

Caritas Pakistan, a member of the Federation of Caritas International, was established in Pakistan in 1965. The organisation has always been in the forefront to respond to emergencies, be natural or man-made disaster.

Michel Roy said that during 2010 floods, the secretary general said that the disaster was the worst in the history of Pakistan that affected nearly 20 million people all across the country.

In total Caritas Pakistan has supported 48,232 families in the relief phase through its seven offices across Pakistan. The humanitarian organisation served the affected community by supplying food items, tents, kitchen sets, beds and bedding, buckets, blankets, jerry cans, plastic sheets, water, hygienic kits, mosquitoes net, water purification bottles, seeds and fertilizers.

On completion of one year of the devastating floods of 2010, Caritas Pakistan has also published a memoir named Restoring dignity that provides a detailed account of the efforts of the organisation as well as the experiences of the people working with the affected community and the views of the partners along with the case studies.

Caritas National Director Bishop Coutts said, From relief to recovery, it is our duty to continue supporting the people who have been badly affected by floods.

Caritas Executive Director Amjad Gulzar, on the occasion, said that Caritas was donating 1.9 million Euros for this year flood relief activities. We have provided food items to 14,473 families, non-food items to 40,365 families, tents to 25,544 families, hygiene kits to 21,810 families. Besides that 62,098 patients have been treated in medical camps, 3,530 livestock has been administered vaccination, 928 persons have been given seeds and fertilizers and 1360 families have been given warm clothes and bedding, he said.

September 21, 2011 (The News)

Flood control room set up at Bilawal House

President Asif Ali Zardari formally launched the Special Flood Control Room in the presidential camp office Bilawal House Karachi and spent hours monitoring the flood monitors through an elaborate network of stations and video conferencing facilities.

According to Spokesman of the President Farhatullah Babar, monitoring rooms have also set up in all flood-affected districts of the province and the Chief Minister's house in Karachi all manned twenty four hours a day and seven days a week.

Farhatullah Babar said the president also issued several on the spot instructions to remove bottlenecks, ensure smooth operation of the relief measures and provide special relief in special cases.

The elected representative of the areas and district administration in the district monitoring rooms gave an overview of the relief measures undertaken, the difficulties encountered and the special needs of the area, the spokesman said.

September 21, 2011 (The News)

Sindh floods

President Asif Ali Zardari has called upon artists, sportsmen and NGOs to support the government in its efforts to provide relief and rehabilitate flood victims in Sindh.

He was addressing leading Pakistani players, artists and heads of various non-governmental organisations (NGOs), who were there to show their support to the government in fundraising. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah, Information Minister Firdous Ashiq Awan, Raja Pervez Ashraf, Nazar Mohammad Gondal, provincial ministers and senior government officers were present on the occasion. He said that the magnitude of the devastation was huge and the government alone cannot accomplish the relief and rehabilitation work.

Talking to artists, the president said that Sindh was facing the huge devastation due to flooding and the government cannot handle such a catastrophe single handedly. We need your support and we will give you our support in your efforts to raise funds for your affected brethren.

He said that artists can draw attention of people in and outside Pakistan towards the wide-range destruction across Sindh. From the core of my heart and on behalf of the people of Pakistan, I seek the cooperation of young artists in this gigantic task.

He said that the nation was passing through a test of time and the government with the support of civil society will overcome this challenge. He pointed out that the government wants to do on the basis of self help. We have saved a large quantity of wheat and its seeds and we will give it growers of those areas in Sindh and Balochistan which were not affected due to heavy rains so that we can have enough grain to feed our nation.

September 21, 2011 (The News)

Senate to distribute ration worth Rs30m in flood-affected areas

The Senate Flood Distribution Committee (SFDC) would distribute ration bags worth Rs 30 million in flood-hit areas of Sindh.

The SFDC was constituted under the chairmanship of Farooq H Naik, chairman senate, said an official of the senate. He said that the committee collected Rs 15 million through donations contributed by senate members and the remaining Rs 15 million was donated by the business community.

He said that the committee purchased 14,000 ration bags and each ration bag would be sufficient for seven people. He added that the committee would distribute ration bags in Badin, Thatta, Nawabshah, Tando Mohammad Khan, Tando Allahyar, Mithi and Umarnot.

September 21, 2011 (The News)

NDMA appeals for nets to save 700,000 flood victims from malaria

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has made an appeal for provision of impregnated nets to protect around 700,000 people currently living in 3,000 relief camps in flood affected areas of Sindh.

“There is dire need of long-lasting impregnated nets in Mirpurkhas, Tando Mohammad Khan, Thatha and Tharparkar because in these districts Malaria is spreading fast,” said NDMA spokesman Irshad Bhatti. Talking to this scribe, Bhatti said that in many flood-affected districts, a large number of pregnant women and small children are living in worst conditions and they need healthy food.

He said that NDMA has requested all the national and international organisations and philanthropists to join hands with NDMA to save the lives of thousands of people.

He said that currently 34 medical teams are working in flood-affected areas of Sindh. While three mobile clinics have been dispatched to Tando Mohammad Khan. “We have delivered 24 emergency health kits, 42 DDK for diarrhoea treatment, 1,000 hygiene kits, 1.1 million aqua tablets, 4,000 vials of anti-snake venom. To prevent malaria, we have sent 100,000 rapid diagnostic test kits, 100,000 Coartem therapy courses, 500,000 tablet Primaquine and 18,000 long-lasting impregnated nets,” he added. He said, “We have pre-positioned stock of medications at federal level to cover the needs of 1.5 million populations.”

September 21, 2011 (The News)

Relief operation marred by lack of coordination

Security agencies have expressed their concern over lack of coordination among different government departments in the flood-hit areas of Mirpurkhas and other southern parts of Sindh.

At a media briefing, they said that lack of coordination among departments might adversely affect the ongoing relief work for flood victims and the concern has been conveyed to concerned quarters.

There are apparent threats of law and order situation as robberies and other crimes are rapidly on rise in affected areas, the security officials said.

All in this sensitive situation Pak Army has given backup to local police besides working in rescue operation, distribution of relief goods and establishing medical camps in different flood hit areas.

They warned of eruption of waterborne epidemics, drinking water scarcity and further damages to life and property besides law and order situation in the coming days if extra measures are not taken.

The Pak Army named its ongoing rescue and relief operation as “peration Labaik-II” , under which its jawans and officers so far rescued over 30,000 people in boats and vehicles in Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Umerkot and Tando Allahyar districts.

The boats rescue operation still continued in submerged areas of Tando Jan Muhammad and Jhudo in Mirpurkhas districts besides 15 medical camps are operational in this district alone.

September 21, 2011 (The News)

Senate bypasses govt to help flood victims

The Gilani government’s credibility has touched such a low that the Senate has opted for its own mechanism for purchase and distribution of relief goods for flood victims in Sindh.

In a unanimously adopted mechanism, the senators from both sides of the political divide and belonging to all political parties did neither decide to deposit their donations in the Prime Minister’s Relief Fund for flood victims nor engaged the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) or any other official entity to ensure that the donated goods reach the needy.

Of late, the members of the Upper House in a special meeting formed three committees of finance, purchase and distribution to collect funds and help the flood victims of Sindh and collected Rs15 million from the members.

Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani has also admitted that the international

community had not yet responded to his government's call for the assistance of flood victims in Sindh.

Gilani was also quoted to have said that they (rulers) have been facing allegations of corruption since their childhood and that when the international community would give aid to Pakistan it would be distributed in a transparent manner.

September 22, 2011 (The News)

Nawaz for concerted efforts to help rain victims

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Chief Mian Nawaz Sharif advised rulers to come forward to help the rain-affected people instead of exploiting his visit of the calamity-hit areas of Sindh.

The PML-N chief was talking to reporters in Sanghar and said that this is not right time for political point scoring because the people of Sindh are passing through tough times and need rehabilitation, relief and rescue.

He said that government, instead of rehabilitating the rain victims from its own resources, is exploiting the miseries of the rain victims before international donors to get foreign aid. He alleged that international donor agencies were not yet ready to provide aid for the victims because of the surfaced corruption of the government. He said that the Prime Minister of Pakistan has discretionary funds of Rs29billion, but he instead of utilising these is begging from international donors.

He said that rain victims just need Rs290million for rehabilitation and relief and added that Pakistan today seemed like the 1947 Pakistan. He said that millions of rain victims were deprived of food and shelter for the last 13 days and the government has failed to drain out the rain water from the houses and areas and the situation due to the stagnant rain water was becoming worse day by day. He said that recent rains damaged the agricultural economy and livestock of the people. He said that government did not take precautionary measures instead of receiving the heavy rainfall by the Met Department. He said that such inefficiency of the government led to billions of rupees in damages as well as claimed 350 lives.

He said that the rain victims in and out of the relief camps were dying due to the lack of facilities. He urged the government to provide Rs100,000 to

each rain victim adding that he had never seen a situation as bad as this before.

Mian Nawaz Sharif flayed the Prime Minister of Pakistan for not announcing a financial package for the victims on his visit to the affected areas including Sanghar.

September 23, 2011(Dawn)

NDMA lacks proper disaster management framework

National Disaster Management Authority Chairman Dr Zafar Qadir said that the NDMA lacked a proper disaster management framework because it had been run on an ad hoc basis since its inception.

But, he said, the first national disaster risk reduction policy was being prepared.

Addressing a joint press conference with Tennis star Aisam-ul-Haq, the NDMA chief said no proper policy planning was done till June this year for minimising the impact of future natural catastrophes. A hazard vulnerability study of all districts across the country was being carried out, he added.

Answering a question, Dr Qadir said the authority had only 22 officers and 12 of them had been deployed in Sindh to monitor distribution of flood relief goods.

When asked how it is possible for a dozen officers to monitor relief goods distribution in 23 districts, he said: "There is no need for monitoring in less affected districts."

The NDMA chief said since rains had stopped and water started to recede, there would be no stagnant water in three to four districts in upper Sindh after a week, while the situation in other areas was expected to improve in two weeks and after that a comprehensive damage assessment survey would be undertaken.

He said water in the worst-hit districts of Badin and Thatta would recede in about two months.

Answering another question, Dr Qadir said he had briefed the federal cabinet on the reasons for enlarged magnitude of floods, including fault in Left Bank Outfall Drain, flaws in irrigation system and unchecked construction on traditional escape route for water. He said besides the United Nations, Iran, Turkey, Korea and some other countries had been approached for the supply of tents, while China had assured to provide an unspecified number of tents.

He said blankets would be procured in sufficient quantity before winter.

September 23, 2011(Dawn)

2m fell sick due to floods, says NDMA

Two million people have fallen ill from diseases since monsoon rains left the southern region of Pakistan under several feet of water, the National Disaster Management Authority.

More than 350 people have been killed and over eight million people have been affected this year by floods that officials say are worse in parts of Sindh than last year's devastating flood.

Malaria, diarrhoea, skin disease and snake bites are among the health problems facing two million people across 23 districts of Sindh, said NDMA spokesman Irshad Bhatti.

September 23, 2011(Dawn)

Food, health problems mount at relief camp

Still recovering from the exhaustion of early morning childbirth, pale-faced Naimat lying with her newborn on the floor of a relief camp in district east of the city takes great pains to narrate what she and her family have been through after the floods hit their small village in Sanghar.

"I have only eaten some biscuits since morning. I am hungry but there is nothing to eat," the frail woman tells Dawn while Khalid standing close to her and their seventh child says that he needs money to buy his wife some food.

“I am penniless and can’t purchase the food and medicines my wife wants right now,” he says showing a prescription given by a private lady doctor who handled the delivery.

The relief camp set up in a non-functional hospital in the Gadap, off the superhighway, is home to more than 800 flood-hit people, mainly from Sanghar, Tando Allayar, Tando Adam, Shahdadpur and Mitairi. They have been staying here for more than a week.

So far, 313 children, 231 women and 331 men have taken refuge at the non-functional hospital, which currently has the largest concentration of flood victims in Karachi.

A visit to the relief camp shows that the homeless families have found a safe place where they can live till normality returns to their hometowns but food, bedding and medical facilities remain in short supply.

The most vulnerable people among them are pregnant women, young mothers, babies, besides elderly persons and ailing individuals.

“A majority of women and children at this camp have been suffering from diarrhoea, frequent vomiting and abdominal pains.

Health needs of the flood victims are very serious, with many of them complaining about chronic ailments and almost all children suffering from malnutrition. But no special arrangements seem to have been made by the government to meet the extraordinary situation.

In reply to a question about facilities being provided at the relief camp, a couple of women say that the families get meal twice a day but do not get a breakfast or tea and have to live on the leftovers in the morning. “The first meal is provided at 2pm and the second at 9pm. By that time our children have already gone to sleep without food,” one of them adds.

She also complains about the choked sanitation system.

Also the families are in need of new clothes, especially for children, utensils and water containers.

September 23, 2011 (The News)

PM's flood fund hit by credibility fears

Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani's flood relief fund has so far received less than Rs100 million or just over \$1 million from all over the world, an amount that could not be described even as peanuts compared to the monumental floods tragedy faced by the people of Sindh.

Most of this already collected money belongs to official departments such as the National Bank of Pakistan as sources revealed that in the whole of Pakistan the money donated by the people in NBP branches is less than Rs0.5 million. Rs350,000 have been donated in Sindh and Punjab.

Informed official sources disclosed that the State Bank of Pakistan figures comprising the total collection of donation in the PM's account for the flood relief fund by all the designated banks till September 20 stood at Rs98,345,133 (Rs98 million or \$1.1 million).

Such is the pathetic response to Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani's call for donations in his flood relief fund that the concerned officials in the Finance Ministry and the Cabinet Division are even shy to disclose the figure collected as yet from the local and international donors.

September 23, 2011 (The News)

COAS visits flood-affected areas of Sindh

Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani visited the calamity-hit areas of Sanghar, Badin and Tharparkar.

General Kayani met the flood affected people and assured them that the army would continue to help them in the rescue, relief and rehabilitation process in their time of need.

September 23, 2011 (The News)

President, PM discuss relief work in flood-hit areas

Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani and President Asif Ali Zardari discussed progress in the rescue, relief and rehabilitation work in the flood-affected areas of Sindh and control of dengue in the country.

September 23, 2011 (The News)

Floods destroy over 50,000 mud houses

As many as 50,000 mud houses have been destroyed completely and thousands of livestock died due to the devastating floods in the Mithi district of Sindh.

Chairman Relief Committee Mithi MNA Dr Mahesh Malani said that out of 44 union councils (UC) of the district, two UCs were completely damaged by floods destroying more than 50,000 mud houses. About 90 percent of swathe of land of the two UCs is still inundated and the standing water is causing hazards in the rescue and relief work. He said that the remaining 42 UCs were partially damaged but rendering thousands of people of the district homeless.

He added that the government had constituted Relief Committee in each district of the province to ensure provision of maximum and early rescue and relief work for all the flood victims.

Malani said that the RC had started registration of the flood affected people in order to provide ration and tents to them as early as possible.

September 24, 2011 (Dawn)

Sindh floods impact business in Islamabad

With floods playing havoc in parts of Sindh and transport getting engaged in the relief work, supplies of different goods to the capital city have been affected.

One major market of the capital city – Blue Area – which is also a hub of technology business is severely affected because of delayed supplies from Karachi.

Khalid Raja, a key member of trade union in Blue Area, added: “It’s not just the hardware logistics rather several other technology products and new brands are not reaching the market.”

September 24, 2011 (The News)

Relief Fund formed for flood-hit journalists, says Firdous

Government has constituted a “Special Relief Fund for the Journalists,” affected during floods in 23 rain-hit districts of Sindh, said federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan .

Addressing the members at Sanghar Press Club, she said the fund was established on special directives of President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani.

The minister during her visit to the relief camp set up at a government school in Sanghar, distributed ration bags and other goods among the flood-affected people.

September 24, 2011 (The News)

Flood disaster a wake-up call: Zardari

President Asif Ali Zardari said that the havoc caused by floods during the last two years was a wake-up call for everyone to search for permanent solutions to natural disasters rooted in climate change. He also called upon national and international experts and United Nations (UN) agencies to devise workable and practicable plans for countering the vagaries of climate change.

The president was addressing representatives of various UN agencies engaged in relief and rehabilitation work in Sindh.

Spokesman to the President Farhatullah Babar said that the UN agencies and donors, whose representatives attended the meeting included Unicef, WHO, FAO, UNHCR, USAid, WFP and UN Habitat among others.

The president said that Badin and Thatta needed to be given special

attention in view of a huge body of stagnant water accumulated in Badin that had jeopardised life, livestock and agriculture on a massive scale.

The president said that he had also called upon experts to study the prospects of diverting the flood waters to natural storage reservoirs for use in future.

Farhatullah Babar said that the president then met heads of leading banks of the country to discuss the role banks could play in mitigating the sufferings of the people. The meeting was attended by the heads and representatives of State Bank of Pakistan, National Bank of Pakistan among other major banks.

September 25, 2011 (Dawn)

UN warns of food crisis in flood-hit areas

The United Nations warned of a food security and shelter crisis, saying it would soon run out of its stocks of food, essential medicines and tents if the international community failed to support the rapid response plan for flood victims in Sindh.

Speaking at a briefing for diplomats and donor agencies arranged by the cabinet division and National Disaster Management Authority, UN's Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan Timo Pakkala said that after almost a week of its launch, confirmed donor contributions to the rapid response plan amounted to only \$9 million — just around 3 per cent of the funds required.

“This is awfully inadequate,” he said.

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani said the scale of devastation this year was no less than what the nation experienced last year.

Since the spread of the floods is all across Sindh, the national and international relief agencies and the media must portray its severity to the world, he added.

Mr Gilani said the calamity besides claiming hundreds of lives had also resulted in huge economic loss as standing crops had been destroyed and hundreds of thousands of houses washed away or damaged.

Mr Pakkala termed the resource situation extremely dire and said new funding commitments for the plan were needed urgently.

“I appeal to the international community to fully support the people of Pakistan and the rapid response plan to ensure that we can save lives now as well as tomorrow,” he said.

He said that an emergency grant was being processed for Pakistan from the UN’s central emergency response fund. The UN emergency support, he pointed out, came largely from contingency and in-country stocks.

“The UN will face a depletion of relief food in one month and emergency shelter items will run out within weeks,” he said.

He said that more than 80 per cent of people affected by floods relied directly or indirectly upon agriculture and livestock for their livelihood.

“There are serious concerns related to the rise in cases of waterborne diseases, along with malaria and dengue fever. Many people are living without shelter and are exposed to contaminated stagnant water.”

NDMA chairman Dr Zafar Qadir said that the death toll had reached 392 and the number of houses damaged by the floods was 1.5 million.

September 25, 2011 (The News)

NDMA flood moot fails to attract envoys

Envoys of the US, British, Russia, Japan and Iran were conspicuous with their absence in the urgent briefing-cum-dinner on flood situation in Pakistan jointly arranged by Cabinet Division and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani personally appeared and addressed envoys and heads of some of NGOs. Prime Minister Gilani, availing the opportunity, gave his policy statement on Pakistan-US ties against the backdrop of obnoxious tone and language used by some of senior US official about Pakistan in recent days. It was a well thought reaction in which befitting reply was given to the United States in the presence of diplomatic corps of the federal capital.

For the reason, some of diplomats rushed to their missions immediately upon the completion of the statement since they had to send dispatches urgently focusing the statement given by Prime Minister Gilani.

The Chinese ambassador told this reporter that nine planeloads of relief goods had already reached Karachi and more assistance was on its way.

Saudi Ambassador Abdul Aziz Ibrahim Saleh al-Ghadeer was the lone envoy who presented the cheque for Rs11 million to Prime Minister Gilani on behalf of Governor Tabuk Prince Fahad bin Sultan, who is known for his affection for the people of Pakistan.

September 26, 2011 (Dawn)

Floods hit vegetable supply to Islamabad

The impact of floods in southern Sindh has taken its toll on the retail markets all over the country as the supplies of tomatoes and other vegetables have almost been cut off.

September 26, 2011 (Dawn)

A haunted city called Sanghar

The town of Sanghar affected by rains four week ago continues to be in distress.

Most roads have damaged and large parts are under knee-deep water. Most markets and schools remain closed.

The most distressful aspect of the situation is that people suffering from water-borne diseases can not find medicines and potable water.

Most residential areas of the city are under 3 to 4 feet of water. There are reports of theft because 90 per cent of the people have abandoned their homes and moved to other places.

The offices of DCO, DPO, Nadra, Treasury, EDOs of education, health, revenue, finance, works and services, income tax and excise, degree colleges and schools have been submerged by rainwater.

The Civil Hospital has been flooded completely and its emergency section and surgical, medical, orthopaedic, ENT and children wards lie closed.

Temporary arrangements have been made by some doctors who treat emergency cases outside the hospital premises.

Commercial areas, including Saeed Market, Sarafa Bazaar, Liaquat Market and mobile market are inaccessible because of stagnant rainwater and sewage.

M.A. Jinnah Road, the main business centre of the city, has also been severely affected.

The road linking Sanghar with Hyderabad and Nawabshah has been unusable since September 10. A two-kilometre portion of the Hyderabad road is under six to seven feet of water at Shah Baig Mari and vehicles have to use an alternate route to go to Hyderabad.

The town is facing acute shortage of items of everyday use because transport companies are avoiding to come to Sanghar.

Officials of the district government, unable to drain out water, are sitting with their fingers crossed and no efforts to restore the road link are being made.

September 26, 2011 (The News)

Sindh seeks armed forces' help on dredging drains, dewatering

The Sindh government has sought help of the armed forces for dredging of drains, asked Wapda to increase capacity of the LBOD up to 20,000 cusecs and ordered the Irrigation Department for immediate dewatering to enable farmers to sow Rabi (winter) crops, said the Chief Minister of Sindh, Syed Qaim Ali Shah.

The provincial government also urged the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to extend the date of voters' registration by two months as 8.1 million people had been displaced by the devastated rains in the 13 districts, added the provincial chief executive while addressing a press conference after chairing a meeting of PPP Sindh Council at the CM House.

The government was also considering promulgating an ordinance to remove encroachments from the natural drains.

He said 80pc of cotton, 60pc of rice and 45pc of sugarcane crops had been destroyed.

Shah estimated that the total crop area devastated by rains was over two million acres. He said the overall losses triggered by rains were estimated to be over Rs217 billion.

He said the provincial government supported the affected people from its own resources for over a month.

Shah regretted that Met had predicted heavy rains for three to four days only, but heavy rains in Sindh continued for four to five weeks starting from August 10.

He claimed that the government had provided food and shelter to around 70 percent of the affected people but admitted that tents and medicines were needed.

He said given the magnitude of destruction, now NGOs and political parties were also helping the people while international agencies, including the UN, had also come forward.

Shah said the government's first priority was dewatering so that Rabi crops could be sown. For this purpose, the provincial government had sought help of the army.

He said Wapda and Irrigation Department had also been asked for dewatering.

Qaim Ali Shah announced that the provincial government would continue to provide ration to affected families till new crop of wheat.

He said rains caused deaths of 382 people mostly by collapsing of buildings or diseases.

He said malaria was increasing among the victims as spray was considered ineffective.

September 26, 2011 (The News)

Lacklustre response to flood disaster

floods have struck again, killing hundreds, rendering millions homeless and destroying large swaths of land, and despite the appeals made by the president, this year the masses have responded half-heartedly to donate for the flood-affected.

A representative of the Karachi Relief Trust (KRT), Moez Premani, admits that donations have dwindled by 60 percent as compared to last year's floods.

He believes that the main reason the people are not contributing is because of financial constraints as businesses have gone down.

Heading the country's largest charitable organization, Abdul Sattar Edhi says that this year's response is not the one expected from a nation which is known for its generosity.

Meanwhile, an official from the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), Aftab Madni, said that the response was cold because the media did not focus much on the disaster.

The PRCS is working in the worst-hit areas such as Badin, Dadu and Mirpurkhas.

Meanwhile, students, who had actively participated in setting up collection camps to garner aid last year, also seemed to have been disappointed by the slow response.

Szabist students, who had set up a relief camp at Jamshoro last year, were struggling to get aid for this year's flood victims.

September 27, 2011(Dawn)

1.6m children, pregnant women hit by flood

There are 1.36 million children and 240,000 pregnant women among over 8.8 million people affected by the recent rains and floods in Sindh.

National Disaster Management Authority's chairman Dr Zafar Qadir told a press conference on Monday that the total number of women affected by the floods was 4.13 million.

He said about three million patients had consulted the medical facilities in the affected areas. "If it is assumed that many of the patients had a repeat visit to the medical facilities, the number of flood victims suffering from various diseases would be between 1.5 million and 2 million," he said.

NDMA Health Coordinator Dr Sabeena Durrani said 17.6 per cent of the patients were suffering from skin diseases and 11.8 per cent were suspected for malaria.

In children aged up to five years, skin disease (19.2 per cent) is the most reported illness, followed by acute diarrhoea (17.2 per cent), upper respiratory tract infection (16.5 per cent), suspected malaria (11.6 per cent) and lower respiratory tract infection (4.1 per cent). The doctor said diarrhoeal diseases constituted 18.2 per cent and acute respiratory infections 20.6 per cent of reported cases in the group.

Dr Durrani said 48 emergency health kits — each catering for a population of 6,000 for one month — and 57 diarrhoeal disease kits — each sufficient for 1,000 people for a month — had been distributed.

She said 1.4 million water purification tablets, 1,132 hygiene kits, 6,000 anti-snake venom doses and 5,811 rapid diagnostic test kits for malaria had also been distributed.

September 27, 2011 (The News)

16,000 Pakistan Cards issued in Badin

More than 16,000 rain-hit families have been given the 'Pakistan Card' in flood-hit districts of Badin, said Tariq Malik, Deputy Chairman National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra).

Nadra has setup two centers in Badin and one each in Golarchi, Matli, Talhar and Tando Bago where rain-hit families are swarming in to get the Pakistan Cards, he said while talking to this correspondent. Malik said that we are ready to start operations in all 10 rain-hit areas where software, computer network, communication equipment, biometric devices and

offices are setup to start operation next week.

Under Pakistan Cards scheme financial assistance would be given to each flood-affected family in the province as cash relief programme has been launched from Tehsils Badin, Golarchi and Tando Bagho which were fully damaged due to floods, he said. Malik said some districts are fully damaged and some are partially damaged, while the authority would ensure Pakistan Cards for every affected family, following the set procedures to ensure transparency.

He said concerned DCOs have already been asked to provide lists of affected families in other affected areas so that they could be facilitated at the earliest after necessary validation by PDMA and bio-metric verification by Nadra to ensure transparency in cash disbursement.

Under the programme, Tariq said Pakistan Card or ATM Card is being issued having a cash tab of Rs20,000 in two equal installments of Rs10,000 for each affected family. Deputy Chairman Nadra said the organisation has also mobilised its mobile registration vans (MRVs) in rain-hit areas in case any flood victim does not possess Computerised National Identity Cards (CNIC).

September 28, 2011 (The News)

Over 10,000 houses to be built for rain victims on president's directives

More than 10,000 houses with all basic amenities will be constructed for the rain-affected people on the directives of President Asif Ali Zardari.

PPP MNA Faryal Talpur's Coordinator Ziaul Hassan Lanjar told newsmen at the Nawabshah Press Club and handed over a cheque of Rs0.5 million to President Nawabshah Press Club Muhammad Anwar Shaikh.

Lanjar said that different organisations of United Nations are working in the district for the relief and rehabilitation of rain-affected people. He said that district was now out of emergency situation and soon rehabilitation work would be started. He said that in order to issue Pakistan Cards to rain hit people, Nadra has setup 21 centres in the district and the distribution of cards would start soon. He said that quantity of pumping machines would be increased in order to drain out rain water from the city and its

remote areas. He said that ring road project for the city was under consideration and its construction aims at preventing entry of flood water into city limits. He said that rain water from remote areas would be drained out in order to prepare field for cultivation of wheat in time. He said that growers would be provided sunflower and wheat seeds free no cost.

September 28, 2011 (The News)

Flood victims begin to return home

Rain and flood-affected people in the Hyderabad region have started to return their villages/homes, especially in Badin, Jamshoro and Matiari districts, a report gathered from the administrations concerned said.

However, 2,48,321 victims are still living in 1,648 relief camps in Hyderabad region excluding Dadu district from where the report about affected people could not be obtained. The district administration Badin said that 278 relief camps had been established earlier in the district where about 1,50,000 rain victims were provided shelter along with other living facilities, but after receding rainwater, as many as 1,21,964 rain affected people have returned to their villages/homes, subsequently 160 relief camps have been closed while 118 relief camps were still running with 28,036 victims.

Similarly, the reports from district administrations Jamshoro and Matiari have also been received. 500 rain victims from Jamshoro and few thousands from Matiari have returned to their native places.

September 28, 2011 (The News)

Relief operations geared up in Thatta

The District Government Thatta, under the supervision of provincial government's Relief Monitoring Committee headed by Sindh Culture Minister Sassui Palejo, has geared up its relief operations and the supply of ration to the rain-affected people.

According to the survey of the Revenue Department, the last month's devastating rains and flood rendered around 179,085 people of the district

homeless and inundated standing crops over 35,666 acres. The statistics further reveal that the flood destroyed 11,325 houses by flooding 630 villages of the two Talukas, Jati and Mirpurbathoro, where the NDMA and PDMA had established relief camps.

The Thatta DCO told a meeting that the flood-affected people had been provided with 44,781 bags of ration and 8,669 tents. Our correspondent adds from Hyderabad: Sindh Minister for Fisheries and Chairman Hyderabad Relief Committee Zahid Ali Bhurgari, taking notice of experts' alarm that stagnant rainwater was posing great threat of spread of dengue virus, has directed health officials and TMOs to start an extensive anti-mosquito fumigation drive.

Presiding over a meeting of district officials on Tuesday, he said the Hyderabad District had 52 union councils and each of them had been provided with an anti-mosquito spray machine. In addition, the minister said, one big machine had been provided to each TMO to carry out the anti-mosquito spray in their jurisdiction.

Bhurgari further said that Rs1.2 million had been provided to the EDO Health for purchasing anti-mosquito spray, while 400 litres of the same had already been provided to him by the director of the Malaria Control Programme two days back.

September 29, 2011 (The News)

Zardari monitors relief work from Presidency

President Asif Ali Zardari directed the Sindh government to keep an eye on the prices and quality of medicines and other supplies for flood-affected people and directed that all procurement orders should be made available on Internet for the sake of transparency and public information.

The president was interacting with elected representatives and government officials of some rain-hit areas of Sindh through video conferencing room set up at Aiwan-e-Sadr to monitor relief work in Sindh.

Presidential spokesman Farhatullah Babar said the president has been personally monitoring the situation and the relief work being carried out in the affected areas.

The president was also informed about latest position vis-a-vis his directive for the arrangements for de-watering pumps to evacuate stagnant water in different areas. Taking note of reports of rainwater accumulation in Mirpurkhas, Umerkot, Tharparker and Benazirabad districts, the president directed the Member Water & Power, Sindh secretary irrigation and ex-secretary irrigation to meet and work out plan in this regard.

The president, specially, inquired about the complaints from the minorities' communities regarding any indiscriminations against them in provision of flood assistance. He said he had seen reports of discrimination against Dalits and termed any discrimination on any ground unacceptable. The President also directed that the availability of lady doctors and health workers be ensured at all places where there was requirement.

September 29, 2011 (The News)

Four demos held against authorities for not solving flood-victims' problems in Mirpurkhas

The citizens lost their patience and took to the streets against the local administration for not draining out stagnant rain water from residential areas even after two weeks.

Four protests demonstrations were held in various parts of the city, as the stagnant water had now become filthier and dangerously contaminated.

The protest demonstrations are going more volatile with each passing day amid frustration as all claims of the administration of draining out the flood water in a few days proved wrong. Mir Colony, Pak Colony, Mahmoodabad, Jamnadas Colony and the Railway Crossing Road besides other residential colonies are still under two to three feet deep water.

The Civil Hospital is closed for the last 15 days, being inundated under four feet deep water, which is causing severe problems to the patients. Dr Sikandar Samejo disclosed that two patients died in a miserable condition

at the main gate of the hospital as all important departments, including the emergency and the surgery, are closed due to flood water that had not been drained out.

The condition of rain victims, who come daily in govt offices in the hope of getting relief goods, is more pathetic as the offices are also inundated in flood water for the last several days and the administrative machinery is totally paralysed.

Meanwhile, a 12-member UNO team visited the city area and met with the officials of the district administration to discuss provision of health and food for flood victims.

DCO Mirpurkhas Ghulam Husain Memon informed that the WHO, the WFO and other international organisation are set to start wide scale relief work under the UN umbrella for provision of all basic needs to the flood victims.

September 30, 2011 (Dawn)

Iran sends relief goods for flood victims

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah received Interior Minister of Iran Mostafa Mohammad Nijjar and a consignment of relief goods sent by the government of Iran for its distribution among flood-affected people of the province.

The Iranian interior minister hand over the consignment containing food items, tents, medicines and mineral water bottles for the rain- and flood-affected people of Sindh.

September 30, 2011 (The News)

Dams vital to save Sindh from flooding

Construction of Kalabagh, Bhasha, Munda, Akhori and others dams on war footing are crucial to save Sindh from rainstorms and floods. Participants in Jang Economic Session on 'How to save Sindh from Water Storms', added 31 Million Acre Feet (MAF) water was going downstream Kotri every year against a requirement of only 8.6 MAF.

The participants included Chairman Irsa Rao Irshad Khan, Adviser Wapda Abdul Khaliq Khan, former MD Pepco Munawar Baseer, ex-Secretary Irrigation Javeed Majeed and President Farmer Associates of Pakistan (FAP) Dr Tariq Bucha. It was hosted by Sikindar Lodhi and Intikhab Tariq.

Earlier, they said on average 22 MAF water was wasted every year due to ill planning and poor water management, which needed to be stopped urgently, For the last 35 years, the water storage capacity in the country reduced rather being increased, which give opportunity to India for propaganda at world level to construct water reservoirs as upper riparian of Indus and other rivers water.

Rao Irshad Khan said that 145 MAF water was available in Pakistan; Kharif season required 67 MAF water and Rabi season 36 MAF while 31 MAF water went downstream Kotri to stop sea water incursion against requirement of only 8.6 MAF. He said a number of big dams could be constructed to save 22 MAF water. He said last year, 55 MAF water went downstream Kotri in sea. He said price of one MAF water was US \$2 billion, which meant \$110 billion worth water was thrown into sea. He said if water was not stored in Tarbela than Sukkur would be inundated. He said in 1960, it was planned to construct Kalabagh, Bhasha, Tarbela and Mangla dams but it was not implemented. He said water storage capacity was reduced to 11.5 MAF from 15.7 MAF while the country has been compelled to purchase costlier electricity since the dams had not been constructed. He said Indus River has capacity for generation of 59,000 mega watts electricity. He said he twice sent recommendations to the prime minister to implement 2020 vision of construction of mega reservoirs but no notice has been taken. He said cost of construction of dams could be recovered in just five years from electricity generation. He opined that Sindh needed construction of dams more then other province as it was drowning in water. He said Sindh representation in Irsa was 40 per cent thus no one could damage their interests. He predicated that due to weak drainage system, it could take at least 50 days for water to recede in Sindh. He said vested interests of India, oil companies and big landlords encroached riverbed, which had became a hurdle in construction of a mega dam in Pakistan.

Abdul Khaliq Khan said that this year, 10 times more rains had been recorded in Umer Kot, six times more in Mirpur Khas and four times more

in Badin. He said if the drainage system was not encroached upon, then water would have receded in a couple of days.

Munawar Baseer said that Wapda vision 2020 contained good projects and good results could be acquired by implementing it. He said institutions faced shortage of technical human resource. He suggested constitution of a water expert management committee for proper utilization of water resources. He stressed on the need to construct Kalabagh dam on priority. He said poor people of Sindh were misguided by their landlords about it while it was also needed to aware Khyber Pakhtoonkhawa people that Nowshera was 15 feet higher than the Kalabagh dam site so he dam would not affect them as well. He said US has 500 per cent water storage capacity while Pakistan has only 13 per cent.

Javeed Majeed said three feet water embankment could not avert flood in Sindh. He said rainwater was not receding due to non-existence of drainage system in Sindh. He said water of Sindh could be used by constructing small dams there while mini barrages could be constructed ahead of Kotri barrage to keep wildlife alive and for livelihood of fishermen. He said Mumtaz Bhutto allegedly encroached upon 30,000 acres land, Jatoi 50,000 acres and Pir Pagara 100,000 acres land there. He said in the past, dams were filled till September and its water was used till June while in next seven years, stored water would be used till December. He said in the Musharraf regime construction of Akhori dam was decided, which must be implemented.

Dr Tariq Bucha said in future no water drought was in sight despite limited water availability. He said till 2025, temperature would rise by one centigrade, which would change the weather pattern and glaciers would melt, which increase water flows and floods. He suggested allowing water management institution to operate freely and independently.

September 30, 2011 (The News)

Rains destroyed Rs20 billion crops in Badin: Fehmida

Crops worth Rs20 billion have been destroyed due to recent rains in Badin district. This was stated by the Speaker of National Assembly, Dr. Fehmida Mirza.

Talking to reporters, she said that damage to government buildings as well as roads was to the tune of Rs12 billion. The Speaker said that Badin needs Rs40 billion to make good the losses.

She said the recent rains caused a great deal of devastation in Badin district and that the federal and provincial governments with the help of the foreign aid, trying to face this challenge. Dr Fehmida Mirza said that besides rains, the Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) and storm water drains also caused destruction in Badin.

She stated that 30,000 Pakistan Cards have been distributed so far among the victims. Initially, financial assistance of Rs10,000 each is being given.

Dr. Fehmida said that ration, tents, safe drinking water and mosquito net are required for the victims. She stated that after water drained out 125,000 affectees returned to their homes. They have been given one month's ration. The Speaker said that more than 20,000 victims are still living in the relief camps. She directed the administration that the victims be given ration and tents and the required medical assistance be provided and medical camps be set up.

September 30, 2011 (The News)

Iran delegation arrives along with relief goods

An Iranian delegation led by Interior Minister of Iran, Mostafa Mohammad Najar arrived Karachi along with a plane of relief goods for the rain-hit people of Sindh province.

They said at the CM House in a ceremony that they had brought the first phase of items of relief goods and the second phase of relief goods comprising of 55 tonnes were being sent through Air Cargo which would arrive very soon.

September 30, 2011 (The News)

Diplomats voice concern over flood situation in Sindh

A majority of diplomats in Karachi have expressed their concern over the flood situation in Sindh and said seriousness in dealing with the situation is

not being shown this year as against last year when the flood situation was taken seriously.

The diplomats further observed that the government could have beefed up measures to save such a situation, a handout issued from the Governor House.

They made these observations when they called on Governor Dr Ishratul Ebad Khan at the Governor House.

The diplomats assured the governor that relief had already been given to the flood-affected people and more relief goods would also be provided to them.

September 30, 2011 (The News)

Flood-affected children's education continues to suffer

Thousands of children in the flood-affected areas of Sindh, who are without formal or non-formal education, have become prone to security and welfare issues on a daily basis, says an assessment report of a Karachi-based children rights NGO.

“The current situation should be taken as a serious concern because the major focus being given on the relief and immediate rehabilitation activities of the flood victims has compromised the security and safety of children,” said Muhammad Ali, President of the Roshni Helpline. “Since these children do not have any activity to keep them engaged, their vulnerability to security risks has multiplied manifold.” According to Roshni Helpline’s findings, around 1,200 children of different age groups, from five to 18, at the Kemari IDPs’ Village have missed out on proper schooling since last year’s deluge.

Previously, the organisation, in collaboration with an Islamabad-based NGO, had been running Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) at the Kemari camp for about a year, but since its closure no one has offered either formal or non-formal educational services to the displaced children.

Meanwhile, the schools which were not damaged by the flood waters are now being used as shelter by the flood-affected people. “The furniture is being used as fuel for fire and other infrastructure of these schools has

been completely damaged by these refugees, and there is no chance that these schools could be used for education purpose without complete reconstruction,” Ali said. He added that it was high time for NGOs, and especially the education department to save children’s facilities from destruction. He said the Roshni Helpline was continuously monitoring the situation.

October 1, 2011 (Dawn)

Submerged Sanghar scrambles for return to normality

More than a month after heavy rains devastated Sanghar district, the administration is still unable to properly organise relief and rehabilitation work, with rainwater stagnating in the town and adjoining areas and people waiting for help.

The Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) and irrigation department have at last started taking some measures to drain out water.

Sanghar, a bastion of Hur movement for independence from British colonial rulers, is suffering because the rains have destroyed its farmland known for producing cotton and other valuable crops.

The town and its talukas remain cut off from different areas, dealing a serious blow to economy.

Urban population has mostly moved to other places but people in rural areas are forced to live in the open, on the banks of drains and canals or in improvised huts along roads.

The district has suffered the second highest number of deaths in rain-related incidents after Mirpurkhas, according to figures released by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority.

The fine quality cotton crop the district is famous for has been washed away or are flooded. All saline water drains are flowing to their capacity. The drains pose a serious threat to the city in the event of breaches.

Sanghar, a stronghold of PML-F of Pir Pagaro, has a strong representation in federal and provincial governments with one federal and three provincial advisers. They are; Khuda Bux Rajar, Jam Madad Ali, Shazia

Marri and Imamuddin Shauqeen. But the town is yet to see the beginning of a proper relief operation.

The main road linking the town with Hyderabad remains submerged, forcing commuters to make a risky detour through a mud road. The Sanghar-Nawabshah, Sanghar-Khairpur, Shahdadpur, Tando Adam, Khipro and Shahpur Chakar roads are in the same condition.

Encroachments in drains blamed for crisis

Townspeople blame encroachments in and across old passages of natural rainwater drains for the blockage of water's flow to Badin. "The rainwater can't be drained out by cutting the M.A. Jinnah road. It is a cosmetic exercise to pacify angry residents, it is not going to do any good," said Malik Sher, vice-president of Sanghar Chamber of Commerce.

The local economy, he said, had been badly hit. There is a serious price spiral. Price of tomato has shot up to Rs100 per kg from Rs15. Business and civic life had been completely crippled.

The civil hospital has been moved to a private building. It is providing only primary healthcare.

Cases of skin, respiratory diseases and gastroenteritis are on the rise. Mobile units of maternity and childcare are visiting relief camps.

Cotton ginner had expected to receive around 2.2 million bales from Sanghar because of an increase in cotton acreage after an impressive return on cotton produced last year.

There are 106 ginning factories in the town and 15 more are in the pipeline. "We had collected around 15,000 to 16,000 maunds before it rained. But 80 per cent of it has been destroyed and the remainder is going through ginning process," said ginner Mero Mal.

Drainage plan

Sida Managing Director Mohammad Ehsan Leghari has said a plan has been prepared to drain out water from Sanghar by installing 10 pumping machines, each of five cusec discharge capacity. "We hope we will be able to clear the city in 20 days through the Nara Valley drain," he said.

October 1, 2011 (The News)

Lukewarm international response towards victims of Sindh floods

The United Nations has so far received only six percent of the 367 million US dollars which it appealed for from international donors to carry out relief activities in the flood-affected areas of Sindh following unprecedented rains last month, UN officials said.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon had appealed for an initial \$367 million of aid to carry out relief activities including provision of food, shelter and health facilities to approximately 5.5 million flood-affected people in eight districts of Sindh. "The donors response is extremely poor as only six percent of the total 367 million appealed for by the UN secretary general for the flood affected people of Sindh province," Fawad Hussain, Head of Mission of UNOCHA for Sindh, told journalists.

UNOCHA (The United Nations Officer for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) is coordinating relief efforts in eight districts of Sindh, including Sanghar, Badin, Mirpurkhas, Umerkot, Tharparkar, Nawabshah, Tando Allahyar and Tando Muhammad Khan, which were worst-affected due to rains and floods in the province.

Another crisis currently faced by the United Nations is that it will run out of country stocks for food and shelter by October 10, although it is only able to provide food on a daily basis to 10 percent of the total 5.5 million victims as per initial assessment, the UN official said.

He lamented the lukewarm response of the donors, pointing to the 'lack of preparedness' for another disaster by the government of Pakistan, following the last year's super flood in Pakistan, saying this was resulting in serious problems for more than half a million of the affected.

"Politicisation of the aid as well as a lack of security to NGOs and agencies working for the relief of the flood victims is also emerging as a serious issue in helping out the people of Sindh, whose villages, not to mention entire towns and cities, are still inundated due to the heavy rain at the start of last month," he revealed.

October 10 assumes greater significance for the flood affected as it is the deadline set by the provincial administration for the opening of schools where scores of flood affected people have taken shelter and they are concerned about their future after their eviction from temporary shelters, a UNOCHA Sindh official said.

He said the situation was turning from bad to worse as neither the UN and other agencies nor the government had reached all those affected in the eight flood-ravaged districts of the province. All means of communication were cut off due to the accumulation of water in these areas.

“It is expected that the situation would continue to get worse in these areas, especially Sanghar, where water is not expected to recede for the next one and half months as the stormwater drains are incapable of draining out the water accumulated in this vast area comprising several districts,” he warned.

Health was emerging as the biggest challenge for the UN agencies and the government as the health infrastructure was badly affected due to the heavy rains in the province. The lack of clean drinking water, food, medicine and shelter is resulting in the outbreak of communicable and non-communicable diseases, Fawad said.

Unfortunately, in the entire Sanghar district and two other districts of the province, Tharparkar and Umerkot, no medical lab was functioning at the moment, leaving patients at the mercy of physicians’ skill to diagnose diseases like Malaria, typhoid and diarrhea and provide consequent treatment.

Commenting on the security situation, he revealed that trucks carrying food, shelter and other aid shipments to Sanghar for the genuine victims were looted by armed people on the way. He, however, admitted that the provincial government had now appointed two SSPs who arrange security for the aid convoys of the UN when there are notified of their movement in advance.

Similarly, UNOCHA is also working in coordination with the army in the flood affected in reaching out to those in inaccessible areas as well as for the security of staff and workers. He said the focus of the media, especially the Pakistani print and electronic media, had changed and it was giving

less coverage to the sufferings of the flood affected people. As a result, there was a reduction in humanitarian efforts as well as a lower level of donations from the public.

Meanwhile, the NDMA also confirmed that Pakistan received only a fraction of the money asked for in the initial appeal through the UN Secretary General.

“Pakistan has so far received only 21 million US dollars of international aid against the initial appeal for over 350 million dollars, while 55 ships carrying relief goods have arrived at our ports,” NDMA Chairman Dr. Zafar Iqbal Qadir told journalists in Karachi.

He also admitted to the distribution of aid on a political basis but said following such complaints, a committee comprising MNAs has visited the flood-affected areas and is monitoring the distribution of aid.

“The international response to the sufferings of the flood victims is lukewarm this year and very little international aid is being provided and pledged to the country, he admitted. However, he admitted to the lack of preparedness for any other disaster following last year’s flood caused so much devastation in Sindh.

“Many waterways have been encroached upon by influential people in Sindh, which blocked the natural drainage system of water while the province also received unprecedented rains not witnessed in many centuries,” he claimed.

The district administrations’ negligence towards the communication system, maintenance of the water drainage system and communication networks resulted in the inundation of roads that is resulting in serious problems in reaching out to the flood affected areas of the province he added.

October 1, 2011 (The NEWS)

UNHCR calls for another \$33.2m from donors

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has sought \$33.2 million from donors to assist the rain and flood victims in Sindh.

UNHCR spokesperson Qaisar Khan Afridi said during his visit of a tent city in village Shahdad Khan Nandani of district Mirpurkhas.

October 1, 2011 (The News)

CM orders probe into substandard ration supply

Chief Minister Sindh Syed Qaim Ali Shah took a serious notice of the supply of substandard ration to the rain-affected people of Matiari, Hyderabad and some other parts of the province.

He also ordered an inquiry into the matter.

October 1, 2011 (The News)

Telemedicine mobile units launched in flood-affected areas

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) launched Pakistan's first telemedicine mobile unit (TMU) in collaboration with the Aman Foundation that would be used in flood-ravaged areas of Sindh to treat patients.

The TMUs will be transmitting live video and audio of patients in the flood-ravaged areas of the province to health experts in Karachi or any other places through broadband link and the specialists after looking at the condition of patients will recommend medicines or other treatment.

This was stated by NDMA Chairman, Dr Zafar Iqbal Qadir while addressing a press conference at the Karachi Press Club (KPC) regarding the formal launching of TMUs.

“These vehicles are fully equipped with state-of-the-art biometric devices and high resolution video and audio live feed would help health specialists to diagnose and prescribe medicines to patients”, he added.

These two telemedicine units will be based in Hyderabad and Thatta locations, NDMA chairman said.

October 2, 2011 (Dawn)

UN again sends SOS for the flood-hit

The United Nations has warned that humanitarian agencies are running out of resources to assist those affected by floods in Sindh, even as the need for basic items, shelter and health services increases among more than five million affected people. The UN appeal for \$357 million under its “Pakistan flood rapid response plan”, launched two weeks ago, has received only \$19 million so far, an official said .

“Urgent relief is critical as families continue to suffer in the aftermath of the floods. Unless we receive new pledges to the Floods Rapid Response Plan, millions of people will be left in need of food, clean water and essential medicines for months to come,” UN Coordinator for Pakistan Timo Pakkala said.

“We are grateful that donors have started to give to the Rapid Response Plan. But to ensure that we can help save lives now as well as tomorrow, we call on the international community to urgently step up their support for the people of Pakistan through this plan,” he added.

Humanitarian agencies have food stocks that will last a month, while drinking water and emergency shelter materials are likely to run out in weeks if not replenished, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs.

UN agencies estimate that 2.5 million people desperately need safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. Food is required for 2.75 million people, while 2.96 million people are in urgent need of medical care. At least 1.75 million people require emergency shelter.

The UN and its humanitarian partners have so far provided emergency shelter for 314,500 households. More than 1.6 million people have received medicines and medical consultations, and 413,000 people have received food. Safe drinking water has been delivered to approximately 200,000 people and the UN aims to provide in coming weeks safe water to more than 400,000 people.

If the needed funding does not arrive, the UN and aid agencies will run out of food stocks some time next month. Drinking water supplies and stocks

of emergency shelter will last only a few more weeks and a third of the flood-affected population could be without medical care in a month's time.

The World Food Programme plans to increase deliveries in October to cover 2.55 million people in Sindh and Balochistan over the next four months.

The WFP has prepared its one-month ration packet in the light of a recent national nutritional survey which has highlighted alarming levels of malnutrition in Sindh. The ration, alongside the general family food basket, includes high-energy biscuits and ready-to-use supplementary food to address nutritional decline among the vulnerable groups.

A WFP-Unicef programme on community management of acute malnutrition is being expanded to include the disaster-hit districts of Sindh in an effort to provide treatment to young children and lactating mothers.

A joint rapid initial assessment has been conducted in 11 flood-stricken districts of Balochistan. Preliminary data suggests that food is the most urgent need there.

October 2, 2011 (Dawn)

Sindh seeks funds for flood-hit people

The Sindh government has decided to approach the federal government to obtain funds promised for the relief and rehabilitation of the flood victims on a priority basis to ensure uninterrupted supplies and payments to the affected people.

A decision to this effect was taken at a meeting of the committee constituted by the prime minister to assist the provincial government in the relief and rehabilitation work.

Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah, who presided over the meeting, said that the prime minister had announced that the government would pay Rs20,000 to every flood-affected family and the money was now needed. He underlined the need for a greater coordination with foreign non-governmental organisations so that they could go to those areas where people needed them.

The meeting was informed that the Sindh government had spent Rs5 billion on relief activities, while people of Tando Mohammad Khan and Badin received Rs1 billion under the Pakistan Cards scheme. The Sindh government needed more funds on an immediate basis for making payments to the affected people in Benazirabad and Sanghar under the same scheme.

The convener of the committee briefed the meeting participants about two major issues as to how drain out accumulated rainwater in affected areas and how to save people from the attack of mosquitoes.

He said that the health department imported insecticides from France and India and 500 spray machines would be required to conduct spray in all rain-affected areas.

He said that eight million people had been affected and the NDMA had distributed two million family packs of ration and 310,000 shelters among affected persons.

He said the people had started going back home in those areas where water has receded.

The meeting was informed that affected farmers would require financial support for sowing wheat and sunflowers in those areas where water had receded.

The meeting was informed about 4.5 million animals had been moved to safer areas in desert. The livestock department had chalked out feeding plan for next 15 days which required Rs600 million.

October 2, 2011 (The News)

UN warns relief supplies for flood victims could run out in a week

The United Nations warned that humanitarian agencies are running out of resources to assist those affected by floods in Pakistan, even as the need for clean water, food, shelter and medical services increase among the more than five million people in affected communities.

“Urgent relief is critical as families continue to suffer in the aftermath of the floods. Unless we receive new pledges to the Floods 2011 Rapid Response Plan, millions of people will be left in need of food, clean water and essential medicines for months to come,” said Timo Pakkala, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Pakistan.

“We are grateful that donors have started to give to the Rapid Response Plan. But to ensure that we can help save lives now as well as tomorrow, we call on the international community to urgently step up their support,” he added.

October 2, 2011 (The News)

‘2.5m flood victims need safe drinking water’

The United Nations agencies have estimated that 2.5 million people are in desperate need of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in the flood-hit areas.

October 2, 2011 (The News)

Sindh to request Centre to release flood relief funds

The Sindh government will make a formal request to the federal government for the release of funds promised for the relief and rehabilitation of flood victims on priority basis in order to ensure uninterrupted supplies and payments to the affected people.

This decision was taken at a meeting of PM’s committee constituted to assist the provincial government in the relief and rehabilitation work.

Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah, said that the prime minister had announced to pay Rs 20,000 to each affected family and this money was needed now.

He underlined the need for a greater coordination with foreign NGOs so that they could go to the areas where people need them.

The meeting was told that the Sindh government has spent Rs 5 billion on the relief work while people of Tando Mohammad Khan and Badin received Rs 1 billion under the Pakistan Cards.

The Sindh government needs more funds on immediate basis for making payments to the affected people in Benazirabad and Sanghar under the Pakistan Cards.

Clusters of United Nations and NGOs have also started relief work in all the affected areas and people have started returning to their homes in the areas where rainwater has receded.

October 3, 2011 (Dawn)

Breaches in LBOD blamed for colossal damage

Leaders of public opinion have blamed government's inefficiency for breaches, both man-made and natural, in the Left Bank Outfall Drain and other saline water drains, which have devastated 21 districts of the province and affected about 15 million people.

Speaking at a conference convened by the Awami Tehrik (AT) at the Mumtaz Mirza Auditorium of Sindh Museum, they said thousands of villages had been destroyed and the province had suffered losses to the tune of billions of rupees.

On an average 30 to 40 people were dying of hunger and diseases every day while about 700,000 displaced people were living in camps and many others in the open, they said citing a report of the National Disaster Management Authority.

They said three million people were suffering from diseases and nine million heads of cattle had perished in rain-related incidents.

Referring to a UN report, the speakers said there would be a catastrophe if the affected people were not provided succour on an emergency basis.

The speakers included AT's leader Rasool Bux Palijo, chairman Ayaz Latif Palijo, Ghulam Nabi Mughal, Anwar Memon and Ms Afroze Shoro.

Resolutions adopted at the conference demanded that all districts and union councils affected by rains should be declared calamity-affected and all the displaced people be provided food and medical facilities.

One of the resolutions called for transparency in distribution of relief goods and ending the role of MNAs, MPAs, Waderas and bureaucrats in the distribution.

The conference demanded payment of adequate compensation to the affected people and said rain-hit farmers should be given free of cost seeds, fertiliser and agricultural machinery and should be exempted from land revenue, water charges and bank loans.

Another resolution appealed to the Supreme Court to take notice of the flawed design of the LBOD and fix responsibility.

It said the rain affected-people should be provided free electricity for six months and students should be exempted from fees.

Stagnant rainwater should be drained out on a war footing and all encroachments in and along water ways should be removed.

The conference said the affected people should be settled in Hyderabad and Karachi. It termed Pakistan Card and financial aid of Rs20,000 a cruel joke. It demanded that each affected family should be paid at least Rs500,000.

STP meeting

The Sindh Taraqqi Pasand Party has blamed flawed design of the LBOD for the colossal damage caused by heavy rains in 21 district of the province.

A meeting of the central executive council of the STP chaired by Dr Qadir Magsi criticised what it described as insensitivity and callousness of the government and national and provincial disaster management authorities.

October 3, 2011 (The news)

Over eight million people affected by recent rains, floods in Sindh: Qaim

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah has said that heavy rain was a natural calamity which continued for five weeks in Badin, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Thatta, Khairpur, Tando Muhammad Khan, Matiari and other districts of the province.

while talking to media he said that due to floods more than eight million people were affected and the crops included sugarcane, cotton were also badly damaged, leaving people residing in coastal areas economically disturbed.

The chief minister said that all resources are being utilised for the relief and rehabilitation of the affected people and in the first phase an amount of Rs20,000 is being paid to each affected family through Pakistan Card, besides an amount of Rs4 billion was allocated for providing fertiliser and seed for 'Rabi' crop to the growers of affected districts.

He said that President Zardari and Prime Minister Gilani visited the rain affected areas of the province, and the president had appealed to the international donors to come forward and help rain affected people.

He said that the World Food Organization is providing food stuff to the flood victims and assistance to the provincial government in this regard. Shah also said that the World Bank is also helping the flood victims while NGOs and the Iranian government are providing the same service through the Red Crescent Society in the province.

He said that all-out efforts are being made to import maximum number of anti-mosquito nets for flood victims. The chief minister also visited to review the ambulance service launched to provide door-to-door health facilities to the people affected by floods. On the occasion, DCO Larkana Abdul Aleem Lashari, briefed the chief minister regarding the health facilities being provided to the people by the district government.

Meanwhile, the chief minister distributed food among the rain affected people at the Government Boys Higher School, Ghari Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto.

October 3, 2011 (The news)

PPP landlords, bureaucracy engaged in misappropriating relief goods: Palejo

Landlords of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the country's bureaucracy were committing corruption in relief goods sent for the rain- and flood-victims, said the leader of a political party .

Rasul Bakhsh Palejo, founder of the Awami Tehreek (AT), stated this during the day-long conference held at the Sindh Museum Hall on problems being faced by the rain- and flood-victims in the interior Sindh. He said there was a gang of landlords, religious extremists and rulers in the country. He said a joint struggle would be launched against that gang with a view to delivering the nation from that vicious group.

He said landlords and rulers had failed to help the people at the time of calamity, but how did they get votes. He said every organisation of the country was on the verge of fall, but the rulers were doing nothing.

President AT Ayaz Latif Palejo said categorically not a single victim of rain and flood could get relief goods and the rulers were telling lie. The statements of the rulers regarding distribution of relief goods were hurting the affected people in the province.

Landlords and the rulers were preventing aid agencies from helping the victims and the aid was being given on the chit of politicians in the province, he claimed.

October 3, 2011 (The news)

Flood relief campaign launched in UAE

Prominent UAE based Pakistani and former Ambassador Javed Malik hosted an event in Dubai to launch a campaign to extend support to the victims of flood in Pakistan.

The event was attended by Chairman Senate Farooq H Naek who led a 10-member delegation of senators to the UAE. The delegation included senators from all political parties.

The campaign will include a series of events and activities aimed at raising awareness and funds for the flood victims, and a gala fund raising dinner is being organized a day later where a large amount is expected to be announced by the overseas Pakistanis group.

October 4, 2011 (Dawn)

3m people in urgent need of food Flood victims at risk after world inaction: WFP

The United Nations warned that the international community had failed to respond to the latest flooding crisis in Pakistan, leaving three million people in urgent need of food handouts.

“Somehow the present flooding and the humanitarian impact of the present flooding have not yet picked the interest and focus of the world,” said Ramiro Lopes da Silva, Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme.

“If we have no resources, we have no response,” he told a news conference in Islamabad after visiting the flood-hit areas of Sindh. On Sept 18, the United Nations led an appeal for \$357 million in emergency funding to shore up rescue and relief efforts for millions of affected people after floods swept away houses and farmland in the province.

“The funding is not coming as swiftly and as fast at the levels it came to the response of the floods of last year,” Mr Silva said. “Donors are being challenged by the level of resources required to address similar needs of humanitarian situations across the world.”

the UN said only the Japanese government had pledged \$10 million in response to the appeal.

The government says more than 350 people have been killed and over eight million people affected this year by floods, following the 21 million hit last year in the country’s worst-ever disaster.

The WFP official said three million Pakistanis were in urgent need of food security and said the UN agency would help “2.4 million of those severely affected by food insecurity”.

Meanwhile, international aid agency Oxfam called upon the donor community to provide urgently needed funds they had pledged for flood victims and said relief activities so far had barely scratched the surface.

In a statement, Oxfam said the gains made and the lives saved through relief activities were in jeopardy because critical emergency-response supplies ran low.

Two weeks into the UN flash appeal, the rapid response plan has received only six per cent of funds. The UN and other humanitarian agencies will run out of resources in a few weeks unless donors immediately step up their response.

Oxfam said that continuous humanitarian aid was needed for at least six months to support the people affected by floods in Sindh and Balochistan.

Immediate medical care is needed for 2.96 people and at least 1.75 million people require emergency shelter. "Immense and continued support is needed to help people get back on their feet. Oxfam fears the long-term impact of the flooding will be exceptionally hard on farmers," said Neva Khan, Oxfam's country director in Pakistan.

Unicef has announced that more than one million women and children will be reached in six flood-affected districts with a package of assistance this week in collaboration with the Sindh health department and WHO and UNFPA.

The assistance is expected to significantly reduce the threats of communicable diseases and complications of pregnancies.

Unicef and its partners are now reaching hundreds of thousands of families with life-saving assistance. Almost 210,000 people are now receiving clean water daily, while supplies such as buckets, soap, water purification tablets and tarpaulins are being distributed to more than 100,000 people.

Unicef said it was facing a major funding shortfall as it scaled up humanitarian assistance to meet the key needs of hundreds of thousands of children and women displaced by the floods. Under the flash appeal, Unicef is appealing to the international community for \$50.3 million to cover the immediate needs of children and women for six months.

October 4, 2011 (The News)

Pakistanis at risk over world inaction on floods: WFP

The United Nations warned that the international community had failed to respond to the latest flooding crisis in Pakistan, leaving three million people in urgent need of food handouts.

The country has suffered two consecutive years of floods but has been at increasing risk of international isolation since the US troops found and killed Osama bin Laden near the capital in May.

“Somehow the present flooding and the humanitarian impact of the present flooding has not yet picked the interest, the focus of the world,” said Ramiro Lopes da Silva, the deputy executive director of the World Food Programme (WFP).

“Donors are being challenged by the level of resources required to address similar needs of humanitarian situations across the world,” he added. The United Nations said only the Japanese government had pledged \$10 million in response to the appeal. The Pakistani government says more than 350 people have been killed and over eight million people affected this year by floods.

October 4, 2011 (The News)

Rains inflicted Rs457 billion losses in 21 Sindh districts: Qaim

Sindh Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah has said the recent rains inflicted Rs 457 billion losses in 21 districts of the province, which are more than Rs 444 billion damages caused by the 2010 floods.

Addressing a ceremony arranged by the North Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC) at the Circuit House in Khairpur, he said the rains displaced more than 8 million people. Qaim said the Sindh government was determined to improve social and economic conditions of the people.

He said the government, as well as the international community, was making all kinds of efforts for resettlement of the rain victims and providing them relief, rescue and food.

Qaim said the Pakistan Cards are being given to the rain victims and the

Sindh government would not leave them alone. He said Rs 4 billion have been allocated for provision of agriculture inputs to the affected growers for the Rabi crop.

The chief minister said to bring improvement in sewerage, drainage, as well for supply of pure drinking water, the Sindh government hired the services of the NSUSC in some districts under the Sindh Cities Improvement Project. He said the Asian Development Bank provided the funds to the Sindh government for the project in the shape of financial assistance.

He said teams have been formed for removing illegal encroachments in the cities. During the ceremony, the NSUSC adviser briefed the CM about the corporation's working and informed the meeting that modern machinery has been purchased with the cost of Rs 40 million.

Meanwhile, the DCO Khairpur briefed Qaim about rain damages, saying 927,953 people of the Khairpur District have been affected by recent rains, 388,638 acres of agricultural land, 274,233 acres of standing crops, 34,676 houses, 276 schools, and 511 kilometers of roads were damaged in the district alone. He said 133 de-watering machines are in operation day and night and 44 medical camps have been established.

October 4, 2011 (The News)

Zardari views flood situation via video conference

More than 3,00,000 tents have been distributed to date among the flood-affected persons in various parts of Sindh.

This was informed during a videoconference held at a special flood control room of the Presidency, where President Asif Ali Zardari toured various flood-affected districts of Sindh including that of Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Tharparkar and Umerkot, and interacted with concerned government officials and elected representatives of these districts through satellite video conferencing facility for an update on the relief activities for the flood-affected people of Sindh.

Spokesperson to the President Farhatullah Babar said that during video conference, the president was informed that over 31,000 tents have been distributed in Mirpurkhas alone along with over 300,000 family packs,

23,000 blankets, nearly 800 water purification units and three de-watering pumps along with other supplies including drinking water, mosquitoes nets and food items.

In Sanghar, over 241,000 family packs, 35,000 blankets, six de-watering pumps and other food items and commodities have been provided. In Badin, over 43,000 blankets, 500,000 family packs, 1,751 water purification units, 10 de-watering pumps and nearly 16,000 mosquito nets have been distributed so far.

He said that during last videoconference, the president had directed the concerned officials that each and every detail of the losses and damages occurred and relief provided till this date be provided to him. He had also directed the Sindh authorities to keep an eye on food and other supplies for the affected people and that all the procurement orders for the flood victims are made public through Internet.

Farhatullah Babar said that the president directed chief minister Sindh, who was also participating in the videoconference that Army's assistance be also sought in de-watering activities and 'Pakistan Cards' be distributed with the help of Rangers. The president, during meeting, directed that permanent drainage plan be also chalked out as incessant rains and consequential floods may recur due to climatic change.

October 6, 2011 (The News)

Senate refuses to involve Centre, Sindh govt in flood relief

As transparency remains a big challenge, the Senate of Pakistan has constituted a special panel to have a regular watch over the fair utilization of donations collected, or in the pipeline, for flood victims in Sindh.

October 6, 2011 (Dawn)

Zardari orders measures to help flood-hit farmers

President Asif Ali Zardari directed the government to set up a committee to recommend measures for meeting the seed requirements of farmers in flood-affected areas of Sindh and another committee to suggest steps for reserving the command area of Gomal Dam for cultivation of cotton.

The decision to form the committees was taken during a briefing to the president on the state of agriculture in the flood-hit areas.

The first committee will comprise agriculture secretaries of Punjab and Sindh and other committee will consist of the agriculture secretary of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and representatives of the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association.

Presidency's Spokesman Farhatullah Babar said the president had also called for providing seeds for growing canola, sunflower and cotton and soft loans so that the flood-hit farmers could make a fresh start.

Mr Zardari said the large-scale destruction of food and cash crops and livestock in Sindh had seriously affected the agricultural economy. He said one of the top priorities was to help the farmers reclaim their agricultural land and to prevent further loss of livestock. "We need to have full involvement and assistance of women so that they could also contribute in rehabilitation efforts," Mr Babar quoted the president as saying.

The president was informed that the flood had damaged two million bales of cotton, over 75,000 tons of chilli, 0.2 million tons of rice, 0.33 million tons of onion and 70 thousand tons of tomato.

Keeping in view the upcoming Rabi planting season, Mr Zardari said, rapid measures needed be taken to assist the farmers by timely providing seed and fertiliser. He said cash-for-work schemes were needed to help create much-needed income opportunities for the affected communities.

While reviewing the cotton production situation, the president said better management of existing technology and introduction of new technologies were essential to maximise national cotton production and to control various viral diseases.

October 4, 2011 (The News)

Flood-affected children being comforted at learning centres

A nine-year-old boy, Allah Bachayo, son of Ramzan Mallah, sitting in a temporary learning centre (TLC), was trying to design a peacock and giving it matching blue and green colors. Though the beautiful bird is not found in the area the boy belongs to, he claims to have seen flocks of peacocks

while visiting the Thar Desert to his relatives. He really seemed to be fascinated with the bird with its gaudy plumage.

Another boy, Gumshad Ali son of Shafi Mohammed, was making mushrooms but looking disturbed how to use colours as originally the vegetable is white and grows in the rainy season. He was shy to talk about his artwork, but said he was eager to collect mushrooms from the area but with the flood water everywhere, they could not see any naturally growing fruit and vegetable to take and use it.

In a tent village, located near the flooded area, known locally as Jara Water, Seerani Road, around five kilometres from Badin city, there are clusters of tents owned by different clans, living together in a similar situation. While visiting the tent school The News asked children to draw pictures of their own houses.

The Temporary Learning Centres (TLCs) were established recently by the Pakistan Fisherfolk's Forum (PFF) in collaboration with Unicef, aimed at keeping children engaged in teaching and entertainment to bring them out of depression, following displacement displacement and after shifting to the safer places. Many of them have shifted places frequently, as flood water was flowing everywhere, inundated villages and people are running helter skelter with small packs of belongings.

There were 75 children, 40 boys and 35 girls enrolled in the tent school, where two teachers, also belonging to the same neighborhood, have been appointed to spare four hours daily to keep the children engaged in recreational work. Majority of children had never visited nearby government schools, since their parents were reluctant to allow them to travel two-three kilometer distance they could not go there.

Unicef has taken the initiative to open 4000 TLCs in the flood-affected areas of Sindh out of which PFF is opening 200 tent schools in Badin district. According to plan in each school two teachers will be appointed one by government and the other by the partner (PFF). Children are being gifted school bags, pencils, colours, boards and games for their entertainment.

October 8, 2011 (Dawn)

\$17.6 million allocated by UN for flood victims

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) of the United Nations has allocated \$17.6 million (Rs1.54 billion) for providing water, food, shelter and healthcare to families devastated by floods in Pakistan.

The UN bodies – IOM, UN Habitat, UNHCR, WFP, FAO, Unicef, WHO and UNFPA – will deliver assistance in support of government-led relief and recovery efforts.

“We are grateful for the immediate funding provided by CERF, especially with UN relief stocks running low. This gives UN agencies flexible resources to continue to help save lives,” said UN’s Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan Timo Pakkala.

The assistance will target the most vulnerable families living in temporary settlements in the eight hardest-hit districts of Sindh. Many of them had not recovered from last year’s record-breaking floods.

About \$4.9 million (Rs428 million) will help provide 96,000 people with emergency shelter materials, blankets and kitchen sets.

Another \$2.9 million (Rs253 million) will help feed about 270,000 people, and \$800,000 (Rs69 million) will help families keep their livestock alive, to ensure continued milk production and a return to agricultural activities as soon as possible.

About \$3.8 million (Rs322 million) will provide emergency primary healthcare for 1.3 million people, who face malaria, dengue and cholera and \$3.1 million (Rs270 million) will respond to critical water, sanitation and hygiene needs.

“This CERF allocation marks the largest single donation to the Pakistan Floods 2011 Rapid Response Plan so far,” said John Ging of OCHA.

“The appeal has received only 15 per cent of \$357 million (Rs31 billion) needed to urgently reduce suffering and save lives. Families are in a fight for survival. Much more is needed now.”

CERF was set up by the United Nations General Assembly five years ago this month, to make funding for humanitarian emergencies faster and more equitable.

Since then, more than 120 member states and dozens of private sector donors have pledged some \$2.3 billion to the Fund, which is managed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

October 8, 2011 (The News)

Eight flood victims dead in 10 days

Eight flood victims, including four women, were reported to have died due to non-availability of medical assistance in last ten days. At a relief camp set up in the Naukot Fort, five persons, identified as Jannat, 45, Jaffar, 50, Arab, 55, Munnawar, 18, and eight-year-old girl Sindhu, died of Malaria and waterborne diseases. All belonged to the Solangi Tribe.

The families of the deceased revealed that those died first had a high fever and then sore throat, and in two to three days succumbed to the severity of these ailments. In addition to the above deaths, two women and a man died at the civil hospital's main gate here due to non-availability of any medical assistance as even the Emergency Department of the hospital is totally non-functional and submerged in knee-deep rainwater.

Apart from that more deaths are being reported from different relief camps as majority of flood victims are still far devoid of any medical facility. Sources revealed that majority of the victims were children and women with causes reported to be Malaria and waterborne diseases.

However as majority of the Basic Health Units (BHUs), Rural Health centers (RHCs) and even the Civil Hospital Mirpurkhas are practically closed because of being inundated in rainwater for last over three weeks, there was not official record of wide spreading diseases and the victims.

The district administration, as well as the Health Department, remains totally oblivious to this rapidly developing serious situation. Till the filing of this report, DCO Ghulam Hussain Memon and EDO Health Dr Shafquat

Dahiri were not available for comments despite repeated attempts to contact them.

October 8, 2011 (The News)

President monitoring flood relief activities'

As a part of regular interactions with the elected representatives as well as concerned government officials of the flood-affected areas of Sindh, President Asif Ali Zardari monitored the flood relief activities in three districts of Sindh namely Badin, Tando Allahyar and Benazirabad through satellite video conferencing.

From the special Flood Control Cell of Aiwan-e-Sadr, the president visited and interacted with the elected representatives and DCOs of the three districts and inquired about the situation there. The president inquired about the latest situation vis-a-vis relief efforts and availability of food, medicines and other supplies.

The president was informed that over two million affectees of nearly 12,000 villages of the three districts had been provided with nearly eight hundred thousand family packs along with one hundred thirty thousand tents and other necessary items including blankets, water purification units, de-watering pumps, drinking water, mosquito nets and rice bags. The concerned DCOs also informed the president about health facilities and availability of medicines in these districts along with other steps taken in light of the president's earlier directives to prevent outbreak of various diseases.

October 8, 2011 (The News)

Tribute paid to UAE team for relief to flood victims

A Pakistani top aid official has paid rich tribute to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) relief team for rescuing and feeding thousands of families after taking them to dry and safe places from parts of Sindh swept by floods.

According to official media of the Emirates, the UAE humanitarian assistance to Pakistan is being delivered on specific instructions given by

President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Amin, Military Relief Coordinator in Sindh Region said that the UAE's initiative to deliver emergency humanitarian assistance had significantly contributed to alleviating suffering of the affected families. The relief from the UAE was timely and had helped large number of the people of the affected areas to find enough relief.

He said that the UAE relief team and Pakistani Army had carried out joint relief operations in Mirpur Khas District which had been badly hit by the calamity and they had pitched 500 tents in the UAE relief camp adjacent to the military camp that had been housing 100 tents.

The UAE ambassador in Pakistan Eissa Abdullah Al-Basha Al-Nuaimi is also taking keen interest in the efforts for provision of relief to the flood-hit areas in Sindh. He has recently taken up his responsibility as ambassador in Pakistan and he had detailed discussions with the senior officials concern here soon after his arrival in Islamabad for assuming his assignment. The government appreciated the gesture shown by the envoy, sources said.

October 8, 2011 (The News)

WHO needs more funds to respond effectively to flood emergency

The World Health Organisation (WHO) will be scaling its humanitarian response in all the flood-affected areas of Sindh to resolve health issues faced by the displaced people, but it required more funds urgently to save precious human lives.

“WHO is already working side by side with the provincial and district health authorities and other partners to comprehensively address health problems,” said Dr Guido Sabatinelli, WHO Representative in Pakistan, while speaking to the secretary health and other senior health department officials during his visit to Sindh.

WHO officials say besides Norway which supports selected districts in Sindh, the USA, the UK and Spain are the only donor countries which have pledged funds in support of WHO to assist millions of flood-affected Pakistanis.

These donations account to only nine percent of the funding needs of the health sector to properly respond to the emergency, they revealed.

A special mission comprising senior technical experts of the WHO Country Office and the provincial sub-office visited the WHO Humanitarian Hubs in Hyderabad and Sukkur to see and hear first-hand about the health impact of the flood emergency and the organisation's operations throughout Sindh.

According to WHO officials, they visited hospitals, health centres, nutrition stabilisation centres, immunisation sites and displaced persons in Hyderabad, Sukkur, and Larkana including Naudero, Garhi Khuda Bakhsh, and Community Midwives workstation in Village Katchi Unar.

WHO has been collaborating with the health authorities and implementing partners, to reduce the burden of preventable deaths and illness through life-saving interventions among flood-affected populations since the 2010 mega flood.

But the current floods in South Pakistan and the poor donor response has stretched the capacity of the health authorities and the organization to address the factors contributing to the main mortality risks such as acute diarrhea, pneumonia, malaria, measles, malnutrition, and maternal and neo-natal mortality, WHO officials added.

WHO's Emergency and Humanitarian Assistance (EHA) team has been focusing on the provision of essential primary health care and health services to the affected population.

In this regard, they are working on mitigation of communicable disease outbreaks through intensive surveillance and early response to disease threats; environmental health interventions including water quality analysis and treatment with priority given to schools and health institutions; health education informing the general public; ensuring the provision of emergency essential reproductive health services; and the treatment of acute malnutrition and nutritional surveillance.

The mission that visited the flood affected areas of Sindh concluded that the conditions in which the flood-displaced persons are living in camps and temporary settlements is highly critical, with limited access to safe water and no functional sanitation facilities.

“Overcrowding, inadequate hygiene and poor nutrition increase the vulnerability of the affected population, and the situation continues to deteriorate with every passing day so that the risk of an overwhelming outbreak of waterborne disease is dangerously increased” WHO Communicable Disease Epidemiologist, Dr Rana Kakar said.

She maintained that surveillance teams have already identified 57 outbreaks of diarrhoea, but they were at an early stage where they could be controlled by prompt action.

During the investigations, more than 96 percent of the 294 water sources tested by WHO environmental health team were found contaminated.

In response, WHO provided hygiene kits, Jerry cans, water filters, water disinfection tablets and hygiene information.

In view of the threat of diarrhoea and cholera, WHO has strengthened some hospitals to provide diarrhoea care by provision of inpatient beds and medical supplies.

As many health facilities are still under water in Badin, Mirpurkhas and Sanghar, mobile teams are providing very basic health services.

In other districts, health facilities serving the flood-affected people were also found to be highly unhygienic, due to lack of water and sanitation services.

While 805,264 patient consultations have been reported, serious gaps exist in nutrition, and maternal, newborn and child health coverage, and immunisation, not only in officially registered camps for displaced population but also for the rest of the population.

Only 32 percent of health facilities in these districts have adequate stocks of medicines, vaccines, equipment and other consumables to last more than one week.

WHO has provided essential medicines to Sindh flood-affected population directly or through its implementing partners to cover approximately 450,000 people but the needs are obviously greater.

In collaboration with the health partners, WHO interventions are scaling up efforts of local health facilities to provide emergency essential

reproductive health services including antenatal and postnatal care and developing referral mechanisms for them through social mobilisation, training of female paramedics and provision of the necessary supplies and logistics.

The nutritional needs of infants and very young children are being addressed through stabilisation centres with provision of equipment and medicines and proper monitoring, particularly for the severely malnourished children.

In view of the emergency situation, WHO senior technical experts held a marathon meeting with the Sindh Health Secretary Rizwan Ahmed and the top leadership of the Sindh Health Department including Special Secretary Health Dr Sikander Panhwar, Additional Secretary Development Dr Khalid Sheikh, Director General Dr Hafeez Memon to delineate the government - WHO biennial programme for 2012 and 2013.

The WHO's Country Cooperation Strategy for the next six years was also introduced including steps to be taken in the post-devolution scenario of the Health Sector.

October 10, 2011 (The News)

133,438 Pakistan Cards issued to flood victims so far

As many as 133,438 Pakistan Cards (Watan Cards) have been issued to heads of rain affected families in three calamity-hit districts, including Badin, Tando Mohammad Khan and Shaheed Benazirabad (Nawabshah) so far.

Information gathered from the media cells established by Sindh Information Department at regional and district information offices revealed that total 37 Nadra centres have been established in these three districts and a number of these centres were being gradually increased to facilitate the affected victims.

Presently 15 Nadra Centres were working in district Badin district, where till October 7, 96,829 Pakistan Cards have been issued to family heads of rain affected victims and this process was at full swing. Similarly 16 Nadra Centres have been put in the place at district Shaheed Benazirabad, where

till October 7 total 16,474 Pakistan Cards have been issued, while 20,135 Pakistan Cards have been issued in District Tando Mohammad Khan Barkat Ahmed Rizvi, where six Nadra centres were actively working.

The DCO Tando Mohammad Khan said that three more Nadra centres would start functioning in the district from October 10 and the work of issuance of Pakistan Cards would be further expedited.

October 10, 2011 (The News)

36 model villages to be handed over to rain victims

36 of 89 model villages will soon be handed over to families affected by the 2010 floods in Punjab. "These model villages are being built with funds allocated by the Chief Minister's Relief Fund for Tameer-e-Pakistan. About Rs1.55 billion were donated by people through relief funds," according to official sources.

The government had provided official land for 17 model villages while for the rest of 19 villages, land was acquired from various sources. Sources maintained that model villages had all amenities of life, including water supply, sewerage, dispensaries, schools and technical institutions.

They said an amount of Rs12 billion had already been disbursed among 252 flood affected families through the Watan cards scheme. Every family received Rs20,000 under the scheme. They said the government was giving high priority to development of infrastructure in flood-affected areas and for the purpose, it was spending Rs1.2 billion on restoration of roads while for restoration of irrigation system in flood-hit areas, Rs2.75 billion was being utilised.

October 11, 2011 (The News)

Zardari monitors flood relief activities

President Asif Ali Zardari interacted with the elected representatives as well as government officials concerned of the flood-affected areas of Sindh and monitored the flood relief activities through satellite video conferencing from the special Flood Control Cell of Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Spokesperson to the president, Farhatullah Babar said that on the directions of the president, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah and relevant provincial ministers, including those of MQM, were encamped in Mirpurkhas to discuss issues about Mirpurkhas division comprising of Mirpurkhas, Tharparkar, Sanghar and Umerkot via video conferencing.

The spokesperson said that during the video conference, the president directed the chief minister of Sindh, public representatives of the flood affected areas and all officials concerned to expedite relief work and step up efforts so that all those left without shelter in the affected areas get shelters before the fast approaching winter season.

The spokesperson said that during the briefing on Mirpurkhas district, the president was informed that over 31,000 tents, over 300,000 family packs, 23,000 blankets, nearly 800 water purification units, three de-watering pumps and over 16,000 mosquito nets had been distributed in Mirpurkhas alone along with other supplies including drinking water, medicines and food items for over 700,000 flood victims in the district.

In Sanghar, over 35,000 tents, 241,000 family packs, six de-watering pumps, 4000 mosquito's nets and other food items and commodities have been provided for over one million flood and rain affected people.

The spokesperson said that on a point raised by the Speaker of National Assembly about the stagnant water in Badin, the president directed that a special team of experts of Wapda should visit Badin immediately and propose a drainage plan on a permanent basis.

October 11, 2011 (The News)

PIMA sends drugs to flood-ravaged areas

The Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) dispatched the third consignment of medicines worth Rs1 million to the flood-affected areas of Sindh to be distributed among patients through doctors of the association working in the affected areas. The association has already sent medicines worth Rs2 million for the people displaced by heavy rains.

PIMA Karachi President Ahmed Salman Ghauri told journalists that his organisation had sent some 35 doctors, including general physicians,

pediatricians, gynecologists and gastroenterologists, who were providing healthcare facilities to people in Mirpurkhas, Badin, Sanghar, Umerkot, Tando Muhammad Khan and other areas.

October 12, 2011(Dawn)

UN to launch life-saving plan in flood-hit areas

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) announced that it would activate life-saving activities in the flood-affected areas of Sindh, particularly for the pregnant women there.

About 1.4 million women of child-bearing age in the most severely affected districts of Badin, Tando Mohammad Khan, Tando Allahyar, Nawabshah, Mirpurkhas, Khairpur, Sanghar and Umerkot require access to reproductive health services, the UN agency says in a press release. Of them, over 160,000 women require emergency services.

United Nations Population Fund Representative in Pakistan Rabbi Royan says the funding gap will have to be filled to ensure safe delivery of thousands of women in the next six months. As part of the consolidated UN appeal, the international community has been requested to provide \$3.8 million to address the most urgent reproductive health needs, including emergency obstetric services.

Estimates show that 440 women go into labour every day, 60 of whom may have potentially life-threatening pregnancy-related complications.

Access to the mobile health facilities has been one of the major challenges. In its initial phase, the UNFPA has mobilised 50 mobile service units in the eight worst affected districts while working with the government and NGO partners. These fully equipped mobile vehicles are offering basic emergency obstetric care services, including basic primary health care to women and adolescent girls.

October 12, 2011 (The News)

UK's Muslim Aid to give aid for flood victims' rehabilitation

Muslim Aid, a UK-based international relief and development organisation, has started assessing damage to crops and businesses in the flood-affected areas of Sindh to provide financial aid to the victims so that they could be able to earn their livelihood once again.

“Currently, Muslim Aid is working on the provision of basic necessities of life, including clean drinking water and healthcare facilities, to protect precious human lives in the inundated districts of Sindh,” Muslim Aid’s Country Director for Pakistan, Khubaib A Wahidi, told journalists after visiting Sanghar and other areas of the province.

Muslim Aid was among the first international NGOs that reached the flood-ravaged districts and started healthcare facilities, including a 20-bed field hospital and four mobile units in Sanghar, besides the installation of five filter plants to provide clean drinking water to the locals.

“Now we are going to construct 4,000 toilets for the flood victims that would be a step towards the prevention of diseases in the flood-ravaged areas where the people are displaced and are forced to live in makeshift camps with no facilities,” Wahidi said.

For the provision of clean drinking water, Muslim Aid has invited a team of Canadian experts, led by Matt Capobianco, which is helping the local authorities in the installation of water filtration plants.

In addition to that, the relief organisation is providing hygiene kits to 25,000 displaced people while 750 tents have also been given to people who have lost their homes due to heavy rains.

“Muslim Aid will remain in the flood areas at least for the next six months, carrying out emergency relief activities in the first phase while in the last three months, it would focus on recovery and rehabilitation of the victims,” Wahidi said.

October 13, 2011 (Dawn)

UNICEF appeals for \$50.3m to cover

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has appealed to the international community for \$50.3 million to cover the immediate needs of children and women hit by the recent flood in the country.

A UNICEF official told that additional relief supplies for health, nutrition and water are urgently needed, which cannot be purchased without additional funds. He said UNICEF is facing lack of funds as it has scaled up humanitarian assistance to meet the basic needs of thousands of displaced children and women in flood-hit areas.

He said the monsoon floods have struck the Sindh province for the second consecutive year. UNICEF and its partners are now reaching hundreds of thousands of families with life-saving assistance.

UNICEF has only received limited funds while its water trucking programme alone costs \$600,000 per month, he said. To a question, he said UNICEF and its partners have now established 23 new centres for the mal-nourished children in the affected districts.

October 13, 2011 (The News)

UAE envoy visits Sindh flood-hit areas

The Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Pakistan Eissa Abdullah Al Basha Al Noaimi while demonstrating his strong commitment towards the greater human cause of helping the needy, poor and struggling people of Sindh, currently confronting devastating flood, reached the flood-hit areas just after one week of assuming his diplomatic assignment in Pakistan. Brigadier Khan Ghais-ud-din, Commander 56 Brigade district Sanghar, received him.

He visited and joined a team of prominent five UAE's charitable foundations and organizations already carrying out distribution of relief goods in Sanghar district as a part of its ongoing humanitarian assistance in the different swamped districts of Sindh.

According to the Government of Pakistan (GOP) more than 10 million people in Sindh have been badly affected from the flood. It created a large-scale human crisis. Even livestock was badly suffered.

The UAE Relief team briefed Ambassador Al Noaimi on their diversified but integrated relief operations in different districts of the province and appreciated the extended spells of coordination of the local authorities, government machinery and the Armed Forces of Pakistan, providing suitable/dry places for relief camps and facilitating distribution of foodstuffs among the most affected victims of flood.

He said that UAE relief team activities including distribution of foodstuff have succeeded to lessen some basic problems of the downtrodden people. He said his visit to Sanghar district was a follow up of the relief work by the UAE team that rigorously engaged with diversified humanitarian assistance activities in the flood-hit areas and arrange necessary medication too through the supply of medicines. Moreover, water purification plants were also donated for safe and clean drinking water supplies in these areas.

October 15, 2011 (The News)

Work to drain out rainwater from Mirpurkhas begins

The district administration sprung into action to drain out the stagnant rain water after President Asif Ali Zardari showed displeasure over not taking result-oriented efforts for the same even after one month.

Sources said a few days back President Zardari was told by the district administration during a video conference that post-rain situation was totally under control and all was OK. The video conference was also attended by Chief Minister Sindh Syed Qaim Ali Shah besides some cabinet members and local member of the parliament.

But interestingly none of them said anything against the district administration's point of view that there was no problem and work on dewatering was going smoothly and most of the area had been cleared.

Sources privy to the video conference with the President revealed that despite "all is well" slogan of the administration and the politicians, the

President did not appear to be satisfied and gave a stern message that the city must be cleared and the efforts must be seen on the ground.

Chapter-2

Articles

Pakistan is Again Hit by Devastating Floods

Wajid Shumsul Hasan

Just when it was on road to recovery Pakistan has again been hit by a natural calamity causing devastation of enormous magnitude. Sindh province has had the worst of rain and flooding havoc. Approximately five million lives have been uprooted besides causing huge devastation to livestock and standing crops. Hundreds of people have lost their lives; over four million acres of land is under water; 2.5 million acres of crops have been destroyed; and over a million houses have been damaged or washed away. The situation is worsening with forecast of more widespread rains in the area. Initial estimates paint a grim picture with economic losses caused by these rains could run into billions of dollars.

In the wake of the severity and scale of this natural disaster, urgent humanitarian assistance is required to save lives and continue rescue operations. The most pressing requirements at the moment are for tents, aqua tablets, water purification equipment, food supplies, de-watering pumps and medicines.

President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari has appealed to the international community for humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance. The president is also requesting the UN Secretary General to mobilize the international community for urgently needed relief assistance to save precious lives. A team of UN agencies is visiting the affected areas for a needs assessment.

The president has also appealed to the people of Pakistan, including the expatriate community, to make generous contributions and assist in the rescue, relief and rehabilitation efforts for millions of their compatriots affected by this natural calamity.

It needs to be reiterated that last year's devastating floods, which marooned one fifth of Pakistan, had caused unprecedented destruction which the UN described as worst than Asian tsunami. Apart from 1,400 deaths the overall losses were estimated by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank at \$10 billion.

The government of Pakistan was still grappling with last year's devastation; the fresh floods were the last thing one would have expected in the beloved motherland which is already facing enormous problems including extremist threat, regional instability and acute energy crisis.

Although despite better economic performance, with 40% rise in exports (\$27 billion); robust foreign exchange reserves (\$18 billion); highest level of remittances by Pakistani Diaspora (\$12 billion) and a bullish trend in stock market (12000 points), the country needs international community's support, especially in providing immediate relief to the affected people, including life-saving medicines, shelter and drinking water.

The Pakistani community in UK has always been at the forefront whenever Pakistan faced any calamity. Last year the community made generous contribution in the Prime Minister's Flood Relief Fund. The community also directly reached out to the flood victims and built thousands of houses in all the four provinces of Pakistan.

The British government's generous assistance of £134 million and Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC)'s donation of £71 million, distributed through its affiliate NGO's, provided much needed relief to the devastated people. The rehabilitation work is still continuing.

However, fresh floods have again put an added strain on the government and the people of Pakistan to provide relief to their vulnerable compatriots. I am confident that the international community would once again come forward to play their role in sharing the burden of the government of Pakistan.

The government and people of Pakistan are aware of the donor fatigue due to various emergencies world over and would continue to rely on its own resources and share the major burden of the relief and rehabilitation work. But certain emergencies are beyond any government's control such as provision of tents, aqua tablets, water purification equipment, food supplies, de-watering pumps and medicines. Since time is of essence, urgent relief would be needed for the flood victims. Pakistan High Commission and its Consulates General in Manchester, Birmingham, Bradford and Glasgow would be on standby to guide the Pakistani community to channel their relief efforts through the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

Trail of Tragedy -3

Chronology of Disaster in Sindh 2011 (25th August -15th October)

I would also appeal to the community to channel their relief work through the NDMA as being the apex body it is in a much better position to coordinate relief work and provide relief to the areas, which need help on most urgent basis. The writer is Pakistan's High Commissioner in London.

September 12, 2011 - The News

Effects of Climate Change

Naseer Memon

Given recent experience, one could say that Asia is under the jinx of climate change and natural disasters. Extreme weather events with debilitating intensity and frequency have brought unprecedented misery for millions in the region.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) held its fifth Asia Regional Conservation Forum in Incheon, South Korea recently. It was attended by more than 500 delegates from different countries. Being there, I had the chance to interact with participants from neighbouring countries. The poignant tales of rain, floods, disasters and the plight of affectees were almost similar from all the countries represented. Recent disasters experienced in Pakistan are no exception to what is happening in the region. Rising unpredictability and intensity of extreme weather events have confounded decision-makers and researchers everywhere.

The manner in which extreme weather events have affected people in parts of Asia can be gauged from a few recent examples.

In August, Bangladesh received 750mm of rain which affected nearly 200,000 people in Rajshahi. In the southeast, more than 50 people were killed due to landslides and floods while Siraiganj lost crops over 3,000 hectares and more than 20,000 people were left homeless in Cox's Bazar and Teknaf district.

In India, more than 3,000 villages of Orissa state were inundated, affecting more than two million people of which 130,000 had to be evacuated. In Bihar, rivers burst their banks after receiving the highest flow since 1975. In New Delhi, a cloud burst broke a 50-year record of rainfall within a single hour.

Similarly, Seoul in South Korea received more than 300mm rainfall in one day, the largest single-day rainfall during July recorded since 1907.

In January, Sri Lanka witnessed rains that affected nearly a million people. Climate change is predicted to render major tea-growing areas of Sri Lanka unsuitable for the crop by 2050.

In Thailand, thousands of homes were damaged and hundreds of thousands of acres of crop land was inundated due to heavy showers. In June, rains pounded six provinces of China forcing the evacuation of 0.35 million people and damaging some 33,000 houses. Water level in the Qiantang River rose to the highest level in more than 50 years.

One thing is common in all cases: past data has become almost redundant in predicting the weather pattern and planning against its impacts.

Given that Pakistan is located in this zone too, it is also bearing the brunt of the climate change phenomenon. Last year, the country witnessed an unusual shift of the monsoon from the easterly to the westerly region. This year, the lower half of Sindh received record-breaking rains. Rainfall in lower Sindh averages between 200 to 250mm, which normally occurs from July to August.

This year it came in September and the districts of Mirpurkhas, Badin and Shaheed Benazirabad received 810, 680 and 640mm of rain respectively – way beyond the normal averages. Badin received 297mm of rain just in two days, on Aug 11 and 12, which buffeted hundreds of villages along main artery of the Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD). The overall damages surpassed last year's figures. Due to Sindh's flat topography, the province has only 200mm fall for little more than a kilometre, as a result of which gravitational drainage to the Arabian Sea is retarded even under normal circumstances.

Incessant rain turned into a nightmare due to the pooling of water, while faulty infrastructure also compounded the gravity of the disasters.

The aforementioned countries' experiences suggest that ill-planned infrastructure, particularly in the irrigation and highways sectors, and the unregulated sprawl of human settlements, have multiplied the lethal impact of disasters. Pakistan experienced this in the earthquake of 2005 and the floods of 2010 and 2011.

The rapid assessment of the disaster caused by Cyclone Yemyin in 2007 in Balochistan and Sindh identified the Mirani dam barrier, inadequate cross drainage works and unbridled settlements obstructing natural waterways as major causes of havoc caused by reverse flow. In 2010, encroachments in river plains were identified as a major contributing factor that

exacerbated the effects of the floods. This year, the LBOD again dictated the lessons of the cyclone of 1999 and the rain floods of 2003: on all three occasions, the LBOD was identified as a major barrier in the flow of rainwater to the Rann of Katch.

The climate change rollercoaster suggests that the entire infrastructure and administrative web may need to be supplanted in the wake of the new manifestations. Prominent climate change campaigner Al Gore, said: "The rules of risk assessment are being rewritten right before our eyes. This year alone, in the United States we have had \$10bn-plus disasters." What Al Gore said with reference to the US is true for much of the world now.

Pakistan's irrigation and drainage networks are also victim to the inadequacy to manage abnormal flows. The LBOD drain, for example, has a design discharge of 4,000 cusecs but this year it had to bear 18,000 cusecs. This caused a number of breaches in the drain and reverse flows in the hundreds of kilometres-long connecting network of drains. Similarly, the administrative web was vitiated by the intensity of the disaster which required several million souls to be evacuated within days and settled in camps.

The provincial and district level disaster management authorities are neither sufficiently equipped to nor skilled in managing such a scale of operations. Pakistan has recently moved up from 29th in 2009-10 to number 16 on the Climate Change Vulnerability Index. The frequency of intense weather events warrants dexterous overhauling of the infrastructural and administrative set-up. The coming years may prove even more excruciating for communities in Pakistan and elsewhere in Asia.

October 23, 2011 - Dawn

The Emergency the World Forgot

Just because it's not being broadcast doesn't mean all is well in Pakistan's flood-hit areas.

Sherry Rehman

Disaster fatigue is not a common sentiment in Pakistan. Since the 2005 earthquake Pakistan has seen many natural calamities and large-scale mobilization campaigns across the country to manage the fallout from those disasters. At every point, the state's humanitarian response has been substantially augmented by nongovernmental organizations motivated by the severity of the crisis and the magnitude of need.

But after this year's floods—despite some level of response from local NGOs, young Pakistani activists, relief workers, and the U.N.—aid inflows remain dangerously inadequate and relief workers warn of an impending catastrophe due to unmet pledges and a potential looming breach in the relief-and-food supply line to victims in the difficult months ahead.

Why has the world not responded? First, the international media has almost totally ignored this catastrophe. The local media has also taken its time getting there: despite the initial reporting on the floods, sustained media interest, with a few exceptions, has been a major challenge. Yet the need for media coverage is equally great, if not greater, than it was during last year's floods, the country's worst ever. International aid agencies, in fact, rate the trauma this time as greater than last year's because almost two million people in Sindh have been forced to flee their homes for a second time in as many years.

One of the reasons the media is looking away is that this year's floods are different both in nature and impact. Unlike the great floods last year that engulfed the whole country from north to south in a direct river outburst, the 2011 floods are the creature of unprecedented monsoon rains gaining critical mass over a short period of time. The floods have deluged over 6.1 million acres of land, killing 466 in its ferocity, but their fallout has been localized primarily to Sindh and pockets of Balochistan, catching only a short window of the local media's attention. With the political temperatures rising in the country, the media's concentration span has

almost completely narrowed to episodic reporting, ignoring the misery that has arisen from the destruction of 1.48 million homes and the onset of a watery winter.

Second, the gravity of the crisis has met with disproportionately low public interest because of the physical barriers imposed by the flood path. This has automatically pushed the disaster into a broadcasting ghetto. Given the acute and localized nature of flooding, the rescue phase has also consumed double the time and resources. Land access to victims has been the first obstacle; entire roads and villages still lie swamped and remote to assistance.

The facts are sobering, and with the onset of a harsh, wet winter, even chilling. With some nine million people affected, the overstretched National Disaster Management Authority has been unable to cope, and the government's resources and capacity are way below the numbers needed to provide relief, food, and basic medical care to 850,000 in makeshift shelters. Over a quarter million people still remain in the 758 camps dotting this dystopian landscape. The government, as well as humanitarian organizations have been unable to shift more than 65 percent of the displaced back to dry homes from camps simply because the water has no regular river channel to carry it swiftly out to sea. Without a charted, flow path to the sea, the monsoon waters lie trapped and fetid, destroying livestock, land, and sewerage, spreading disease and misery. Unlike last year's floods which left behind alluvial riverine deposits, this time the toxic standing water may not only salinate crop soil, it may well destroy grazing land for livestock survival impacting existing food insecurity for vulnerable communities in Sindh and Balochistan.

If human suffering in such disasters can be calibrated on a scale, the most vulnerable are the women and children in the camps as well as those scraping for a living on sandbanks and roadsides. Of the five million at risk today, 143,750 are pregnant women. Many of them require special care, which the mobile health units are unable to provide. District hospitals are only able to cope with some percentage of trauma patients, while clogged emergency rooms are often unable to meet women's needs. Others remain hostage to privacy obstacles, unable to navigate the survival chain when confronted with predatory competition for scarce resources, open to abuse and neglect. Non-Muslims have suffered even worse

discrimination in certain areas, where relief has been denied on the basis of religious identity and illegal rites of exclusion.

The extent of the damage remains unmapped for most of Pakistan, and the world, except in aid offices and the government's control rooms. Last year, for instance, Badin district was a hub for relief activities and displaced persons. This year, it has collapsed completely, with 500 villages consumed by the overflowing and controversial Left Bank Outfall Drain to the Indus River. Districts which had never seen more than 200 millimeters of rain have been swamped by five times as much rainfall this time.

Sindh's Provincial Disaster Management Agency, U.N. aid agencies, local NGOs and the Pakistan Red Crescent Society and its international partners are out in the field, pumping water out, securing people to shelter, and disbursing relief and survival packs, but resource shortfalls hobble critical interventions needed immediately to avert further disasters. The U.N. secretary-general's flash appeal is still barely 20 percent funded while the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies see other givers remaining "ominously silent" at a time when over five million lives in Sindh and Balochistan are at risk.

Other than mismanagement and governance deficits at the local level, which are legion in such disasters, compassion fatigue at the international level is compounded by new resource deficits and the diversion of finite aid pools to more consistently headlined crisis sites such as Somalia and Libya. The global financial downturn has also shifted the donor radar inwards, downscaling international assistance, while the recent uptick in branding Pakistan as a terrorist flashpoint has sapped some pockets of sympathy in key Western capitals. However, the situation on the ground is far different, as is the humanitarian response. International aid workers facing the elements in Sindh are unanimous in their anguish at the aid trickle because they neither caricature victims as potential jihadists nor see them as anything but helpless farmers and laborers who stand to lose everything this time in the tsunamic monsoon floods.

Yet despite the sympathy on the ground, repeated appeals including by the U.N. and its World Food Programme remain unheeded, imperiling millions who rely for subsistence on relief operations. At a stage when assistance should be focused on rehabilitating people, there is a consensus

now that without real-time inflows we may barely be able to make it. The food supply line itself stands at a red mark, flashing close to empty when the food aid shortfall alone is \$107 million in the U.N. system. There is little realization that without further urgent donations, it will be virtually impossible to provide full rations from December.

To compound the crisis, the recent rain predictions for Sindh have triggered fresh alarm on the ground, as thousands still remain marooned on roadsides with little more than plastic sheets for cover. The Pakistan Red Crescent Society has received better support from its international partners than other agencies, and we are bringing relief and supplies in a fresh winter emergency effort, but much more needs to be done just to keep survivors afloat, let alone carry on with parallel activities such as provision of shelter and rehabilitation. Field estimates tell us that the challenge of restoring livelihoods and homes is going to require serious heavy lifting on the ground, as 2.3 million acres of cropland is compromised and the livestock toll has tipped over 100,000.

As we go into the fourth month of disaster response, the good news is that coordination gaps in the governance of this disaster-management cycle have subsided. The worrying news is that a joint detailed assessment among the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and local government suggests that unless emergency appeals are not revised and heeded, hundreds of thousands will remain destitute under a merciless winter sky. In fact if, as donors, volunteers, citizens and humanitarian agents, we do not respond, the 2011 floods will become just another emergency the world forgot.

Rehman is Ambassador to US, ex MNA and Minister.

November 25, 2011- News Week Pakistan

Rains Wrought Havoc on Historical Sites

Bhagwandas

Torrential rains that lashed the province in recent months have severely damaged some historical and archaeological monuments and affected many others, says a Sindh culture department report.

The report based on a post-rains survey of historical and archaeological sites in the province identified Umerkot, Kot Diji and Satyhan Jo Asthan as those severely damaged by the downpours.

Culture department officials Qasim Ali Qasim and Mohammad Tanvir, who had been tasked with the survey and submission of recommendations, in the report stated that Umerkot, Kot Diji and Satyhan Jo Asthan were in need of immediate repairs. If the repairs were not carried out, the sites could destroy during winter showers or next monsoon rains.

The report mentioned Shah Baharo Tomb, Thul Mir Rukan, Tomb of Noor Mohammad Kalhoro, Tajjar Building as the other sites which required repairs to restrict further decay.

Umerkot

Located on the fringes of the Great Thar desert, the entire fortification of the 500-year-old Umerkot has been badly damaged and a portion of the eastern gate has collapsed owing to unprecedented rains, according to the report.

It was Umerkot where Mughal Emperor Akbar was born when his father, Humayun, was on the run after losing battle after battle to Farid Khan, better known as Sher Shah Suri, in the 16th century.

The report stated that various portions of the fortification had collapsed and rainwater had entered the bastion from holes at the top and loosened masonry.

The sides of the walls had eroded at many places, it added.

The saturation and swelling of earth core had caused damage to the inner brickwork lining of the fortification which caused cracks, leakages, bulging and a partial collapse of the wall, it mentioned.

The report said that the rainwater pressure had damaged the surface due to blockage of original rainwater outlets and rainwater runoffs had created furrows in the open area of the fort.

Vaulting of three barracks of the British jail had also partially collapsed, it stated.

Rainwater had also seeped in the masonry of merlons through various cracks that was causing pressure on the walls. If the repairs were not carried out immediately, the walls could collapse, the report added.

Kot Diji

Located in Khairpur district, Kot Diji — a Talpur period monument — has badly suffered owing to rains as the recent ‘restoration and development’ work carried out by the district government has blocked the original drains that caused rainwater accumulation at many places, according to the report.

A portion of Jaikhana roof and barracks had also broken off, it said.

The rainwater penetrated the cavities and potholes on the surface between the walls and top of the walls which seeped towards the wall and bastion, it added.

The report also identified masonry joints of a well that had become loose.

Satyhan Jo Asthan

Satyhan Jo Asthan — the family graveyard of Mughal governor Mirza Abul Qasim Namkeen — had suffered greatly due to the rains, the report said.

It added that parts of the parapet on the southern, eastern, and northern sides had bulged out.

Two pillars decorated with Kashi on the western side at the top of the monument were leaning dangerously. A pillar on the northern side of the monument, located on the bank of the Indus River at Rohri, had already collapsed, the report mentioned.

It stated that rainwater had penetrated into the entire structure through the cracks between the parapet and flooring, damaging the floor. Joints of glazed Kashi tiles of the graves had become wide open, while carved

stones slabs of graves had been displaced from their original position, it added.

Shah Baharo Tomb

Located in Larkana district, the surrounding area of the Talpur general's tomb was inundated with sewage, the report said.

The stagnant water was causing dampness, leading to deterioration of the foundations and lower portion of the walls. Some parts of the tomb have been damaged as the rainwater has penetrated through cracks in northern and eastern walls, according to the report.

It said that terracotta tiles on all the nine graves in the tomb were in advanced stage of decay. Several portions of platforms were damaged. The dome and small minarets, including the roof of the tomb, had suffered badly owing to rains, the report added.

Thul Mir Rukan

Located in the Moro area of Nawabshah district, the millennium-old Buddhist stupa had suffered greatly in the rains, the report said.

The top of the historical stupa had been damaged severely and the brickwork on its drum had broken off at many places. The drum ring had corroded in places due to dampness, while a portion of the stupa was missing.

The flooring of the area had deteriorated and the pillars and plinth of the monument, where the department had not even posted a watchman, had been broken, the report said.

Kalhoru tomb

Located in the Daulatpur Saffan of the Moro area, the tomb of ruler Noor Mohammad Kalhoru had suffered severely in the rains and a portion of the southern enclosure wall had collapsed, the report said. The remaining part was leaning dangerously and could collapse any time, it added.

The western, northern and eastern walls of the complex comprising seven tombs and a mosque were in a bad condition. Three small tombs were in a poor state and the vaulting of these chambers had broken off. The outer tombs, open graves and mosque were also in advanced state of deterioration, the report said.

Tajjar building

Situated in the heart of Larkana, the historical building said to be built by Nawab Wali Mohammad Khan Leghari, a prime minister of the Mir rulers, in the early 19th century was in a shambles, the report said.

It added that there was evidence of dampness in the floor and walls of the Tajjar building surrounded by stagnant rainwater.

While inner glazed tile work on the parapet was fast decaying, tiles on its exterior were missing, the report mentioned.

Some cracks had appeared in the ceiling that needed repairs, it said.

October 12, 2011 -Dawn

Strange Ways of the Islamic Republic

Ayaz Amir

Flood waters may have devastated Sindh again, knee-deep water may be standing in Karachi, and Lahore, the capital of good governance, may be, for the second year running, in the grip of the dengue virus but through long experience we know how to take such disasters in our stride. These too will pass. Next to the national capacity for cynicism is our stoical attitude towards calamities, man-made or nature-inflicted.

Perish the thought of learning anything from last year's floods or last year's dengue invasion. Doing that or taking preventive measures simply would be out of character. That's not how things are done with us. The call for collective prayers is the last refuge of the Islamic Republic in distress. Having issued such a call, let no one say President Asif Ali Zardari has not performed his foremost national duty.

The matter is now between the Pakistani nation and the throne of the Lord of the Worlds. Let Him now come to our assistance. We have done what the dire situation demanded. The rest is up to Him and His boundless mercy.

And let no heretic think it will be any different next year, or the year after. We will continue to behave as we do and when things get desperate we will invoke the intervention of the Most High. And our duty will be done.

And let no one crib that the president thought fit just at this time to go for a medical check-up to the UK. If he had stayed here what Napoleonic effort would he have led to combat the flood-waters or the dengue onslaught? As for the prime minister...well, about him the less said the better. Certain things, certain people, are unimpressionable. Hit them with a sledgehammer and they will not get the point. The prime minister, entirely in character, has been away on one of his endless foreign visits. If he had stayed behind, everything would still be the same.

The Punjab CM has been in Sri Lanka seeking help for the dengue outbreak. We helped the Sri Lankans in their civil war. It is but right they should return the favour and give us a somewhat better understanding than we seem to have of the dengue outbreak which, at least for the

moment, has overshadowed everything else in the capital of good governance.

Next we could think of asking Bangladesh for help to get our population control programme going. Time was when we in this part of Pakistan would smirk at the Bengali gift for fertility. Now at least in this field we have left our former brethren far behind, our birth-rate ahead of anything that Bangladesh can boast of. But let's look at the bright side of this conundrum. A higher birth-rate means more warriors for the greater glory of the faith. That can't be bad.

Only problem is what temple of Somnath will our holy warriors strive to conquer? To the achievement of what noble task will their holy endeavours be bent? Kashmir and Afghanistan are littered with the wreckage of our dreams. Those lands, alas, are not to be conquered anymore, for which I would like to commiserate with my dear friends, Gen Hamid Gul and General Aslam Beg. The only place safely to be conquered is Pakistan itself but this has been conquered so many times in the name of Islam that the scope for further conquest, on the same premises, has been well nigh eliminated.

Next we could turn to Nepal, with its experience of Maoist fighters joining the political mainstream, for help in trying to understand how to bring Baloch and other rebels in from the cold and make them part of the Pakistani mainstream.

But first we have to see how the Sri Lankan experiment in Lahore succeeds. If imperfect memory serves, the last time we saw Sri Lankans in Lahore our holy warriors tried desperately to slaughter them, no doubt for the greater glory of the faith. And if they did not succeed, and no Sri Lankan was hurt, it was, sadly, not because of the brave and farsighted Lahore police but the presence of mind of their bus driver who put his foot down hard and did not stop until he had reached Gaddafi Stadium (yes, we still haven't changed its name and probably shouldn't....Gaddafi, whatever his later sins, helped us in times past. For Auld Lang Syne then let us keep the name unchanged).

Let's hope our holy warriors can spot the distinction between cricketers and dengue-eradication experts. Although why they should have thought of visiting cricketers as a kosher target would forever remain a theological

mystery. Their eminences Ayman Al-Zawahiri and Hakeemullah Mehsud should one day explain. Although if the best of our holy warriors can think nothing of attacking van-loads of school kids why they should balk at a foreign cricket team is a point to consider.

But could some enlightened soul shed light on another mystery, of a judicial nature? Why are their Lordships in Karachi? That they have been disturbed by the lawlessness gripping the city, and by the hundreds of deaths in the last few months, is easy enough to understand. Their Lordships have taken suo moto notice of lesser happenings. Karachi affects the entire country, so taking stock of the situation there makes eminent sense.

But it would help, and even advance the sum of national understanding, if the nation was given some idea of what their Lordships were hoping to achieve. Their daily pronouncements in open court, their obiter dicta, the nation reads of with great interest and even excitement. But we have to pause for a moment. Are the armed militias operating in Karachi open or amenable to wordy admonitions? Their Lordships have said that the government should give in writing that it will not support any armed group. Really? Is this all? A written undertaking from the government? If only the Karachi situation was responsive to written undertakings. For beggars it would be their day of deliverance. They would be riding horses.

On stage no calamity is worse than a sense of anti-climax, of the thunder of the opening chorus ending, when the play is up, in a whimper. Beware a sense of anti-climax. Their Lordships, who could give amateur dramatists a lesson in the finer points of their calling, surely understand.

My advice, for what it's worth, would be slightly different. Of all the operations of war, retreat is the most difficult...not a headlong retreat, which is easily accomplished, but an ordered retreat. Generals conducting orderly withdrawals have earned some of the highest praise in military history. Going into Karachi was easy. The time may now have come for an orderly withdrawal.

But to return to other issues...the waters standing knee-deep in Karachi will have to recede on their own. There is nothing that we, or rather the municipal fathers, can do anything about this. In our calendar September is the cruellest month. That's when mosquitoes breed the most. To the

Trail of Tragedy -3

Chronology of Disaster in Sindh 2011 (25th August -15th October)

lunar and weather gods let us pray that September passes swiftly. October should bring some relief from the dengue invasion. Meantime the medical services, under-performing as always, will have to cope as best as they can. And of course there is always the recourse to collective prayer.

Meanwhile I breathlessly await the next foreign trips of the president and prime minister. Keep at it, my masters, for when all else is forgotten by these small tokens of your national solicitude will ye be remembered.

September 16, 2011 -The News

Pakistan Must Turn to Aquaculture

Taj M Khattak

The devastating floods which ravaged Pakistan's agricultural regions for a second year pointed to the need for alternate sources of food supply. It is time Pakistan paid serious attention to aquaculture and joined the "Blue Revolution" for the alleviation of its worsening food crisis.

Pakistan was once a land of six rivers, but was left with three after the Indus Water Treaty conceded three eastern rivers (Ravi, Sutlej and Beas) to India in 1960, which adversely affected the agricultural potential of the country. After India's completion of Bagliar Dam and Kishanganga hydroelectric power project upstream of Rivers Jhelum and Chenab, water scarcity in lower-riparian Pakistan will almost certainly be aggravated.

If Afghanistan also decides to build major hydroelectric power structures or water reservoirs on its water resource feeding the River Indus, the existence of Pakistan's centuries-old sustainable agricultural regime could be seriously threatened.

"Farming the oceans," as aquaculture is appropriately referred to, is the fastest-growing food sector in the world amid the shortages produced by increasing population and declining availability of wild fish stocks. All human food production activity has impact on the environment and nature, but aquaculture has one of the least negative.

Pakistan has tremendous potential for sustainable aquaculture as it has some of the most suitable water resource sites downstream of Kotri in the Indus River Delta. Situated south-east of Karachi many of these sites in mangrove creeks and estuaries are at par with those anywhere else in the world for this activity. Other potential sites are at Sonmiani, Khor Kalamat, Pasni, Gwadar and Jiwani, and they could be considered for more advanced open-ocean farming.

These locations can effectively be explored for micropod operations, which are generally used for nurseries of marine fish and/or culture of shrimp to market size. They would also be ideally suited for gravity or aquapod cages. The cages can be operated completely submerged and

conform to waves and currents in high-energy environments, yet they can be surfaced for cleaning, harvesting and routine maintenance tasks.

Pakistan has a large number of species across its marine-life spectrum which are herbivorous. They rely on low tropic level feeding and thus can favourably impact cost of operations. Seaweeds can extract nutrients from water columns and become an important agent in the Integrated Multi-Tropic Aquaculture model which does not rely on the expensive “Ocean Garden” feeding technology and reduces risks of eutrophication, or excessive richness of nutrients in a body of water. Often produced by runoff from the land, eutrophication causes a dense growth of plants and algae.

The unique habitat on our coast can attract international funding from countries like China and Japan which are in search of good investment opportunities abroad. Pakistan can seek assistance from China in such areas as hatcheries, spawning channels, limnology, hydrology, habitat monitoring, stock assessment, food technology and environmental control. With availability of a variety of successful models, it would be possible to select those with minimum “fish print”– i.e., those which maximise yield while minimising environmental and ecological impacts.

Studies conducted by National Academy of Sciences, Washington, show that China accounted for 50 percent of fish consumed globally in 2009 which was all produced through aquaculture. It also revealed increasing consumer-driven trends for food certification, eco-labelling, traceability, aquaculture methods uses, diets, and disease treatment. Khor Kalamat, along the Makran Coast, to mention one example, is one of the cleanest regions environmentally and Pakistan should take advantage of it as seafood demand intensifies in the EU and the US.

Pakistan’s marine environments may not be suited to high-value aqua products like salmon, which require cold, clear, clean waters or so-called 3C conditions. But they are well suited to other varieties like cobia, which is the rising star in aquaculture industry worldwide because of its exceedingly fast growth rate and an expanding consumer market.

Most experts are unlikely to hazard a guess about what the state of Pakistan’s agriculture might be in mid-21st century, but they are certain that year 2050, will see aquaculture in most regions on the globe, as

logical extension of using oceans to support food requirements of populations ashore as it offers the most efficient conversion of oceanic resources into edible and healthy proteins.

If Pakistan continues to be plagued by recurring weather related calamities and water scarcity concerns for too long, then food insecurity can't be too far behind especially with our booming birth rate. In such an environment, and without sounding overly dramatic, it is about time Pakistan coupled its Green Agricultural Revolution with Asia's fastest growing Blue Oceanic Revolution to ensure food security in the future by adapting to rapidly deteriorating water scarcity environments and uncertain climate change.

September 27, 2011 - The News

Flood-hit Dalits Facing Hunger and Prejudice

Jan Khaskhli

Paari Kolhi, a mother of two, was unable to narrate the actual cause of her sudden blindness. She lost her eyesight during her continuous travel from Jhudo town to Tando Bago town in search of a safe place after heavy rains inundated her area.

Sitting outside a tent with both her children — Mandi (son) and Mirwan (daughter) — she recalls: “I felt suffering from high fever and cold during that night in the heavy rain — living in the open without shelter. I cried and my children called people for help. But no one could do anything for me as the land routes were cut off. And then I lost my eyesight mysteriously.”

Her husband is missing since rains wreaked havoc on her village. “I do not know anything about Ramchand. He took us out, asking us to move ahead slowly and then returned to take something from the flooded house. Since then we do not know where he has gone.”

At a walking distance was a long queue inside a government high school building. Hundreds of people were waiting to be issued ‘Pakistan Card’. There were crowds from the entrance waiting for their turn. But for Paari Kolhi going there was a futile attempt.

A majority of 3.8 million peasants (out of a total 8.8 million) affected by rains and flood belong to low-caste Hindu families — Kolhis, Bheels, Meghwars, Bagris, Jogis, Gurglas and other gypsy tribes. They are not being treated equally, they complain. With empty stomachs, they are facing prejudice everywhere. That was why most of them preferred to live on safe mounds. A few of them have got donated tents, food packs, non-food items and kitchen sets while others are waiting for help.

While traveling from Hyderabad to Badin, there were tents, makeshift shelters and water everywhere. Many link roads were still submerged.

Another woman, Satru Kolhi, wife of Kewal Kolhi, who had traveled a long distance from the same town of Jhudo, was sitting with three ailing

children suffering from gastroenteritis. “Somebody came and gave these medicines to me,” said the mother of four. Her husband had gone to beg some cooked food from other affected people for their ailing children.

The Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (Piler) claims to have distributed food items with health kits to 1,200 families, 60 percent of them belonging to Dalit communities.

Over 120 Bheel and Kolhi families, displaced from Badin district, traveled 70-80 kilometres to sand dunes in Tharparkar district, considering the area the only safe place. All the 120 families staying on sand hills for one month are waiting for help from charity organisations.

September 30, 2011 -The News

Chapter-3

Editorials

When Water Hits

WITH several parts of the country already affected by heavy downpours and flooding, a new spell of torrential rain could cause the crisis to aggravate if the Met Department forecast for the coming days proves correct. At this point it is difficult to say whether the consequent damage will be as great as we witnessed last year, when huge floods swept across the country. What is clear is that people are already suffering in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh on account of flash floods and canal breaches. So far, with the exception of Badin in Sindh and adjoining areas, the problem has remained largely limited to the upper parts of the country, especially the north. The latter receives more rain than the arid lands below. But rainwater flows south in Pakistan and there is no telling what destruction it may cause if active measures are not taken to prevent a repeat of last year's floods. People in the south are bracing for the worst. The hardest hit could be regions downstream of Kotri and the delta areas. Just as important as rehabilitating devastated lives in the north is the need to take immediate measures to contain a potential disaster in the south.

The government must learn from its past mistakes and resolve not to repeat the wide-scale apathy it demonstrated last year.

It must realise that the affected people must not be denied official support. It must also develop a strategy for tackling natural disasters, which seems to be non-existent at the moment, and have in place a solid plan. Occasional support is of little use and is no replacement for well-coordinated action on multiple levels. Additionally, the government should focus on implementing environment-friendly policies so that a natural crisis is not compounded by man-made factors. Pakistan is prone to natural disasters and the past few years have seen it face several calamities ranging from earthquakes to cyclones to floods. In all cases the government's performance has been far from sterling, and there are still many victims of past disasters who have not been rehabilitated.

Dawn. August 31, 2011

Stormy Days

The weather has made the headlines around the world in the last month with the depredations of hurricane Irene on the American east coast and numerous reports of extreme meteorology from China, the Philippines and Southeast Asia. We have suffered as well, with the ongoing monsoon season compounding for many millions of us the effects of last year's havoc. There have been flash floods in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa that have completely wiped out some remote communities, and our helicopter pilots have struggled to bring relief to these mountainous areas sometimes flying at the very limits of their operational envelope. Southern Punjab has had severe rains on Wednesday and Thursday, and storms in Rahim Yar Khan have brought down houses and injured 52; 22 of them critically so. But the worst of the damage has again been in Sindh. Flash floods have killed eight, canal banks have been breached and tens of thousands of acres of agricultural land inundated, much of it bearing crops that were close to harvest. Farmers who were just beginning to recover have seen their efforts come to naught.

What is ever clearer as the years pass is that there are dramatic changes in weather patterns the world over, and whether or not one believes the arguments for or against the global warming debate, the reality outside of academic circles is that perhaps billions of people are going to see their lives negatively affected by the weather far into the foreseeable future. Last year's floods in Pakistan were said to be a 'once in a lifetime' event. An event unlikely to happen again for perhaps a century. That has for many been proved wrong, and although this year's floods are not as severe as last, for Sindh and parts of Balochistan, this year is a repeat of last and there is no guarantee that next year will not be the same or worse. For us in a resource-poor and badly administered state the problems are magnified by the consecutive failure to right or repair the damage of the previous year before the current year's monsoon develops.

Our responses to natural disaster tend towards the reactive rather than the proactive, and those in need are often the victims of a cruel political environment of preferment and nepotism. Let 2011 be the last year when the weather has caught us poorly prepared. We know what to expect and

Trail of Tragedy -3

Chronology of Disaster in Sindh 2011 (25th August -15th October)

we have the resources to address weather-related events. What we lack is political will and competent managers. Time for a change in both cases.

September 3,2011 – The News

Open Skies

Rains have created a disastrous situation across almost all of Sindh with the heavy downpour falling around Eidul Fitr leading to at least 66 deaths according to authorities. Previously, the southern parts of Sindh and notably the Badin districts had been badly hit by the monsoon rains. Most of the deaths occurred as a result of poor quality housing collapsing or incidents of electrocution amid the standing body of water in numerous villages. As diseases begin to spread in these areas, the inhabitants may find themselves faced with much worse. Many in the affected areas have already lost vital crops – especially the sugarcane and paddy plantations that are essential to the economy in most parts of Sindh. The upper regions of the province have been the worst affected; people here are wondering how they will survive during the coming year.

We have learnt plenty of lessons on the subject of floods and their aftermath from last year's events. Ideally, we should also have learnt how to put better disaster prevention methods in place. Regrettably, this has not happened. As has been the case before, there was insufficient prior warning of the impending disaster. But we must hope that the authorities will now move in quickly to conduct rescue work in the flood zone. Preparations for this purpose are reportedly being made. We can only hope that the victims will receive the required assistance in a timely fashion and will escape long-term devastation in the wake of this disaster.

September 4, 2011 - The News

Disaster in Sindh

The disaster being inflicted by the monsoon in Sindh is now becoming tragically reminiscent of last year's devastating floods. On Monday, the chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority said that four to five million people in the province had been affected — over a fifth of the number affected in 2010 — and 132 had died. Nearly 700,000 houses had been damaged, he added, and standing crops on 1.7 million acres destroyed. Recent days have been especially deadly, with the majority of those who have died losing their lives within the last two weeks.

What makes this all the more unfortunate is that much of this year's devastation has resulted from a repeat of last year's mistakes and a failure to take preventive measures in light of that experience. Continued encroachments along drains have prevented their desilting, resulting in breaches. The construction and rebuilding of dykes and embankments planned after last year's experience was not completed in time. Various stakeholders are arguing, as they did in 2010, about who is responsible for breaches and which areas water should be diverted to. The NDMA and its provincial counterpart claim to be doing their job and the army has played an important role, but the real need is for disaster management expertise at the local level. District-level disaster management authorities have reportedly not been formed in most districts, and there is no provision for such entities at the union council and taluka level. As was the case last year, this leaves response largely in the hands of local government administrations, which are hardly resourced, equipped or trained to deal with natural disasters or their aftermath.

The cycle of human tragedy that has followed is also heartbreakingly familiar. As rainwater has turned to floods due to overflows and breaches in the irrigation system, tens of thousands of houses have been washed to the ground. Standing water has led to mosquito-bred and gastrointestinal diseases that have already taken lives. Roads, communications, electricity and gas have been cut off. Relief goods, including food and tents, are in short supply. The prices of essential items have skyrocketed. Most damagingly, families have lost the cattle and crops on which their livelihoods depend and which will take months, if not years, to regain. Meanwhile, the danger is that the private funds that became such an

Trail of Tragedy -3

Chronology of Disaster in Sindh 2011 (25th August -15th October)

important part of relief and rehabilitation last year may not be forthcoming until more damage has been done, or at least highlighted. It is past time for Islamabad to concentrate its energies and resources on mitigating the effects of this new monsoon tragedy.

September 7, 2011 - Dawn

The Flood Muddle

The deluge continues and the woes of the people of Sindh are compounded by the day, even though the army struggles to save lives and bring relief; over 2000 marooned people and 1500 families have been rescued and brought to relief camps in the last 24 hours. On Saturday Prime Minister Gilani went on national TV making an appeal for humanitarian assistance and asking the various political parties to put aside their differences and work together for the good of all. President Zardari had already appealed to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for assistance the day before he jetted off to the UK. If ever there was a man with a gift for being in the wrong place at the wrong time it is our president. The PM appealed to the expatriate community as well as international donors, but given that there has already been considerable publicity about the way the government has bungled this years flood disaster and the hopelessly ill-organised distribution of relief, it is questionable as to whether the international community is going to leap to our aid yet again.

Enter stage left bearing bad news Nawaz Sharif. The PML-N chief was speaking from Nawabshah which he said he was visiting at the behest of the president. He remarked that this was not a good time to be on foreign tours and that the president might spend his time more fruitfully by leading flood relief initiatives from the front, rather than at arms length in the comfort of a five-star hotel in London. He later visited relief camps but failed to distribute aid items on behalf of the PML-N because of cock-ups in his own organisation. Once again the political nabobs have failed to deliver the goods, either by displaying anything approaching political unity to tackle what is once again a national catastrophe, or by having a grasp of the coordination skills that would allow us to weather this storm a little better than we have. In one thing at least Nawaz Sharif was correct – we do have the resources to adequately address the problem. We just lack the common sense at political level to deploy them appropriately.

September 12, 2011 - Dawn

No let-Up

The 2011 monsoon is proving as disastrous, if not more so, than the Great Flood of 2010 – particularly for Sindh which has seen over 200 deaths and counting. Karachi saw 16 deaths in rain-related incidents over the weekend, some of them anecdotally linked to unlucky citizens having contact with live electricity pylons. The principal thoroughfares of the city remained flooded in many places on Monday, and by Tuesday morning the overnight deluge had reduced the city to a set of shallow waterways. Normal life had come to a standstill. Raw sewage is present in many of the flooded areas and the chances of contracting waterborne infection considerably raised. Flooded graveyards present a risk also, and they need to be drained as a matter of the greatest urgency. Although the rain which produced this chaos was heavy, it should not have disabled the city as it has. It has simply overwhelmed the poorly maintained infrastructure and the rains are forecast to last into Thursday.

In the hinterlands of Sindh the situation has worsened considerably. Badin is likely to be 90 percent inundated in the next two days, with a massive loss of crops, livestock and housing. Local people have blamed the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA) for failing to maintain the Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) and said that SIDA had done no work to this essential protection since it took over responsibility for it. The SIDA defends itself citing work done in 1993 – 18 years ago – and that the current problem requires another study of the LBOD and a complete redesign. Expect no early result. Further gloom comes courtesy of Unicef which points out that children are being doubly hit, suffering the second set of flood-related trauma in less than 12 months with many of them not yet recovered from the events of 2010. Around 2.5 million children are currently affected, and even if we get through next year's monsoon relatively unscathed, an entire generation of children in southern Sindh has had its lives blighted perhaps for decades. Girls' attendance at school was noted to have declined dramatically in the last year, and many schools are not open anyway as they are being used as emergency accommodation for flood victims – a kind of circular misery to add to the cycle of deprivation that characterises the lives of so many in the region.

Calls for political unity have fallen mostly on deaf ears, and are little more than window dressing at a time when what is needed is a collective rolling up of political sleeves and a (temporary) burying of the hatchet. The comment by Nawaz Sharif of the PML-N that we have sufficient resources not to need international help may be true, but we are fast approaching the point at which we are going to be unable to save our people without it. The US and the UN are both saying they will be 'on the ground in days' and the desperate people of Sindh may be relieved to see them. Once again the world comes to our aid, but there is a sense that it would come sooner and with more in its hand if we used the resources we already have to better effect.

September 14, 2011 - The News

Crop Losses in Sindh

The disastrous flooding of a large part of Sindh caused by torrential monsoon rains is estimated to have destroyed between 20 to 25 per cent of the province's standing paddy crop. The damage is projected to cause the country a loss of \$235m in export earnings. Additionally, Pakistan will lose its edge over other rice exporters of an early crop. But rice is not the only crop that has been affected by the floods in the province for the second year running. The output of other major kharif crops — cotton and sugarcane — has also been affected adversely in addition to the production of chillies, tomatoes, onions, musk melons and bananas. The initial estimate of losses released by the Sindh Agriculture Department on Sept 5 showed that the flooding of fields had destroyed a third of the total kharif crop spread over 15.9 million acres of land across the province. The Sindh Chamber of Agriculture has, however, disputed the official numbers, claiming 70 per cent of the crop has been destroyed. Another private estimate has the losses to Sindh's rural economy at a whopping Rs250bn.

Irrespective of the final cost, the damage to major and minor crops in Sindh is going to impact a national economy already reeling from the losses from last year's unprecedented floods. While the reduction in rice and cotton output may result in a significant drop in the country's meagre export earnings and slow down economic growth, the damage to vegetables, fruit orchards and fodder is likely to push up price inflation. In fact, the prices of basic vegetables like onions and tomatoes are already soaring in many parts of the country because of disruption to supply from Sindh. The country's fiscal and current accounts could also come under pressure due to reconstruction costs as well as a possible hike in the bill for food imports. Helping affected farmers who have lost their livelihoods and managing the economy in such a way that the floods do not affect the country's growth prospects will be a real test for the government in the wake of this destruction in Sindh.

September 16, 2011- Dawn

Disaster Management

Several institutions have been held responsible for the level of destruction caused by this summer's rains in Sindh. One of these is the National Disaster Management Authority, an institution whose responsibilities remain the source of much confusion and misinformation. The NDMA's staff of just 22 officers should be focusing on the federal-level tasks it is responsible for, which include issues such as identifying relief and resource needs in various areas; communicating these needs to relevant government departments, the armed forces and international donors and relief agencies; and facilitating and coordinating response. Instead, according to the chairman, over half the officers are in the field in Sindh monitoring the distribution of relief goods themselves. What is lacking, and is beyond either the mandate or the capacity of the NDMA, is a disaster-management mechanism on the ground at the local level. District disaster management authorities overseen by district coordination officers were meant to be set up, but are either not functioning or have not yet been notified. The reasons for this delay are unclear, but the failure to bring DDMA's into being reflects a lack of both political and bureaucratic ownership.

This is, however, part of the preparation that should have been carried out well before the arrival of the rains, especially in light of last year's flood experience. Much attention has been paid to the delays in removing encroachments, clearing drains and restoring flood-protection infrastructure. But also missing was compliance at the provincial and district levels in terms of setting up disaster management authorities that could have made other preparations such as collecting adequate stores of tents, blankets and non-perishable food items. Adequate funding should also have been in place for local-level authorities and the NDMA; reportedly, funds from the 2005 earthquake and the 2010 floods may still be lying unused in various relief accounts, for example, and could have been pooled together and distributed to the organisations in advance. One lesson from this and previous disasters that would be foolish to ignore is that creating and empowering the right organisational set-up at all levels will be crucial for mitigating the effects of future disasters.

September 24, 2011 - Dawn

Endless Pain

The agonies of Sindh and parts of Balochistan seem endless. Alongside reports that there are now 7.1 million people affected by the floods, almost half a million accommodated in 2,618 camps, 1.3 million homes damaged or destroyed and six million acres of land – which includes two million acres of cultivation – there is even worse news. It comes not from a foreign agency but from our own National Nutrition Survey (NNS). The survey tells us that Sindh has the highest rate of malnutrition among children in the country with 17.5 percent of those under five years of age suffering acute malnutrition, and with seven percent of them being severely malnourished. Half of all children exhibit stunted growth and 72 percent of the entire population of Sindh is food insecure. Taking the outdated figure of the 1998 census the population of Sindh was put at 30.4 million, thus a minimum of 21,888,000 people are food insecure and the real number is far greater than that. This level of food insecurity has not happened overnight and has increased steadily year-on-year and cannot be attributed to the floods of 2010 and 2011 alone, neither can the stunting of children's growth. The effects of the floods are going to magnify food insecurity dramatically in the short term and chronically in the long term.

Against this background the United Nations launched an appeal last Sunday to raise \$356 million under its Rapid Response Plan 2011. This will be spent initially on 91 flood-related projects in Sindh and Balochistan, but is sadly little more than a drop in an ocean of need. The international response to appeals for help last time around was tardy to say the least, and few bilateral or multilateral donors made good on their initial promises – some defaulting to a greater degree than others. Almost exactly a year ago there were calls for of \$815 million from 56 donors, who eventually pledged (pledged, not gave) \$649.07 million. By the end of August 2010 payments and disbursements amounted to 17.5 percent of the total pledged. No donor wanted to give money directly to the government of Pakistan and then, as now, much aid is being delivered by the partner agencies of bilateral and multilateral agencies. Adding insult to injury there is still five billion rupees in the fund from monies collected for relief in 2010 - allegedly not disbursed because of 'bureaucratic difficulties', which will be a great comfort to those lying hungry at the roadsides. Sindh

Trail of Tragedy -3

Chronology of Disaster in Sindh 2011 (25th August -15th October)

was half-starved before this year's floods. Must we now consider the dreadful spectre of the next stage in this cycle of deprivation – famine?

September 20, 2011 – The News

The Peanuts Fund

‘The proof of the pudding is in the eating’ goes the old saying. There had been widespread doubt in the national media that the prime minister’s fund for flood relief would attract much interest, and so it has proved. Thus far it has received less than Rs100 million – just over a million dollars – and calling such a sum ‘peanuts’ does a disservice to that humble foodstuff. The majority of that collected comes from official sources such as the National Bank of Pakistan where the people of the nation have donated a miserable Rs0.5 million. Many branches have yet to receive a single rupee by way of donation, despite it being 12 days since the fund opened. Government officials are a little shy of discussing how much has been donated, presumably because it is the clearest possible evidence of just how little the public trusts anything that puts the words ‘government’ and ‘money’ in the same sentence. There is a similar reticence about how much international donors have given, and the reason is as plain as the nose on one’s face. The current dispensation has a national and international reputation of being one of the most corrupt regimes in the history of the state. International donors are only willing to give ‘in kind’ and not in cash, with the UAE donating tents and food but not a single rupee in hard cash.

Meanwhile the Supreme Court threw out the Sindh government’s report on the recent floods dismissing it as ‘concocted’ and ‘not worth reading’ and failing to address a single question that had been asked by the SC. A new report was requested that reflected the ‘ground realities’ rather than the waffle with which the court had been presented. The court was also in possession of documents which demonstrated the failure to implement the findings of the 2010 flood commission enquiry, and the abject failure of the Sindh government to provide significant relief for about 7.7 million people affected by this year’s floods. No action has been taken against those who breached dykes to preserve their own interests in last year’s floods, and it appears that 2010 affectees have received approximately Rs11 (eleven) per head by way of compensation despite the Sindh AAG saying that they received Rs20,000. Wherever one looks at the picture of the 2011 floods there is incompetence, a lack of public and international confidence in the government at every level, and a complete lack of understanding by figures such as the PM of how negatively they are seen.

Trail of Tragedy -3

Chronology of Disaster in Sindh 2011 (25th August -15th October)

There has been a dereliction of duty across the board, coupled with a catastrophic failure in duty of care by individuals and organisations which are corrupt and self-serving. At a time when we needed real leadership we instead had the triumph of mediocrity.

September 24,2011 – The News

Chapter-4

Opinion

Non-stop Rains

Sohail Sangi

OVER a million people have been affected badly by the recent monsoon rains. In fact, the term 'affected' does not convey the crucial conditions of these victims. They have been trapped in ... a very difficult situation and it appears impossible to pull them out of their misery. However, some concrete efforts can minimise their misery. The Met office has forecast another spell of rain which would continue.

The prime minister stated that over five million people were affected and that crop standing on a vast area was damaged. He also described the measures taken by the government and said that out of four million affected people, only 1.5 million were in camps. If 1.5 million victims were provided shelter at the camps what about the remaining thousands...? The devastation caused by last year's flood was different from the recent one as the former was due to breaches in the dykes and was highlighted by the media, while the latter has ... gone unnoticed. Neither has the media fully highlighted the destruction nor are government organisations fully aware of the situation. We have neither the resources nor the spirit in the government machinery to look after the affected properly. Last year, although international organisations were helping the people they had to work with government officials. These officials were hindering the process of relief and rehabilitation.

When we talk about rain devastation in other areas we have some excuse — that there was no infrastructure, and hence the people had to suffer. But rain in Karachi exposed the performance of our machinery. Roads wore a riverine look while nine people were electrocuted due to the faulty power supply system. We appeal to the government to take precautionary measures ... and ensure the early shifting of thousands of people who ... are under the open sky waiting for help.

September 13, 2011 - Dawn

Calamity-Hit Farmers Seek Debt Write-Off

Mohammad Hussain Khan

In the wake of successive disasters in Sindh, growers are seeking government help for the loan write-off and debt rescheduling. They claim that they are not in a position to repay the loans. The government, so far, has not responded to their demand.

Last year when the super floods hit the Indus right bank areas, the growers demanded that loans should be written off as similar facility was offered in the past. In 2010 these farmers farmers, according to a rice grower Gada Hussain Mahesar, were informed by bank managements that loan recovery was suspended but they were not written off.

As a result of recent disaster triggered by monsoon rains, the growers have suffered enormous damages to their standing crops of cotton, sugarcane, vegetables and rice.

A delegation of Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA), led by its president Dr Nadeem Qamar, had put forwarded this demand before Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani in a meeting with him in Hyderabad. But the PM told the SCA delegation that he would discuss the matter with the federal finance ministry before taking any decision.

Growers admit that they turn to pedhys just to avoid hassle of banking. Pedhy is a term used in local language for middlemen who offer loans to farmers in shape of inputs and buy their produce at cheaper rates to adjust the amount outstanding against them. For instance, growers say, if a middleman offers a bag of urea normally priced at Rs1,300 per bag at the time of sowing, he charges Rs1,600 at the time of harvest, making a profit of Rs300 as markup.

The country's agriculture is credit-starved, says Mehmood Nawaz Shah, General Secretary Sindh Abadgar Board (SAB). "If we talk about Sindh, it contributes around 25 per cent to Pakistan's agriculture. But it gets 10 per cent of credit facility," he argues. The Sindh-based growers demand that their share in credit should be raised to 25 per cent, he says. "Punjab gets

Trail of Tragedy -3

Chronology of Disaster in Sindh 2011 (25th August -15th October)

80 per cent of state-run Zarai Taraqiati Bank loans while the remaining 20 per cent is shared by three provinces,” he adds.

SAB president Abdul Majeed Nizamani asserts that growers are justified in their demand that their loans should be written off.

September 26, 2011 - Dawn

Disaster After Disaster

Nasir Ali Panhwar

Heavy rainfall has flooded 22 districts of Sindh, 10 of which have been declared calamity-hit areas.

While farmers were trying hard to recover from the effects of 2010 deluge, they were hit by another disaster. Last year, half of the province was affected, but this time almost entire Sindh is in the grip of floods.

Schools, hospitals, roads and other infrastructure are under water and thousands of villages have been damaged severely. Urban infrastructure has also collapsed in many areas.

Besides Sindh's natural endowments including agriculture, fisheries, livestock and poultry, wetlands, water resources, flora and wildlife have been severely damaged. These natural assets were already under stress due to poor government management and also in the absence of community participation in the management and development process. Increasing poverty and unemployment further have restricted sustainable natural resource management.

The current flood has put an additional stress on the provincial government's limited resources at a time when even a year after the 2010 floods, many reconstruction and rehabilitation needs are still unmet, including the repair of irrigation canal embankments.

To finance the post-flood rehabilitation, the Sindh Finance Department had proposed a sharp cut of Rs38 billion in the development outlay and Rs31.5 billion reduction in non-development expenditures. This was necessitated to generate resources for the Rs69.5 billion for reconstruction of flood-hit areas.

According to weather forecasts, high to severe monsoon is expected in the Indus basin for the next 20 years. As disasters are likely to increase due to climatic changes, the government policies should be resilient to integrate the disaster risk reduction plans with needed climate change adjustments in the development and recovery phase.

So far, the official response to flood was poor in all districts; the government departments have always been reactive to disasters. There has never been preparedness for any kind. Whenever it comes, the response is marred with problems of poor coordination among government departments and civil society bodies. Things worsen because of lack of information management systems, skilled human resource and necessary equipment.

Reported increase in water-borne diseases call for appropriate and timely actions. The increased number of cases of communicable diseases at the moment indicates the potential threat of an epidemic. Irrigation canals, drainage network and urban drainage need major revamping.

The Sindh government has to prioritise its development needs with focus on land use plan, sound town planning, strict implementation of laws regarding encroachments on water and drainage infrastructure.

September 26, 2011 - Dawn

Shortage of Milk

Qurban Ali Khushik

The supply of milk from Dadu district to major cities and towns in Sindh has virtually stopped after a sharp drop in milk production in rain-hit areas.

Owing to heavy rains in Katcho belt along right side of the Indus River from Naing Sharif to Fareedabad, chaff and grass have almost vanished which has also affected the health of the ruminants and reduced their weight and milk output.

Consequently, the cattle pen owners have stopped supply of milk to dealers and dairy companies in Dadu town. This has virtually dried up milk supply to Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, and Mirpurkhas.

According to Secretary Sindh Livestock Department, Dr Laeeq Memon, chaff and grass were being distributed among farmers for their animals in the rain-affected areas of Dadu, Mirpurkhas, Tando Mohammad Khan, Tando Allahyar, Badin, Sanghar and Nawabshah. He said that between August 12 and September 18, some 97,000 animals were reported dead in various areas of Sindh. Among the large ruminants that died included 12,000 buffalos and cows. About 60,000 sheep and goats and 6,000 camels, horses and donkeys had also perished, he said.

Mr Memon said that around 2.36 million animals were vaccinated through 43 mobile teams of veterinary doctors. He said that two million cattle heads were shifted towards desert area of Thar Kohistan by their owners in search of fodder. About damages to poultry in Sindh, he said that 911 poultry farms were completely ruined in 16 districts. A large number of commercial birds had died in rains, he added.

Owner of the Bhitai Poultry Farm Service, Dadu, Haji Ghulam Mustafa Brohi, said that his 25 poultry farms were damaged in the rains in which 25,000 birds had died. He said that poultry farms from Bhan Syedabad to Mehar town in Dadu and Jamshoro were completely destroyed.

September 26, 2011 - Dawn

Chapter-5

Letter to the Editor

Floods: Coming to the Aid of Victims

Necessant rains and floods have created unrest and panic among the people of lower Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan.

According to media reports, large-scale devastation has been caused by heavy and incessant rains.

The claims made by the administration of the various city and municipal governments to cope with the situation have not yielded positive results so far. Many people have been killed and infrastructure has been destroyed by floods. The metrological office has predicted more rains in Sindh, Balochistan and lower Punjab in the days to come. It is, therefore, the need of the hour to make foolproof arrangements to save precious human lives.

The people exposed to hazards may be shifted to safer places and solid steps should be taken to protect their lives and assets.

The impact of last year's floods is still being felt. In future floods in the northern or upper regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can be tackled by building water reservoirs.

As the Kalabagh dam project has already been disputed and politicised, the government should come forward to have consensus on all mega dams to overcome not only the grave energy crisis being faced by us during the last couple of years but also to avoid the calamity of floodwater which has, of course, made our lives miserable.

According to experts, this is the only way to avoid floods as well as to overcome energy shortage in the country. Apart from this advantage, we will also have ample water resources available for cultivation of our barren lands. Experts say that small dams and reservoirs for rainwater should be built in costal regions to avoid floods in these regions.

SHAUKAT HAYAT

Chinglai village, Buner

September 17, 2011 - Dawn

Fake Drugs for Relief Camps

Reports are pouring in from the worst rain-and flood-affected districts of Sindh wherein revenue officers have set up relief camps.

Once the scheduled visit of dignitaries is over, law-enforcers baton-charge them so as to displace and disperse them once and for all.

Similarly, in Sindh the business of fake and counterfeit drugs is booming.

H.A.

Islamabad

September 28, 2011 - Dawn

Trees, Floods and Protection of Dams

It is a fact that floods are destroying our agriculture, hearths and homes, livestock and, above all, living beings. We can overcome the situation easily by growing vegetation in our catchment areas. Our rivers would then be carrying water to their capacity throughout the year and would be comparatively silt-free.

In the absence of vegetative cover the rainwater flows from hilltops/mountains with full speed carrying along with it all the silt, sand and pebbles. When such water reaches rivers, lakes and ponds, their beds are filled up with such materials resulting in their overflow, causing havoc in adjoining areas.

Similarly, the government is trying to construct dams on various rivers for the benefit of mankind. These dams would ensure proper irrigation to our agricultural lands and also, in many cases, generate electricity. If these dams get completed without proper vegetation cover on our catchment areas, they would be silted up and then would become a source of nuisance instead of providing relief and prosperity.

Last but not least, about 30 years back, a scheme was envisaged regarding tree plantation in the toe of river embankments to make the effect of wave-wash ineffective. It was very well conceived, initiated, and drafted. Unfortunately, it could not be materialized.

Lala Fazal Ahmed Bellae

Hyderabad

September 28, 2011 - Dawn

Funds Collection

Booths for collecting funds for flood-affected people have sprung up all over Karachi like mushrooms these days. I wonder how many of those are genuine and how many are fraud.

In my opinion it would be a mistake to donate at these places without ascertaining which ones are genuine? Since I do not have time and patience to ascertain that, I do not donate there.

Donating at these places is like patronising beggary. The more you do the more it grows. I, therefore, suggest discretion should be used before doing that.

N.A. KHAN

Karachi.

Sindh floods: Problems with Relief Work

In the kachcha area of Dadu, in Nain Gaj, a mighty torrential stream flooded vast tracks of land with a flow of 25 feet. As a result, along with human loss, the livestock and household items of poverty-stricken people were washed away.

It resulted in disconnection of 300 villages from taluka headquarters Johi. For days, people remained stranded without food and shelter. After a week of starvation, a few truckloads with food items arrived in Johi but the mukhtiarkar left these to the relief mafia to loot. Deserving women, elderly men and youths preferred more starvation than being shoved and abused by plundering gangs and stayed away from these looters.

The relief mafia, comprising 'jialas' and feudal lords, emerged during 2010 floods. They took truckloads of relief goods from the district government, some NGOs and elected representatives in the name of flood-affected people and peasants and sold it into the market. People allege that they have bought cars and buildings by selling relief goods.

If the police and district governments are given full powers and autonomy to dispatch relief services, real victims would certainly get their due share and there would be no need for the common man to look for the army to distribute relief goods.

Recently, the DCO, Dadu, with the full backing of MNA Ahmed Jamali, called meetings of civil society organisations and asked them to help the district government in distribution of relief goods. The representatives of NGOs sought assurance for non-interference from any quarters, and then started distribution work in most inaccessible areas. The work is going on smoothly. The relief mafia was thus restrained from looting relief goods. They have started protesting against the district government, Dadu. The government should not pay heed to them, and support the DCO against relief mafias.

Gulsher Panhwer

Johi.

September 29, 2011 - Dawn

Misery of Kaloi

The recent torrential rains have badly affected Sindh, followed by breaches in the Left Bank Outfall Drainage. Now when rains have stopped, the floodwater is standing in many cities and villages. Kaloi is one of the largest cities of Diplo tehsil of Tharparkar district, having a population of more than 20,000. It is one of those cities where floodwater has entered from the west and is increasing by every hour.

The apparent reason for this, as reported in the media, is that the floodwater of Sanghar and Nawabshah is being drained into the Jamraoo Canal. People were not able to have any respite because of continuous rainfall. And now the floodwater has multiplied their agonies.

There is an immediate need for arranging a ring 'bund'-type protection so that Kaloi and adjoining areas may be saved. The authorities concerned, such as the flood-monitoring cell, should take immediate steps to save Kaloi and its adjoining areas like Tharparkar and Badin.

Moreover, other measures to save Kaloi like avoiding draining water into the Jamraoo Canal should be taken on a war footing so that the areas which remained safe from heavy rains and have sheltered many displaced people from adjoining areas may also be saved from floodwater.

A Concerned Citizen

Kaloi, Tharparkar

Millions Displaced After Floods

One year after the worst flooding disaster in the history of the region, more floods triggered by heavy rains have devastated parts of Southern Pakistan. Millions of people have been displaced after losing their homes in this region which has still not recovered from last year's floods.

Last year, Pakistanis came out to help their brothers and sisters in need and contributed money, food, clothes and other items.

With stagnant water having collected in most parts of the district, several sources say that the threat of an outbreak of malaria and other epidemics is imminent.

Several cases of death by snakebite have surfaced but anti-snakebite serum is rarely available.

The government is providing mosquito nets, but it is feared that not enough are being distributed. The nets themselves may not be enough to prevent the outbreak of diseases.

A large number of school buildings, particularly in the Katcha area, have collapsed or have been damaged beyond repair after being submerged in floodwater. Thousands of government primary and middle schools have been flattened to the ground, and as many are being occupied by millions of survivors. As a result, half-a-million children are still out of school.

The Government of Pakistan says that the rehabilitation of 21 million homeless people takes priority over the revival of the education system. And funds of universities are being diverted towards relief schemes.

If we do not take precautionary measures on an urgent basis, we will face an even worse situation.

Anam Hayat
Islamabad

October 4, 2011 - Dawn

Rain-Hit Sindh: No Relief Despite Funds

Last year Sindh faced massive floods, and a million people lost their homes and many their lives. They are still living as IDPs at different places.

This year rain battered Sindh again. Districts including Badin, Sanghar, Thatta, Tando Allahyar, Mirpurkhas and Benazirabad are inundated. Rain has disrupted the lives of the people and they have lost their shelters as well. Now people are living on roadsides, in schools or government buildings.

It is the responsibility of the government and NGOs to provide relief to these people. There is no doubt that the government has received more funds for relief of the suffering people. China, South Korea, the UN and others granted funds for relief. But many locals are still unable to get shelter and two-time meals.

There is no lack of funds but there is a lack of administration, planning and sincerity. You can see people running behind ration trucks. There are no good arrangements for distributing supplies among them.

NGOs also have a plenty of funds for relief of the rain-hit people, but they too cannot do any better. Now it is time to help people and lessen their sufferings. Higher authorities must visit sufferers promptly and provide relief to them

M. I. Bozdar
Mirpur Mathelo

October 8, 2011 - Dawn

Floods: Nawabshah in Bad Condition

Heavy rains have flooded Nawabshah town and its adjoining areas. While roads have been cleared, there is stagnant water in lanes, open spaces, and in houses in adjoining low-lying areas.

A lot of people have become refugees in their own town as their homes are under waist-deep water.

Owing to the obstruction created by rainwater the drainage system has stopped working. There seems to be a total collapse or absence of public health engineering and town planning.

A great economic loss will be inflicted on the agriculture-based economy of the entire Benazirabad division whose total cotton crop has been destroyed.

The loss to the banana plantations is more tragic, 75 per cent of mature trees will wilt away and with it an investment of more than three years. The human misery caused by the loss is compounded by the vision of a challenging future. While the tragedy of lost human lives has been so far averted, the ethos of wasted human enterprise and lost opportunities can never be recorded.

The political leadership from Nawabshah should take up the challenge as an opportunity to rebuild the morale of the town. The era of granting favours has to end.

Dr. Syed Shoaib Sultan

Poor Patients' Aid Society

Civil Hospital, Karachi

October 10,2011- Dawn

Chapter-6

SPO's Response

Humanitarian Response

Rising from the foundations of last year's humanitarian response, SPO took no time to respond the humanitarian situation created by the unprecedented torrential rains and subsequent heavy currents of flood waters in many districts of Sindh province during the months of August and September 2011.

SPO's presence at the grass root level, and its regular interaction and committed partnership with community institutions, have, in turn, strengthened SPO's resolve to assist poor and disadvantaged sections of the communities to help achieve their goals for sustainable development under regular programming as well as at times of disasters. In order to address the community needs during the disasters, SPO has established Humanitarian Response component. Through this section; SPO deals with disasters and emergency situations, such as earthquake in Azad Kashmir, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) of NWFP and last year's flood across the country.

During August and September 2011, Southern and central districts of Sindh were hit by worst monsoon-related floods. Heavy rainfall, flash floods and riverine floods devastated large parts of Sindh on the arrival of seasonal monsoon rains on August 08, 2011. As per conservative estimates by NDMA around 5.3 million people were affected by the floods. The official death toll rose to as many as 350, with dozens reported as injured. Besides, human and infrastructural damages, standing crops on tens of thousands acre land was also affected, escalating concerns about food security in Lower districts of Sindh.

In order to facilitate coordinated humanitarian response in the flood affected areas and enable humanitarian organizations to have substantial planning for their humanitarian activities, SPO, with the support of its partner organizations, carried out rapid assessments in the affected areas. Through rapid assessments, SPO identified desperate needs of affected communities, which included: food, clean drinking water and water purification materials, emergency health services, tents and shelter kits, cooking kits, mosquito nets, and other non-food items (NFI). These rapid assessments were widely circulated among the relevant stakeholders through email to enable them plan their humanitarian response. Date-

wise situational update and rapid assessments of damages can still be accessed on SPO website <http://www.spopk.org>.

SPO's wider outreach in the form of its regional & project offices and presence of SPO partner organizations all across the country including Azad Jammu & Kashmir, help SPO in responding timely the needs of disaster stricken communities.

Resource Mobilization

Resource mobilization for carrying out all development and relief activities is an integral part of SPO activities. During the initial response stage SPO spent around half a million Pak Rupees from its meager resources. In addition to that SPO's staff from Hyderabad Region contributed one day salary in relief fund of SPO. Members of the General Body, Board of Directors and their families also made generous contribution in the fund. During flood response work SPO staff did not avail weekends and other holidays for two months and field staff did not claim any benefits during the emergency response work. SPO's partner organizations and networks also mobilized resources through local contacts and in many cases played an appreciable role in rescue and relief work in their areas. All this contribution has a great value for SPO.

SPO National Centre and Regional Offices have good reputation with donor organizations as well as local philanthropists. Thus our teams succeeded in resource mobilization of large funds for relief activities in the flood affected areas. The details of the mobilized funds and carried out interventions are provided in below given tables:

SPO External Funding Detail: July 2010 – June 2011

Province	Cost of interventions (PKR)	Cost of interventions (USD)
Badin	12,359,290	145,403
Umer Kot	14,039,168	165,167
Mirpur Khas	96,690,673	1,137,537
Tando Mohammad Khan	9,501,800	111,786
Tando Allah Yar	4,078,080	47,977
Matiari	126,657,429	1,490,087
Jamshoro	60,688,523	713,983
Shaheed Benazirabad	5,097,598	59,972
Kashmore	13,904,100	163,578

Glimpse of Cluster-Wise Interventions of SPO

Cluster	Beneficiaries	Scope of Work	Geographical (District, UCs)
WASH	4,000	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. H&H Kit/material 2. Water Kit (Aqua tab, Jerry can) 3. Public health sessions 4. Rehabilitation of sanitation facilities 5. Cleaning/Di-silting of drainage channels 6. Installation of communal water pump 7. Communal water tank 	<p>Tando Muhammad Khan (Bulri Shah Karim, Jinhan Soomro, Allah Yar Turk, Mula Katiar, Saeed Khan Lund)</p> <p>Matiari:</p> <p>Tehsil Saeedabad (Zair Pir, Bhale Dino Kaka, Shahmir Rahu, Saeedabad),</p> <p>Tehsil Hala (Karam Khan Nizamani, Bhit Shah, Bhanoth, Hala Old, Faqir Noh Hothiani)</p> <p>Tehsil Matiari (Sekhat, Udairo Lal, Udairo Lal Station, Shah Alam Ji Wasi, Taj Pur, Nasarpur)</p>
SHELTER/NFI	675	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emergency shelter 2. Kitchen set 3. Bedding kit/winterization kit 4. NFI 	<p>Mirpurkhas (Turak Ali Mari, Balochabad, Bhurgri, Kot Ghulam Mohammad, Mir Khudadad),</p> <p>Umerkot (Talli)</p>
FOOD	1500	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Food packets 2. Cooked food 	Badin (Serani, Dei Jarkas)
Livelihood	1815	<p>Cash for Work</p> <p>Unconditional Grants</p>	Jamshoro (Manjhand)

Trail of Tragedy -3

Chronology of Disaster in Sindh 2011 (25th August -15th October)

Education	22,500	Temporary Learning Centers (TLCS)	<p>Tando Allah Yar</p> <p>Tehsil Tando Allahyar -(Tando Allah Yar 3, Chambar-2, Begun Jarwar)</p> <p>Tehsil Chambar (Chambar-1)</p> <p>Tehsil Shaikh Musa (Shaikh Musa)</p> <p>Tehsil Bozdar (Bozdar)</p> <p>Tehsil Pyaro Lund (Pyaro Lund)</p> <p>Tehsil Sanjar Chang (Sanjar Chang)</p> <p>Tehsil Jhando Mari (Misan)</p> <p>Benazir Abad:</p> <p>Tehsil Daur (Sath Mail, Ghulam Hyder Shah, Bushairi, Ismail Khan Brohi, Suhailo, Jhoro Khan Shar, Jhoro Khan Shar Deh Sat Suhailo, Jam Sahub, Amar Ji, Jamal Shah, Abdul Hassan)</p> <p>Tehsil Kazi Ahmed (Malharo, Kazi Ahmed 2, Sawri, Syed Kando, Kubhairi, Ahmed Bughio)</p> <p>Tehsil Sakran (Pir Zikri, Sakrand-2, Kumb Lima, Sakrand-1, Guhram Mari, Mehrab Pur, Hamal Faqir, Bhora, Khadar, Dalail Dero, Karam Jamali, Marvi)</p> <p>Tehsil Nawab Shah (UC-1, UC-2, UC-3, UC-4, UC-5, UC-6, UC-8, UC-9, Ghand Tar)</p>
-----------	--------	-----------------------------------	--

Trail of Tragedy -3

Chronology of Disaster in Sindh 2011 (25th August -15th October)