

16 Jan 2009

Natural Disasters:**16 Jan: Flood in Jakarta: Water remains in most areas**

What lies beneath the stagnant brown flood water that is now an all-too-common site on Jakarta's streets is a sewerage system that has proven time and again incapable of carrying away the heavy rainfall that hits the city each new year with the regularity of clock work. Power cuts Thursday left many residents alone in the dark in their flooded homes, and those whose houses had not taken on water were not willing to stray far from their homes in fear that more rain could come.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/01/16/flood-jakarta-water-remains-most-areas.html>

15 Jan: Philippine floods, slides kill 20, displace 300,000

Floods and landslides caused by almost a week of unseasonal heavy rains have killed 20 people and displaced 300,000 in the eastern and southern Philippines. Wide areas on the southern island of Mindanao and in the eastern part of the archipelago from the Bicol region to Samar and Leyte islands were inundated, said Glenn Rabonza, head of the government's disaster agency. "We're experiencing an unusual heavy downpour brought by the tail-end of the cold front," Rabonza told reporters, adding many areas have been submerged under 4-6 feet (1.2-2 metres) of floodwaters. About 20 people had drowned in swollen rivers or been buried in landslides while 63,000 families or slightly more than 300,000 people had to leave their homes because of the freak weather conditions.

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/MAN129100.htm>

15 Jan: Freezing cold stalks China quake victims

Sub-zero temperatures and heavy snowfall are adding to the misery of millions of Chinese made homeless by last year's deadly quake in the country's southwest. Quake victims with their homes intact are using rubble from collapsed houses for fuel but others living in temporary housing have had to rely on expensive electricity for heat, they said. "We are burning wood from the rubble of collapsed houses but people in temporary housing have to use electric heaters.

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/PEK212996.htm>

13 Jan: Fresh floods hit Fiji: Fresh flash floods sparked by heavy rains were reported in Fiji. Officials posted the second severe flood warning in five days after a series of tropical storms earlier left at least eight people dead. Fijian officials have said that around 6,000 people have also been displaced by the floods. According to the UN, the displaced are being housed in 110 evacuation centers. The Fiji Times reported that many families have also moved to higher ground. "This is the worst flooding situation in the recent history of Fiji," the AP quoted Meteorological Service director Rajendra Prasad as saying.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/EDIS-7N9LDH?OpenDocument&rc=5&cc=fji>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7826162.stm>

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28638101/>

13 Jan: Death toll in Indian cold wave rises

More than 80 people have now died as a result of severe cold temperatures in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh since the first of the year. Although no details are available, dozens of others have

reportedly died in other northern states suffering from severe cold weather, including Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal (Uttarakhand), Delhi and Bihar. The city has been covered in fog for much of the new year, stopping air and road traffic. Still, the Indian Meteorological Department said that so far this January has been slightly warmer than last year's. Separately, in the far northern state of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), three villagers were buried in a snow avalanche on Monday (January 12). The avalanche occurred near Chotali village, near Uri, a town that borders the part of Kashmir controlled by Pakistan. Rescue workers were able to save one person from the avalanche. The Kashmir valley typically sees frequent deadly avalanches in the winter months, but this year's snowfall has been lighter than normal, IANS reported. No major snowfall has been reported in the Kashmir valley, despite moderate snow in the mountains. The harsh winter along the northern border area leads J&K state to move its capital from the main city of Srinagar to Jammu, which sits in the lower part of the state, during the winter. The transition to Jammu occurred this week.

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle.asp?xfile=data/international/2009/January/international_January637.xml&ion=international&col=

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Four_deaths_due_to_cold_in_UP_toll_climbs_to_80/rssarticleshow/3972905.cms

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/StoryPage.aspx?sectionName=IndiaSectionPage&id=56a0d0aa-8c20-48bd-8ac6-f7d705c9c85f&&Headline=Chilly+morning+greet+Delhiites>

12 Jan: Costa Rica earthquake

The final death toll in Costa Rica from a strong earthquake last week will likely rise to around 40 after an emergency official on Monday scaled back the number of people missing. Fourteen bodies have been found after Thursday's 6.1-magnitude quake caused landslides that buried cars and crushed homes and another 23 people remain unaccounted for, said National Emergency Commission head Daniel Gallardo.

"If there are (more) people missing, their families will advise us. It's unlikely that there are missing people that have still not been reported," Gallardo said. Emergency services had earlier said there may have been as many as 50 people missing after the quake, which was centered in a tourist area north of the capital.

<http://members.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/N12350783.htm>

Bird Flu: The sister of Vietnam's first confirmed bird flu patient of the year has died with similar symptoms. Five people died of bird flu in Vietnam in 2008, all in the first quarter of the year, when cooler temperatures allow the virus to thrive. In China, the government says it does not have evidence to suggest that the bird flu virus has mutated into a form which can be spread by humans, after a woman died last week in Beijing. The 19-year-old died of the H5N1 strain of the virus after gutting ducks, China's first death in almost a year, bringing the total death toll to date to 21. Experts say the case highlights the role and risks of waterfowl in the transmission of the virus to humans. The current outbreak, which originated in southeast Asia in 2003, has spread to the Middle East, Europe, South Asia and Africa. More than 240 people have died around the world from the H5N1 strain. Almost all have caught it from birds, but scientists believe there have been a few cases of human to human transmission.

<http://members.alertnet.org/db/crisisprofiles/BIRDFLU.htm>

News:

Disaster-heavy 2008 raises pressure for climate pact, insurance

After December's uninspiring U.N. climate change talks in Poland, the process that's meant to lead to a new global pact in Copenhagen at the end of this year could do with a shot in the arm. While the world waits impatiently to see how U.S. President-elect Barack Obama will tackle climate change once his administration gets up and running in late January, perhaps a few disaster statistics will help fill the gap.

At the end of December, Munich Re - one of the world's biggest reinsurance companies - said a large number of tropical cyclones, combined with May's earthquake in Sichuan, China, made 2008 one of the most devastating years on record. Although there was a drop in the number of events that resulted in financial losses - from 960 in 2007 to 750 - the number of people affected and the scale of the losses jumped. http://www.alertnet.org/db/an_art/20316/2009/00/5-174834-1.htm

Warming may spark global food crisis

Half of the world's population could face a food crisis by 2100 sparked by rapid warming, a new report by scientists in the US warns. According to Professor David Battisti of the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington, rapid warming is likely to reduce crop yields in the tropics and subtropics, the BBC reported. Battisti collaborated with Professor Rosamond Naylor, the director of Stanford University's Program on Food Security and the Environment, to examine the impact of climate change on food security, the BBC reported. In an article appearing in the journal Science, Battisti said that the most extreme summers of the last century will become the norm. He said that the world must urgently create heat- and drought-tolerant crops if we are to adapt in time.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/7817684.stm>

Strengthening disaster prevention and resilience: Developing media and NGO capacity to increase awareness among communities in the Indian states of West Bengal and Orissa - India

BBC, World Service Trust (WST) initiative is shaped by the observation that the media, governments, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have a crucial role to play in raising awareness amongst the public about risk management. Launched in December 2007 in India, the 15-month pilot project centres around a series of 5-day training workshops for print and broadcast journalists and NGO representatives. The Trust hopes to enable interaction between these groups that might spark the development of fruitful relationships. In addition, shorter workshops for government officials in each state focus on how to cooperate with the media more effectively. A 3-day workshop for local radio professionals explores the design and production of public service announcements (PSAs) on disaster preparedness.

<http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/contactus/>

<http://www.comminit.com/en/node/273321/2754>

Vietnam's First Satellite

Vietnam plans to launch a satellite called VNREDSAT-1 by 2012. It will be the country's first remote sensing satellite. It will be used for natural resources management, environmental protection and disaster prevention. The Vietnam News Agency reported on 12 December that the project will be worth around \$100 million. <http://www.asmmag.com/news/vietnam's-1st-remote-sensing-satellite>

Detecting Land Mines: New Technology

The detection and accurate location of unexploded land mines, bombs or shells is a serious problem. A joint American-Australian team is working to develop a system based on multi-sensor integration. Highly accurate and highly reliable, this new geo-location system will significantly improve the state of the art. <http://www.asmmag.com/features/new-technology-for-detecting-land-mines>

Asia Launches SAFE for Climate Change

Asian nations meeting at the 15th Asia Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum at Ha Long Bay in Vietnam (9-12 December 2008) have agreed to develop a platform for prototype systems for environmental monitoring. The project, called SAFE (Space Application for Environment), is intended to assess the regional impacts of climate change, among other uses. <http://www.asmmag.com/news/asia-s-space-initiatives-for-climate-change>

Indian Earthquake Prediction Research

The state administration in Gujarat is to acquire multi-parametric geophysical observatories as part of a program earthquake prediction research. The Institute of Seismological Research will install 3 systems at Kutch, reports *Indianexpress.com*. ISR has also finished installing 10 out of 25 GPS stations that will be used in the study of crustal deformation in the region.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/Three-new-observatories-to-keep-a-tab-on-seismic-activities/395215>

Hope and disappointment four years on from Asian tsunami: Indonesia

When the deadly waters of the Asian tsunami smashed into this fishing village in Indonesia's Aceh province four years ago, not one house was left standing. Now there are too many of them. Recovery has been uneven in the dozen countries hit by the 2004 Indian Ocean disaster, which killed more than 220,000 people. While some communities have rebounded and flourished on a multibillion dollar outpouring of aid, others have languished.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/MYAI-7MNAZR?OpenDocument&rc=3&emid=TS-2004-000147-LKA>

Restoring healthcare to tsunami-affected communities in Sri Lanka

The new UNICEF built district hospital in the eastern Sri Lankan town of Pottuvil serves a community of 50 thousand families. Most of them were displaced by the tsunami. Before the disaster, the nearest maternity hospital was more than 45 kilometers away, in an area under threat by Sri Lanka's civil war.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/MUMA-7MQ5PM?OpenDocument&rc=3&emid=TS-2004-000147-LKA>

Mozambique hunger and floods: Around 350,000 people in Mozambique need food aid because of poor harvests. Central and southern regions have had less than half their normal rainfall since October and the southern African country may be heading for its third consecutive year of drought despite recent rains in some areas. In fact torrential rains in the centre of the country in the last two weeks have killed 25 people according to authorities. They warn that flooding could devastate the region by March.

http://members.alertnet.org/db/crisisprofiles/SA_HUN.htm

Events:

Third National Emergency Management Summit, 4-6 March 2009, Washington DC Forum on Disaster, Epidemic and Terrorism Planning, Response and Recovery for Healthcare Organizations
<http://www.emergencymanagementsummit.com/>

Seminar: The Challenge of Development in Energy-related Projects and Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in the Cold Regions of Asia, India, 21 - 24 April 2009, Leh, India

GERES (Groupe Energies Renouvelables, Environnement et Solidarités), a recognised international French NGO, is organising in partnership with the European Union, GTZ (German Technical Cooperation), ADEME (French Environment and Energy Management Agency), and Fondation Ensemble, a regional seminar on « the challenge of development in energy-related projects and climate change adaptation strategies in the cold regions of Asia. <http://www.eldis.org:80/go/events-and-announcements&id=41573&type=Item>

Urban Modeling, Spatial Statistics, 29 June-2 July, Yongin, Korea

The 4th International Workshop on Geographical Analysis, Urban Modelling and Spatial Statistics (GEOG-AN-MOND 09) is being held in conjunction with the 2009 International Conference on Computational Science and its Applications (ICCSA 2009). The deadline for full paper submissions is 16 February. <http://www.lisut.org/workshop/GEOG-AN-MOD09/>

Emergency Management Conference: 14-16 September 2009, Beijing

The international conference on Geospatial Solutions for Emergency Management (GSEM 2009) is being held in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the Chinese Academy of Surveying and Mapping. The organisers are calling for papers on themes including data and image fusion, disaster management and new sensors. The deadline for abstracts is 31 March. <http://www.gsem2009.org/>

India Disaster Management Congress 2009, 4th & 6th November 2009, New Delhi, India

<http://www.ekgaon.com/dcs-idmc09/>

Information Resources:

Feature Article: Techno-fixes and techno-fixation: a 101 guide to climate change technologies

There is certainly not a dearth of publications on climate change these days that outlines the scale of the problem that confronts us. Science has shown that rising global temperatures will tip the planets' ecological balance leading to catastrophic climate change. If we are to avoid this the world needs to limit global warming to two degrees which would require a peak in global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2015 at the latest, with emissions falling by 50%-80% below 2000 levels by 2050. This is the international scientific consensus on the issue, as laid out by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). http://www.csr-asia.com/weekly_detail.php?id=11582

Publication: Setting Directions for Sustainable Fisheries and Coastal Livelihoods in the Post Tsunami Context, India. FAO/UNTRIS, 2008

The tsunami of 26th December 2004 was one of the worst natural disasters that the world has seen in the recent past. If tsunami was of unprecedented scale and impact, the response it generated across the world was reassuring. The post tsunami relief programme may go down in history as one of the most massive and also effective recovery efforts. In recent times, Dwindling catches, declining catch rate per unit effort, and dropping real incomes have been emerging as characteristic indicators of Indian marine fishery. The objective of the volume is to bring out a comprehensive documentation of the various interventions and studies undertaken. It is expected to be a guideline document based on the plan, processes adopted, good practices, studies, achievements, limitations and lessons learnt. The document is aimed at development agencies and policy makers involved in interventions in sustainable fisheries livelihoods or post disaster recovery or development programmes. www.un.org.in

Publication: Data against disasters: Establishing effective systems for relief, recovery, and reconstruction, The World Bank, 2008

In recent years, the world has witnessed both massive destruction caused by natural disasters and immense financial and physical support materializing for the victims of these calamities. Climate change can reasonably be expected to increase countries' vulnerability to natural hazards in the future. So that these natural hazards do not become man-made disasters, we require effective systems to identify needs, manage data, and help calibrate responses. Such systems, if well designed, can help coordinate the influx of aid to ensure timely and efficient delivery of assistance to those who need help most. The emphasis on aid effectiveness is particularly important in the context of disaster response because, as is now clear,

vulnerability to natural disasters and inefficiencies in aid distribution may lead to unnecessary economic losses, increased suffering, and greater poverty. www.worldbank.org

Climate change adaptation and mitigation in development program: A practical guide

The need to “mainstream” climate policy into development goals is well-recognized within the World Bank, as well as at the national level and among other donor agencies. Individually and collectively, international multilateral and bilateral organizations have responded to the increasing challenge of climate change with an agenda for action to integrate climate concerns into the mainstream of developmental policy making and poverty-reduction initiatives. All have defined major new initiatives designed to help their clients mitigate the impact of past and future development programs on climate change. In addition, they have intensified joint efforts on both climate change mitigation and adaptation. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTEEI/Resources/DCCToolkitCRAlores.pdf>

Manual for development planning: Adapting to climate variability and change

Climate change may pose risks and/or create opportunities for development efforts in many countries. The USAID Global Climate Change Team developed this Adaptation Guidance Manual to assist Missions and other partners to understand how climate change may affect their project outcomes and identify adaptation options to integrate into the design for more resilient projects. http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/environment/climate/docs/reports/cc_vamannual.pdf

Website: APEAEN stands for the Asia Pacific Association of Educators in Agriculture and Environment www.apeen.org

Peace game to help train disaster responders

Video game technologies have long been used in simulation-based training for military operations, but thanks to researchers at Duke University they could soon come in handy in the world of disaster response. In collaboration with Virtual Heroes, a U.S.-based game developer, the team has developed 'Virtual Peace', a simulation game to train the next generation of emergency response and international negotiators. <http://members.alertnet.org/db/blogs/43555/2009/00/12-091200-1.htm>

Interview-Bird flu flares anew, raising uneasy questions

The re-emergence of birdflu in Asia and Egypt has prompted experts to ask tough questions: are poultry vaccines effective against a virus that is constantly mutating, and are governments doing enough to stop it spreading? The virus turned up last week in a farm equipped with modern biosecurity measures in Hong Kong, killing over 100 chickens and leading to the culling of some 80,000 birds there, in nearby farms and a wholesale market. <http://members.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/HKG162827.htm>

For archived DRM updates:

ADPC Website:

<http://www.adpc.net/v2007/IKM/EVENTS%20AND%20NEWS/DISASTER/2008/DISASTER-NEWS-2008.asp>

Note: The information has been collated from publicly available information. Although the sources are deemed reliable, the information reported here are topical and are subject to change.

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Roopa Rakshit
Communication & Information Manager
Information Knowledge Management (IKM)/
Office of the Executive Director (OED)
Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
979/69, 24th Floor, SM Tower, Paholyothin Road
Samsen Nai, Phayathai, Bangkok, 10400
Tel: (02) 2980681-92 ext 141
Fax: (02)2980012-13
E-mail: roopa@adpc.net
Website: www.adpc.net