

14 Aug 2007



*Helping Hands e.V.
Initiative for Development and
Disaster Response*



Press Release

Current situation:

- more than 20 million people are affected
- between 500 and 2,500 people have already died
- two thirds of Bangladesh are covered in water, as well as large parts of northern India and south-east Nepal



Thousands have fled from the waters and are now camping along the elevated roads.

More and more Nazarenes affected by South Asia floods

Heavy flooding has devastated parts of Nepal, India and Bangladesh after several weeks of rain. By now more and more Nazarenes are affected, particularly in Bangladesh. Most of the water is seeking its way to the ocean through the lowlands of Bangladesh and the Ganges and Brahmaputra delta.

Many have no other choice but to watch their livelihood disappear in the floods. Like Pastor Bilash. He has been serving the Church of the Nazarene for eight years. Just now he works in the Gopalganj district. The local church is poor and he needs to earn an additional income to feed his wife and three daughters.

The rains started on 20 July. By the end of the month several dams had broken and the waters began to rise, slowly but surely. A few days ago Pastor Bilash's fish pond was washed away. That same night water reached his cow shed and he took the cows into one corner of his home. Like the houses of so many other poor people it is only made of wood and bamboo. Now six inches of water are inside and things are beginning to rot. The walls could collapse any minute, and then he would stand in the open.

Bilash wonders whether he should go to the money lenders, as he has nothing left with which to make a new start. But they charge outrageous interest and just wait for times like these.

What shall I do? That is a question many Bangladeshis in similar situations are asking themselves these days. And disasters have the habit of affecting everybody in their path, irrespective of religion, race or caste.

"We need to help them," district superintendent Nathan emphasizes. "They are suffering and who knows what will be next!" His own mother has had to flee before the waters. Completely drenched and with high fever she finally arrived at her son's home. Like so many others in South Asia she is praying for a helping hand that will give them a new chance!



Nathan, leader of the work in Bangladesh, is concerned as he surveys the damage caused by the floods.

You can reach out a 'helping hand' to the people in Bangladesh!



On tiny islands people are waiting for the floods to recede.

For £ 25 (Can\$ 55) you can assist one family in their need! The relief package contains food, household utensils and medicine. Long-term rehabilitation costs £ 30 (Can\$ 65) per family. We are hoping to assist approximately 12,000 families.

Please ask your local pastor or NMI president how best to donate or transfer funds. Of course, any amount you can donate will help to reach out to these suffering people.

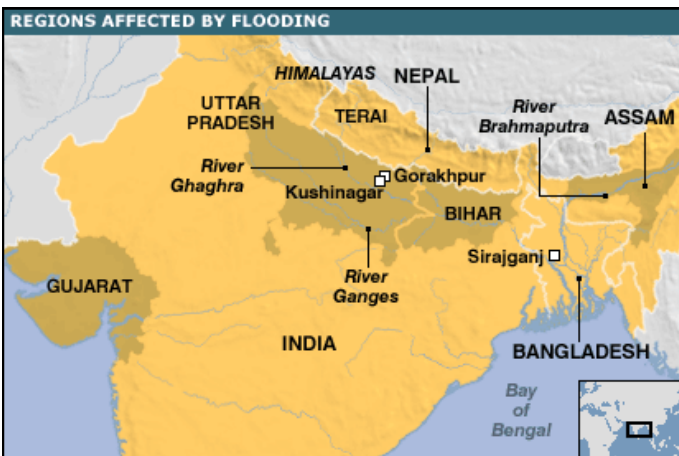
Facts & Figures about the situation in South Asia

In India about 12 million people are affected, primarily in the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Assam, as well as Gujarat in the west. More than 1,000 deaths have been reported.

In Bangladesh more than 5 million people are affected. Two thirds of the country are covered in water; because of the river deltas the situation is still deteriorating, and deaths are increasing.

In Nepal 250,000 people are affected by the rains; land slides are occurring in the higher areas, and large parts of the Terai are flooded.

Please contact *Helping Hands* or your local pastor for additional information (address see below left).



Often the water rises as high as the roof.

Helping Hands e.V.

*Initiative for Development and
Disaster Response*

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Relief Package:
£ 25 (Can\$ 55)
per family

Rehabilitation:
£ 30 (Can\$ 65)
per family

Our partner in Bangladesh

Bangladesh Nazarene Mission (BNM) was founded in 1993 as a non-profit and non-political Christian organization. With several hundred employees, BNM runs development projects in many areas of Bangladesh, including 88 child development centres. Through many years of

experience in disaster response, rehabilitation and long-term help (eg in the devastating floods of 2000, 2002 and 2004), BNM has gained the necessary knowledge, competence and infrastructure to help the people in Bangladesh effectively and in a sustainable way.