

Severe deluge washed away southern and southwestern Sri Lanka

- Sri Lanka is the tropical island in the Indian Ocean located at 60~100 North latitude and 800~820 East Longitude just south of India. With the total land area of 65,525 Km² (including inland waters) and population density of 304 persons/sq.km, Sri Lanka has always temperature (Mean Annual) 27°C in the lowland, 15°C at Nuwara Eliya (altitude 1800 m). Relative Humidity varies from 70% during the day to 90% at night. Rainfall (annual) is 2500 mm to over 5000 mm in South West of the Island and less than 1250 mm in the North West and South East of the Island. Further Sri Lanka experiences rain during the seasons of south-west monsoon (May to August) and North-East Monsoon (November to February).

- The south - west monsoon this year (2003) brought extensive rain to the country resulting historic rain and flood to the country. This is the worst flood in the history Sri Lanka spanning above 50 years. Many of the regions of south and south eastern Sri Lanka are seriously affected by flood and consequent landslides causing severe human sufferings and death. Official statistics confirmed death of over 300 persons and marooned population of about 177,820 families (Matara 83,300 families, Galle 40,000, Ratnapura 50,000, Kalutara 24,650 and Gampaha, Colombo, Hambantota 11,000). The Government has already allocated over Rs.17.00 million for relief and more and more international assistance in various forms flow into the country. Moreover the flood has also destroyed completely about 15, 200 houses and partially about 26,300 houses. Apart from the local residents the international disaster rescue operators are also in the scene to help the victims.



picture courtesy-Daily News, Sri Lanka
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- Majority of the infrastructure in the affected areas are badly damaged and many roads in the districts of Hambantota, Matara, Galle, Ratnapura, and Kalutara have been submerged by floodwaters and obstructed by landslides and became impassable. Moreover, floods and landslides have also affected about 200,000 school children and many schools obstructing temporary shelter. In addition to this catastrophe, the secondary disaster like epidemic of diseases due to water pollution is also expected. The initial damage is estimated to be several hundreds of millions US\$ and the official figure is not yet available due to the continuous rain and evacuation activities.
- Though Sri Lanka is much prone to windstorms and floods and experienced many sever floods in the past years, this is found be the severest in terms of loss of life, homeless, injured and damages. Also the Government has made

several steps to provide relief to the affected population with the help of the international emergency aid and resources. Prime Minister has appointed Disaster management committee and invited the President to head this committee which is to monitor details and coordinate efforts and will comprise Prime Minister and several ministers in charge of the relevant subjects thus endorsing the severity of the flood disaster.

For more information, please contact Dr. SriGowri Sanker (sanker@adrc.asia).