

APFEJ bats for early flood warning system



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Nava Thakuria 3 October 2014 Updated 3 Oct 7651 views

Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (APFEJ) has emphasized on an advanced national and international early flood warning system to prevent the casualties and loss of properties to a great extent. The umbrella environment journalist forum urges the respective governments of Asia Pacific region to initiate for such scientific system and share with the neighboring nations.

Mentioning about the recent floods in northeast India, the forum expresses concern that the natural calamity has snatched the lives of over 150 persons in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya. The last wave of flood just before the autumn festival, had affected millions of people in the region surrounded by Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet (China), Burma and Bangladesh.

The respective province government sources disclosed that thousands of villages were inundated in the last week of September damaging vast areas of croplands. Moreover, the flood and erosion rendered few lakhs of families homeless and many took shelter in the relief camps.

Assam remained the worst sufferer as the heavy rainfalls in Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya made the flood situation grave in the State. This year while Arunachal faced a severe flood in August losing 56 people to the disaster, Meghalaya witnessed unprecedented rainfall and flood in its Garo hills during the last week of September that killed 55 people and affected thousand villages.

On the other hand, Assam lost 67 persons this year due to the flood related calamities. Similarly 4446 villages of Assam were inundated directly affecting 42 lakh people and damaging 4 lakh hectare crop areas. Around 55,000 houses were also completely damaged and over 7 lakh people were rendered homeless because of flood furies in Assam during 2014.

“The incessant heavy rainfall in Meghalaya and Assam together left a trail of devastation in Garo hills and also huge areas of western Assam on the southern bank of Brahmaputra. Even most parts of Assam’s prime city Guwahati remained under water for many days adding endless woes to the citizens,” said Quamrul Chowdhury, chairman of APFEJ, headquartered in Dhaka.

But an effective flood warning system among the provinces of northeast India could have prevented many casualties in Assam as well as the damages in northern Bangladesh as the water run thorough Brahmaputra and Barak rivers to the lower riparian country, argued Chowdhury.

APFEJ, while predicting frequent natural calamities in the coming days due to climate variability, appeals to the concerned governments for adopting policies in local level for adaptation and contributing in international arena for the effective mitigation of natural & man-made disasters.

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BY NAVA THAKURIA

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