

Bihar's nightmare

As flood waters recede in Bihar, millions of underfed children are finding themselves at risk of contracting diseases. Lakhs of people are still grounded on embankments or living in makeshift shelters on highways.

Oppressive heat, showers and unhygienic conditions are making flood victims easy targets for infection. Bihar's poorest people, especially women and children are living through the worst nightmare.

Rotary clubs in India unambiguously expressed their solidarity with the poor and marginalised people in Bihar, with a commitment to support processes that will empower them to participate in development using the right approach.

In such a situation of natural and human made disasters, Rotary clubs strive to provide support in relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation— both psycho-social and material to the survivors and affected people from the most poor and marginalized communities, enabling them to rebuild their lives. The appeal for help from the Rehabilitation Committee set up with the Past Rotary International President Rajendra K Saboo as the Advisor, saw spontaneous response from several RI Districts in India.

I must thank the Rotarians of RI Districts 3010, 3080, 3131, 3140, 3291,



3230 and 3250 for their generous contributions in cash and kind. The list of items that were delivered to District Governor Dr. L B Singh in Patna is endless. Some of the items were: over 10,000 blankets, Rice, Sarees, Lungis, Footwear, Medicines, Tarpaulins, Linen, Kerosene Stoves, Bed sheets, Water purification tablets, Detergents and soaps, Cleaning chemicals, Jerry cans, Cooking utensils, Cutlery, Candles, matchboxes, mosquito nets, Milk powder, Salt and Drinking water. In addition 700 Ghar Wapsi Kits which were organised by PDG Shekhar Mehta, RI District 3291, were also sent to the affected areas.

The relief materials were worth more than rupees three crores. District Governor Dr. L B Singh of RI district 3250 and his team of dedicated volunteers, sorted out the items

and matched the requirement area-wise. The trucks carrying the relief materials were flagged off by the Governor of the State of Bihar Shri Raghunathanlal Bhatia, on October 4, 2008. The administration of the State of Bihar headed by Principal Secretary Mr. Afzal Amanullah IAS praised the efforts of Rotary in providing the much needed relief instantly to the victims.

I must particularly thank PRIP Rajendra K Saboo for his initiative in putting together this committee and to DG Dr. L B Singh for co-ordinating the efforts without a hitch.



*Rtn. Ashok Mahajan
Director, Rotary International*