

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

**SNOW FALL AND AVALANCHES IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR –
A SITUATION REPORT**

PRESS NOTE

India Meteorological Department (IMD) report

According to the IMD, the Western disturbance which affected the northern parts of the country from 16th to 20th February, 2005 causing widespread snowfall over Jammu & Kashmir has moved away eastwards. In view of its eastward movement, clear weather conditions have set in over Jammu & Kashmir, which are likely to continue for next 24 hours. *Due to accumulation of snow and the prevailing clear weather conditions, the danger of avalanches still remains.*

2. Cold and dry northwesterly/northerly winds have set in over plains of northwest and west central India resulting in cold wave conditions in these areas. However, the cold wave conditions are likely to abate after 24 hours.

3. According to the IMD report dated 23rd February, 2005, a feeble western disturbance is likely to affect the western Himalayas from 25th to 26th February, 2005, which may cause *light to moderate rainfall/snowfall* at a few places over Jammu & Kashmir.

4. IMD has been requested to send 6 hourly reports on the weather situation. Ministry of Defence has also been requested to advise SASE to send 6 hourly weather forecasts in the context of snowfall/avalanche to the Control Room of MHA (Fax No.23093750).

Event:

5. As per IMD, snowfall upto 2m has occurred at some places during 16-20th February, 2005. *Highest snowfall recorded in the last 30 years in J & K region has been 4.5 m in February-1996 in Banihal and 8.4 m in February-1967 in Gulmarg.* Initial reports indicate snow accumulation upto 40 ft at several places in different districts. As per the reports received from the State Government, 239 persons have lost their lives and more than 19 persons are missing due to snowfall and avalanches. 308 persons have been rescued so far including 40 foreigners. 10, 000 houses have been damaged. Rabi crop and the plantations have suffered extensive damage. ***Anantnag, Doda, Pulwama and Poonch are among the worst affected districts.***

6. About 300 search and rescue personnel including Army and Para Military Forces have taken shelter inside the tunnel for safety reasons. About 1000 people have been held up near Ramban and 70 loaded carriers are stranded at Batote.

Relief measures taken by the State Government

7. The State Government has taken necessary rescue and relief operations which include ex-gratia relief of Rs.50,000 to the next of kin of the deceased, Rs.25,000 to the persons severely injured

and Rs.5,000 for minor injuries. Relief is also being provided at the rate of Rs.10, 000 for fully damaged houses and Rs.6, 000 for partially damaged houses.

8. Deputy Commissioners of the affected districts have been provided upto Rs.10 lakh for undertaking immediate rescue and relief operations. Civil administration with the assistance of armed forces, paramilitary forces and state Police is making all efforts to reach out to remote locations in different districts for search and rescue operations. Relief materials are also being airdropped in far-flung areas. Armed forces have also provided food packets to stranded passengers on the national highway.

9. Ministry of Defence has been requested to instruct the HAWS, Gulmarg to assist the Civil authorities at Anantnag in rescue and relief operations.

10. State Government requested for assistance of Army and BRO clearance of roads in the interior areas. Ministry of Defence has been requested to advise their Engg. Units to assist the Civil authorities. Ministry of Defence has already made available two dozers ex-Srinagar. About 1000 people stranded on the National Highway between Ramban- Jammu and Loharmunda-Srinagar are being taken to Jammu and Srinagar and their further movement to respective destinations is being facilitated.

Setting up of Control Room:

11. State Government was requested to set up State Disaster Management Control Room in Jammu and Divisional Control Room in Srinagar to be operationalised for 24x7 operations. State Control Room is in constant touch with Ministry of Home Affairs Control Room to exchange information on the rescue and relief operations. State Government has also been advised to organize Inter-Departmental coordination meeting under Divisional Commissioner, Srinagar. The representatives of concerned Ministries of Government of India located in Srinagar/Jammu will be invited to attend the meetings. State Government will send daily situation report including information on search and rescue, position of stock of essential items, number of persons died, persons injured, persons missing and assistance required from the GOI if any.

The State Control Rooms have become **operational** in Srinagar and Jammu. However, the daily situation report is not being received from the State Government.

Coordination:

12. MHA is coordinating rescue and relief in association with all the concerned Ministries/ Departments of Government of India and the State Government. An Inter-Ministerial Core Group under Secretary (BM) (MHA) is reviewing the situation and coordination meetings are being held twice daily.

Sector/Department-wise situation

13. Sector wise situation is as under:

i) Power:

a) 220 KV Kishanpur-Wanpoh line (State owned):

- 4 Towers have been collapsed and Conductor snapping at 1 or 2 spots reported so far. Action Taken: Action plan is being chalked out by the State Government with the assistance of Power Grid Corporation of India (PGCI)/Ministry of Power, for immediate restoration.

b) 132 KV Udhampur-Wanpoh Line (State owned)

- Trees have fallen at 2 spots – Trees removed. Line was charged but could not hold it.
- Conductor snapping at 2-3 places- Further patrolling of line being organised.

c) **Distribution Network:** Survey and immediate restoration work being taken by the State Government.

State Government has informed that about 50,000 poles have been damaged.

Uri generation has been started from 1800 hours on 22nd February,2005, with a load varying between 100-130 MW and is feeding Srinagar area along with Ziankote, Pampore, Bemina, Wagnapura, Habak, Chashma-Shahi, as a separate island grid. Loher **Jhelum HEP** with a load of 35-40 MW is feeding Jhelum, Amargarh, Kupwara, as a separate island. With these two islands, nearly 40 % of the Valley load is being met and the load is less due to outage of distribution system. Generation from Uri and Jhelam HEP will be increased according to addition of load after rectifications.

In Jammu area full load (nearly 550 MW) is being met from rest of the Northern grid. Aerial patrolling has been scheduled for 24th February,2005 for restoration of 220 KV Kishenpur-Pampore and 132 KV Udhampur-Wanpoh lines. A technical team of Powergrid has been deputed to Srinagar to assess the situation and assist in early restoration of the transmission system.

PGCI will assist the State Government in restoration of power in entire valley.

ii) Telecom:

- I)** OFC route between Udhampur and Srinagar washed away due to land slide/snow. These have been **restored** using gensets.
- II)** E/A at Srinagar fault causing mobile service failure. It has been **restored** using gensets and mobile services are **operational**.

The telecom services are being gradually restored in the entire valley .

iii) Civil Aviation: The material lying at Air Port/ Tarmac area at Srinagar Airport has been cleared and all the three bays are now operational. Srinagar Airport is expected to handle 10 civil flights on 23rd February,2005 against 5 scheduled.

10 flights were operated ex-Srinagar on 22.2.05,which carried around 1400 passengers. Ten flights i.e. five additional flights are proposed to be operated during next few days.

iv) Health: Ministry of Health is taking action to provide essential medicines required by the State Government. Hypothermia is the most common disease in such situations. 198 Cartons carrying about 3 Tons of essential medicines have been airlifted on **23rd February, 2005** to Srinagar by Indian Airlines. 15 MT medicines will be airlifted by civil flights on 24th February,2005. Divisional Commissioner, Srinagar has been informed to make necessary arrangements.

v) Petroleum products:

The status of POL stocks and supplies in Srinagar as on 23.02.2005 is as under:

<u>PRODUCT</u>	<u>STOCK</u>
MS (Petrol)	306 KL
SKO (Kerosene)	1163 KL
HSD (Diesel)	1699 KL

LPG (MT)@

280 MT (pumpable stock)

@ In addition 150 MT of dead stock is available, and some of it could be retrieved if the situation so warrants.

MS and SKO are at minimum stock level. IOC has advised AFS, Avantipur for sending 100 KL SKO to Srinagar by Tank Trucks, by downgrading ATF, to overcome the present crisis. IOC has arranged 120 barrels, 60 each of SKO and MS at Pathanlot for airlifting to Srinagar by Air Force. However, due to non-availability of Air Craft of IAF, these could not be airlifted. The Ministry of Defence was requested to ensure their airlifting on 24th February, 2005. The Ministry of Defence has been requested to plan airlift of POL from Pathankot, Agra and Udhampur on 24th February, 2005 and K.oil from Chandigarh on 25th February, 2005.

Possibility of transporting loaded Tank Trucks (TT) by cargo planes is also being considered. Ministry of Defence has been requested to make arrangements for airlifting of at least one TT on 25th February, 2005.

Bottling of 5814 LPG cylinders was done on 20 & 21 February. Another 4500 LPG cylinders have been bottled on 23.2.2005. Bottling plant has been restored at Srinagar and is operating at 40% of its capacity. MOD is exploring movement of LPG by air to Srinagar. *Ministry of Petroleum has been advised to monitor the bottling of LPG cylinders at Srinagar to ensure that there is no shortfall.*

The ITBP informed that the stock of diesel for running genests around the Jawahar Tunnel is very critical and require about 4000-5000 Lt. Diesel immediately. The per day requirement approximately is 400 Lt. Ministry of Petroleum and ITBP will pack the product in barrel/ jericane and Ministry of Defence will arrange for airdropping.

vi) Transport Aircraft: State Government has requested for 2 small helicopters viz Chetak or one big helicopter viz M-8/M-17 at the disposal of Divisional Commissioner at Srinagar for rescue and relief operations in the remote areas of the affected districts in the division. It has been made available on 23rd February, 2005.

vii) Clearance of Jammu-Srinagar National Highway [294 km]: Jammu-Ramban stretch is open to traffic. Srinagar-Loharmunda is also open for one-way traffic. Out of total 294 km length between Jammu and Srinagar, now 45 km of this highway between **Ramban-Banihal-Jawahar Tunnel-Loharmunda** is blocked at different places and BRO along with armed forces and state administration is making all efforts for road clearance at three places viz. *Ramban, Banihal and Lohar Munda*. About 300 persons and 14 equipments are engaged in the road clearing operation. BRO will be able to clear the National Highway by 28th February, 2005.

4 dozers and 6 snow-ploughs were to be airlifted on 23 February from Leh to Avantipur. However, only one big dozer has been airlifted on 23rd February. It is expected that one more big dozer will be airlifted on 24th February. BRO was also requested to take immediate action for assembling the newly acquired snow ploughs at Leh and put these into operation. 2 dozers were made available from Rajouri at Ramban. The State Government was requested to mobilize some dozers/JCB ex-Jammu for BRO so that clearance operation could further be expedited. However, no feedback has come from the State Government. Government of Jammu & Kashmir is again requested to take necessary action for mobilizing dozers etc. from private agencies. BRO showed their inability for arranging the dozers from private agencies, due to administrative

reasons. IRCON and NHA have been requested to make available the snow clearing equipment viz. JCB, dozers to BRO.

viii) Requirements of essential items: The State Government requested for essential items like milk powder, vegetables etc. It was advised that State Government may procure such items of their own from Delhi or any other nearest place out of funds available in the State Calamity Relief Fund.

ix) Supply of foodgrains: The Department of Food and Public Distribution has informed that as on 21st February 2005, at Jammu Division, 14,484 MT wheat, 18,634 MT rice and 6552 MT sugar is available. At Srinagar Division, 5257 MT wheat, 13568 MT rice and 118 MT sugar is available. State Government has requested for enhancement of the sugar stock at Srinagar. In case the stock position of sugar at Srinagar becomes critical, this will be airlifted from Jammu Division, where adequate stocks are available. The Department of Food and Public Distribution informed that FCI Depot at Jammu has been instructed to release the required quantity of foodgrain and sugar to the State Government. The Department of Food and Public Distribution was advised to monitor the foodgrain stock position in Srinagar in consultation with the State Government and ensure availability of adequate stock.

xi) Gensets: The State Government requested for gensets for making operational the essential services like water supply, health sector etc. It was advised that gensets may be procured by the State Government and necessary assistance will be extended by GOI, if needed. However, the State Government has not given any feed back in the matter. State Government is again requested to take action promptly to procure gensets.

xii) Satellite phones: MHA has provided five Satellite phones for use of officers engaged in the rescue and relief operations. State has requested some more such Satellite phones. It was advised to procure them from the funds of the CRF, as it is an approved item under the CRF guidelines. State Government has not reported about procurement of Satellite phones.

xii) Immediate requirement of Rs. 50.00 crore: State Government has requested for release of Rs.50.00 crore for taking rescue and relief operations. It was mentioned that an amount of Rs. 42.43 crore has been allocated in the CRF for the year 2004-05 comprising of Rs. 31.82 crore as Central share and Rs. 10.61 crore as State share. Entire amount of Central share has already been released. The State Government was advised to send the details of expenditure from the CRF so that their request of Rs. 50.00 crore can be considered. The request of the State Government is being processed.

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

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OK/PM/SBM