

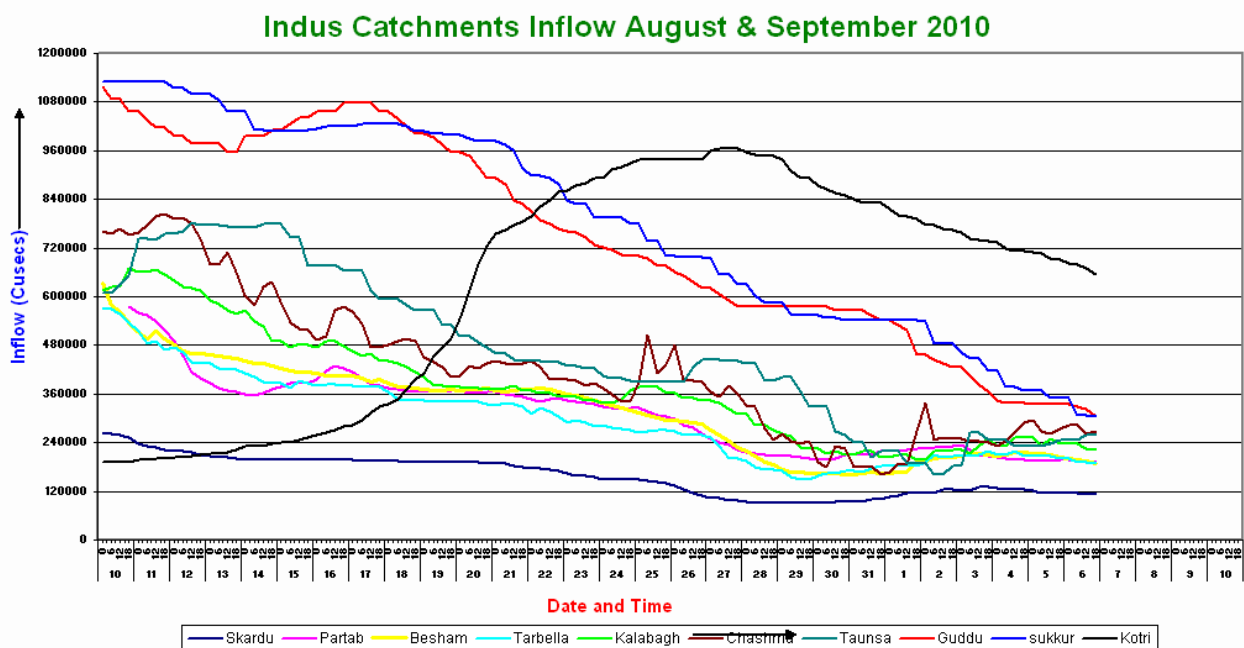
Update: Pakistan Floods 6 weeks on...

Following such a major inundation the ground is now saturated over huge areas of Pakistan. All the available soil storage is taken up and groundwater therefore returns to the surface, which means that water supplies are contaminated, and returning to agricultural production is very difficult. With some critical dates coming up for re-starting cultivation, the long-term food situation could get even worse, especially given the large population in the affected areas, and the need for large volumes of food aid to be distributed in areas with damaged infrastructure.

In the province of Sindh the situations is improving slowly owing to the geography of the land. The terrain here is very flat, and the water is draining away more slowly as a result. There is also a general draining from north to south across the affected area, which means that as parts of the north clear, the waters remain in the southern provinces.

The **Pakistan Meteorological Organisation** is keeping an eye on the floods, and their website is a useful resource for the latest information and monitoring, although they have an extremely difficult job monitoring such as a huge inundation.

<http://www.pakmet.com.pk/FFD/cp/floodpage.asp>



Source: http://www.pakmet.com.pk/FFD/index_files/inflow/indus.htm

The Indus river system and tributaries is now draining into the Arabian Sea, and flow remains at very high levels, as it will do for some considerable time. Satellites are tracking the floods by remotely measuring the levels of soil moisture: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-10991541>

There has also been a major effort to release data for viewing in **Google Earth** and this has been recently extended – details on this Google Earth blog posting, which provides a link to a KML file download...

http://www.gearthblog.com/blog/archives/2010/09/a_ton_more_data_from_the_pakistan_f.html

The **BBC** has a series of reports following the course of the Indus, as this was the area most badly affected.

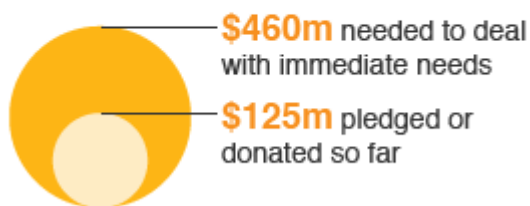
Children have been unable to return to school as they have been damaged in the floods...

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11140724>

Aid agencies are working on the ground, and **Shelterbox** have recently released images of people who have been re-housed in their tents after weeks out in the open. The UN has repeated its appeals for help, following a recent visit by UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie.

6 million people estimated to need food aid

Over **722,000** homes have been damaged or destroyed



Source: OCHA

There have also been some unconfirmed reports which suggested that areas of land owned by rich landowners were protected at the expense of those farmed by poorer families:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/pakistans-rich-diverted-floods-to-save-their-land-2069244.html>

Dave Petley from Durham University has also blogged on the impact of the floods on infrastructure such as the vital Karakoram Highway in the north of the country.

Kamila Shamsie has written about the wider reasons for the floods' impact, which are not confined to purely physical causes: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/aug/05/pakistan-floods-failure-state>

Clearly the worst may be yet to come, with water-borne diseases, and the problems with rehousing millions of people, and re-establishing the economic basis for their livelihoods. It is estimated that as many as half a million women are also due to give birth in the next six months, so there are also fears for their health, and that of their children.

A clip has been added to the BBC Learning Zone:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/pakistan-hit-by-terrible-floods/10733.html>

Some reports also suggest that the River Indus may change its course as a result of the floods, which will dramatically affect those communities that may have developed along the established course. Some reports explain that even the established course was only 200 years old, and the result of an earlier diversion following a major earthquake.

This report <http://www.abc.net.au/unleashed/stories/s3010324.htm> describes the impact on those communities living along the river.

A further update will follow as the flood waters recede further and the longer term impacts become clearer.