

FLASH UPDATE 4

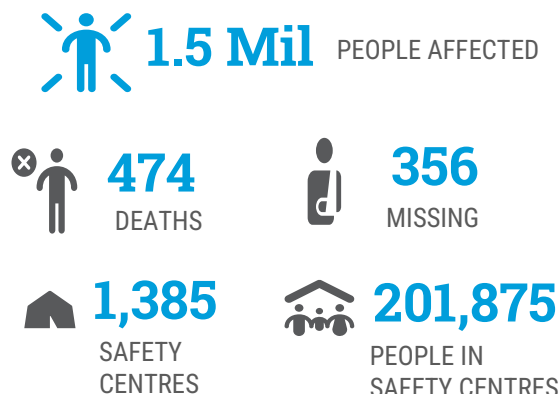
Sri Lanka: Tropical Cyclone Ditwah

As of 3 December 2025, 3:00 p.m. local time, all information subject to confirmation

Situation Overview

The latest reports indicate a significant increase in impacts from Cyclone Ditwah, widening humanitarian needs across the country. The Government declared 22 of the island's 25 districts as national disaster affected areas.

Updated government figures report 474 deaths and 356 people missing, with 1,586,329 people (448,817 families) affected across all 25 districts.



The cyclone, which moved across Sri Lanka on 28 November, has left 201,875 people from 53,758 families sheltering in 1,385 government-run safety centres. A total 41,329 houses have been partially or fully damaged.

The highest numbers of affected people are recorded in Puttalam, Colombo, Gampaha and Mannar, reflecting widespread inundation across western, north-western and northern districts. With over 200 landslides in recent days, landslide alerts were extended until 3 December across several areas, including the central highland districts of Kandy, Nuwara Eliya and Badulla, where significant loss of life and structural damage have already occurred.

Despite significant infrastructure constraints, with multiple roads still inaccessible, clearance operations have reopened several key roadways, improving access for relief teams and restoring connectivity between priority districts. Electricity restoration efforts are on-going, prioritizing hospitals and water supply centres. Clean water access remains a concern in several flood- and landslide-affected districts, due to damages to water-treatment and supply infrastructure.

Water levels in the Kelani River are steadily receding and flood conditions in the Commercial Capital City Colombo are expected to gradually ease.

Northeast monsoon conditions are expected to gradually establish over the island in the coming days, with rains expected in several regions.

Government Response

Rescue operations are still ongoing. Despite emergency assistance from multiple actors, including generous contributions from the public, some remote areas remain inaccessible due to landslides that have completely disrupted access roads.

The Ministry of Finance has issued a circular to facilitate government spending and expedite recovery efforts, reiterating the 2024 procurement guidelines. Under this, provincial chief secretaries and district secretaries can spend up to Rs. 150 million and Rs. 100 million respectively. State officials were also instructed to inform the Treasury if needs exceed these spending limits. The LKR 10,000 allowance provided to each affected household to restore sanitation and clean their homes has been increased to LKR 25,000 following a Cabinet decision. The President's Fund has announced a special grant of LKR 25,000 for the educational needs of each schoolchild affected by the disaster.

The Extraordinary Gazette issued declaring 22 districts as National Disaster-Affected Areas under the Registration of Deaths (Temporary Provisions) Act No 19 of 2010, enables expedited administrative processes, including the registration of deaths in disaster-hit areas.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has published detailed information on essential items required for relief operations. Once cleared by the Ministry of Finance, these goods may be transported by air or sea and will be released without tax obligations if consignments are addressed to the Disaster Management Centre. Items sent directly by foreign governments to Sri Lankan embassies will also qualify for duty-free clearance. The full procedure and guidelines are available online.

To address growing concerns around food security, the government has decided to import frozen vegetables, relax import regulations, compensate farmers quickly, and provide fertilizer so they can restart cultivation. The Ministry of Trade is conducting spot raids to ensure sellers do not inflate the prices of essential food items. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka Police have announced strict legal action against individuals circulating false or misleading information on social media during the ongoing disaster period.

Of the 156 water supply schemes affected across the island, the National Water Supply and Drainage Board has managed to restore 126 over the past three days. Telephone and internet connections are expected to be fully restored this week. The Ceylon Electricity Board has decided not to suspend power supply due to unpaid bills in disaster-affected areas. Additionally, Aswesuma beneficiaries have been granted an extension until 31 December to recertify their information in order to remain eligible for welfare benefits.

On 1 December, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the establishment of the Rebuilding Sri Lanka Fund, comprising representatives from both the government and the private sector. The government has also sought support from the World Bank to conduct a Global Rapid Post-Disaster Damage Estimation (GRADE) assessment, which is expected to be completed within approximately two weeks.

Humanitarian partners coordination, preparedness and response

International support continues to arrive, with Maldives, Bangladesh, Great Britain, the United Arab Emirates, and Nepal pledging assistance. A Japanese emergency medical team has also arrived in Sri Lanka to conduct an urgent assessment prior to deploying a full emergency medical contingent. Sri Lanka Customs has announced an exemption from customs duties and other taxes for foreign relief and aid entering the country to streamline humanitarian assistance.

A Joint Rapid Needs Assessment (JRNA) has been developed with the Disaster Management Centre, UN agencies, and humanitarian partners, bringing together multiple data sources, from preliminary reports by government and field partners to satellite imagery and GIS analysis. By mapping flood and landslide exposure, the assessment provides a picture of where impacts are likely to be most severe and helps guide immediate response planning. The JRNA has been published by the Disaster Management Centre and can be accessed [here](#).

The United Nations and its partners are delivering urgent, multi-sectoral support. Thousands of essential non-food items, including kitchen sets, water tanks, generators and hygiene supplies have been provided to the Disaster Management Centre and district authorities, with additional relief items being procured and dispatched. Food assistance, safe drinking water, sanitation, and health supplies are reaching isolated communities, and rapid medical teams have been deployed. Protection services, including the distribution of maternity and dignity kits, are ongoing. Early recovery efforts, such as damage assessments and technical support, are underway in close coordination with national authorities to ensure effective and timely relief.

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