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# Mumbai remembers last year's floods

- **When the rains first hit in the early afternoons in the third week of July, millions of Mumbai's office workers were tucked safely away in their offices.**

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BBC News Online

Mumbai. 28<sup>th</sup> July 2006

It was no different from any other monsoon, many thought. A coastal city, Mumbai is regularly hit with heavy rains during the months of July and August. But a few hours later, when many of the city's financial executives attempted to make their way home on Mumbai's railway networks, they realized this was going to be a very different monsoon.

Mumbai's streets were flooded and almost a meter of rain swept away people, cars and precious belongings. Some people even lost their homes. As many as 500 people died in this city because of the rains, many of them from Mumbai's overcrowded slums.

## Emergency drills

One year later, and Indian industry has moved on. The rains have returned to Mumbai, but if you were to take a walk in the heart of the city's corporate district in the Bandra Kurla Complex today, it is business as usual. Billions of dollars are made in India's financial capital everyday, fuelling the growth in India's roaring economy, and Indian companies cannot afford to let their work be affected by disaster.

Which is why Intelenet, an Indian outsourcing firm, has set up measures to protect and prepare its workers for future disasters. Emergency drills are run every quarter to ensure that any disaster is handled well. Thousands of calls are attended to by workers in Intelenet's call centres every day from the UK and the US. Work here has to go on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Safety first

Last year's floods took Indian companies like Intelenet by surprise. Nobody expected that much rain. It had never happened before in Mumbai's history. Intelenet lost some money in the floods, but says it was not significant. It also lost some of its valuable call centre equipment, which got damaged by the water.

But the company has learnt some valuable lessons from last year's downpour.

"The main thing we learnt from last year's floods was that communication was critical," says Susir Kumar, the company's Chief Executive Officer.

"We've set up a text messaging service to make sure that our staff know the correct routes to get them home safely, or if they're planning to come to work, which ways they can come here by," he explains.

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"Also we want to encourage those who are coming to work here and continuing with calls. We want them to know that they will be well looked after here."

This year, Intelenet has 300 sleeping bags on site, as well as plenty of food, fuel and water. "Initially last year we thought we needed supplies for just 12 hours, but it then it turned out we needed them for 2 days," says Mr Kumar.