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Information bulletin

Bangladesh: Cold Wave

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Glide n°	Date of issue: 22 December 2019
Date of disaster: 18 December 2019	Point of contact: Surendra Kumar Regmi, Programme Coordinator, IFRC, Bangladesh Country Office
Operation start date: 21 December 2019	Expected timeframe: NA
Category of disaster: Yellow	
Host National Society: Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS)	
Number of people affected: NA	Number of people to be assisted: NA
N° of National Societies currently involved in the operation (if available and relevant): NA	
N° of other partner organizations involved in the operation (if available and relevant): NA	

This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. This information bulletin provides updates on the preparations and actions taken by the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) so far. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation. The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) will, however, accept direct assistance to provide support to the affected population.

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The situation

A cold wave is sweeping over different districts of Bangladesh, disrupting normal life and causing suffering to people. The districts of Chuadanga, Dinajpur, Panchagarh, Rajshahi, Pabna, Naogaon, Nilphamari, Jessore and Kurigram are mainly experiencing the biting cold during the last few days. On 19 December, the lowest temperature was recorded in Chuadanga district 7.9 degree Celsius. During this first spell of sudden cold weather with winter's arrival, the dense fog at mornings continue to disrupt communication by road, waterways and air. In general, this may not seem particularly low, but Bangladesh is a tropical country, where people are not prepared for cold weather and most homes have no form of heating. For the fifth straight day the sun was eclipsed by clouds and fog in northern and western part of the country and in the capital, Dhaka the sun was not seen for four days in a row. The normal life and activities are greatly hampered. According to the weather forecast moderate to thick fog would continue to hamper visibility.



People gather beside a fire to get warmth during the biting cold that sweeps the country. (Photo: Mahmud Hossain Opu/Dhaka Tribune)

The Meteorological Office said that there will be another cold wave at the end of this December. Chilly wind from the north continued to cause deep distress, particularly low-income people. According to an official of the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, for the current spell of the cold wave, the situation will start improving from Sunday, 22 December.

At least 4,500 people treated by government hospitals in 40 districts for cold related diseases.

In Rangpur, a large number of people, mostly from poorer groups, crowded makeshift shops beside roads to buy warm clothes for cheaper prices. Life in Lalmonirhat district is badly disturbed due to the biting cold accompanied by dense fog as the sun remained invisible for couple of days. Poor people are badly suffering due to lack of warm clothes. The people living in the char (land emerging from riverbed) areas beside Teesta and Dharla rivers are more vulnerable.

Around 40 people admitted to the hospital every day for the treatment of cold-related diseases, said by the Resident medical officer (RMO) at Chuadanga Sadar Hospital.

Low-income people, especially farm labourers, are the worst sufferers as most of them cannot go out for work due to the adverse weather while many people, especially children and the elderly, are getting cold-related diseases like pneumonia.

Dense fog compelled the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh to divert four Dhaka-bound international flights to Kolkata and Myanmar on Saturday. The flights landed at Dhaka International Airport behind the schedules and domestic airliners had to delay flights on all routes because of low visibility in the morning and passengers waited long hours at airports to catch up with the new schedule of flying.

In Lalmonirhat district 28,700 blankets are being distributed among the cold-hit poor people by the authority. They have also mentioned that due to huge demand, they have sent request to Relief and Rehabilitation Ministry, seeking more 50,000 blankets for poor people. In Chuadanga, 20,000 warm clothes are being distributed by authorities.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) NHQ and district branches have been monitoring the situation closely. Based on weather report and secondary information, BDRCS response department has started mobilizing blankets.

BDRCS have already dispatched 8,500 chadors (warm clothes) to the most affected districts to be distributed immediately. Additionally, 10,000 blankets will be dispatched tomorrow.

On the other hand, under its Population Movement Operation (PMO), in Cox's Bazar, BDRCS with the support of German Red Cross (GRC) and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has distributed 18,000 blankets along with sleeping mats among the people in the camp settlements. Another, 6,000 blankets and sleeping mats will be distributed in next couple of days.

In country, Red Cross Red Crescent movement partners are also closely monitoring this situation. IFRC, Bangladesh Country Office has allocated another 16,000 blankets to Bangladesh Red Crescent Society to be distributed among the most affected people by the cold wave in the northern affected districts of the country.



Click here

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Save lives.
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote **social inclusion**
and a culture of
non-violence and **peace.**