

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Bangladesh and India: Cyclone AILA

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This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The International Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation. The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and Indian Red Cross Society will, however, accept direct assistance to provide support to the affected population in the respective countries.

[<click here to view the map of the affected areas, or here for detailed contact information>](#)

The situation

On 25 May, the cyclonic storm AILA, which hovered over the north bay and adjoining west central bay, moved northwards towards the inland of **Bangladesh**. The storm intensified further and moved in a northerly direction and crossed the West Bengal-Khulna coast. According to media reports, by the afternoon, the storm hit Bangladesh's south-western coast, killing approximately 120 people and washing away several thousand homes as wind-driven tidal surges inundated vast tracts of land.

With winds of up to 90km an hour, the storm roared into Khulna, Satkhira, Patuakhali, Bagerhat, Barisal, Barguna, Pirojpur, Jhalakathi, Laxmipur, Jessore, Bhola, Chittagong and Noakhali around 2pm local time. Thousands of people were made homeless as tidal waves of up to ten feet rolled onto many of the villages in the coastal districts. The waves damaged river and flood-control embankments and dykes, submerging many villages, mainly in Khulna, Satkhira, Patuakhali, Barguna, Bhola, Noakhali and Laxmipur. A large number of domestic animals and standing crops on farmland were lost in the surge.

Alerts were launched by the Bangladeshi government, with signal no. 7 hoisted for Mongla and coastal districts in the south and south-western offshore islands and chars, while in the coastal districts of Cox's Bazaar and Chittagong, signal no. 6 was hoisted. Low-lying areas of these coastal districts, offshore islands and chars were inundated by storm surge five to ten feet above normal astronomical tides, destroying homes, livelihoods, livestock and displacing thousands of families. According to media reports to date, approximately 500 people are missing, mostly fishermen who have not returned from sea. One of the most affected areas is Satkhira district, near Mongla Port.

Actions taken by the government of Bangladesh to date:

- The government disaster management system was activated and coordinated pre-impact preparedness.
- The ministry of food and disaster management (MoFDM), disaster management bureau (DMB) and department of relief and rehabilitation (DRR) opened the control room. MoFDM is now visiting the affected areas.
- MoFDM ordered the deputy commissioners and UN organizations of coastal districts and upazillas to conduct disaster preparedness meetings for possible damage assessments due to the cyclone.
- MoFDM has ordered volunteers from 32 upazillas of 11 coastal districts to be alerted in accordance with established operating procedures.
- The disaster management information centre was activated and remains open round the clock to monitor and report on changing situations.
- The disaster management bureau has instructed the district disaster management committees (DDMC) and emergency response resources of coastal districts to be on stand by.

- Local administration of districts and upazilas in the coastal belt evacuated people to safer places and many took shelter at cyclone shelters, schools and colleges before AILA made landfall.
- The prime minister has ordered members of the armed forces to join in the relief and rescue operations while the deputy commissioner said a 33-member team of the Bangladesh Navy has left for the cyclone-hit areas to conduct rescue operations. The team was facing difficulties due to the adverse weather.

Government of Bangladesh allocation to affected districts

| Item | Allocation from MoFDM |
|------|------------------------------|
| Cash | BDT 1.2 million (CHF 19,006) |
| Rice | 100 MT |

In **India**, Cyclone AILA ripped through the West Bengal coast, unleashing storms that uprooted trees, electricity poles and thatched homes, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake, and killing approximately 30 people and affecting 100,000 others.

A severe storm with winds of 110 km per hour, accompanied by heavy rainfall, preceded the cyclone, ripping through the districts of Kolkata, North and South 24 Parganas, Howrah and Hoogly. The coastal blocks of Sagar, Namkhana, Kakdwip, Patharpraima, Canning, Basanti, Mathurapur and Kultali have all been severely affected and casualties have been reported. It was further reported by the media that around 100,000 people had become homeless. The accompanying rains caused water-logging in large parts of the city, while power supply was erratic and flights were cancelled.

Up to four people were killed and 15 injured in Kolkata due to the storm. The city streets were deserted as authorities stopped tram services and people were advised to stay indoors. The Kolkata city administration and police declared a virtual emergency. Army assistance has also been sought to help the civil administration to respond to the situation.

Cyclone AILA also affected several parts of coastal Orissa with heavy rains and winds, prompting the government to prepare for relief work. No casualties have been reported so far.

According to the director of the regional meteorological centre, the cyclone is now lying stationary 50 km west of Kolkata and is moving in a northerly direction. It is expected that the cyclone will weaken gradually to a depression, affecting the northern and north-eastern states of India.

Local media indicates that the Indian army and government aid workers responded quickly to provide relief to more than 400,000 people marooned in the Sundarbans delta region in West Bengal. In addition, rescue and relief operations were carried out by army personnel in Sandeshkhali and Kultali of North and South 24 Parganas districts. The government also provided support to the affected communities through food packets air-dropped by two helicopters dispatched from the Indian army.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

In **Bangladesh**, the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) district branches affected by Cyclone AILA have conducted initial damage assessments in their respective districts for emergency response. The damage assessments will be completed within the next few days.

BDRCS has so far distributed BDT 30,000 (CHF 475) in cash to Barguna, Bhola, Bagerhat and Patuakhali units each and BDT 50,000 (CHF 971) in cash will be sent to Satkhira unit for the purchase of dry foods for emergency distribution. A total of 2,000 water purification tablets and 5,000 packets of oral rehydration solution will be sent with each team.

The International Federation country office is coordinating with the BDRCS and the cyclone preparedness programme through regular meetings. At time of reporting, the International Federation has mobilized teams to assist BDRCS in assessments and other forms of emergency response.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is also coordinating with the BDRCS and has mobilized a tracing team that will join the assessment in tracing operations.

In **India**, the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) disaster management centre at the national headquarters is in communication with the West Bengal state branch. The disaster management team from the IRCS and the International Federation are closely monitoring the situation and is ready for any further emergency response.

The IRCS has seven water and sanitation units pre-positioned at its regional warehouse in Salt Lake, Kolkata and can be deployed immediately along with the recently trained national disaster water and sanitation response team (NDWRT) members, should there be a requirement.

The IRCS disaster management coordinator of the West Bengal state branch is closely monitoring the ground situation and is in regular contact with the disaster management focal points of the affected districts for any further required support. As discussed during the emergency meeting at the state branch and as directed by the state branch secretary, a medical team and some relief items will be sent immediately to the most affected areas.

In response to the disaster, IRCS used the flood contingency plan prepared for North 24 Praganas and Purba Midnapore districts, which included district level disaster response capacity.

The state disaster response team member from Purba Midnapore district branch, along with the local Red Cross volunteers, carried out an emergency assessment in the affected areas.

Red Cross volunteers, particularly local junior Red Cross volunteers, were involved in disseminating early warning as well as search and rescue efforts, followed by the distribution of bleaching powder and halogen tablets among the affected people in the Chandpurvillage, Lachinpur, Sankarpur, Mandarmani and Bidyadharpur villages. The volunteers were also very active in Donipur village where they distributed medicines among the displaced villagers. Immediate distributions carried out were aimed at the affected population living in temporary shelters and was based on initial assessments which indicated that the most required items are bleaching powder, halogen tablets and kitchen sets.

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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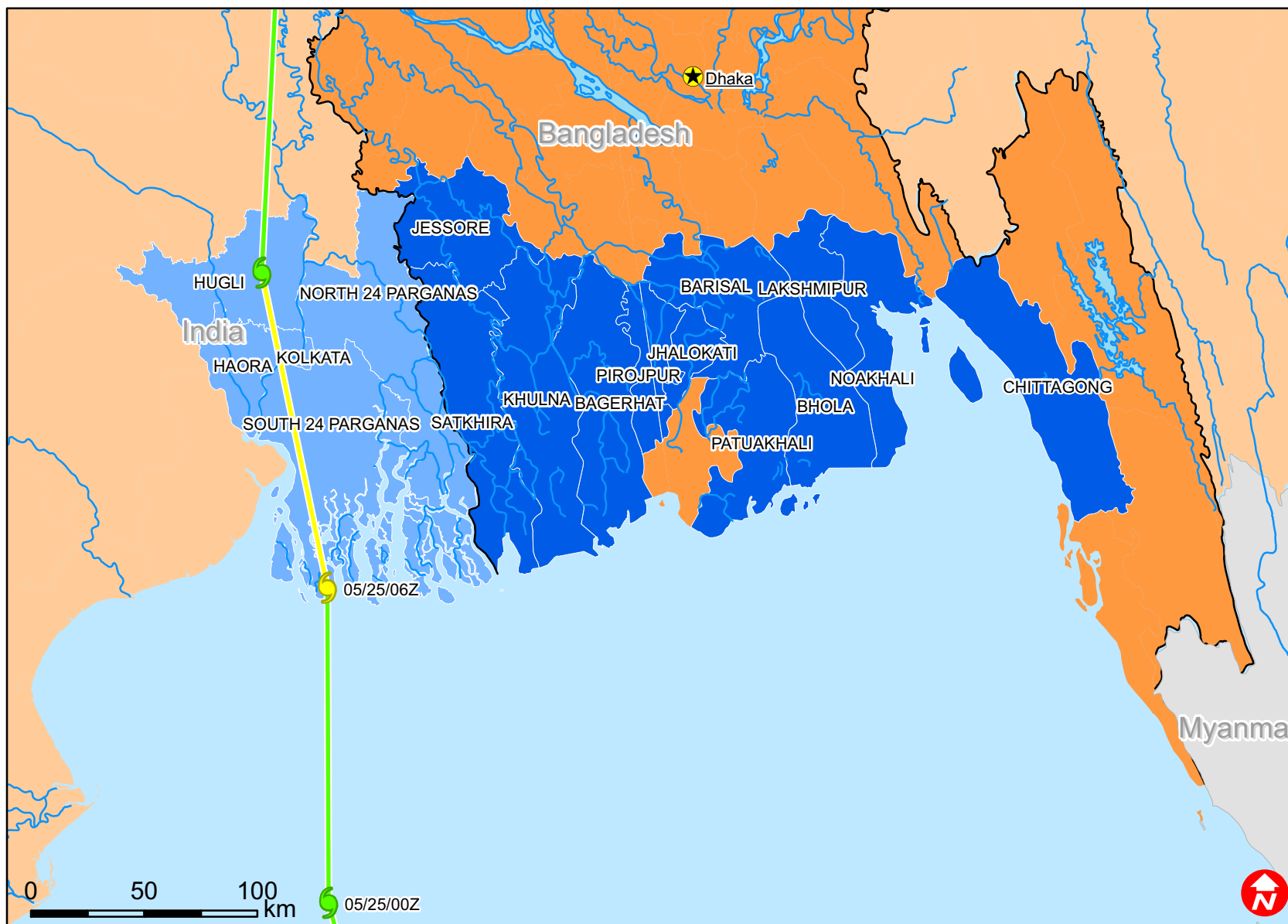
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[<map below; click here to return to the title page>](#)



Bangladesh and India: Tropical Cyclone Aila



- CYCLONE-1
- TROPICAL DEPRESSION
- TROPICAL STORM
- CYCLONE-1
- TROPICAL STORM
- Capitals
- Bangladesh
- Affected area in Bangladesh
- India
- Affected area in India

The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities.
 Map data sources: ESRI, DEVINFO, ISCGM, International Federation, IB260509.mxd