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Disaster relief emergency fund (DREF) Bangladesh: Cold Wave

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation n° MDRBD012
GLIDE n° CW-2013-000001-BGD
4 January 2013

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent emergency response. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of National Societies to respond to disasters.

CHF 296,678 has been allocated from the IFRC's DREF on 3 January 2013 to replenish 30,000 blankets of which the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) delivered for immediate assistance to 75,000 cold-affected beneficiaries (15,000 families) in 21 districts in Bangladesh. The DREF also funded for an additional 9,000 blankets for preparedness supplies. Un-earmarked funds to replenish the DREF are encouraged.

Summary: A cold wave has struck the northern districts of the sub-Himalayan regions of Bangladesh claiming more than 72 lives as per the assessment data of BDRCS and local administration, mostly children due to hypothermia. According to the Disaster Management Information Centre on 26 December 2012, around 22 districts have been affected by the cold wave, notably the districts of Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, Nilphamary, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Bogra, Joypurhat, Naogaon, Nawabganj, Rajshahi, Natore, Sirajganj, Pabna, Mymensing in the north, Moulvibazar in the east and certain districts in the south, namely Kushtia, Jessore, Faridpur and Madaripur. According to the BDRCS concerned units, people living in open and public spaces like bus and railway stations, and daily labourers and slum dwellers are most vulnerable to cold wave as they cannot afford warm clothes. As per the reports received from various units, more than 50 per cent of population in the district is affected by the cold wave.



Lighting small fire as this is only most viable option for most communities in the cold: A community in Dinajpur district, **Photo:** BDRCS.

The number of pneumonia and diarrhoeal patients, mostly older population and children, continues to increase due to the sweeping bone-chilling cold wave in the sub-Himalayan regions in the past week. The extreme cold and the lack of sunlight is expected to hamper the natural growth of crops, including *Boro* (winter rice variety) seedlings. Failure of cash crops may result in unemployment of agro-labour and investment of share croppers and induce poverty of marginal farmers.

Based on the three-month forecast (December 2012 to February 2013) from Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), the weather condition in January 2013 will be experiencing moderate/severe cold waves (6°C - 8°C/ 4°C - 6°C) in the northern, north-eastern and central parts of the country and mild/moderate cold waves (8°C - 10°C/ 6°C - 8°C) in other parts of the country are likely to sweep across. BMD also predicted one mild cold waves (8°C - 10°C/ 6°C - 8°C) is likely to sweep across the northern and central parts of the country during early February 2013. (For more details, refer to <http://www.bmd.gov.bd/Content.php?MenuId=39&SubMenuId=60&SubSubMenuId=54>)

According to the Disaster Management Information Centre (DMIC), on 26 December 2012 the Government of Bangladesh allocated 30,900 blankets for 14 districts. In addition to that, the government has allocated 240,00 blankets for 64 districts (entire country), which will be released in installments for distribution. The Ministry of Food and Disaster Management is expected to distribute more warm clothes in the coming weeks. Furthermore, some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like Muslim Aid and Action Aid Bangladesh will distribute 20,000 blankets across the country.

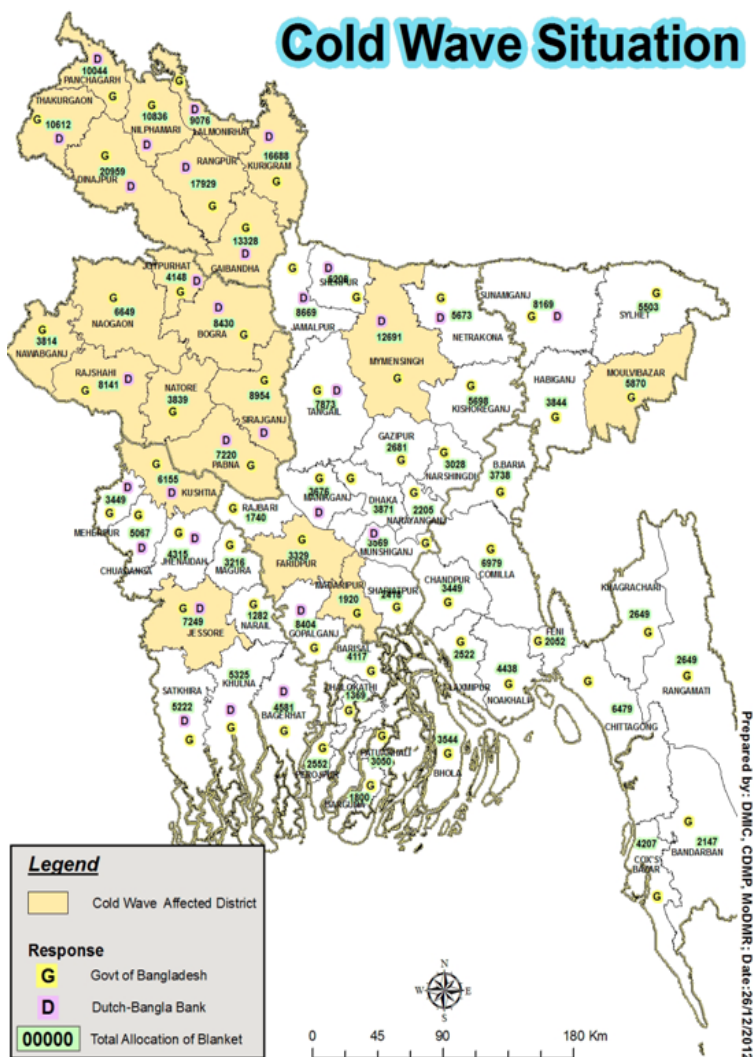
While BDRCS dispatched and distributed 30,000 blankets (20,000 from BDRCS own stock and 10,000 from IFRC and BDRCS joint disaster preparedness stock) for 15,000 severely affected families or 75,000 people. The procurement and distribution of the relief packages are in progress to the affected district units. A further 9,000 blankets is allocated under the DREF as preparedness stock.

This operation is expected to be implemented for three months, and will therefore be completed by 3 April 2013. A Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 3 July 2013).

The situation

Bangladesh has been reeling under bitter cold weather from mid-December 2012. A mild cold wave started sweeping over the country causing sufferings to the poor people. The wind blowing from the Himalayas has intensified the cold and will continue over Rajshahi, Rangpur divisions and regions of Kushtia, Jessore and Srimangal. Thick fog has engulfed over river basins and across Bangladesh from midnight till noon. Single digit temperature with cold winds and severe fog is prevailing in many of the affected districts. The meteorological office warns that temperature will go further down. The lowest temperature of the country is likely to be 8°C - 9°C and the highest temperature may be 25°C - 26°C. Minimum temperature recorded at Rangpur district was 7.5°C. Women, children and elderly people are experiencing respiratory illness from the cold waves and situation deteriorates in the night time as they cannot afford warm clothes. Hospitals in the affected districts reported increase in the number of admissions for cold weather related illness. The cold wave has also caused crop and other natural resource losses, which will have a longer term negative impact on the economic situation of the country.

Winter crop failures will result in greater poverty, poor dwellings, and seasonal unemployment (especially agricultural or farming sectors). According to DMIC, the following map indicates the district wise

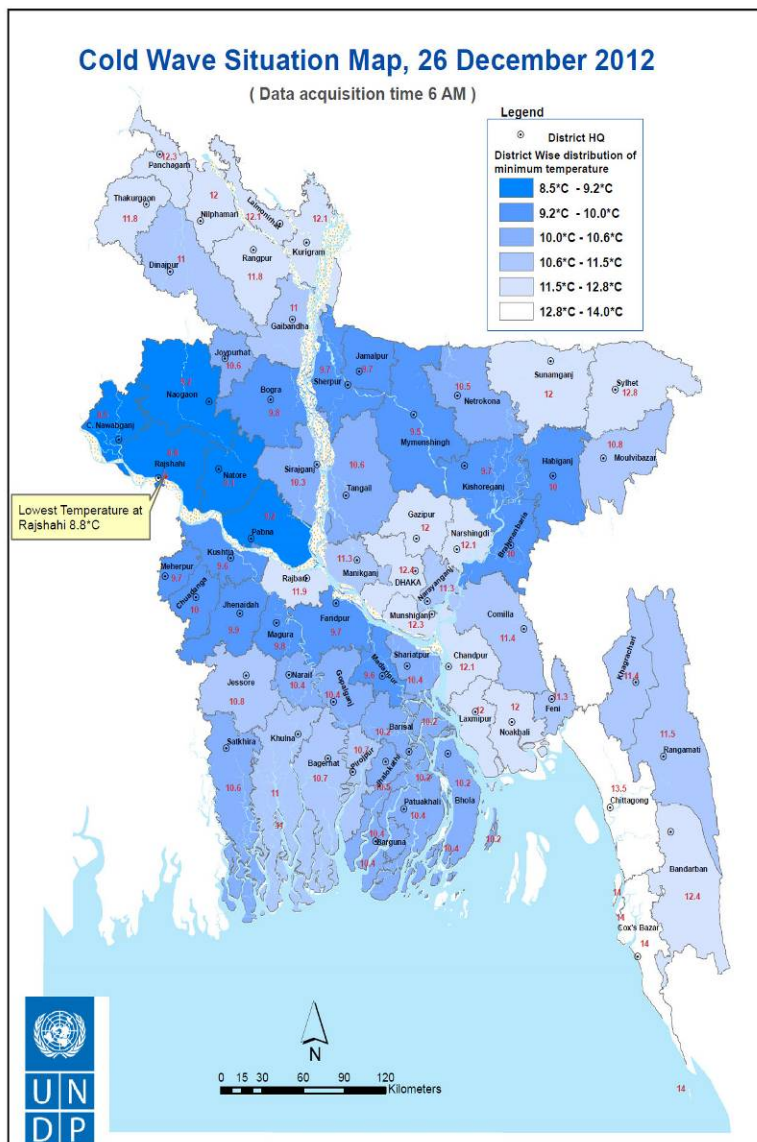


DMIC map showing districts affected by cold wave. **Source:** DMIC 2012.

distribution of minimum temperature on 26 December 2012. The lowest temperatures persist in regions of north-west in the districts of Rajshahi, Naogaon, Nawabganj, Natore and Pabna while other districts in the north, east and the south are also experiencing cold weather.

The cold wave will suspend the livelihood and works of wage earners, daily labours (i.e. rickshaw/van pullers) farmers, and women working in government rural road constructions.

The intense cold will negatively impact crop seedlings of high yielding variety, notably *Boro*. Meanwhile there is possibility of certain pest-related outbreaks on potato farming induced by the ongoing cold temperature. Although there is currently no available information from government sources on the impact on livestock, it is suspected that persistent cold weather might lead to death of poultry or livestock if not well protected.



Mapping of cold wave situation in Bangladesh. **Source:**BMD, 26 December 2012.

people are left with limited financial resources to purchase any materials to deal with the cold. Hence communities already bearing the brunt of recent floods, cold wave has only added to its suffering.

The most vulnerable people affected by the cold wave are the marginal poor of rural areas. In terms of geographical settings, affected communities residing near river or water bodies are most affected as cold wind and fog concentrates more into these areas. Among the affected population, women, children and the elderly are the most vulnerable and are more susceptible to cold induced illness.

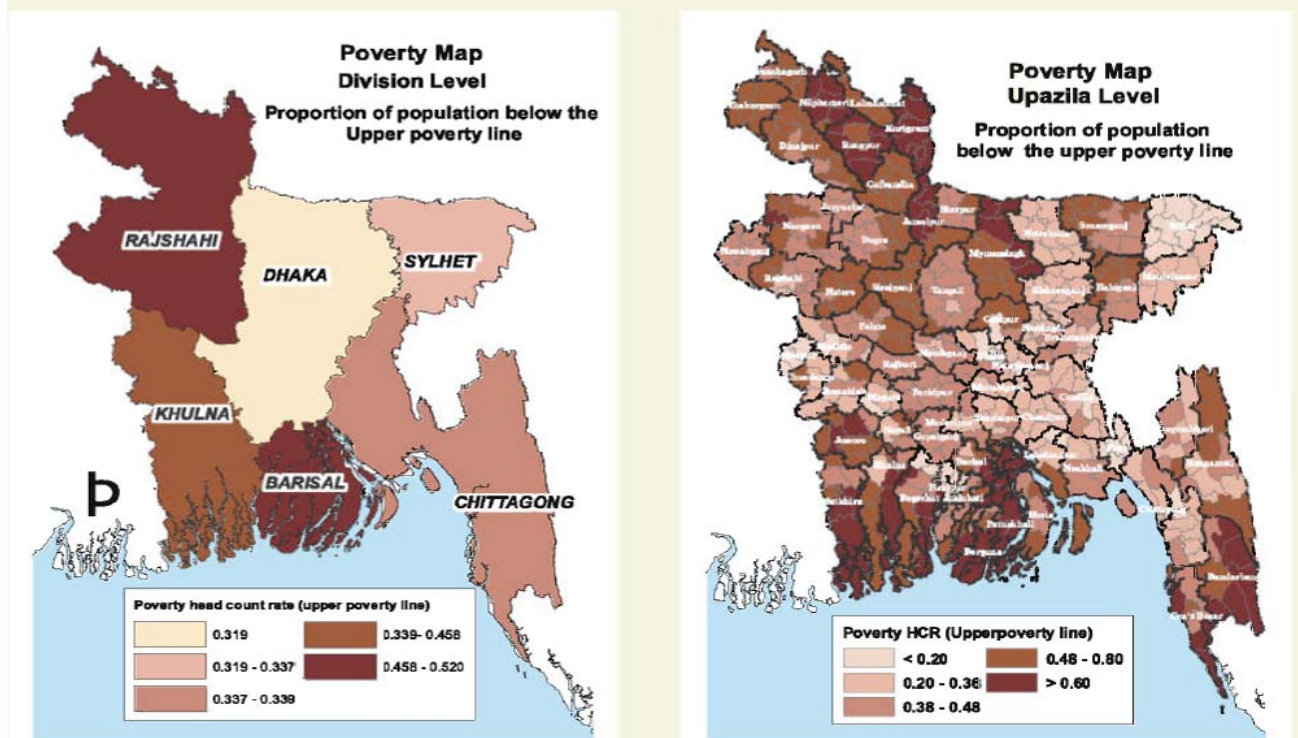
BDRCS/IFRC assessments revealed that children's attendance to school has been irregular due to this cold wave.

The movement of vehicle on roads and highways remain restricted as thick layers of fogs covered the air reducing the visibility. Due to this heavy fog, ferry services, port schedule and air traffic schedules are heavily disrupted. A large number of passengers are suffering extreme hardship, as trucks, buses and private cars remain stranded. Around four hundred loaded trucks and 200 passenger buses were stranded on both sides of the river.

The poverty rate in the country stands highest in the northern districts of Rangpur and Rajshahi where more than 50 per cent of the population is below the poverty line as per Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). According to the maps (below), the north-western districts implies largest proportion of population below the upper poverty line.

The government has allocated 30,900 blankets in 14. However, the government assistance is inadequate to cover a large number of affected populations. In addition to the government distribution, several humanitarian organizations including university students, business community, local NGOs have responded to the cold wave with warm clothes in rural and urban poor.

While the communities in the north have been already affected by seasonal flood three times in a row this year, these

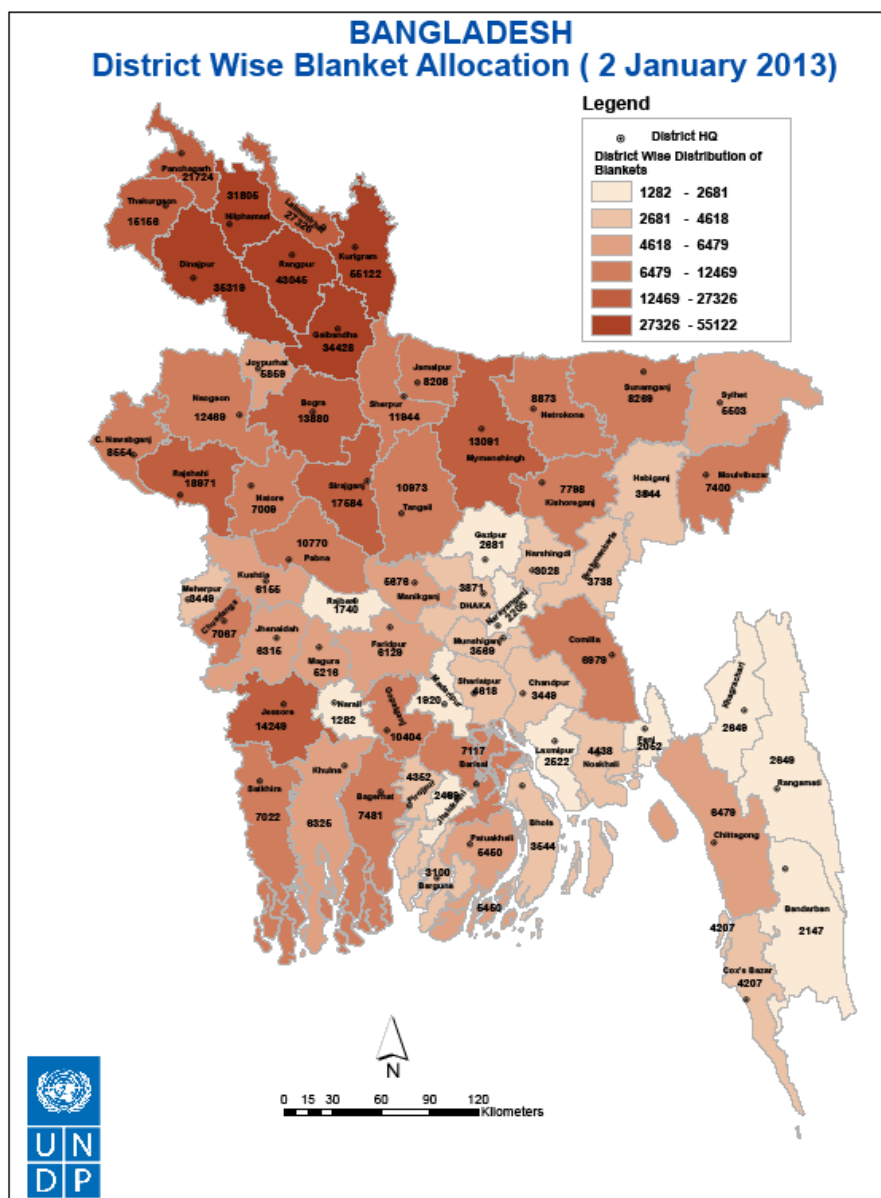


Mapping of district wise blanket allocation in Bangladesh. **Source:** World Bank, World Food Programme and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2005.

Coordination and partnerships

Coordination with Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners has been established through set meetings on the subject for exploring possibilities of support to cold wave affected population. A total of 20,000 blankets from BDRCS stock and 10,000 from the IFRC/BDRCS joint stock have been dispatched immediately as the impact intensified. The stock is to be replenished through DREF fund. The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement coordinated with other humanitarian agencies as Muslim Aid, Action Aid, UNDP and the European commission humanitarian aid (DG ECHO) to keep track on the updates to support affected population to avoid any duplication on the ground. Discussions were also held with Ministry of Food and Disaster Management in targeting geographic locations. BDRCS units of most affected districts in Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions, have maintained contact with district administrations for identifying remote locations uncovered by government or other organizations. BDRCS national headquarters have communicated with BMD to monitor the weather pattern changes. BDRCS is collecting situation updates from different agencies including the network for information, response and preparedness activities on disaster (NIRAPAD). Since BDRCS/IFRC is active members of the Disaster Emergency Response (DER) group, information and operation updates will be shared with other humanitarian agencies and the national government in order to avoid any distribution overlap.

Humanitarian Cluster on Early Recovery has been updating the 3W mapping to plot the gap and facilitate a coordinated response (refer to the map below).



Mapping of district wise blanket allocation in Bangladesh. **Source:** DDM blanket allocation matrix, 2 January 2013.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

BDRCS and IFRC have been closely monitoring the situation. The BDRCS response department conducted an assessment on the situation through its units offices located in northern, eastern and north-eastern parts of the country. Discussions have been held between IFRC and DG ECHO on the current cold wave situation in the country as well as possible interventions. Based on BMD's forecast that there will be further deterioration of the cold wave, IFRC continues to have discussion with BDRCS for immediate response. IFRC and BDRCS joint disaster preparedness (DP) stock has been reviewed for quick dispatch. The fleet and national disaster response team (NDRT)/ regional disaster response team (RDRT) are kept standby for deployment to assist local units in case of response operation. BDRCS request for possible response to cold wave situation in the country was discussed in the Movement partners' coordination meetings. BDRCS has also discussed with PNS including British Red Cross, German Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross to coordinate geographical areas, package and beneficiaries in case of any response.

The needs

According to [BMD's weather bulletin](#), the situation is likely to deteriorate and cause severe suffering for the poor in the northern and north western districts. The death toll has reached to 72 across the country of which more than 60 per cent recorded in northern regions of the country, as per the assessment data of BDRCS and local administration. Though the government and other humanitarian organizations responded swiftly to the cold wave, further response is required to provide relief to thousands of people who are unassisted. Under the on-going cold wave response, assistance in terms of warm clothes need to be provided to the most vulnerable populations i.e. wage earners, agriculture labour, the street people, internally displaced, and so on in the identified priority districts. Women, elderly, children, and persons with disability will be given priority for the assistance.

The government has allocated 30,900 blankets for distribution in 14 districts on 26 December 2012. As per the 3W information of the Early Recovery Cluster, the government has further allocated 240,00 blankets for 64 districts (entire country), which will be released in installments for distribution. In addition to government support, some NGOs like Muslim Aid, Action Aid and Care have been distributing around 50,000 blankets, mostly in the northern Bangladesh. Thus far, PNSs has yet to support or make contribution to BDRCS response for this operation. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management will be responding to the needs of warm clothes distribution in the coming weeks.

The proposed operation

The proposed operation is based on available information from the government and initial assessments carried out jointly by BDRCS and IFRC, as well as based on the BDRCS's capacity. With support from IFRC's DREF allocation, 30,000 blankets distributed for 75,000 severely affected people or 15,000 families in 21 districts will be replenished through ZLU in KL using the IFRC Framework Agreement for blankets.

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)	
Outcome:	75,000 severely affected people or 15,000 families receive blankets (two blankets/family) in 21 districts.
Output:	Families received blankets are better protected from the effect of cold wave
Activities planned:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door to door assessments. • Beneficiary registration. • Dispatch and transportation of blankets by BDRCS to the distribution sites. • Storage and distribution of blankets, especially at unit level. • Distribution of blankets by trained Red Crescent Youth volunteers. • Regular detailed monitoring and reporting of distribution of blankets. • Procurement and replenishment of 39,000 blankets through IFRC Asia Pacific Zone Logistic Unit.

Each of the 15,000 families will receive a package of two blankets. The distribution plan for families is as follows:

Table 1: Summary of district wise relief allocation plan

SL	District	Upazila	No. of families
1	Panchagar	Boda, Tentulia, Debiganj, Atwari	1,000
2	Thagurgaon	Haripur, Baliadangi, Ranishankail	500
3	Dinajpur	Kaharul, Bochaganj, Birganj, Birol	1,000
4	Rangpur	Mithapukur, Gangachhara, Taraganj, Pirganj, Badarganj	1,000
5	Lalmonirhat	Patgram, Kaliganj, Hatibanda	500
6	Kurigram	Raumari, Rajibpur, Ulipur, Chilmari, Nageswari	1,000
7	Nilphamari	Dimla, Domar, Jaldhaka, Kishorganj	500
8	Gaibandha	Saghata, Fulchhari, Sundarganj, Sadar	1,000
9	Rajshahi District	Tanore, Godagari, Bagmara	500
10	Rajshahi City	Slum areas	500
11	Chapainawabganj	Sibganj, Nachole, Gomastapur	1,000
12	Chuadanga	Chuadanga Sadar, Alamdanga, Jibon Nagar	1,000
13	Jhinaidaha	Jhinaidaha Sadar, Shailokupa, Moheshpur, Kortchandpur	500
14	Magura	Magura Sadar, Sripur	1,000
15	Jessore	Jikorgacha, Monirampur, Keshoppur	1,000

16	Gopalganj	Gopalganj Sadar, Kotalipara, Tongipara, Moksudpur	500
17	Jamalpur	Shorishabari, Melandah, Dewanganj	500
18	Manikganj	Manikganj Sadar, Dowlotpur, Horirampur	500
19	Pabna	Pabna Sadar, Bera, Ishwardi, Sujanagar	500
20	Sirajganj	Sirajganj Sadar, Kazipur, Chouhali	500
21	Natore	Natore Sadar, Gurudashpur, Singara, Lalpur	500
Total			15,000

Contact information

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Please send all funding pledges to zonerm.asiapacific@ifrc.org

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How we work

All IFRC 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 the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
 2. Enable healthy and safe living.
 3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.
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DREF OPERATION

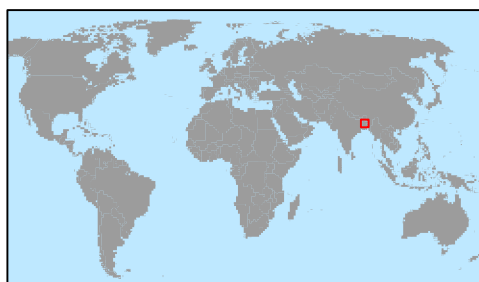
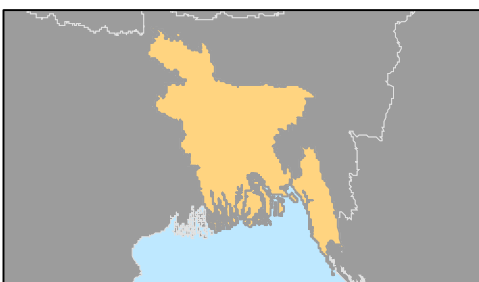
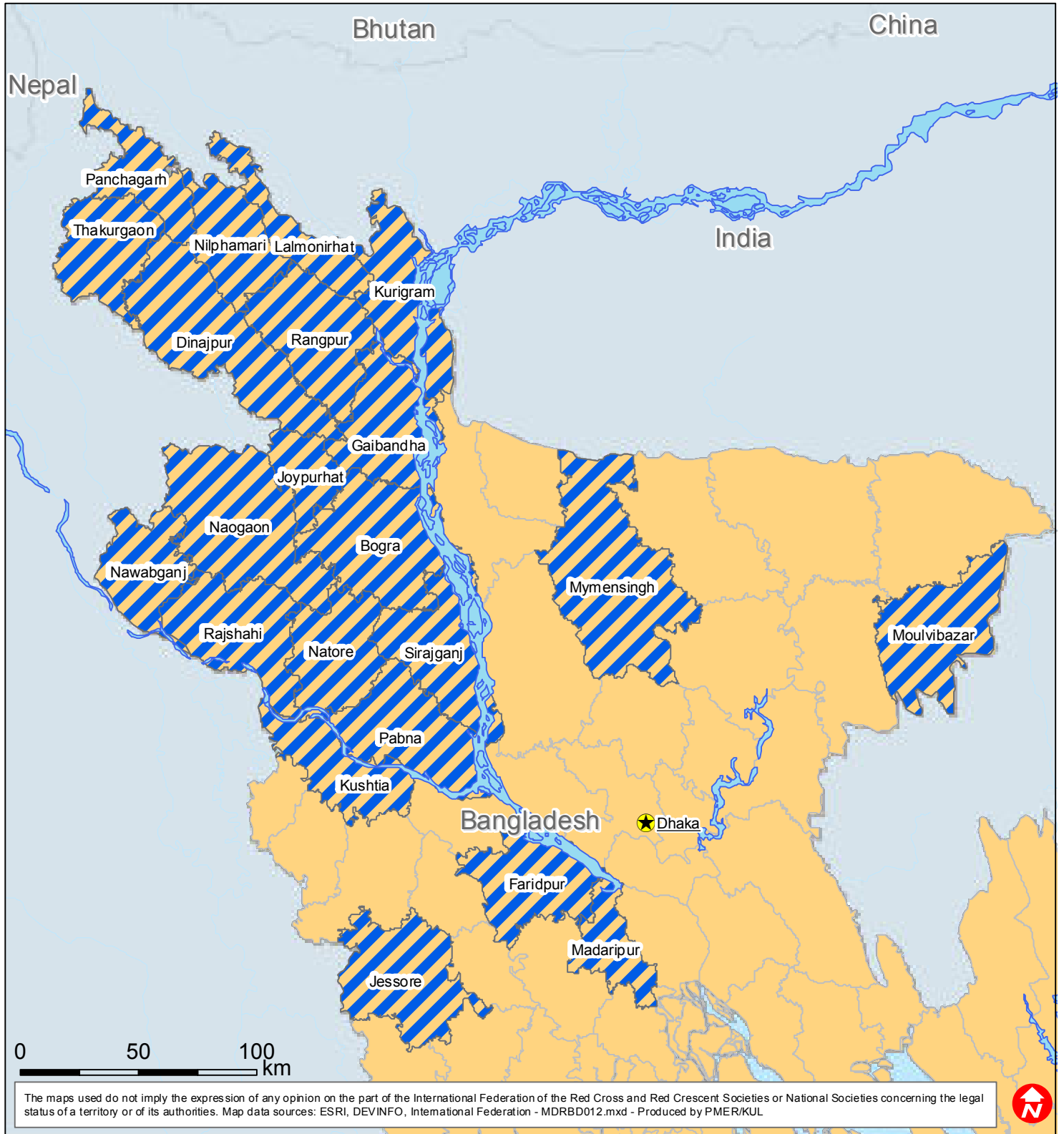
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MDRBD012 Bangladesh : Cold Wave

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF
Clothing & Textiles	278,571
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	278,571
Programme and Services Support Recovery	18,107
Total INDIRECT COSTS	18,107
TOTAL BUDGET	296,678



Bangladesh: Cold wave



Affected districts