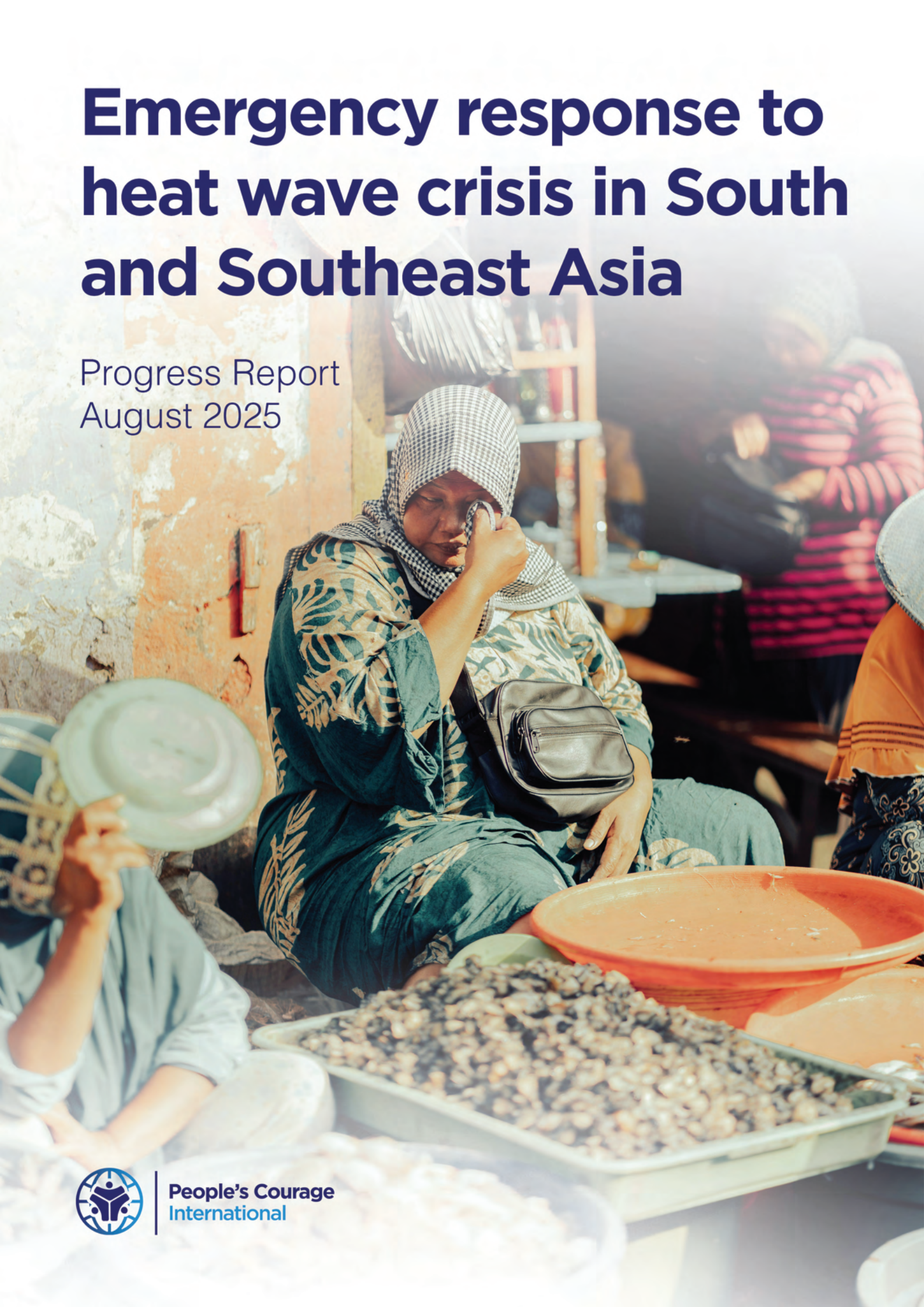


Emergency response to heat wave crisis in South and Southeast Asia

Progress Report
August 2025



People's Courage
International

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Introduction

Rising Heat, Rising Risk for Informal Workers

Intense heatwaves are becoming one of the harshest extreme weather events all over the world. Its impact is felt by everyone, but some people are far more vulnerable than others - especially those who earn daily wages, work outdoors, or live in crowded, poorly built settlements. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), more than 2.41 billion workers worldwide are exposed to excessive heat each year. This exposure leads to an estimated 23 million occupational injuries, 19,000 deaths, and the loss of over 2 million disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) annually. Without urgent action, these impacts are projected to escalate further, compounding poverty and vulnerability in regions least equipped to cope.

The burden of heat stress on workers across South and Southeast Asia is both urgent and uneven. Developing economies in the region endure far longer hours of dangerous exposure compared to wealthier countries, with India, Indonesia, and Bangladesh ranked among the top five globally for total hours of extreme heat exposure.



Heat Stress across South and Southeast Asia, and Urgency

The burden is concentrated in countries with high informality and low protection, where workers endure the longest hours under dangerous heat. By 2030, Southern Asia alone is projected to lose the equivalent of 43 million full-time jobs to heat stress.

Extreme heat disproportionately affects the urban poor, and the scale of projected losses is stark:

- **India:** 5.8% of total working hours lost (34M jobs).
- **Bangladesh:** 4.8% of hours lost (3.8M jobs).
- **Nepal:** 2.0% of hours lost (~0.39M jobs).
- **Indonesia:** 3.0% of hours lost (~4M jobs).
- **Philippines:** 2.3% of hours lost (~1.2M jobs).

Recent events underscore the urgency. In 2025, the Indo-Gangetic plains and Nepal Tarai experienced a prolonged pre-monsoon heatwave, forcing schools and workplaces to close. Studies show that climate change has made such heatwaves at least 30 times more likely, with events that occurred once a century now happening roughly [once every five years](#) in Bangladesh and India.

In India, where [temperatures](#) crossed 52.9°C in 2024—the highest ever recorded in the country—**workers in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Bengaluru described collapsing from dizziness at worksites, sleepless nights under tin roofs that trap heat, and wages lost to illness. These are not isolated cases but part of a worsening pattern, where those with the least protection face the greatest risks.

Between December 2024 and February 2025, Southeast Asia experienced extreme and prolonged heat, with Jakarta, Indonesia, and the Manila region in the Philippines among the hardest hit.

In the Philippines, the severe heatwave extended into March and April, significantly disrupting daily life and placing strain on key economic sectors such as fisheries and agriculture. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) issued multiple warnings of a “dangerous” heat index, with recorded temperatures ranging between 42°C and 51°C.

Taken together, these events illustrate how intensifying climate extremes are intersecting with existing labor market informality, fragile infrastructure, and weak social protection systems, heightening risks for vulnerable groups while undermining economic resilience.



Responding to the Heat Crisis: Our Approach So Far

Last year, People’s Courage International published a policy brief and accompanying article that brought national attention to the rising risks faced by workers due to extreme heat. Drawing from field consultations. The publications highlighted how prolonged exposure to heat is not only reducing earnings and pushing up health costs for informal workers, but also revealing the lack of preparedness in urban and rural systems alike. It catalyzed conversations among worker networks, civil society actors, and policy discourse, and laid the groundwork for coordinated action to protect informal workers from emerging heat stress risks.

Addressing heat stress among workers requires a multi-faceted approach; one that brings together governments, industries, philanthropies, and worker communities. The need of the hour is to implement evidence-based policies and operational guidelines, including training, health monitoring, and emergency preparedness in the context of climate-induced heat stress. Heat Action Plans and tracking tools can help increase resilience in high-risk regions and sectors. At the same time, investments in social protection, such as insurance and offering financial assistance are critical forms of anticipatory action to safeguard workers already on the frontlines.

Our Research

In 2024, we released our flagship report [Coping with Climate](#): How Extreme Weather is Already Impacting Internal Migrants, across South and Southeast Asia. Drawing on a survey of nearly 24,000 migrants, 27 Focus Group Discussions with internal migrants and 30 Key Informant Interviews with experts across Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal and Philippines.



The survey found 90% internal migrants had been negatively affected by extreme weather events across Bangladesh (100%), India (86%), Indonesia (90%), Nepal (94%) and Philippines (96%), translating into an estimated 180 million internal migrants in these five countries. This displayed extreme distress among migrants across rural and urban areas.

In the extreme weather events that migrants mentioned as impacting their livelihoods, occupations and households – increasing heat stood out as a major concern for them across source and destination locations. In the survey, heat ranked as number one across impacts faced by internal migrants. At source locations, we saw a variation in how heat affected migrants across countries while at destination locations, heat was clearly a top-most stressor for migrants across countries except in Indonesia, where it ranked second, after flooding (Figure 1).

Table: Sample size for survey by country

Country	Survey Sample Size
Bangladesh	2,505
India	13,540
Indonesia	1,492
Nepal	2,796
Philippines	3,582

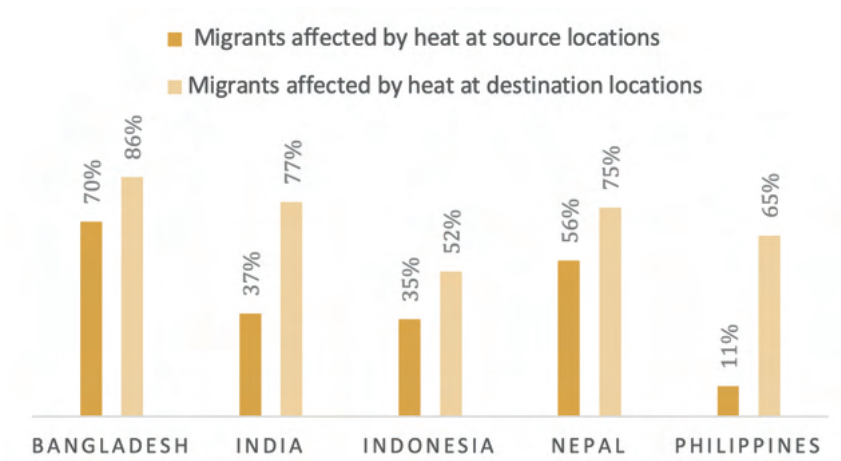


Figure 1: Internal migrants affected by heat at source and destination

For migrant workers employed largely in outdoor and informal occupations, extreme heat often translates into significant hardships on their work and households. Workers are denied access to basic amenities by employers during extreme heat. During conversations with migrants in focus groups in India, it was clear that employers provide employees with little to no relief from the heat, in some instances even denying water breaks.

As one migrant noted, "It is more problematic at this time, during the summers. We have to climb up 5-6 floors with bricks, cement, etc. It is so hot right now. Sometimes, we get work where we are exposed to heat. They even keep monitoring when we go to the washrooms. In this heat, if we take multiple water breaks we are told of"

There were instances of rest breaks also being denied

A Filipino construction worker noted "Heat has been extremely severe in Manila. Sometimes it gets so bad that I need to take immediate shelter. During these periods, I want to stop work, but I cannot directly because I will be called out by the foreman. If I do stop, they ask me to return and continue as the work has to be completed."

Workers also navigated through wage losses – Bangladesh (83%), India (79%), Indonesia (58%), Nepal (59%) and Philippines (43%) – as a result of missed workdays or absenteeism during extreme heat and other weather events. There were reports of productivity losses as well, often leading to increased working hours to complete usual work.

At an individual level, health related illnesses were the most common among workers during increasing heat along with other weather events in cities – Bangladesh (94%), India (66%), Indonesia (66%), Nepal (45%) and Philippines (45%).

A worker in the Philippines mentioned, "In the past while working during extreme heat, I have felt extremely dizzy with high blood pressure, now due to this I am on medication. It's dangerous for me if it's too hot but I continue working to support my family."

Impacts such as food insecurity usually as a consequence of wage loss combined with increasing costs of water, electricity and health expenses during summer months was another major challenge for workers.

For example, a worker in Jakarta, Indonesia reported, "During the day, the heat can be unbearable, and air pollution is also a challenge due to the heavy traffic on the roads. My family and I also become more prone to illness during this period and our household expenditure increases due to these unforeseen expenses. During this period, I face significant cuts in my income as the number of orders decrease due to the weather. With these rising expenses and decreasing income, I usually end up taking out bank loans or use my savings to support my family."



Coping capacities to address these impacts that workers were facing due to rising heat were severely constrained, with migrants receiving little to no support from state or non-state actors. Unlike other disasters, heat events remain largely unaddressed in urban policy and heat action plans that exist are usually unenforceable, leaving vulnerable groups especially migrants without any formal protection.

The report identified heat as an urgent and escalating threat especially in urban locations such as cities, already affecting over half of internal migrant workers in the sample countries. Based on future predictions around rising temperatures, these numbers could see a drastic increase in the coming decades.

This progress report builds on the work of People's Courage International, through its initiative Migrants Resilience Collaborative. Much of this work has taken root in South Asia, with scope for expansion into Southeast Asia. It marks the next step in translating earlier recommendations into practice through the Collaborative's emergency response to the heatwave crisis across South and Southeast Asia. Our partner organizations initiated cooling stations, heat stress insurance package, insulated roofing solutions, training and awareness sessions for workers facing extreme heat.

We discuss the progress of these interventions below. While these efforts mark an early important start, much more needs to be done to protect those most at risk—at the scale and depth needed.



A. Cooling Stations

Outdoor workers often spend the hottest hours of the day at their job sites, exposed to direct sunlight, with little opportunity to rest or rehydrate. This constant exposure increases the risk of dizziness, heat stroke, and dehydration. To address this, PCI, through MRC, supported piloted cooling stations in 18 locations across 3 countries in Nepal, India, Bangladesh as a practical solution to mitigate heat stress among informal workers.

22 high-footfall locations, frequented by outdoor workers were identified. The locations covered areas of Rajshahi, Gopalpur Bazar, Tongi, Bhaluka, Chalandika Mor, Mirpur, Pallabi, and Kallyanpur (Bangladesh); Bharatpur, Dhangadhi, Madhyapur thimi (Nepal); and New Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida, Indore, Kanpur, and Lucknow (India) with the cooperation of site administrators, the team set up cooling stations in a range of environments such as construction sites, waiting offices for cab drivers, market areas, bus stands, and community spaces around labour dense areas, and Migration Resource Centers run by MRC to test the model's utility across different working conditions.

Each cooling station provided a shaded, air-cooled shelter stocked with drinking water and rehydrating agents. PCI also equipped the stations with chairs, floor mats for resting and electric extension boxes to charge mobile phones. To offer immediate support in case of minor injuries, a first aid kit was also placed at the stations.

27399 workers visited the cooling stations during the recently concluded summer season, primarily using them to rest, cool down, access clean and cool drinking water, and rehydrate with oral rehydration solutions. In some locations, health camps were organized at the cooling stations to conduct check-ups and detect early signs of heat stress among workers. Mental health counseling support was provided at other locations. A total of 143 workers were provided primary health check-ups through these health camps.

The response to the cooling stations has been positive. At several sites, local management teams actively helped expand the services offered at cooling stations. Workers reported that the stations helped lower heat-related fatigue, which allowed them to be more productive. Fewer doctor visits also enabled them to reduce their medical expenses. Both workers and employers noted that the initiative helped reduce absenteeism during the summer season. This meant fewer missed work days and more stable wages for the vulnerable workers.

Given the success, there is strong scope to scale the model in other heat-stressed geographies such as Indonesia and the Philippines, where large outdoor and factory-based workforces face rising temperatures, increasing humidity, and limited access to protective infrastructure. Expanding cooling solutions in these countries could significantly enhance worker wellbeing and safeguard productivity in two of Southeast Asia's most climate-exposed economies.

Voices from the ground



"After establishing the cooling station, we've seen remarkable improvements in our workforce's well-being. Previously, absenteeism rates due to heat waves averaged between 10-15%. Now, with the introduction of the rest area, our employees not only find relief but also feel genuinely valued."

- Senior Safety Office, construction site, Indore



"We've already shared a detailed report with our ESG team at the Mumbai Head Office, and they were equally impressed; not just with the concept, but also with the thoughtful execution. They particularly appreciated the fact that a dedicated professional has been assigned to manage the cooling station, ensuring it operates smoothly and consistently supports worker welfare. It's a strong example of how on-ground action can align with broader sustainability and ESG goals"

- Project Head, Tata Projects, Noida International Airport



Voices from the ground

A construction worker involved in loading and unloading vegetables in Bharatpur, Nepal noted, “Earlier I used to feel dizzy but now I feel more relaxed. Whenever there is relatively no/less work, I come here and sit in front of the cooler.”

“

“The heat makes it hard to keep moving, but something like a cooling station Can be a boon for us. It will give us a chance to catch a breath, have a glass of water and complete my work without stress”, says Jacob, a daily wage earner in Manila market.

“When the day’s heat is at its peak, we step in here for sometime. It leaves us refreshed, ready to return and finish our work,” stated a 50-year-old female construction worker at Indore.



B. Heat Stress Insurance

For daily wage earners and informal workers, extreme heat not only affects health but also erodes income. Lost workdays and heat-related illness often translate into severe financial strain. We partnered with K.M. Dastur Reinsurance Brokers Private Limited, has developed an insurance package tailored for construction workers in the National Capital Region of Delhi and Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

This package covers 6,000 workers and includes parametric insurance to provide quick payouts during extreme heat events, along with a hospital cash cover to support medical expenses.

When maximum temperatures breach thresholds for five consecutive days, at each of the six locations the parametric insurance covers, a payout of ₹1,000 to workers is automatically triggered. For each consecutive day where the temperature remains above the threshold, an additional ₹100 would be paid to the worker till the 10th day. Thus, totaling to a maximum possible payout of ₹1,500 in 10 days. Two such payouts, without any cooling period between the payouts, are possible, thus resulting in a maximum cover of ₹3,000 for the season. This payout, being paid by the Jan Sahas Foundation, enables workers to take personalized actions to mitigate heat stress, including preventive health measures, purchase of basic cooling equipment, and gradual acclimatization to high temperatures.

The extreme heatwave in the second week of June saw the temperature trigger at Noida being breached. This resulted in 714 workers receiving a payment of ₹1,000 per head through the insurance, with 186 more workers set to receive the payout.

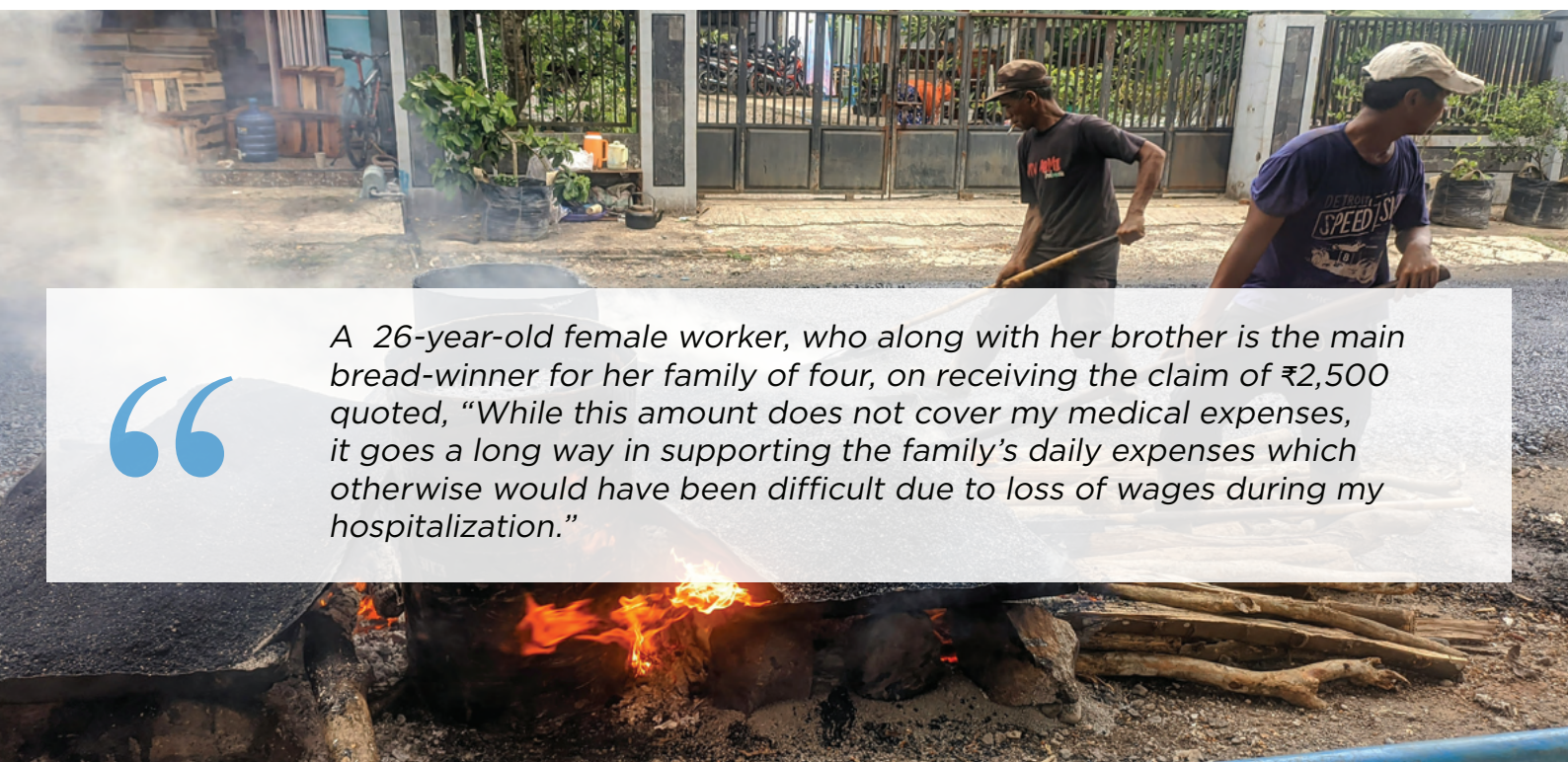
The insurance package also includes a hospital cash cover, providing workers ₹500 per day for each day of hospitalization, with a minimum hospital stay requirement of 48 hours. Each hospitalization incident is covered for up to five days, offering a maximum payout of ₹2,500 per incident. Workers can claim this coverage for up to two separate incidents during the insurance period, totaling a maximum hospital cash benefit of ₹5,000.

So far, four workers have successfully claimed hospital cash cover. One worker hospitalized for 10 days due to a stomach infection and fever received ₹2,500 (the maximum per-incident coverage), another hospitalized for two days due to herpes received ₹1,000. Two more workers hospitalized, for six days with abdominal pain and fever and for three days with gall bladder stone, received ₹2,500 and ₹1,500 respectively.

Insured workers regularly stay in contact with our team, who provide continuous support for filing claims in case hospitalization becomes necessary. This assistance will remain available until the coverage ends on 24th August 2025 with plans to expand this pilot to other countries.



A 26-year-old female worker, who along with her brother is the main bread-winner for her family of four, on receiving the claim of ₹2,500 quoted, “While this amount does not cover my medical expenses, it goes a long way in supporting the family’s daily expenses which otherwise would have been difficult due to loss of wages during my hospitalization.”



C. Insulated Roofing Solutions

For workers and their families, including young children, living in tin-roofed or metal-sheet homes, the heat does not end with the workday. The use of metallic sheets in housing traps heat inside, keeping indoor temperatures dangerously high even after sunset. In many settlements, access to air coolers, fans or even a steady electricity supply is unreliable, making relief from the heat intangible.

To ease the burden of extreme heat inside workers' homes, PCI partnered with cBalance to pilot insulated roofing solutions that bring greater thermal comfort and dignity to daily living.

The intervention included water-filled PET bottles to increase thermal mass, static alufoil and multi-layered plastic (MLP) panels for insulation, and modular space frames with radiant barriers. Developed using passive design principles, these solutions have successfully reduced indoor temperatures by three to four degrees Celsius by minimizing heat gain during the day and promoting cooling at night.

These solutions were piloted in select households across communities in Bengaluru, a high-temperature destination city in India. Residential settlements and public spaces in five additional cities have also been identified for further expansion. In Mumbai, another high-heat destination, an agreement has been initiated to begin testing a similar solution.

The pilot's impact is being assessed through temperature sensors and baseline data collected from the sites. The model demonstrates that low-cost, scalable interventions are both feasible and effective, while underscoring the urgent need for greater public investment in thermal comfort for climate-vulnerable communities in rapidly warming cities.

To support long-term scaling, PCI, through its initiative MRC, is engaging with the Bengaluru Climate Action Cell to explore pathways for scale across Bengaluru. Similar engagements are being sought with Selco Foundation and ROOH (Roof Over Our Heads) campaign's partner SPARC to facilitate and fund similar solutions across other cities.



“

“We cannot sleep inside during the summer. Our lives become extremely difficult due to the intense heat and high humidity. Days and nights are equally hot,” shared a resident of an informal settlement in Manila.

D. Training and Awareness

The various approaches discussed above aim to build workers' resilience against heat stress. Providing essential knowledge on heat stress prevention remains a key part of this effort. PCI proactively engages workers visiting cooling stations and those working nearby, raising awareness about causes of heat stress and preventive measures.

The training sessions guide workers on practices such as protecting themselves from direct sunlight, staying hydrated, ensuring adequate rest, maintaining a proper diet, and avoiding dehydrating beverages like tea, coffee, and alcohol. Additionally, these sessions offer crucial information on safe migration, emphasizing safety considerations workers must remember while migrating.

So far, 5183 individuals have participated in these training and awareness sessions. Alongside the training, participants received a care kit containing oral rehydration solutions or glucose, a wet wipe, and a pamphlet summarizing key points from the sessions.



Making Headlines

mint

Digit Insurance disburses parametric claims to Noida migrant workers as heatwave hits 42°C

Go Digit Insurance has partnered with K.M. Dastur Reinsurance Brokers (KMD) and [Jan Sahas Foundation](#) to offer heat index-based parametric insurance to migrant labourers across Delhi, Noida, Ghaziabad, Gurgaon, Faridabad, and Lucknow.

DECCAN Chronicle

Heatwave Triggers Insurance Payouts To Migrant Workers

Prolonged heat wave has triggered a first-of-its-kind insurance payouts, with Go Digit General Insurance settling claims for migrant labourers in Noida. Claims were paid under parametric insurance as temperature in the city breached the threshold of 42°C, triggering the first payout. The Company has partnered with K.M. Dastur Reinsurance Brokers (KMD) and [Jan Sahas Foundation](#) to offer heat index-based parametric insurance to migrant labourers across six cities.



Heatwave triggers insurance payouts for migrant workers in Noida: What is parametric cover and how it works

Go Digit General Insurance has activated payouts for migrant labourers in Noida after the temperature breached 42°C for five consecutive days. The compensation was triggered under a parametric insurance policy — a product that pays automatically when weather conditions cross certain thresholds.

This heatwave-linked cover is being offered in partnership with K M Dastur Reinsurance Brokers and [Jan Sahas Foundation](#).

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Heat insurance: Rs 3,000 for workers

Digit Insurance, in partnership with K M Dastur Brokers and [Jan Sahas Foundation](#), is offering this heat-index based cover to workers across Delhi, Noida, Ghaziabad, Gurgaon, Faridabad, and Lucknow.

FORTUNE
INDIA

Policy cover for daily labourers that kicks in at 42°C: What is heat insurance?

The innovative, parametric insurance cover has been co-developed by Go Digit General Insurance, K.M. Dastur Reinsurance Brokers (KMD), and [Jan Sahas Foundation](#). Previously, the trio had collaborated to offer air pollution-based insurance in Delhi-NCR.

NEWS 18

Migrant Workers In Noida Receive Payouts By Digit After Extreme Heat Triggers Insurance

Go Digit General Insurance Limited (Digit Insurance) has announced the settlement of claims for migrant labourers in Noida under their parametric insurance scheme. This payout was triggered as temperatures in the city surpassed the 42°C threshold. Partnering with K.M. Dastur Reinsurance Brokers (KMD) and [Jan Sahas Foundation](#), Digit Insurance aims to provide financial relief to migrant labourers affected by extreme heat across six cities.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Heat insurance: Rs 3,000 for workers

TNN / Updated: Jun 19, 2025, 07:49 IST

Digit Insurance has initiated payouts for migrant laborers in Noida due to extreme heat, utilizing a parametric insurance model that triggers payments when temperatures exceed specific thresholds for consecutive days.



MUMBAI: Intense heat has triggered a first-of-its-kind insurance payouts, with Digit Insurance settling claims for migrant labourers in Noida after temperatures crossed 42 degrees Celsius. The payouts, based on weather thresholds rather than actual losses, aim to provide quick financial relief without lengthy claim assessments.

Digit Insurance, in partnership with K M Dastur Reinsurance Brokers and Jan Sahas Foundation, is offering this heat-index based cover to workers across Delhi, Noida, Ghaziabad, Gurgaon, Faridabad, and Lucknow. "Digit's heatwave parametric insurance is a crucial step in providing migrant labourers with a much-needed safety net," said Adarsh Agarwal, chief actuary and product officer at Digit Insurance.

The policy pays up to Rs 3,000 when temperatures cross thresholds for five consecutive days, with an additional payout if the breach lasts 10 days. The threshold temperatures range from 42 to 43.7 degrees Celsius, varying by city. Many of the covered workers depend on daily wages and are exposed to heat-related risks such as heatstroke. In 2024, India recorded 67,637 suspected heatstroke cases and 374 deaths.

42°C Threshold Triggers Claims In Noida

- > The first-of-its-kind insurance payouts, **based on weather thresholds rather than actual losses**, aim to provide quick financial relief to migrant labourers without lengthy claim assessments
- > The policy by Digit pays up to **₹3,000 when temperatures cross thresholds for five consecutive days**, with an additional payout if the breach lasts 10 days
- > The threshold temperatures range from **42°C to 43.7°C**
- > In May 2023, ICICI Lombard introduced a similar policy for 50k women labourers, which paid cash once temperatures exceeded limits, making it the first **heat-related livelihood loss** cover in India



The cover also includes a hospitalisation cash allowance of up to Rs 5,000 for any accidental bodily injury or illness during the coverage period, regardless of temperature.

Jan Sahas Foundation is bearing the premium for the identified migrant workers. This is Digit Insurance's second collaboration with KMD and Jan Sahas. The three had earlier partnered to offer AQI-based parametric insurance to daily wage workers in Delhi-NCR.

In May 2023, ICICI Lombard, in collaboration with Swiss Re, introduced a similar policy for 50,000 women labourers associated with SEWA across 22 districts in Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra. That policy paid automatic cash compensation once temperatures exceeded set limits, making it the first Indian initiative specifically addressing heat-related livelihood loss.

Locations We Work In

India: Delhi NCR, Uttarpradesh, Madhyapradesh, Karnataka

Nepal: Bharatpur, Dhangadhi, Madhyapur thimi

Bangladesh: Rajshahi, Gopalpur Bazar, Tongi, Bhaluka, Chalantika Mor, Mirpur, Pallabi, and Kallyanpur



CASE STUDIES: NEPAL



From exhausted to energized: Bhagrathi's story

Bhagrathi Bista has been an auto driver in Dhangadhi, Nepal, for eight years. But this year, the heat feels unbearable. By midday, the roads empty as people avoid the scorching sun, and her vehicle becomes stifling. Weak and light-headed, she struggles to keep going. Resting on the roadside, however, is a risk as she has had her earnings stolen more than once while taking a nap.

Through other workers, she discovered the cooling station run by our partner the National Environment & Equity Development Society (NEEDS). Now, during peak hours, she stops there to drink cold water and rest in a safe space with fans and a separate area for women. The short breaks restore her energy and allow her to resume work.

The cooling center is the difference between breaking down and carrying on in the absence of protection against mounting climate risks. Simple, worker-centered interventions can mean a lot to outdoor workers like Bhagrathi.



“

Without a place like this to rest and drink cold water, I wouldn't be able to complete my day's work.

Bhagrathi Bista

Cooling support, strengthened spirit: Maiya Ale Magar's story

At 61, Maiya Ale Magar works as a street vendor in Nepal, selling small items to make ends meet. The extreme heat makes her already difficult life even harder. When dizziness and headaches strike, she heads to the cooling station run by our partner Nepal Mahila Ekata Samaj. There, she finds cold water, glucose, medicines, health checkups, and a quiet place to rest.

In recent years, rising temperatures have hurt both her health and her income. Illness forced her to stop working for weeks, leaving her unable to afford medical care. Now, with free support from the cooling center and the care of its staff, she can recover and keep going.

Maiya's story reflects the experience of the countless older workers and women vendors worldwide who face daily hardships due to rising heat. For them, even small interventions like cooling stations provide not only relief but also the chance to work with dignity.



“

I come to the cooling station twice or thrice a week. It's helpful for people like us.

Maiya Ale Magar

CASE STUDIES: BANGLADESH

Beating the heatwave: Abdullah's story

Abdullah's life as a construction worker in Rajshahi grows harder each summer. From April to July, soaring temperatures make outdoor work dangerous. Short breaks offer little relief, but Abdullah pushes on—driven by the need to provide for his wife and children.

One day, a coworker told him about a cooling station near their worksite, run by our partner the Association for Community Development (ACD). For Abdullah, it was a lifeline. With cold drinking water, glucose, and first-aid services, the center quickly became a place to rest, recover, and regain strength before heading back to work in the blistering heat.

What struck him most was that he had never seen such support for workers like himself. The staff also shared practical advice on staying safe in extreme heat, which he found invaluable.

This simple intervention has transformed Abdullah's daily struggle into something more manageable. His experience echoes the reality of millions of outdoor workers across Asia and beyond—people who face the brunt of rising global temperatures, yet often lack even the most basic protections.



The cool and quiet resting space helps me relieve my tiredness.

Abdullah

A cool refuge that saves lives: Deliza's story

For Deliza Khatun, survival means collecting waste from the streets of Rajshahi city under the burning sun. With no shade or rest, she faced the risk of heatstroke and dehydration every day—until she discovered the cooling and support center run by our partner the Association for Community Development (ACD).

Now, the center is her refuge during heatwaves. She has access to cold water and glucose that help her recover and stay safe. The separate space for women makes it even more welcoming and dignified. After a free health check at the center, she found out she has high blood pressure. Since then, she gets it checked regularly and follows the staff's advice to stay healthy.

Last summer, Deliza fell sick due to the heat and spent her meagre savings trying to survive. This year, the cooling center saved her from suffering the same fate again. Deliza hopes more such centers will open across the city to support others like her who are vulnerable to extreme heat. Interventions like these can mean the difference between exhaustion and resilience for them.



We suffer a lot while working under the burning sun. At least you think about us by providing us with this support initiative

Deliza Khatun

Finding physical and emotional healing: Tahmina's story

Tahmina has never known heat like this in Bangladesh. As a domestic worker, she has no choice but to step out even when the air feels scorching. Her husband, a rickshaw driver, often falls ill from the heat, leaving her with the burden of keeping the household afloat. She has to take care of chores at her tin-roofed stifling home, feed her children and in-laws, then rush to work, no matter how exhausted she feels.

Things became more manageable when she discovered the Kallyanpur cooling station run by our partner Bangladesh Nari Sramik Kendra (BNSK). The first glass of lemon juice she received there felt like relief she had never imagined. Since then, she visits regularly to rest, rehydrate, and access first aid.

Beyond physical relief, the center has empowered her. She learned about social protection schemes and helped her mother-in-law apply for the Old Age Allowance. It has become a safe space where women workers like Tahmina share their struggles and support each other.

Countless women workers across Asia and the world shoulder both work and family responsibilities while battling rising heat. Spaces like these are more than cooling centers for them; they are places of dignity, healing, and resilience.



I am grateful for such a beautiful and supportive space for women workers like me.

Tahmina

Where extreme heat meets hope: Bonna's story

For Bonna, a daily laborer who suffers from frequent migraines, the cooling station run by our partner Bangladesh Nari Sramik Kendra (BNSK) has been a blessing. After long hours of exhausting work, she comes here for cold water and free medicines. Reenergized, she is able to work with better focus and more stamina. Earlier, she would worry about wage loss due to poor productivity and missed days, but not anymore.

The station has become more than a place to escape the heat. It is where Bonna has learned about women's rights and workplace respect. She has become friends with other women like her—supporting each other and finding emotional strength. Counseling from the cooling station staff adds to this sense of care and community.

For Bonna and many others, the cooling station is a rare space of dignity and solidarity. As climate risks intensify, workers everywhere need not only protection from physical harm but also safe, supportive spaces that nurture resilience.



“

You have given us a wonderful space to rest, learn, and heal.

Bonna

A moment of relief amid intense heat: Mawla Mia's story

For three years, Mawla Mia started his days before sunrise, trying to earn as much as possible before Gazipur's scorching heat made work unbearable. Heatwaves have been worsening every year. As a rickshaw-puller, fatigue and dehydration become unavoidable for him, with only the roadside for shade and rest.

One sweltering day, just as he was about to faint, his friends took him to the cooling station run by our partner Karmojibi Nari. For the first time, he had access to cold water, lemonade, ORS, and even basic health checks and medicines—free of cost.

The center not only restored his strength that day, but also gave him the chance to continue working safely to support his family. Regular visits to the center have helped reduce his heat-related medical expenses, which keeps him from spiralling into debt.

Mawla is grateful that he found the center. He hopes that others like him who are struggling to survive amid frequent extreme heat events can also receive support from this initiative.



“

I hope initiatives like this can be expanded so that rickshaw pullers, street vendors, garment workers—all can benefit

Mawla Mia

CASE STUDIES: INDIA

From exhaustion to empowerment: Medini's story

Medini, a daily wage worker in Lucknow, hauls bricks and cement blocks everyday at a local construction site, under the scorching sun—her labour as relentless as the heat itself.

She often works in temperatures exceeding 45°C. With three children to support and no access to cooling or ventilation at her temporary shelter, the heat had taken a toll on her health, leading to dehydration and missed workdays.

With the setup of a cooling station at her worksite with our partner Eldeco Group, Medini now finds daily respite in a shaded, air-cooled space stocked with clean drinking water, ORS, and basic first aid. This small intervention helped her regain energy, protect her health, and continue working safely and sustainably.

In addition to physical relief, the cooling station also served as a platform for awareness and empowerment. Regular trainings and camps offered vital information on heat safety, health, and relevant government schemes—resources Medini and many others had little access to before.

For Medini and countless others confronting the growing threat of extreme heat, the cooling station has done more than just provide comfort. It has restored their ability to earn a livelihood and reaffirmed their right to safe, dignified working conditions.



“

This Cooling Station didn't just give us cold water—it gave us strength, information, and respect. Without it, this summer would have been unbearable.

Medini

Relief that pays off: Milan & Hemu's story

Milan and Hemu Bhunjar, daily wage construction workers in Lucknow, spent long hours under the scorching sun, often falling ill during peak summer months. Frequent heat-related illnesses led to missed workdays and mounting medical costs, straining their already limited income.

In May 2025, We set up a cooling station at their worksite. With access to an air-cooled resting space, clean drinking water, ORS, and basic first aid, the couple found much-needed respite. They began taking breaks and meals at the station, helping them recharge during the day. Since then, both have remained healthy, with no lost workdays through June and July. The cooling station not only protected their health but ensured consistent earnings—preventing financial loss and safeguarding long-term well-being.



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It feels like now someone is thinking about us! In this extreme heat if the body remains fit then we can continue earning two meals a day

Milan

Cooling relief, lasting impact: Rekha Devi's story

Rekha Devi, a construction worker from Bihar, migrated to Indore with her husband and two young children, supporting a family of eight on daily wages. Long hours under the blazing sun took a toll on the couple's health, making work increasingly difficult.

That changed when We set up a cooling station at their construction site. With access to cold drinking water, ORS, glucose, first aid, and even mobile charging, the station offered much-needed relief from the heatwave.


Beyond physical respite, the station became a gateway to empowerment. Through MRC's awareness drives, Rekha accessed social security benefits including e-Shram registration, health insurance under Ayushman Bharat, and life insurance via PM Suraksha Bim Yojana—marking a critical step towards long-term safety and stability.



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Earlier, we never received information about government schemes while working. But now, through this initiative, we are not only getting relief but also learning about our rights

Rekha Devi



People's Courage International (PCI) promotes initiatives that work deeply – and at scale – on the ground and leverage this to change systems. To ensure the success of our initiatives, we support grassroots leaders and organizations by bringing resources, technical capacity, research, technology, and

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