



Cyclone Fani batters Odisha

Leaves trail of destruction; 8 killed; weakens into tropical storm; crossing West Bengal towards Bangladesh



AGENCIES

At least eight people were killed as Cyclone Fani, the biggest storm to hit India in 20 years, slammed into the eastern state of Odisha yesterday, damaging houses and cutting off power, water and telecommunications.

It made landfall at the temple town of Puri in the morning, with winds gusting up to 200 kilometres per hour.

Fani is the strongest cyclonic storm since the Super Cyclone of 1999, which claimed around 10,000 lives and battered the Odisha coast for 30 hours.

As the cyclone progresses into West Bengal, it is expected to weaken gradually into a severe cyclonic storm with winds of 90-100kmph and gusts of 115kmph before entering Bangladesh as a cyclonic

storm with winds of 60-70kmph, reports Hindustan Times.

It is likely to hit Kolkata early today, a city home to 4.5 million people.

Fani spent days building up power in the northern reaches of the Bay of Bengal before it struck the coast of Odisha around 8:00am, said India Meteorological Department.

In recent days, the authorities in Odisha state evacuated more than a million people as they were worried about a possible 1.5-metre (five-foot) storm surge sweeping far inland.

Eight people were reported dead so far, senior officials said, adding that they were yet to get information from many areas, reports The Economic Times.

Of the victims, three, including a teenage boy, were killed in Puri

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People head to a cyclone shelter in Khulna's Dacope upazila around 4:00pm yesterday as the area braces for the impact of cyclone Fani. **Bottom left**, volunteers ask people to go to shelters by the evening. A shelter crammed with local residents, **bottom right**.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Save people, face Fani

PM's directive to authorities

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, now in London, has directed all the government and non-government organisations to work in a coordinated manner to face cyclone Fani.

She also asked the authorities to take the people of coastal districts

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12 lakh moved to shelters

Heavy rainfall across Bangladesh; storm surges hit coastal areas; 50 villages inundated as embankments breached

STAR REPORT

More than 12 lakh people have been evacuated and moved to cyclone shelters in 19 coastal districts as cyclone Fani is charging towards Bangladesh, after making landfall in the Eastern Indian coast yesterday morning.

The very severe cyclonic storm, named Fani meaning snake's hood, lost its speed and strength and turned into a tropical storm. It was on its way to West Bengal when this report was filed around 1:00am today.

It is expected to strike Bangladesh around midday today, according to the Met office.

It will enter through the north of Khulna and south of Rajshahi around noon and will remain in Bangladesh territory for 6-10 hours, said Shamsuddin Ahmed, director of Bangladesh



Source: GDACS/IMD

high storm surges and triggered rainfall almost all over the country yesterday.

At least seven people reportedly died and seven were injured in lightning and tree falls in different parts of the country.

At least 30 villages in Patuakhali, Bagerhat and Khulna were inundated as storm surges breached earthen embankments and

Meteorological Department.

"Currently the eye of the cyclone is some 300km southwest of Satkhira," he told The Daily Star at 11:00pm yesterday.

Hindustan Times reported that it will further weaken by the time enters Bangladesh with a wind speed of 60-70kmph.

But even before the strike, Fani already caused cyclonic storm with a speed of more than 100kmph and five feet

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Lightnings and tree fall kill 7

4,071 cyclone shelters in 19 districts prepared

Dry food, medicine, drinking water sent to cyclone shelters

32 Navy ships in operation to rescue people

Thousands still stranded in offshore islands of Noakhali, Bhola

Anxious wait at cyclone shelters

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

It was shortly after 3:30pm yesterday when Saddam Sana, a 44-year-old farmer, arrived at a temporary cyclone centre in Dacope's Tildanga health complex. He was completely drenched and quivering.

Saddam along with his wife and two children went to the three-storey building, adjacent to the Shibsha river, to take refuge from cyclone Fani.

This was not the first time Saddam came to a cyclone centre. The memories of cyclones Sidr and Aila were still fresh in his mind.

Sidr caused devastation, including destroying houses and other establishments, in the coastal regions of Khulna in 2007. Two years later followed the Aila and broke embankments, keeping some areas partially submerged for nearly two years.

Like Saddam, around 170 people, including women and children, were staying in the shelter, which had a capacity to accommodate around 300 people, yesterday. Many arrived there with their belongings and cattle. But many like Saddam couldn't.

"I need to go back [home], I need to save them," said the man from Dacope's Gorkhali village, adding he had also lost his home after Aila struck. "I'd to live in shelters for days when Aila came".

Another villager, Mamata Mistary, said she bought some dry food with her and was taking them.

Contacted, Dacope Upazila Nirbahi Officer Abdul Wadud said they

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Water breaks through an embankment along the Payra river in Patuakhali's Mirzaganj upazila yesterday as swelling tide of the Bay sent water into the river. Five villages of the upazila have been flooded as gushing water breached the embankment at six points.

PHOTO: STAR

Remove all barriers to repatriation

Bangladesh asks Myanmar at JWG meeting on Rohingya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has urged Myanmar to remove all barriers to the repatriation of Rohingyas and take concrete steps to create conditions conducive to their return.

It also emphasised the need for positive steps towards a "well-defined time-bound pathway" to citizenship that would encourage the Rohingyas to return home voluntarily.

The suggestions were put forward at the fourth meeting of Bangladesh-Myanmar Joint Working Group (JWG) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Mahbub Uz Zaman, secretary (Asia & Pacific) at the Bangladesh foreign ministry, and U Myint Thu, permanent secretary of Myanmar foreign ministry, led their respective delegations at the meeting, according to a statement by the Bangladesh foreign ministry.

Bangladesh particularly stressed the need for removing legal and administrative barriers, including freedom of movement, safety and security, to ensure basic rights of the returnees.

Fleeing a military crackdown in Rakhine, thousands of Rohingyas have taken shelter in Cox's Bazar since August 2017. Some one million Rohingyas, including 750,000 who fled violence since August 2017, are now living in Bangladesh.

At yesterday's meeting, Dhaka called upon Nay Pyi Taw to start repatriation soon. The process remained stalled

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4 land in jail over sexual assault on madrasa girl

Principal, a teacher among them, say police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A Jashore court yesterday sent a madrasa teacher to jail on charges of molesting a fifth grader student in the district's Sharsha upazila on Thursday night.

Three more also landed in prison for backing up the molester and threatening the victim's family.

M Moshir Rahman, officer-in-charge of Sharsha Police Station, said the victim's father filed a case against four men under the Prevention of Women and Child Repression Act on Thursday night.

Police arrested the four -- the madrasa's assistant teacher Shariful Islam, 24; managing committee member Nurul Islam, 32; principal Mohsin Ali, 36; and office assistant Jamal Uddin, 30 -- on the same night.

The victim's father alleged that Shariful had

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