

# Cyclone Fani damage worth Tk 536 crore

Crops on 1,800 hectares destroyed, ministry says

UNB, Dhaka

The damage caused by Cyclone Fani has been estimated to be Tk 536.61 crore, the government said yesterday. It affected the environment, infrastructure and livelihood of the people when it swept across the country. "The cyclone flooded 63,000 hectares of land and destroyed crops on 1,800 hectares," State Minister for Disaster Management Enamur Rahaman said after a meeting on assessing the damage and chalking out rehabilitation plans. "The agriculture department

suffered Tk 38 crore of damage ... Recommendations have been made to waiver debts and provide subsidy to farmers in Fani-hit areas," he said. Apart from this, Tk 251 crore will be needed to repair around 21.95km stretches of embankments at 240 places, he said, adding that road repair cost would be about Tk 161.63 crore. The forest suffered a damage of Tk 5 crore while the amount was Tk 2.84 crore for fisheries. He added that Tk 78.14 crore would be needed to repair 2,063 damaged houses. "The rehabilitation will be done quickly at the prime minister's order," he said.

# Europeans reject

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compliance on the basis of Iran's performance regarding its nuclear-related commitments..." read a statement issued jointly by the European Union and the foreign ministers of Britain, France and Germany. "We are determined to continue pursuing efforts to enable the continuation of legitimate trade with Iran," said the European states, adding that included getting a special purpose vehicle aimed at enabling business with Iran off the ground. The 2015 nuclear deal requires Iran to curb its nuclear programme in return for the elimination of international sanctions. It was signed by the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China. The administration of President Donald Trump abandoned the agreement a year ago and imposed US sanctions, which it has ratcheted up this month, effectively ordering all countries to halt all purchases of Iranian oil or face their own sanctions. The move creates a dilemma for Washington's European allies which say they share its concerns about Iranian behaviour but think the Trump administration's tactics are likely to backfire. The European allies have opposed the US decision to abandon the nuclear deal, which they say plays into the hands of hardliners in Iran and undermines pragmatists within the Iranian leadership who want to open the country up to the world. French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday called for the nuclear deal to be extended to cover other issues of concern to the West, such as Iran's regional policies and missile programme, rather than jettisoned. "Leaving the 2015 nuclear agreement is a mistake because it is undoing what we have already done. That's why France is remaining and will remain a part of it and I deeply hope that Iran will remain," Macron said. "We contributed to negotiating this deal. France at the time had even pushed for it to be more demanding than what the United States was ready to accept. It is a good deal and good base. It needs to be completed," he

said. European countries have tried to develop a system to allow outside investors to do business with Iran while avoiding falling foul of US sanctions. But in practice this has failed so far, with all major European companies that had announced plans to invest in Iran saying they would no longer do so. Iran has always denied that it was seeking a nuclear weapon. Tehran says it wants to abide by the nuclear deal. A spokesman for Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation yesterday said Tehran's goal was to bring the agreement "back on track". But Tehran has also maintained that it will leave the deal, known as the JCPOA, unless it receives more economic support. "We have not left the JCPOA so far, but we have put such a move on our agenda and that would happen step-by-step," Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araçchi was quoted as saying by state-run PressTV on Wednesday night. Supporters of the nuclear deal, including Trump's predecessor Barack Obama and European allies, say the pact extends the time it would take Iran to make a nuclear weapon if it decided to do so, and guarantees that it would be caught. Lifting sanctions would show ordinary Iranians the benefits of cooperating with the world and make it harder for hardliners to roll back reforms, they argue. The Trump administration argues that the nuclear deal was flawed because it is not permanent, does not address Iran's missile programme and does not punish Iran for what Washington considers meddling in regional countries. France, led by Macron, says those issues would be easier to tackle in a future agreement if the existing deal is kept in place. Iran has always said its missile programme and regional policies are sovereign issues and not negotiable. Trump's hardline stance is supported by Israel and by Arab allies of the United States such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which consider Iran a foe and gain leverage over global oil prices from having its exports taken off the market.

# Grief-stricken

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2013, respectively. She was enrolled in IbneSina Hospital's Kallyanpur branch for a diploma in nursing in 2014, after which she started her job in the hospital in 2017. Speaking to this correspondent over phone, Tania's elder brother Kafil Uddin Sumon, also a nurse at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), said their parents had to spend around Tk 15 lakhs for his and Tania's nursing education at private institutions. "Moreover, our family had to spend huge amount of money to bear the treatment cost of our mother, who was a cancer patient and died last December. "After joining our jobs, we [me and Tania] were trying to improve the financial status of our family," said Sumon. A sobbing Sumon said he tried to persuade Tania several times to get married. "But she used to say that she would build a house for our father first and then think of marriage." Tania's uncle Nasir Uddin said, "Her death is an irreparable loss for the family, which has faced a serious blow and it would be very tough to overcome the situation." Family and police sources said Tania boarded a SwarnalataParibahan bus from the capital's Mohakhali to go to her home in Lohajury in Katiadi around 3:00pm on Monday. She had called Sujan upon reaching Katiadi, which is a 10-minute rickshaw ride away from her home saying she would reach Pirijpur shortly. After passengers were dropped at Ujanchar in the upazila, Tania was the only one left in the bus, said Shafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Katiadi Police Station, quoting family members.

After waiting for over an hour and finding Tania's phone switched off, the family rushed to Pirijpur bus station but did not find her there. Around 11:00pm, they learned that Tania had died after being contacted by the KatiadiUpazila Health Complex. After they say her body, her family alleged she was killed after being raped. The bus driver and helper, who were both arrested, during primary inter-rogation, claimed that the girl jumped off the running bus through a win-down and died. But they could not explain why she would do that, police said. The autopsy conducted on Tania a day later found evidences of gang rape and murder. The incident sparked huge outrage across the county as different socio-cultural organisations and professional bodies formed human chains at different areas, including in Dhaka and Kishoreganj, demanding exem-plantary punishment of the criminals. Bangladesh MohilaPrishad and Manobadhikar Forum formed a human chain at Kishoreganj town's Kalibari area. They also submitted memoranda in this regard to the deputy commissioner and superintendent of police of Kishoreganj.

# Woman

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Meanwhile, police detained Samena Khatun, 40, sister-in-law of the victim, from her home but rest of the family members went in hiding, said Monirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Aminur Police Station. A case would be filed in this connection within the shortest possible time, the OC added.



Transport union workers hold a banner reading "United Transport for Venezuela" on top a truck during a protest against the government of Nicolas Maduro in Caracas, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# No mercy for killers

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them no matter where they hide in and whatever amount of money they spend," she told a views-exchange meeting at Taj Hotel here in the afternoon, reports BSS. The PM said courts have given verdicts against the killers and money launderers and the government would take measures so that the judgements were executed. Mentioning about the Awami League's landslide victory in the December 30 general election and the country's development over the last 10 years, Hasina urged all to stay alert so that none can play ducks and drakes with the people's fate. About the construction of the Padma Bridge, she said the government was building the bridge with its own funds. The PM said allegations of graft regarding the bridge were raised against the government. "But we didn't accept the allegations,

rather we protested as we had such courage." The UK Awami League and its associate bodies organised the meeting, with UK AL President Sultan Mahmud Sharif in the chair. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam was present. PM TO RETURN HOME TOMORROW Hasina is scheduled to leave London for home today after completing her visit to the United Kingdom, reports UNB. A VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, carrying the PM and her entourage, will depart Heathrow International Airport at 6:00pm (Bangladesh time), according to the Prime Minister's Office. Bangladesh High Commissioner to the UK SayeedaMuna Tasneem will see off Hasina at the airport. The premier is Hasina to reach Dhaka at 10:20am tomorrow. She went to the UK on May 1.

# Demonstration

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regularly. No one even wants to lend us money because we are not paid. "Sometimes I pull rickshaws at night to make ends meet," he said. In another part of the country, some 35,000 workers of eight state-run jute mills in Khulna and Jashore continued their work-stoppage that started on Sunday night. From Tuesday, the workers had been blocking the Dhaka-Khulna highway and rail tracks near Notun Rasta intersection in Khulna city between 4:00pm and 7:00pm. In Khulna yesterday, hundreds of workers gathered in Notun Rasta, Kabir Bottola and Daulatpur areas in the afternoon and demonstrated with empty plates and pots and then sat in the middle of Dhaka-Khulna highway.

In Jashore, workers from Jashore Jute Industry and Carpeting Jute Mills Ltd blocked the highway in Rajghat area. Buses leaving Khulna after 4:00pm remained stranded for hours. Railway communication was also disrupted between 4:00pm and 7:00pm due to the blockade, said Manik Chandra Sarker, manager of Khulna Railway Station. Platinum jute mills worker Mizanur Rahman told The Daily Star that he would gladly leave his job if he gets his three months' arrears. According to Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation in Khulna, the corporation is losing about Tk 4 crore every day due to the work stoppage. According to BJMC there are 14,525 permanent and 18,552 temporary workers of the jute mills.

# Rain washes out

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There was a question of finding the right opening partner for automatic choice Tamim Iqbal. While Soumya Sarkar's performance in Bangladesh's first match of the tri-series against West Indies might have provided the answer but a number of players, especially the four backups -- Taskin Ahmed, Forhad Reza, Yasir Ali and Nayeem Hasan -- with whom the team have travelled, are yet to be tested to see if there could be any last-minute changes to the 15-member World Cup squad. Before embarking upon the World Cup, it was vital for Bangladesh to play each of the matches for ideal preparation. However, inclement weather could hamper Bangladesh's preparation for the mega event. Also, the Tigers will be hoping that no such external issues will interfere with the next scheduled match against the West Indies on May 13.

# 165 more

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agencies were out there to help these re-turnees round the year, the Brac official added. The types of assistance range from providing medical care to helping the migrants reconnect with their families. Brac's Migration Programme unit had provided support to over 2,500 re-turnees in the last one year, Shariful said, adding, "It is difficult to run the show without financial backup. Support from all quarters at home and abroad are welcome."

# Australia

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parliamentarian, Edith Cowan. But the technology seemingly did not include a spellchecker. It took seven months for the public to notice "responsibility" was repeatedly misspelled in the text of Cowan's 1921 maiden speech. "I stand here today in the unique position of being the first woman in an Australian parliament. It is a great responsibility," the text reads, missing an "i". The script is barely legible to the naked eye and the Reserve Bank of Australia may have got away with it, were it not for one eagle-eyed radio listener. But there are no plans to pull the notes from circulation. "The Reserve Bank of Australia is aware of it and the spelling will be corrected at the next print run," said a bank spokesperson. Edith Cowan played a crucial role in winning the vote for women in Western Australia and at the age of 60 entered parliament. There she was instrumental in opening the legal and other professions to women.

# 2 killed

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official said. Sensing presence of the law enforcers, the smugglers opened fire on them, forcing them to fire back that triggered a "shootout", he added. Later, Rab members recovered the two with bullet injuries and took them to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital where doctors declared them dead. Rab men also recovered a firearm, three bullets and 10,000 yaba pills from the spot. The bodies were kept at the hospital for autopsies, said Farid Uddin Khandakar, officer-in-charge of Cox's Bazar Sadar Model Police Station.

# Premium numbers

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The gang has been running this business for years. They collected SIM cards in different ways, including a method called "dual claiming" which allows them to recover a SIM card using fake documents with the help of dishonest employees of mobile operators, said a senior official who investigated the matter. Sources in the carriers and the investigation team said the rouge employees even used fake death certificates to deregister a SIM and sell it off. The gang did this because the demand is there. People seek easy-to-remember numbers that are often labelled as "premium numbers". A chairman of an upazila in Pirojpur had bought a SIM that had the same last eight digits through this channel. The BTRC discovered that the SIM was replaced at least twice in two years without notifying the central bio-metric database of phone users. The chairman was currently using a SIM that had the same last seven digits. The Daily Star could not reach the chairman for comments as he was abroad. The BTRC's probe began after Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID) Director General Md Shahidul Islam filed a complaint that his phone was not working and someone had claimed his SIM. It found that the SIM was recovered illegally and then transferred to a different carrier so that it becomes more difficult to track. CIID DG Shahidul told The Daily Star that in October he suddenly found someone was using his number. He immediately informed the BTRC of the matter. The BTRC later learnt that the same had happened to ICT State Minister Zunaid Ahmed Palak. The telecom regulator also noticed some rules violations on biometric verification by the second largest mobile operator Robi and fined it Tk 5 crore. In the investigation, the BTRC found that the operators were guilty and fined them, Md Jahurul Haque, chairman of the BTRC told The Daily Star on Wednesday. "It was a huge process and our team is certain that there are some un-scrupulous employees inside operators and we also asked them to take action against them." However, the three carriers said they were following the rules and regulations and that they had not violated any rules regarding the matter. During its probe, the BTRC found stores in clickbd.com selling such SIMs. Browsing different e-commerce sites, The Daily Star found SIMs selling from Tk 1.50 lakh to Tk 2 lakh each. Talking to a seller's representative Anisul Islam Shahin, The Daily Star learnt that the demand for "premium numbers" starting with 017, 018, and

019 was more than the ones starting with 016 and 015. The ones starting with 013 and 014 had almost no demand. "Premium numbers" of 016 and 015 series was selling between Tk 70,000 and Tk 80,000. Prices are reduced if the customer wants only the last five digits to be the same, he said refusing to share details about their trade. The sellers tout proper biometric registration and home deliveries. The BTRC officials said their investigation identified 800 SIMs that were used by the syndicate to run their trade and blocked them. In separate statements, Grameenphone, Banglalink, and Robi claimed that they were following the registration process mandated by the regulator. "As a compliant company, Grameenphone follows all regulatory conditions when selling SIM cards to customers. In such cases, some individuals may be taking advantage of the regulation on ownership transfer. In the inter-est of transparency, we may be open to some reasonable regulatory inter-vention to deter such fraudulent activities," said Md Hasan, a deputy general manager of the country's top carrier. "As a company we do not sell any number which is defined as 'premium'. Therefore, if any entity sells SIM cards claiming it premium, it has no connection with us and we have not authorised anybody to sell such types of numbers," said Robi in a statement. The second largest operator also said anyone with proper biometric verification can buy a Robi or Airtel SIM from their walk-in centres or author-ised selling points. "After buying a SIM, a person can transfer the SIM ownership by following the due process given by the regulator. Only mo-bile operators have legal access to the NID server for biometric SIM verification." The Daily Star sent screenshots of webpages selling Banglalink number to the carrier. Taimur Rahman, chief corporate and regulatory affairs officer of Banglalink, said they checked the numbers and found that none of them were "premium numbers." "Banglalink always sells SIMs through its authentic formal channels in a compliant manner and as per the directives of the BTRC," Taimur said. However, the BTRC has asked Banglalink to fire 12 sales agents in connection with the misappropriation of Palak's and CIID DG's numbers. According to BTRC meeting minutes obtained by The Daily Star, Bangla-link in a statement claimed that two individuals, who had no connection with the carrier, were responsible and that its agents and employees had nothing to do with the matter.

# Time to split

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change our culture, influence elections and empower nationalist leaders," he continues. "And I'm worried that Mark has surrounded himself with a team that reinforces his beliefs instead of challenging them." Hughes is the latest in a series of prominent entrepreneurs and tech executives to call for stricter regulation of Facebook and other online platforms. They are speaking out as countries around the world rush to put better controls in place following a wave of scandals related to data privacy, election meddling and the spread of misinformation. Zuckerberg has signaled that he's open to some regulation. In an opinion piece published in the Washington Post in March, the CEO tried to sketch out areas where he thought regulation should start. In Hughes view, Facebook's calls for regulation are a way to head off a potential antitrust case. Hughes, who has not worked at Facebook in over a decade, argues that Zuckerberg's competitive drive and quest for domination has led the company to control an estimated 80% of the world's social network revenue. The entrepreneur says that Facebook is now a "powerful monopoly" that should be forced to reverse its acquisitions of Instagram and Whatsapp. Hughes also says the US government should create a new agency to regulate tech companies. "[Zuckerberg] has created a leviathan that crowds out entrepreneurship and restricts consumer choice. It's on our government to ensure that we never lose the magic of the invisible hand," Hughes writes.