

# India prepares for 'extremely severe' Bay of Bengal cyclone

May 2 2019

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An Indian fisherman runs between the docked fishing boats amid strong winds at Chandrabhaga beach in Puri district of eastern Odisha state, India, Thursday, May 2, 2019. Hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated along India's eastern coast on Thursday as authorities braced for a cyclone moving through the Bay of Bengal that was forecast to bring extremely severe wind and rain. (AP Photo)

Hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated along India's eastern coast on Thursday as authorities braced for a cyclone moving through the Bay of Bengal that was forecast to bring extremely severe wind and rain.

The India Meteorological Department in New Delhi said Cyclone Fani was expected to make landfall on Friday with gale-force winds of up to 200 kilometers (124 miles) per hour likely starting Thursday night. It warned of "extremely heavy falls" over parts of the state of Odisha and its southern neighbor Andhra Pradesh.

India's National Disaster Management Authority forecast "high to phenomenal" sea conditions for most of the Indian states along the Bay of Bengal. Fishermen were advised not to venture into deep waters. A 1.5-meter (4.9-foot) [storm surge](#) was expected to inundate low-lying areas.

Fearing that Fani could be the worst storm since 1999, when a cyclone killed around 10,000 people and devastated large parts of Odisha, Indian officials put the navy, air force, army and [coast guard](#) on high alert, the Press Trust of India news agency reported.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with Cabinet ministers and weather and disaster-response officials for a briefing on the measures being taken.

The Meteorological Department projected "total destruction" of thatched-roof huts, flooding of farmland and orchards, and the uprooting of telephone poles.



In this Wednesday, May 1, 2019 photo, Indian fishermen attempt to bring their boat ashore amid strong winds at Chandrabhaga beach in Puri district of eastern Odisha state, India. Hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated along India's eastern coast on Thursday as authorities braced for a cyclone moving through the Bay of Bengal that was forecast to bring extremely severe wind and rain. (AP Photo)

Odisha's special relief commissioner, Bishnupada Sethi, said that preparations for Fani included the country's largest evacuation operation, of around 880,000 people.

More than 800 shelters were opened and around 100,000 dry food packets were ready to be airdropped.

"We've been preparing plans for the last few days to ensure that all the

people who are vulnerable will be shifted to our cyclone centers," Sethi said.

Tourists were provided special trains to leave the popular beach town of Puri in Odisha on Thursday, according to Indian media reports.

The National Disaster Response Force dispatched 54 rescue and relief teams to flood-prone areas along the coast and as far afield as Andaman and Nicobar Islands, a group of islands that comprise a state located about 1,300 kilometers (840 miles) east of mainland India in the Bay of Bengal.

The teams included doctors, engineers and deep-sea divers equipped with boats, scuba sets and satellite phones, the group said in a statement.

In the coastal city of Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh, strong winds and heavy rain battered an empty beach where fishing boats had been left on shore. People piled into truck beds and buses reinforced with tin sheeting.

Residents tied plastic tarps over their tin-roof shacks before abandoning them.

Fani was also forecast to hit Bangladesh, tracking north through ports including Cox's Bazar, the coastal district where more than a million Rohingya from Myanmar live in [refugee camps](#).

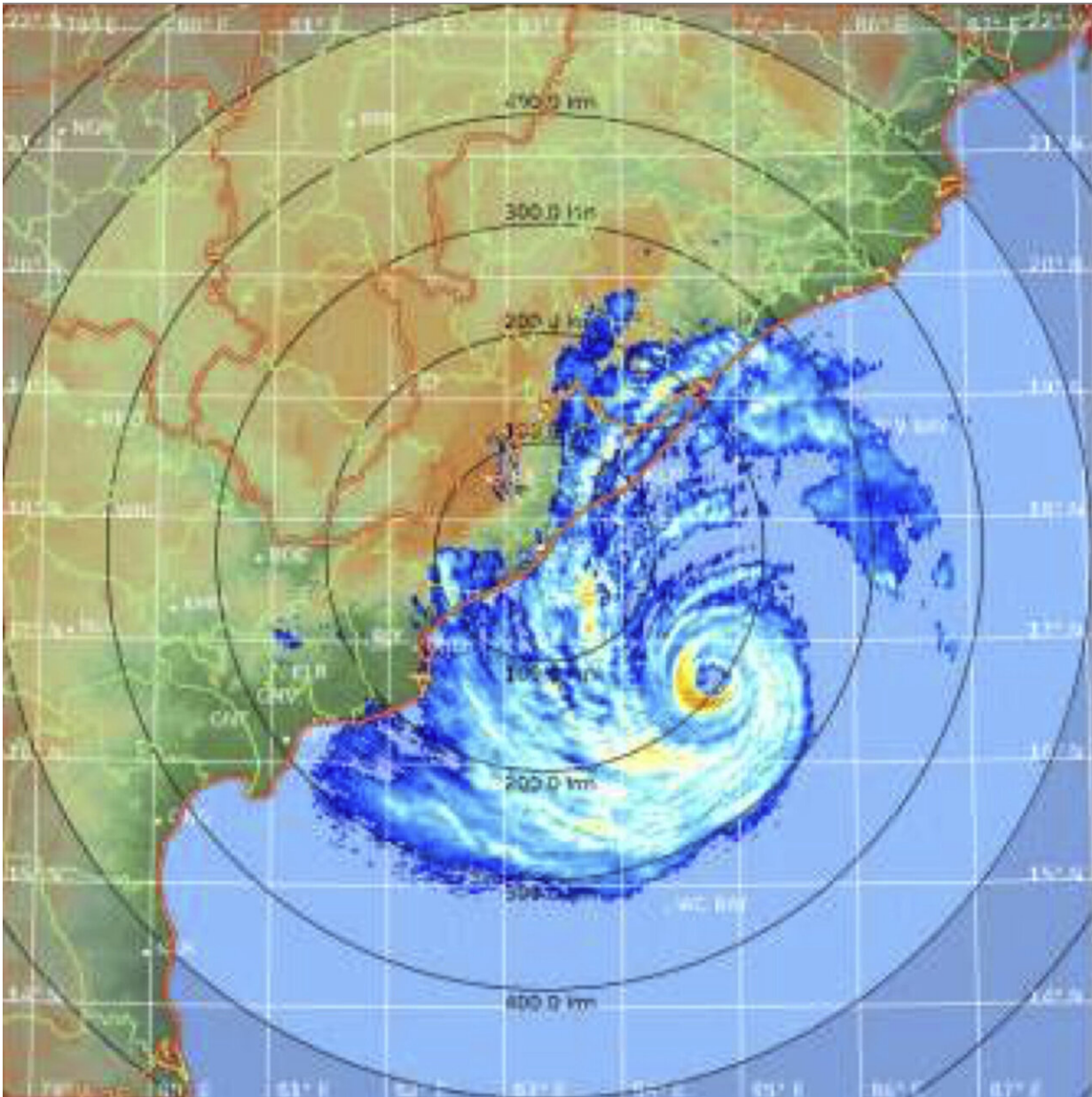
Aid agencies warned that the Rohingya were at threat. Hillol Sobhan, local communications director for the group NGO Care, said it is keeping emergency supplies for the refugees in Cox's Bazar.

The Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority said it suspended operations of all vessels. Authorities also halted activities at Chittagong

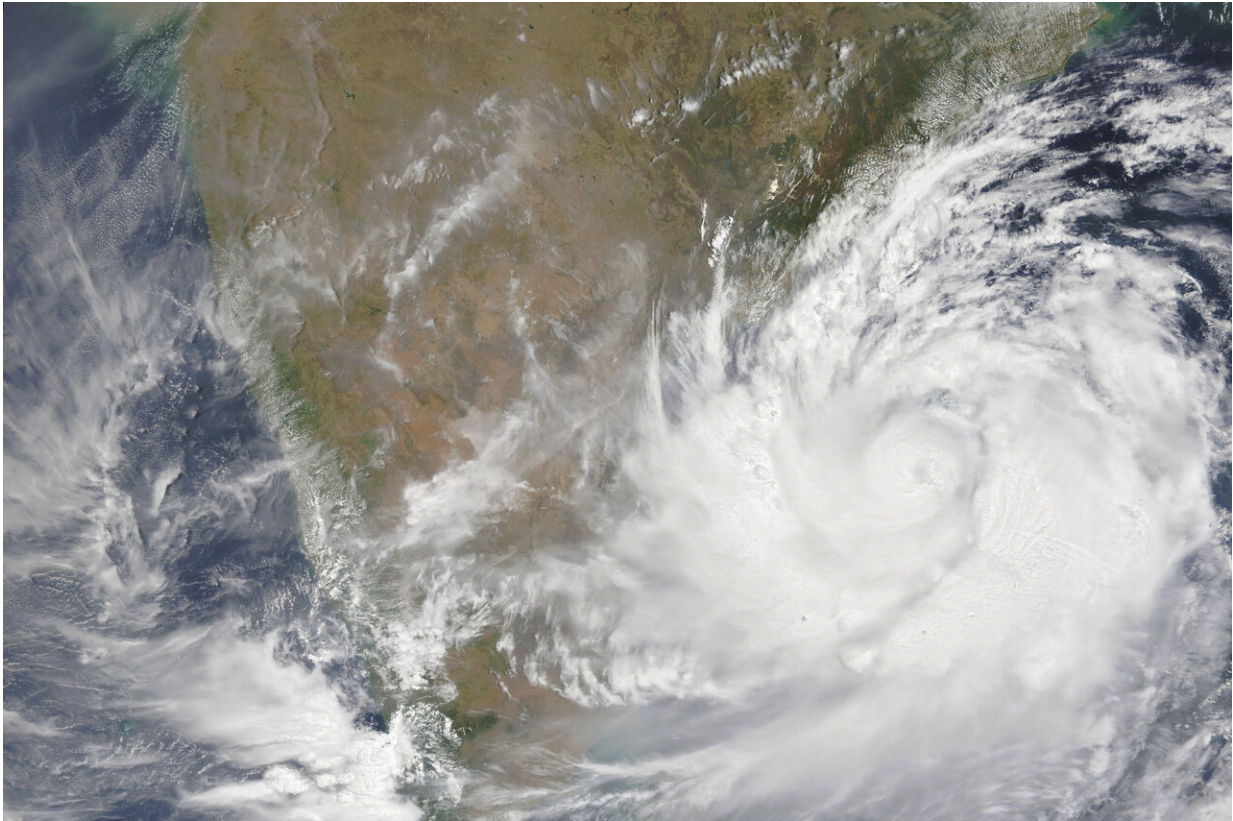
Seaport, which handles 80% of the country's overseas trade.



Villagers of Chandrabhaga fishing village take shelter at a government run school building after they were evacuated by the authorities in Puri district of eastern Odisha state, India, Thursday, May 2, 2019. Hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated along India's eastern coast on Thursday as authorities braced for a cyclone moving through the Bay of Bengal that was forecast to bring extremely severe wind and rain. (AP Photo)



In this satellite image acquired from the Indian Metrological Department, shows Cyclone Fani in the Bay of Bengal on Thursday, May 2, 2019. Hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated along India's eastern coast on Thursday as authorities braced for a cyclone moving through the Bay of Bengal that was forecast to bring "extremely severe" wind and rain. (Indian Metrological Department via AP)



This Wednesday, May 1, 2019 photo provided by NASA shows a satellite view of Cyclone Fani. Indian authorities have evacuated hundreds of thousands of people along the country's eastern coast ahead of the cyclone moving through the Bay of Bengal. Meteorologists say Cyclone Fani could bring extremely severe wind and rain when it hits the Indian state of Odisha on Friday. (NASA via AP)



Dark clouds loom over locals standing at a beach in Puri district of eastern Odisha state, India, Thursday, May 2, 2019. Hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated along India's eastern coast on Thursday as authorities braced for a cyclone moving through the Bay of Bengal that was forecast to bring extremely severe wind and rain. (AP Photo)

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