

Cyclone Sitrang: 24 dead as Bangladesh seeks to restore power to millions

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Nearly 10,000 homes were destroyed or damaged by storm that flooded cities and forced a million to evacuate

At least 24 people have died and millions were without power after Cyclone Sitrang struck [Bangladesh](#), forcing the evacuation of about a million people.

Most of the deaths were from falling trees, police and government officials said, with two dying in the north on the Jamuna river when their boat sank. A Myanmar national working on a ship also died by falling off the deck, an official said.

“We still have not got all the reports of damages,” said Jebun Nahar, a government official.

About 10 million people were without power in districts along the coast on Tuesday, while schools were shut across much of the country’s south.

Sitrang made landfall in southern Bangladesh late on Monday. Authorities managed to get about a million people to safety before it hit.

Eight people were missing from a dredging boat that sank during the storm on Monday night in the Bay of Bengal, near Mirsarai, said Abdullah Pasha, regional fire department chief. “Strong wind flipped the dredger and it sank instantly in the Bay of Bengal.” Divers were searching for survivors.

People evacuated from low-lying regions such as remote islands and riverbanks were moved to thousands of multi-storey cyclone shelters, said the disaster management ministry secretary, Kamrul Ahsan.

Ahsan said nearly 10,000 homes were either “destroyed or damaged” in the storm and about 1,000 shrimp farms were washed away in floods.

Trees were uprooted as far away as the capital, Dhaka, hundreds of kilometres from the storm’s centre.

Heavy rains lashed much of the country, flooding cities such as Dhaka, Khulna and Barisal which received 324mm (13 inches) of rainfall on Monday.

About 33,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, controversially relocated from the mainland to a storm-prone island in the Bay of Bengal, were ordered to stay indoors but there were no reports of casualties or damage, officials said.

The cyclone downed trees and brought widespread panic to the southern island of Maheshkhali after power and telecoms were cut.

“Such was the power of the wind we could not sleep in the night because of the fear that our homes will be destroyed. Snakes entered many homes. Water also inundated many homes,” said Tahmidul Islam, 25, a resident of Maheshkhali.

In the neighbouring Indian state of West Bengal, thousands of people were evacuated on Monday to more than 100 relief centres, officials said. There were no reports of damage and people began returning home on Tuesday.

In 2021, more than a million people were evacuated along India’s east coast before [Cyclone Yaas](#) battered the area with winds gusting up to 155km/h (96mph) - equivalent to a category 2 hurricane.

[Cyclone Amphan](#), the second “super cyclone” recorded over the Bay of Bengal, killed more than 100 people in Bangladesh and India and affected millions when it hit in 2020.

In recent years, better forecasting and more effective evacuation planning have dramatically reduced the death toll from such storms. The worst recorded, in 1970, killed hundreds of thousands of people.

Cyclones are a regular menace in the region but scientists say climate change is likely making them more intense and frequent.

Agence France-Presse

P.S.

• The Guardian. Wed 26 Oct 2022 02.04 BST:
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/26/cyclone-sitrang-24-dead-as-bangladesh-seeks-to-restore-power-to-millions>

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