



**STORM AND AFTER: People waded through a flooded street after Cyclone Fani made landfall in Puri, Odisha, on Friday. — PTI**

## Furious Fani leaves trail of destruction in India

PURI — At least eight people died on Friday as Cyclone Fani, the biggest in years, slammed into eastern India, sending coconut trees flying and cutting off power, water and telecommunications.

The monster weather system made landfall in Puri in the morning, with winds gusting at up to 200km per hour.

In recent days authorities in Odisha state, where 10,000 people perished in a 1999 cyclone, evacuated more than a million people as they worried about a possible 1.5-metre storm surge sweeping far inland.

Eight people were killed, including a teenage boy, a woman hit by concrete debris and an elderly woman who suffered a heart attack in one of several thousand shelters packed with families.

Authorities in Bangladesh, where Fani was headed, said a woman was killed, also by a tree, and that 14 villages were inundated as flood dams broke due to a tidal surge. Disaster management spokesman Mohammad Jahir said that 400,000 people from Bangladeshi villages have been taken to shelters.

Hundreds of thousands more people in India's West Bengal state have also been given or-

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### People were killed in Odisha state

ders to flee. Local airports have been shut, while train lines and roads were closed.

"It just went dark and then suddenly we could barely see five metres in front of us," said one resident in Puri.

"There were the roadside food carts, store signs all flying by in the air," the man told AFP from a hotel where he took shelter. "The wind is deafening."

Another witness said he saw a small car being blown along a street by the winds and then turned over.

After pounding Puri and Odisha state capital Bhubaneswar and heading northeastwards, losing strength as it goes, authorities were battling to remove fallen trees from roads and to restore phone and internet services.

On Saturday Cyclone Fani was expected in West Bengal's capital Kolkata, a city home to 4.5 million people.— AFP