

## **24 killed, half a million flee as Cyclone Roanu batters Bangladesh**

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**Dhaka:** At least 24 people were killed and over 100 others injured as cyclone Roanu pounded coastal areas of Bangladesh on Saturday, leaving a trail of destruction and forcing half a million people to flee their homes.

With a wind speed of up to 88 kilometres per hour, the cyclone hit the Barisal-Chittagong region, sending impacts across the country. Most places witnessed rain and thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty and squally wind since early morning.

Twenty four people were killed in cyclonic storm, BD News reported. The tropical cyclone gradually defused after it made a landfall in the coastlines after the midday today.

The northwestern Chittagong appeared to be the worst victim of the cyclone as it hit the coastline at a speed of 80 kilometre per hour, killing nine people in that port city alone. Bhola, Noakhali and Cox's Bazar coastal districts each witnessed three deaths, he said.

"In terms of infrastructural and other damages, Chittagong suffered most as well as the cyclone damaged some 40,000 homesteads and business houses there," Ahmed said.

A disaster management ministry spokesman said so far some 500,000 people have been evacuated. Officials and reports said under the peripheral impact of the cyclone, codenamed Roanu, stormy winds levelled several hundred village huts.

The district administration at the scenes of the disaster said they continued to receive reports of growing number of casualties with highest 10 deaths in greater Chittagong alone.

"The officer in charge of Banskhal (of Chittagong) police station reported that seven people were killed there alone...they were victims of drowning or landslides," a police officer stationed in the port city told PTI by phone.

A minor child and a woman in Bhola appeared to be the first victims of the cyclone, which continued to advance keeping an edge with the coastlines from the southwesterly direction towards the southwest, turning the sea very rough.

In Patuakhali, over 300 families have been waterlogged as strong tidal waves caused the damn in Rangabali to break. Road communications have been disrupted after strong winds uprooted trees blocking highways, reports said.

The Shah Amanat International Airport, Chittagong suspended all of its flight operations due to Roanu.

Very to very heavy falls may occur at places over Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions, according to a Met office bulletin issued in Dhaka. Yesterday, the Met office issued a warning of 7 on a scale of 10 for three of the four main seaports.

- (PTI inputs)