

DISASTERS UPDATE

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TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS

National

Lightning kills four in Gujarat

7 Jun, 2007 | 0731 hrs IST | PTI

VADODARA: Lightning claimed four lives, two of them women, in Vadodara and Kaira districts of Gujarat, official reports reaching here said on Wednesday.

Four peacocks and four cattle heads were killed after being struck by lightning. These incidents were reported from the two districts since yesterday.

Dhaval Ratilal Bariya (19) died after being struck by lightning in Kachhla village of Sankheda taluka.

In another incident, Shantaben Jivanbhai Bariya (40) died after being hit by lightning in a field at Achhali village.

One Ganpat Moiji Nayak of Dhada village and an unidentified woman were the other two victims, the report said.

Scientists fear loss of icy zones of Himalayas by 2030

8 Jun, 2007 | 0935 hrs IST | PTI

KOLKATA: The Himalayas may lose its huge icy areas by 2030 resulting in alarming rise in water level on the Earth due to global warming, scientists have warned.

The rise in the water level will pose a serious challenge to the coastal areas and endanger the deltas like Sunderbans, said former Geological Survey of India Chairman Asis Ghose at a seminar on 'Melting Ice, A Hot Topic' here.

Water vapour causes 36 to 70 per cent of global warming, emission of carbon dioxide 9 to 26 per cent and methane 4 to 9 per cent, according to Calcutta University Chemistry department professor Shyamal Chakraborty.

Anthropogenic activities, he said, was said to be the basic reason of pollution that caused global warming, and this would give rise to massive outbreak of malaria and dengue by 2020.

The speakers expressed the view that human activities were mainly the attributing factor for global warming. The seminar was organised by the Indian Science Congress Association.

International

India has key role in climate change fight, says Bush

Press Trust Of India

Berlin, June 07, 2007

As Prime Minister Manmohan Singh prepares to ask the developed world at the G8 Summit on Friday to share responsibility for fighting climate change, US President George W Bush on Thursday insisted that efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions would not succeed till India and China were involved.

Bush emphasised the need for creating a bridge between Europe and developing countries like India and China to ensure reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

"By 2008, the world's emitters of greenhouse gases should come together," he told journalists after his meeting with British Prime Minister Tony Blair in Heiligendamm near Berlin. "Nothing is going to happen in terms of substantial reduction unless China and India participate," Bush said, adding "if we want them (India and China) at the table, it is important that we give them the opportunity to set an international goal."

India has held that countries responsible for creating the problem of climate change should come out in a big way to solve this issue. It argues that the greenhouse gas emissions of developed countries even today are many times more than developing countries like India.

Singh is expected to remind the developed countries that as agreed in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, they should act in accordance with their "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities". He is also likely to emphatically state that climate change concerns should be integrated with development strategies.

INDIANA MANDATES WEATHER ALERT RADIOS IN MANUFACTURED HOUSING

NOAA Weather All Hazards Provides Essential Storm Notification – Especially At Night

June 7, 2007 — Officials from [NOAA National Weather Service](#) offices that serve Indiana were on hand today at the Eastbrook Mobile Home Park in Evansville, Ind., to witness the signing of C.J.'s Law by Indiana Governor Mitchell Daniels. Named for two-year-old C.J. Martin, the law mandates installation of [NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards public alert radios](#) in all new and relocated manufactured housing in Indiana, effective July 1.



C.J. was one of 20 fatalities caused by the tornado that hit Evansville at 2 a.m., Nov. 6, 2005. The bill

was sponsored by Representative Phil Hoy and adopted by the Indiana Legislature following a campaign by C.J.'s mother Kathryn.

“Losing a child has to be the most difficult thing a parent can endure,” said National Weather Service Central Region Director Lynn P. Maximuk. “Kathryn Martin made it her mission to protect other mothers from experiencing her heartbreak. She is to be commended for almost two years of effort and determination that resulted in C.J.'s Law going into effect in Indiana.”

Kathryn Martin and Representative Hoy also will be among those honored by NOAA with a Mark Trail Award on June 21 in Washington D.C., for their work in increasing the awareness and use of NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards in the effort to save lives.

“November 6, 2005, will forever be etched in the minds of Evansville and tri-state residents, but out of such devastation and loss of life that touched so many, one child's life, C.J.'s, will live on in our hearts as C.J.'s Law lays the foundation to save countless lives in the future,” said Beverly Poole, meteorologist-in-charge of the [Paducah Weather Forecast Office](#), from which a tornado warning was issued for Evansville 13 minutes prior to the twister striking. Still, the tornado proved deadly since many people were sleeping when the storm arrived.

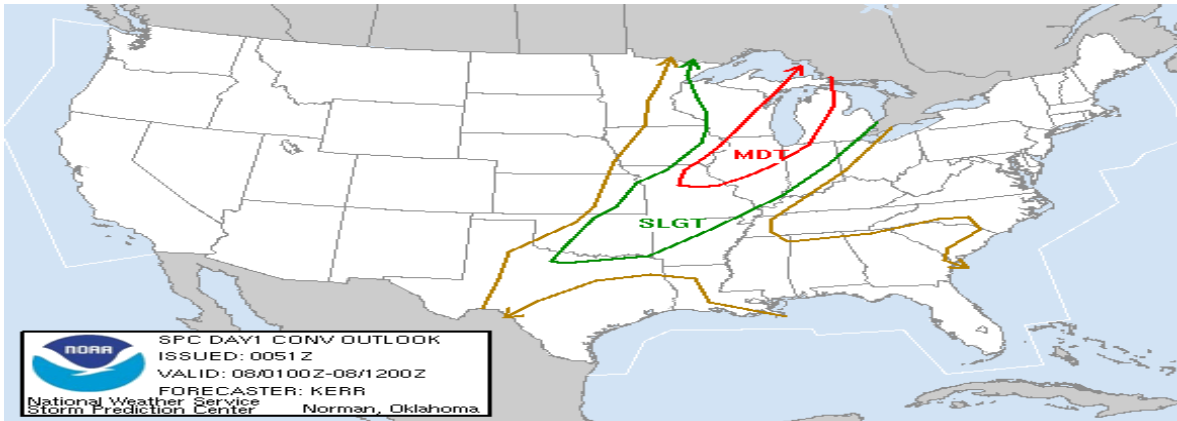
NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards provides immediate broadcasts of severe weather warnings and civil emergency messages — giving those in harm's way critical lead time to respond and remain safe. Special tones precede the initial broadcast of all emergency announcements regarding immediate weather threats and civil emergency messages to gain a listener's attention. These tones will also activate radios that are on alert mode, yet silent. This feature is especially crucial when severe storms or other events occur at night when most people are sound asleep.

Broadcasts of tornado warnings, flood warnings, AMBER Alerts for child abductions, chemical spill messages and many other notifications, in addition to routine weather observations and forecasts, make NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards an essential item for every home, business and public area.

NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards, a component of the nation's Emergency Alert System, is comprised of a nationwide network of more than 975 transmitters each directly linked with one of the 123 [local offices](#) of NOAA's National Weather Service, which issues weather warnings and relays civil emergency messages on behalf of law enforcement agencies. NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards is provided as a public service by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The Storm Prediction Center Is Forecasting Severe Weather Tonight and Into Early Friday.

NOAAWatch



[Severe Weather Outlook - click to enlarge](#)

There is a moderate risk of severe weather from the upper Great Lakes area into the Mid-Mississippi River Valley. An intense late spring storm will produce conditions favorable for strong tornadoes. [Tornado Watches remain in effect until 4 AM CDT Friday morning](#). People in threatened areas should monitor severe weather watches and warnings. There have been a number of tornadoes, large hail events, and damaging thunderstorm wind events reported. [Preliminary reports of severe weather...](#)
[Severe weather outlook for Friday...](#)
[Latest weather forecasts, warnings, watches, and advisories...](#)

Cyclone Gonu leaves behind 28 dead

Associated Press

Muscat: People dragged soaked bedding and carpets from homes after Cyclone Gonu's rains sent torrents of water and mud surging through Oman's seaside capital, a city often called the Arab world's tidiest.

After pummeling normally hot and dry Oman and Iran's southeastern coast, Gonu weakened to a tropical storm and was expected to dissipate into a rainstorm by Thursday as it moved over the sea toward Iran.

At least 28 people were dead, most of them in Oman, and 26 were missing.

The storm spared the region's oil installations, and oil prices dipped on world markets.

People told of spending a night in fear as turgid water flooded their homes, carrying away refrigerators and furniture and leaving streets gouged by sinkholes and caked in mud.

"The water broke through the walls. It came inside the house. It swept everything out," said Nidhal al-Masharafi, 31, who spent the night on his rooftop with his wife and six children.



FIERCE STORM: An Omani wades through floodwater in Muscat as Gonu leaves Oman battered

Grassy fields lay under several feet of water, and lush palm and eucalyptus groves were flattened. Strong waves still battered a beachfront normally thronged with European tourists, and the usually sparkling blue sea resembled a foamy chocolate milk.

"The capital, Muscat, became a lake," said a spokesman for the Oman Royal Police, Abdullah al-Harhi.

The storm was expected to spare Iran's offshore oil installations, which lie more than 193 km to the west, oil officials and the US military's Joint Typhoon Warning Center said

Iran orders evacuation of coastal areas as cyclone hits

Source: Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Date: 06 Jun 2007

TEHRAN, June 6, 2007 (AFP) - Iran on Wednesday evacuated residents living on the coast or river banks in southern provinces further inland to escape the onslaught of one of the strongest cyclones to hit the region in years.

The interior ministry said Cyclone Gonu would strike the southern coast off the Strait of Hormuz and waters further east in the coming hours after earlier hitting Oman, according to the semi-official Mehr news agency.

The cyclone hit the east coast of Oman early on Wednesday with heavy rain and high winds lashing Muscat, and the streets of the capital were almost deserted except for a few all-terrain vehicles.

In Iran, the southern ports of Bandar-e Jask and Chahbahar in the southern provinces of Hormozgan and Sistan Baluchestan were set to be the worst affected by torrential rain, possible floods and waves up to five metres (16 feet) high.

An official said all inhabitants on the coast between Charbahar and the town of Konarak 25 kilometres (15 miles) west had already been evacuated to safer havens.

"All the inhabitants of the regions of Chahbahar and Konarak have been evacuated to a distance of one kilometre from the coastal zone," said Zeinol Abedin Ramezani, the head of natural disasters in Sistan Baluchestan.

"These inhabitants were transferred to the (economic) free zone where they were given food and drinking water," he added.

The interior ministry statement said that "all residents in Sistan Baluchestan and Homorzgan are kindly requested to leave the coastal areas and river banks immediately."

"They should take shelter in safe areas away from the seashore and river banks," it added.

Iranian state television said downpours were already drenching coastal areas and that the road between Bandar-e Jask and the inland town of Minab further west was flooded.

State media also quoted officials as saying there was no risk of a tsunami.

hif-sjw/txw AFP 060848 GMT 06 07

Oman/Iran: Cyclone Gonu Situation Report No. 1

Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Date: 07 Jun 2007

This situation report, together with additional information on the current crisis is also available on <http://www.reliefweb.int>. As your tool for timely information sharing, please encourage submissions of documents and maps by email to submit@reliefweb.int.

SITUATION

Cyclone Gonu - the equivalent of a Category 1 hurricane - reached Oman's coast Wednesday 6 June with fierce winds and torrential rains, forcing thousands from their homes and shutting down oil installations. Even with the weaker wind speeds, Gonu is believed to be the strongest cyclone to threaten the Arabian Peninsula since record-keeping started in 1945. The cyclone initially generated winds of 160mph (260km/h) and by Thursday afternoon, the storm sustained winds of up to 67 kph (41 mph), less than half its strength of 153 kph (95 mph) just 24 hours earlier, according to the Joint Typhoon Warning Center. The storm, which reached the equivalent of a maximum-force Category Five hurricane on Tuesday, has been downgraded to a Category One hurricane and on Thursday 7 June to a Tropical storm.

OMAN

At least 12 deaths were reported in Oman, including members of police rescue squads, and others were reported missing, according to the Oman Royal Police. In Muscat, the cyclone resulted in abundant rainfall and howling winds. Muscat's mountain backdrop added to the havoc. The torrential rains that poured onto the bone-dry peaks flowed into canyons and dry riverbeds channeling water directly to the city.

Electricity went out in Muscat on Wednesday, and streets and some buildings were flooded. The Health Ministry informed that rescue workers had trouble reaching affected areas. Authorities used text messages to warn people away from low-lying areas. According to the Omani Minister of Social Development, more than 20,000 people were evacuated and housed in government-provided dwellings, stocked with medicine and supplies. Another two islands were completely evacuated. There were reports of people trapped in homes in low-lying areas of the capital. Other beachfront residents of the city

were leaving their homes, all threatened by rising tides and large waves pushed by the approaching storm.

The storm, however, caused little damage to Oman's oil fields. Tankers were prevented from sailing from Omani ports, effectively shutting down oil exports, according to the Ministry of Oil and Gas. Authorities also closed all operations at the port of Sohar and Qabus in Muscat and evacuated 11,000 workers. Sohar's oil refinery and petrochemical plant remained running at very low levels, with authorities considering a total shutdown on Wednesday.

Stock exchange as well as private and public institutions are closed until Saturday, while national carrier Oman Air had halted all flights. Flights in and out of Oman's Seeb International Airport were canceled. Flights en route to Muscat were diverted to other airports in the region.

Oman's eastern provinces were cut off, with heavy rains making the roads unusable and communication lines severed. The potential for flash flooding was high in Oman and in neighboring countries like the United Arab Emirates, as rain washes down from mountains into the desert wadis, or dry riverbeds that cut through the desert. There is a potential threat of landslides and mud slides when the normally arid mountains get lashed with rain.

Authorities declared a State of emergency in Oman's Masirah Island, first hit by the storm Tuesday. Troops and police were mobilized to help provide shelter and medical services.

Oil prices rose amid forecasts that Gonu is the strongest storm to threaten the Arabian Peninsula in 60 years. Analysts suggest that even if only some of the tankers are delayed, that could reduce the supply of oil and increase prices. However, the storm shouldn't have a major impact on prices. Shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, which carries up to 40% of world oil supplies, has not been disrupted.

RESPONSE

Over 4,000 trained civil defense personnel were deployed in affected areas. Schools prepared to become safe heavens for those who had to flee their houses equipped with food, beddings and other necessary requirement. Assistance was offered to the Omani government by the Gulf Cooperation Countries members, other countries and international organizations including UNICEF. The Government of Oman thanked for the offer and said its own national resources are adequate for the time being. Other international partners were requested to be on standby.

IMPACT ON THE GULF AND SOUTH ASIA

To the north, the port of Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates suspended all refueling and ship-to-ship supply operations the world's third-largest shipping fuel center. A few ships were sailing through the nearby Strait of Hormuz despite 4- to 6-foot swells and strong winds. Saudi Arabia did not expect the storm to affect its oil-producing regions, which lie well to the west of the generally northward moving storm. Saudi King Abdullah offered Oman help in dealing with any problems caused by the storm according to the official Spa news agency.

The port city of Karachi in Pakistan is likely to be hit by the cyclone. Fishermen in the southwest were told to stay ashore for the next 24 hours. Rough seas have already damaged dozens of fishing boats in the southwestern Baluchistan province.

IRAN

The cyclone has carried on north-west, gradually weakening as it approached the Iranian southern coastal provinces of Hormozgan and Sistan Baluchestan, which lie only some 100 kilometres (60 miles) across the Gulf from northern Oman. The Organization of Weather of Iran stated that there has been 3 killed and 9 injured. Some 11 cities and ports in Iran's southern provinces have been hit by GONU. Authorities evacuated hundreds of people living in the port city of Chabahr on the coast of the Sea of Oman. According to the Iranian state television, floods caused by the heavy rainfall cut off some major roads in southeastern Iran. Subsequent to the declaration of 'extraordinary situation' in Chabahar, the Governor of Chabahar informed that residents living up to one kilometer off the sea coast, as well as all offices and the medical staff of the Imam Ali hospital have been evacuated and moved to a safe place. The staff of Imam Ali Hospital has set up a temporary medical emergency camp for any required treatment.

Outer winds from the storm as fast as 220 kph (137 mph) lashed the Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas, capital of Hormozgan province, shattering windows, toppling billboards and trees. GONU reached Qishm Island and caused some damages. Electricity and telephone lines were cut off. As a result of GONU, in Zahedan province, to the north of Sistan Baluchestan, around 40,000 people have been evacuated to higher areas. There has been more than 120 mm of rain in a day alone, resulting in flooding. Sea level has risen considerably. According to Iran's state broadcasting company, some small villages in Sistan Baluchistan province, on the Gulf of Oman, were still encircled by floods and authorities used helicopters to drop emergency supplies. It is expected that GONU will reach South Khorasan, Kerman on Friday. It will end in Iran by Friday early evening.

According to Iranian officials, the cyclone was unlikely to threaten the country's oil platforms and installations in the Gulf because they are located far from its path. However, authorities have prepared for any possible difficulty..

RESPONSE

The Government of Iran, the National Disaster Task Force and the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) are fully mobilized and held an emergency meeting with the participation of the authorities of Ministries of Transportation, Power, Oil, and Revolutionary Guard in the affected provinces. Necessary coordination mechanisms were made Radio and TV broadcasted programmes to alert inhabitants residing in south and south eastern provinces to be prepared for evacuation from coastlines of Oman and Persian Gulfs and rivers riparian. The Iranian Red Crescent Society dispatched equipment and relief workers from auxiliary provinces and determined places for emergency sheltering. Assessments will be carried out by the authorities as soon as the condition allows.

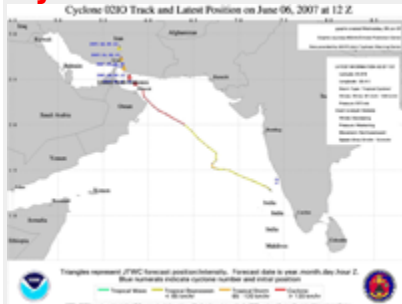
INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

For both countries, there has been no request for international assistance and the situation is well under control, as a result of good early warning and preparedness mechanisms.

OCHA Iran has been in touch with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Ministry of Interior in Tehran, and UNICEF and UNHCR have been in touch with local authorities in Sistan-Baluchistan and stand ready to assist. UNHCR has distributed some non-food and food items including to Afghan refugees in the Zahedan area.

The Ministry of Interior and the Iranian Red Crescent Society are currently assisting affected population and there is no need for more assistance. The National Disaster Taskforce is distributing bread and water among affected population. Those residing in the coastal areas have left their houses and gone to higher places. However those living in big cities are returning. All executive branches of the government are on call and stand ready to assist the population. UN agencies on the ground continue to monitor the situation closely and will remain on stand-by to respond until the week end.

Cyclone 02IO Track and Latest Position on June 06, 2007 at 12 Z



- Date: 06 Jun 2007
- Source(s): National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- Type: Natural Disaster
- Keyword(s): Cyclone
- Format: PDF *, 160k

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UN secy-gen echoes India line on climate

8 Jun, 2007 | 0245 hrs IST | Diwakar/TIMES NEWS NETWORK

BERLIN: UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon has informed Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that the world body would convene a meeting of global leaders to discuss responses to the challenge of climate change. The UN secretary-general put across this message to Singh hours before the US agreed with a European proposal that climate negotiations should take place under the aegis of United Nations.

The agreement at the German sea resort of Heiligendamm validates India's position, articulated yet again by Singh in his meeting with Ban Ki-moon, that United Nations

should be the forum for climate negotiations. It also clears the way for the first summit-level interaction on climate change since the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), pointing to the looming crisis, put the matter on the global frontburner. The IPCC report made it clear that global warming had arrived.

While G-8 deliberations were on, thousands of protestors spent the night in the no-demonstration zone within a kilometre of the security fence surrounding the summit at Heiligendamm.

The words "Evil Empire!!!!" were taped on a road sign that pointed the way to Heiligendamm.

Offshore, activists from Greenpeace led police on a boat chase. One boatload of protestors spilled into the Baltic after colliding with their pursuers. Before US President George Bush agreed to "seriously consider" a European proposal to combat global warming by cutting greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 50% from 1990 levels by 2050, India was already coordinating with China to hone a strong joint stance against efforts to take climate negotiations outside UN purview while foisting sharp GHG emission commitments. Foreign secretary Shiv Shankar Menon said Singh's meeting with Chinese president Hu Jintao saw a convergence.

The issue also figured in the meeting between other "Outreach" countries — in plain language, emerging economies who have grown fast and are threatening to gatecrash the club of the developed — China, Brazil, South Africa and Mexico.

All countries are in harmony with India's stand that while the climate challenge was a matter of global concern, those who have been historically responsible for it should agree to shoulder the major part of the cost required for mitigation. Besides insisting on "polluter pays" principle, they also said that forcing binding targets down the gullets of developed countries would retard poverty eradication efforts.

Bush, a fresh convert to the cause, had steered clear of the caps proposed by German chancellor Angela Merkel and supported by British prime minister Tony Blair. His plan to round up the leading emitters and nudge them towards non-binding targets, however, is at odds with the insistence of India and other developing countries on the "polluter pays" principle. Nor does it appear to be sensitive to their goal of poverty reduction.

The meeting of world leaders that the UN proposes to convene may become an arena for the clash of the approaches, with India looking all set to join other developing countries to refuse to take on commitments, and ask for subsidies from the developed countries to help develop clean technologies.

*Compiled by
AD Kaushik*