

# BAY OF BENGAL, FOMENTING YAAS, HOTTER THAN NORMAL FOR SEASON

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Important Geophysical Phenomenon - Tropical Cyclones

Keeping vigil: Police patrolling the Chandipur beach in Odisha as cyclone Yaas draws closer to the coast. Biswaranjan Rout

Climate scientists say the Bay of Bengal, where Cyclone 'Yaas' has formed, is at least two degrees warmer than what is normal for this time of the year. "The north Bay of Bengal is exceptionally warm with temperatures up to 32 degrees Celsius. Distance to landfall is short, preventing it from drawing that energy and intensifying into an extremely severe cyclone," Roxy Koll, climate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, said on Twitter.

Generally, cyclones in the Bay of Bengal are ferocious and cause significant devastation. Amphan was a super cyclone that ravaged West Bengal in March last year. It was the strongest storm that hit India's eastern coast since the super cyclone of 1999, that struck Paradip, Odisha. Before Amphan, Fani in 2019 also hit Odisha, causing immense damage that lasted weeks.

Cyclones in the Bay of Bengal are not unexpected in May and result from increased ocean surface temperatures. The formation of storms in this period are favourable for drawing in the monsoon into the Andamans and subsequently to the Kerala coast.

Researchers have pointed to trends that suggest a relative decrease in the number of cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and a rise in the Arabian Sea. About 60% of the cyclones that form in these seas make landfall in India causing damage and devastation, according to data from the Earth Sciences Ministry.

## First warning

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) first warned on May 19 the likelihood of the formation of Yaas, even as Tauktae was still to completely abate after landfall over Gujarat.

The maximum windspeeds from Yaas, a name furnished by Oman's meteorological agency, are expected to touch 125 kmph, lower than recorded from Tauktae, which landed at the Gujarat coast earlier this month, and was categorised as an 'extremely severe' cyclone, which is only one category lower than the highest 'super cyclone' grading on the weather agency's cyclone grading scale.

Yaas is expected to heighten into a 'very severe' cyclone by Tuesday noon and make landfall between the Odisha and West Bengal coasts by Wednesday morning.

"It is very likely to cross north Odisha-West Bengal coasts between Paradip and Sagar Island around Balasore (Odisha) during noon of May 26 as a very severe cyclonic storm," said an IMD statement on Monday.

With the advent of the storm, rains and gale force winds are expected in northern Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal, Sikkim. Tidal waves up to 4 metres in height are expected over the West Bengal and Odisha coasts as the storm approaches.

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