



**Government of India
Ministry of Earth Sciences**



India Meteorological Department

Press Release

Dated 19th December, 2023

50th Session of WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones at Bahrain during 19-23 December

On the backdrop of the death of 300,000 people due to a severe cyclone hitting Bangladesh coast near Bhola Island, way back in 1970 and 10,000 people dying in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha each due to severe cyclone in 1970 & 1971, World Meteorological Organisation and United Nations Economic & Social Commission for Asia & the Pacific (WMO and UNESCAP) came together to establish a Panel of countries affected by the tropical cyclones (TCs) in North Indian Ocean (NIO) for developing/improving the cyclone warning system in the region. The first meeting of the Panel was held in 1972 and WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones (WMO/ESCAP PTC) was established consisting of six countries namely Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The first Session of WMO/ESCAP PTC was held in Bangkok in 1973. Gradually, the role and responsibility of the PTC increased over the years and more countries affected by tropical cyclones joined the Panel (Maldives in 1982, Sultanate of Oman in 1997, Yemen in 2016, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Iran in 2018).

In the year 2023, WMO/ESCAP PTC completed 50 years from its first Session in 1973. To commemorate the event, the 50th Session of WMO/ESCAP PTC is being organised during 19-23 December in the Kingdom of Bahrain with the participations of Member countries, WMO and UNESCAP. Indian delegation to this Session is led by Dr. Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, DGM IMD, PR of India to WMO and 3rd Vice President of WMO.

The PTC Session was inaugurated on 19th December by Mr. Mohammed Bin Thamer Al Kaabai, the Hon'ble Minister of Transport and Telecommunications, Kingdom of Bahrain. In his inaugural address the Hon'ble Minister appreciated the cyclone warning services in the region.,

Dr. Abdulla Ahmed Al Mandous, WMO President, Director General, National Centre of Meteorology, United Arab Emirates and PR of UAE to WMO, in his speech appreciated RSMC New Delhi, India Meteorological Department for providing successfully Tropical Cyclone forecast and Advisories over the NIO region including the Bay of Bengal & the Arabian Sea and helping in capacity building of the tropical cyclone forecasters of the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services in the region.

Dr. Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, DGM IMD, PR of India to WMO and 3rd Vice President of WMO participated as Guest of Honour during the programme. In his speech, Dr.

Mohapatra highlighted the role of India in building the Tropical Cyclone Forecasting System over the region. He stressed upon implementing “Early Warning for All” in this socio-economically diverse region. The impact-based forecast along with augmentation of observational network and implementation of Common Alert Protocol in all the countries are the needs of the hour.

Dr. Wenjian Zhang, Assistant Secretary General, WMO and Mr. Ayman Salem Ghulam, Chief Executive, National Centre of Meteorology-Saudi Arabia and the Chairman, WMO/ESCAP PTC also spoke on the occasion.

The celebration was marked with one day Technical Workshop organised by WMO/ESCAP PTC and coordinated by Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre (RSMC) New Delhi. In the workshop, Dr. D R Pattanaik, Head RSMC New Delhi presented about the activities carried out to celebrate 50 years of RSMC New Delhi and WMO/ESCAP PTC. It included the following:

- (a) Lecture Series by eminent personalities from different member countries of PTC.
- (b) Special issue in a reviewed journal on Cyclone forecasting over North Indian Ocean
- (c) International Quiz Competition to popularise cyclone warnings in the region
- (d) National and International Conference
- (e) Development of PTC logo representing completion of 50 years
- (f) One Day Technical Workshop prior to PTC Meeting among masses
- (g) Development of documentaries on cyclones to increase awareness. IMD has developed a documentary film on “Early Warning and Early Action: A Success Story”. The film is available on RSMC website at link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ET68Nozu2fo>

Mrs. Monica Sharma, Scientist D, RSMC New Delhi made a technical presentation in the workshop reviewing the current status, achievements during past 50 years, gap areas and challenges faced and the future scope to improve tropical cyclones forecast and early warning system.

Representatives of the Member Countries of PTC and experts from WMO and UN-ESCAP also made presentations on various aspects of current status, achievements, gap areas and the future strategies.



Fig.1: Dr. Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, DG IMD and 3rd Vice President of WMO addressing the delegates as Guest of Honour



Fig.2: Delegates from WMO/ESCAP PTC Member Countries, WMO and UN participating in the Inaugural Session on 19th December 2023

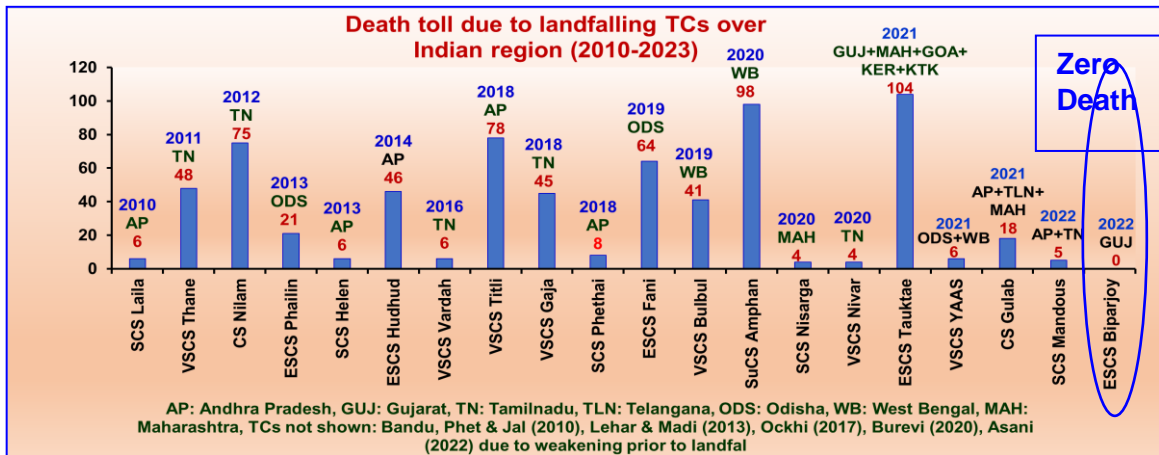


Fig.3: Death toll due to tropical cyclones over the Indian Region

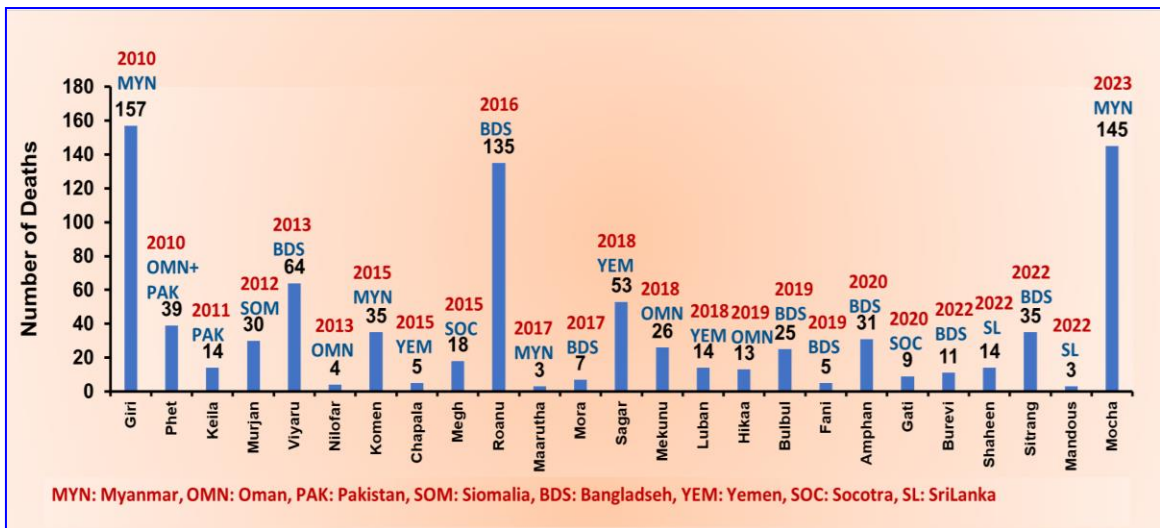


Fig.4: Death toll due to cyclone over WMO/ESCAP Panel Countries bordering Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea

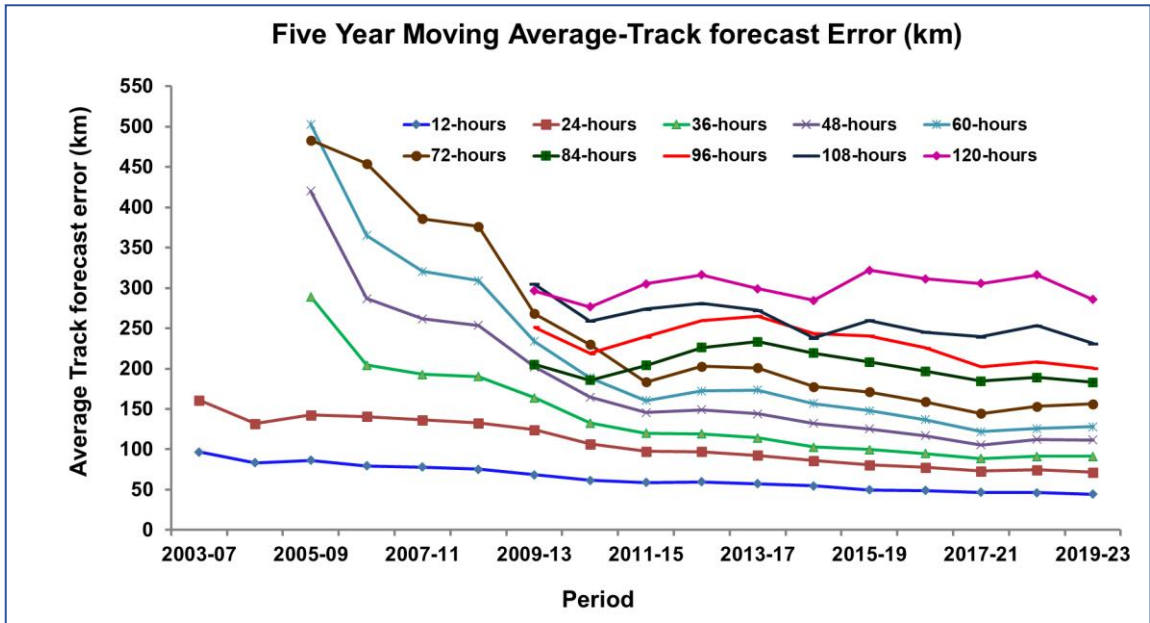


Fig.5: Five year moving average track forecast errors showing continuous decrease in forecast error of IMD, 5 days ahead

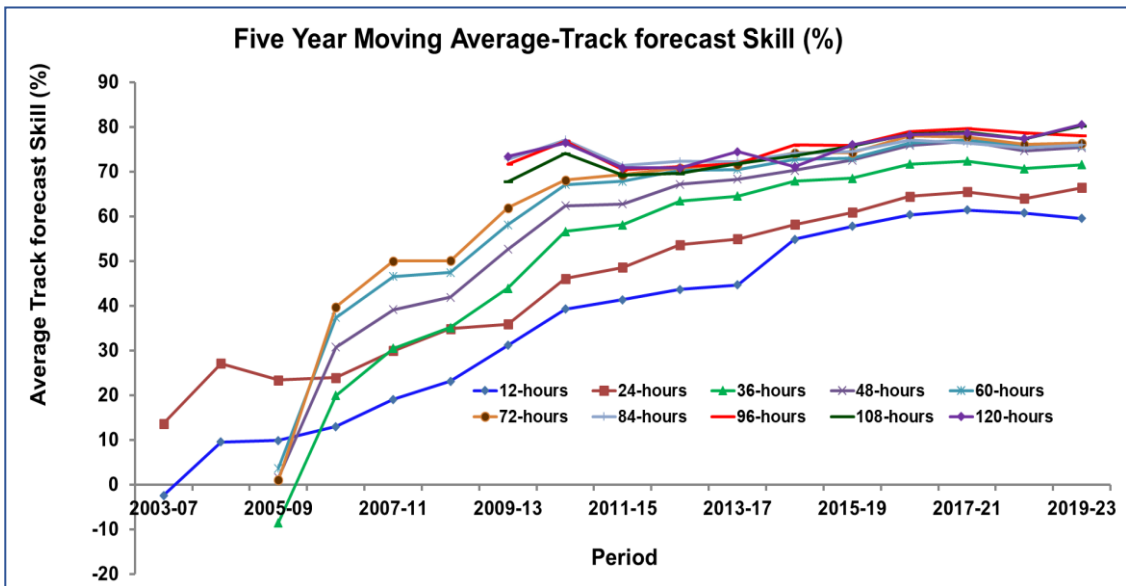


Fig. 6: Five year moving average track forecast skill showing continuous improvement in forecast skill of IMD, 5 days ahead (About 25% decrease in track & intensity errors compared to previous five years errors. The forecast accuracy is at par or better than many leading centres). It enabled the disaster managers to minimize the loss of lives to less than 100 due to any landfalling cyclone in past 10 years
