

# Global warming likely to stoke more powerful hurricanes: Study

AFP, Paris

Global warming is likely to boost the power of the strongest tropical cyclones, according to a study released recently.

An additional one degree Celsius (1.8 Fahrenheit) in sea temperatures in tropical regions where cyclones breed could lead to a nearly one-third rise in the number of the most powerful storms, it says.

"As the seas warm, the ocean has more energy to convert to tropical cyclone wind," say authors of the paper, released by the London weekly Nature.

Previous research, based on observations over the past 30 years, has already suggested that hurricanes -- as cyclones in the Atlantic are known -- have become more intense as a result of warmer seas.

But the observational record for

the Atlantic is more detailed and goes back farther than for storms in the Indian Ocean, known as cyclones, or those in the Pacific, which are called typhoons.

Seeking to fill in the blanks, a trio of US scientists crunched satellite data for the period of 1981-2006 in all of these storm basins.

They totted up the number of storms and the maximum wind speeds attained during each event, and compared this with sea-surface temperatures.

Over the 25 years under scrutiny, they saw no increase in the overall number of storms. But there was a significant increase in wind speed among the most powerful storms, or those in roughly the top quarter for intensity.

This trend -- the stronger the cyclone the greater the change -- occurred in all storm basins, except

for the South Pacific.

The apparent reason is that the South Pacific is already the warmest sea region, and thus has seen less of a relative increase in temperature compared to the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and North Pacific.

No such increase was seen in the wind speed among storms of lesser intensity.

The study, headed by James Elsner of Florida State University, supports the so-called "heat-engine" theory, based on the idea that warmer seas provide more of the raw thermal fuel that drives cyclones.

The paper calculates that a 1 C (1.8 F) rise leads to an increase from 13 to 17, or 31 percent, in the annual number of cyclones that fall into the "strong" category.

In its Fourth Assessment Report, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on

Climate Change (IPCC), gathering top scientists, said last year that from 1906 to 2005, global surface temperatures had risen by 0.74 C (1.33 F), with the rise concentrated overwhelmingly in the final decades of the century.

They predicted that by 2100, there would be warming of between 1.8 and 4.0 C (3.24 and 7.2 F).

However, these figures cannot be directly applied to the oceans because of differences in sea depth, the impact of ocean circulation and the long time it takes for the huge ocean mass to warm.

The new study adds several caveats: it says the ranges of uncertainty are still large and notes that its calculations do not factor in changes in solar radiation or the state of the El Nino system, a big factor in the turnover of ocean warmth.



PHOTO: STAR

Winners of Anannya Eid Fashion Competition 2008 pose for photograph with the guests at the prize giving ceremony at Hotel Abakash in the city yesterday. Women and Children Affairs Adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury was present at the ceremony as the chief guest.



PHOTO: STAR

Eminent artist Hashem Khan examines an artwork of a child at Meridian-Ananda Alo Children's Art Competition at Shishu Academy auditorium in Chittagong yesterday.

## US braces for Hanna as Ike strengthens

AP, Wilmington

Some Southeastern states declared emergencies and officials urged residents to head inland Thursday as Tropical Storm Hanna headed toward the Atlantic coast, where it could bring high winds and rain from South Carolina to Maine.

Meanwhile, disaster planners eyed ferocious-looking Hurricane Ike strengthening in the Atlantic. And with power outages and problems from Hurricane Gustav lingering in Louisiana, Arkansas and Mississippi, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and relief groups found themselves juggling three storms.

Rain and wind from Hanna could start as early as Friday night in the South, where some residents shuttered houses and stocked up on food and sandbags, coastal parks closed, and schools cancelled events and changed sports schedules. Tropical storm watches and warnings were issued from Georgia to near Atlantic City, N.J.

Forecasters expected Hanna to strengthen only slightly before making landfall early Saturday, though hurricane watches remained for much of coastal North and South Carolina.

The governors of Virginia and North Carolina declared states of emergency. North Carolina Gov. Mike Easley urged residents to pay attention because Hanna's path could change.

"No, you're not in the clear if you're not in the track we talked about today," he said. "You're in the clear after the storm goes through and didn't bother you."

## NEWS ANALYSIS

# McCain strikes out from unpopular Republicans

AFP, St Paul

Even as he claimed his presidential nomination, John McCain did his best to offload his unpopular Republican party Thursday, and carved sharp contrasts with Democrat Barack Obama.

McCain, 72, presented himself at his party convention as a humble, imperfect and battle-scarred servant of his country who would use the patriotism forged in a dark Vietnam war prison to navigate through a perilous new age.

Where Barack Obama used his convention speech last week to identify a historic turning point and launched a poetic call to a better tomorrow, McCain came across as deliberate, low key, and steady.

His delivery lacked Obama's rhetorical fireworks and was quiet, sometimes pedestrian and often drowned out by a crowd primed for the red meat rhetoric it never quite got.

McCain rebuked Washington's culture of political gridlock, and bemoaned the reformers in his own party who had gone to the capital to change it, and ended up being changed themselves.

"You know, I've been called a maverick, someone who marches to the beat of his own drum," McCain said, as he tried to leave his party in the rear-view mirror.

"Sometimes it's meant as a compliment and sometimes it's not. What it really means is I under-

stand who I work for, I don't work for a party, I don't work for a special interest, I don't work for myself -- I work for you."

McCain also attempted to seize the mantle of "change" -- an important factor in an election year when the majority of Americans believe their country is going in the wrong direction -- from Obama.

With Sarah Palin, his running mate and the Republican party's new darling, McCain vowed to unleash a wave of change in Washington.

But the question that was left unanswered by his speech was, is an invocation to patriotism, and a heroic warrior past, enough to win an election when Americans are hurting economically and are furious at Republicans?

"These are tough times for many of you," said McCain in a direct response to Obama's charge in his convention speech that with many Americans on their last legs financially he "doesn't get it."

"You're worried about keeping your job or finding a new one, and are struggling to put food on the table and stay in your home."

"All you ever asked of government is to stand on your side, not in your way. And that's just what I intend to do: stand on your side and fight for your future."

Critics will say however that McCain did little to advance any economic solutions not already tried by the Bush administration. The Arizona senator told simply

how love of country was burned on his soul only when he was incarcerated for five-and-a-half-years as a downed navy pilot in a Vietnamese prisoner of war camp.

"I've been an imperfect servant of my country for many years," McCain said.

"But I have been her servant first, last and always. And I've never lived a day, in good times or bad, that I didn't thank God for the privilege."

That patriotic theme may appeal to wavering voters who have been influenced by questions about Obama's patriotism, or who fear the scope of the change that he is demanding.

"One thing that came across loud and clear, it is that you cannot doubt that this is a man who loves his country and has devoted himself to be in the service of this country," said Costas Panagopoulos, a political scientist at Fordham University.

Buddy Howell, a specialist in presidential rhetoric at Denison University, said McCain may not have reached the rhetorical heights of Obama, but had probably secured his Republican base vote, especially with his selection of Palin.

"I think that McCain surpassed my expectations in his speech," said Howell.

McCain's speech will likely be judged according to its various audiences.

## Nuclear envoys to gather over N Korea impasse

AP, Seoul

Top nuclear envoys from South Korea, the United States and Japan were to converge in Beijing on Friday to discuss the worsening impasse over North Korea's nuclear programmes as Pyongyang took steps seen as reversing its promised disarmament.

The North began moving disassembled parts of its main nuclear reactor back to the plutonium-producing facility this week, putting into action a threat it would restore atomic facilities that had been partially disabled under a disarmament pact, South Korea said Wednesday.

Pyongyang says that the United States has not held up its end of their disarmament deal a promise to remove North Korea from the US list of state sponsors of terrorism. Washington says it will take the North off the list only after it complies with a disarmament requirement.

On Friday, South Korea's chief nuclear negotiator, Kim Sook, headed to Beijing for talks.

"I'm going to meet my counterparts from the United States, China and Japan to establish a joint view of the current situation and discuss ways to deal with it," Kim told reporters. "I hope the impasse will be broken at an early date and North Korea will resume" disarmament steps, he said.

The envoys were gathering in Beijing because China has hosted six-nation North Korea nuclear talks that also involve Russia.

## Prize distribution ceremony of Qirat & Azan competition

UNB, Dhaka

The prize distribution ceremony of the Inter-Area Qirat and Azan Competition-2008 of Bangladesh Army was held at the Army Central Mosque at Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

Savar area team won the title while Army Signal Brigade team became the runner-up, said an ISPR release.

In Qirat competition, Sergeant Md Shafiqul Islam from Savar area team won the first prize while Sergeant Md Imdadul Islam from 14 Independent Eng. Brigade team got the second prize.

In Azan Competition, Warrant Officer Md Babul Akter Mollik from Army Signal Brigade team became first while Lance Corp. Md Ashiqur Rahman from Bogra area team got the second prize.

Quarter Master General Lt Gen Md Jahangir Alam Choudhury attended the ceremony as the chief guest.

Later, he distributed the prizes among the winners.

## Reform aid management to fight food crisis: WB chief

AFP, Accra

World Bank (WB) President Robert Zoellick on Thursday called for sweeping reforms in the way international aid is managed if the current food crisis is to be effectively tackled.

One option, he suggested, is to lift export bans and restrictions on humanitarian food aid.

"Restrictions, earmarks and onerous conditions on food aid mean higher costs and these should be removed to ensure that food gets to where it is most needed," he said.

"These policies exacerbate the current crisis and harm the vulnerable. They must go," he told delegates at an international gathering debating ways to better manage and improve the impact of aid from rich to poor nations.

He singled out the current global food crisis as undermining efforts to reduce poverty in many countries.

The three-day conference, which ended Thursday, was attended by hundreds of officials from recipient countries and donor nations and agencies.

More remains to be done and both donor and recipient countries must redouble their efforts to make aid more effective, Zoellick said.

"Whether aid works can help determine whether the future is one of hope or privation," he said.

Ministers and senior officials from more than 100 governments have been talking with representatives of donors to check on progress achieved in the way aid has been handled over the past three years.

Speakers at the so-called High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness said that progress has been mired in bureaucracy since the two sides agreed in Paris in 2005 to work at improving the handling of foreign funds.

Tens of billions of dollars of

donors' funds are poured into developing countries each year, but often the impact is not felt as it gets held up in bureaucracies.

Officials from both sides adopted the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), which helped improve how aid is used and "help countries across the world build a successful future based on a commitment to overcome poverty, a future in which no countries will depend on aid."

The document enjoins both donor and recipient countries to reduce costly fragmentation of aid, adapt aid policies for countries dealing with crisis and make aid inflows more predictable.

"What we have achieved during this high level forum should not be taken for granted," said South African Finance Minister Trevor Manuel.

World Bank Deputy Managing Director Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala urged donor countries to honour pledges made in the past.

## Obama piles up \$10m after Palin attacks

AFP, St Paul

Barack Obama has taken in a record 10 million dollars in campaign cash since Republican vice presidential pick Sarah Palin's scorching assault on the Democratic White House nominee.

Palin's attacks have resulted in our campaign raising over 10 million dollars -- a one day record -- I hope she gives a speech every day," said Obama spokesman Bill Burton.

The Alaska governor has electrified the conservative Republican

base vote since she was named to the ticket by White House nominee John McCain.

But the avalanche of cash into Obama's campaign suggests that her withering assaults may have also energized Democratic voters as well, raising doubts about her ability to bring crucial swing voters McCain's way.

Earlier Thursday, Palin sent out a fundraising email accusing Democrats of orchestrating attacks on her after a week which has seen fierce scrutiny of her past record and the revelation that her unwed

teenage daughter is pregnant.

"Unfortunately, as you've seen this week, the Obama/Biden Democrats have been vicious in their attacks directed toward us," Palin wrote.

"The misinformation and flat-out lies must be corrected."

Democrats however challenged the Republicans to name an occasion when either the presidential nominee or his vice presidential pick Joseph Biden had ever attacked her family, after speaking out against such attacks.



PHOTO: ISPR

Quarter Master General Lt Gen Md Jahangir Alam Choudhury gives away a trophy to Savar area team who won the title of Inter-Area Qirat and Azan Competition-2008 of Bangladesh Army at the Army Central Mosque at Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.



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