BENGAL DISTRICTS TO RECEIVE HEAVY TO MODERATE SHOWERS

Arnab's long reach: Clouds and rain for city

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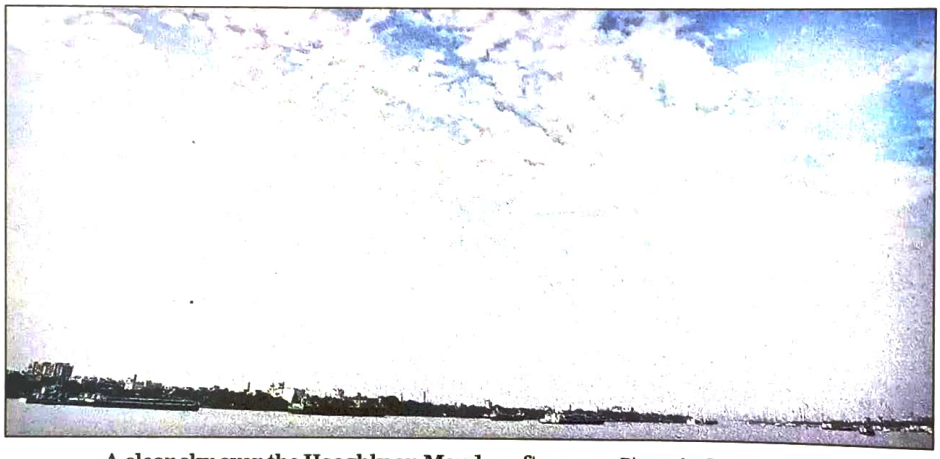
Calcutta: A deep depression over the Bay of Bengal intensified into Cyclone Arnab in the early hours of Monday and into a severe cyclonic storm by the evening.

By Tuesday morning, it was expected to further intensify into a very severe cyclonic storm.

It was racing toward the Andhra Pradesh coast, where it was expected to make landfall on Wednesday.

Fuelled by warm sea-surface temperatures and ample moisture, the cyclone continued to intensify throughout Monday. Around 8.30am on Monday, it packed winds of up to 80kmph, with peak wind speeds rising to 90kmph by 2.30pm.

When it intensifies into a very severe cyclonic storm, the storm will generate a peak wind speed reaching 140kmph.



A clear sky over the Hooghly on Monday afternoon. Picture by Sanat Kr Sinha

The cyclone is likely to retain its intensity until landfall, bringing sustained winds of 115kmph to 125kmph, with gusts reaching 140kmph.

At 2.30pm on Monday, the storm was centred 520km southeast of Gopalpur in Odisha, 540km east-southeast of Visakhapatnam and 790km east-southeast of Bapatla in Andhra Pradesh.

"It is very likely to move northwestwards and cross the Andhra Pradesh and Yanam coasts between Bapatla and Visakhapatnam, close to Yanam, as a very severe cyclonic storm...by the forenoon of October 28," the Met bulletin said.

Yanam, a coastal and riverside enclave in the East Godavari region, is administered as part of the Union territory of Puducherry.

Preparations were underway on a war footing in Andhra Pradesh and neighbouring Odisha, the two states expected to bear the brunt of the storm.

South Bengal is likely to receive some rain on Tuesday, with a more significant spell expected between Wednesday and Saturday.

South 24-Parganas, East Midnapore, West Midnapore, Jhargram, Bankura and Purulia are bracing for heavy rain. Calcutta and other districts are likely to receive light to moderate rain, accompanied by mild gusts and occasional lightning.

In north Bengal, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Kalimpong and Alipurduar are likely to receive heavy rain between October 29 and 31.

Calcutta remained bright and sunny on Monday. The forecast for Tuesday is light rain or thundershowers, with the sky likely to become generally cloudy by afternoon. Persistent rain is expected to lower daytime temperatures, while an influx of moisture is likely to push up night temperatures, a Met official said.