

Climate change, El Nino behind heavy rainfall event in UAE, Oman: Study

NEW DELHI, APR 25: Rainfall events in El Nino years, such as the recent one that impacted the UAE and Oman, have become 10-40 per cent heavier in this region of the Arabian Peninsula, according to a rapid study by an international team of leading climate scientists.

While the researchers from the World Weather Attribution group could not precisely determine the exact contribution of human-caused climate change to this increase, they said warming caused by burning fossil fuels is likely the primary driver behind the escalating rainfall.

Friederike Otto, senior lecturer in Climate Science at the Grantham Institute - Climate Change and the Environment, Imperial College, London, said both El Nino and human-caused climate change seem to be influencing heavy rainfall in the UAE and Oman.

El Nino refers to unusual warming of surface waters in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean and is associated with heavier rainfall in many regions of the world. "While we cannot control El Nino, we have the power to curb climate change. The solution lies in halting the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation," she said.

Mariam Zachariah, researcher at the Grantham Institute - Climate Change and the Environment, said the finding is not surprising and agrees with the basic physics that a warmer atmosphere can hold more moisture.

"Model uncertainties meant we could not complete the last step of the analysis to precisely quantify how much of the in-



creasing rainfall is due to climate change. However, multiple lines of evidence point to climate change as the most likely explanation for the increasing rainfall," she said.

On April 14-15, extreme rainfall battered regions of the Arabian Peninsula. Dubai experienced more than 14 cm of rainfall in 24 hours, equivalent to a year and a half of typical rain and the heaviest on record since 1949.

Flash flooding claimed 19 lives in Oman, including 10 children in a tragic school bus accident, while four fatalities occurred in flooded cars in the UAE.

The flooding wreaked havoc, causing extensive damage to infrastructure, power outages and disruptions to daily life. Dubai airport, the world's busiest international airport, faced significant delays and cancellations due to flooded runways.

The Arabian Peninsula experiences infrequent spells of short, intense rainfall. The heaviest rain usually occurs in March and April and are typically driven by mesoscale convective systems that form when several thunderstorms come together.

The researchers, including scientists from universities, research organisa-

tions and meteorological agencies in Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, the UK and the US, analysed weather data and climate models to quantify the effect of human-caused warming on the extreme rainfall in the Arabian Peninsula.

The analysis looked at the maximum one-day rainfall and focused on the UAE and Oman.

Heavy rainfall events in El Nino years have become 10-40 per cent heavier in the region, the scientists said, citing historical weather data.

The large range in this increase is due to the huge variability in the data as the UAE and Oman often go months without rain and, in the historical record, there are only a small number of extreme rainfall episodes, they said.

The observations also indicate that El Nino plays an important role in the likelihood of heavy rain episodes in this part of the world, as the heaviest rainfall events in the region all occurred during El Nino years.

To investigate if climate change is driving this increase in rainfall, the researchers combined these historical observations with climate models.

However, most of the

models analysed did not show a strong influence of global warming on heavy one-day rainfall events in the region. But again, the scattered and sparse nature of the rainfall limits the researchers' confidence in these results.

While the study could not precisely quantify how much of the increased rainfall is due to climate change, the scientists say global warming is the most likely explanation for several reasons.

First, a warmer atmosphere can hold more moisture, with the Clausius-Clapeyron relation indicating that at 1.2 degrees Celsius of global warming, the atmosphere can hold about 8.4 per cent more moisture. In addition, changing circulation patterns driven by global warming can further increase the intensity of rainfall in particular regions.

Flash flooding is common on the Arabian Peninsula, particularly in river valleys, but also in cities. In Oman and the UAE, 80 per cent and 85 per cent of people, respectively, live in flood-prone and low-lying areas.

Though meteorological agencies accurately forecast the heavy rainfall, the high casualty toll suggests that the warnings may not have effectively reached everyone or sufficiently conveyed the potential risks. The study did not explore the impact of cloud seeding on rainfall.

Despite routine cloud seeding efforts in the UAE, the magnitude of the recent storm system indicates that massive rainfall would have occurred regardless of seeding operations, the researchers said.

IPL streaming on betting app: Maharashtra cyber cell summons actor Tamannaah Bhatia

MUMBAI, APR 25: Maharashtra cyber cell has summoned actor Tamannaah Bhatia in connection with the alleged promotion of the viewing of IPL matches on a subsidiary app of the Mahadev online gaming and betting application, officials said on Thursday.

The actor has been asked to appear before the Maharashtra cyber personnel on April 29, a senior police official said.

Bhatia has been summoned by the Maharashtra cyber cell for allegedly promoting the viewing of the Indian Premier League (IPL) matches on the Fairplay betting app, he said. Some of the IPL matches



were also streamed illegally on the app in 2023, officials said citing a complaint in this connection.

The actor has been called to record her statement as a witness in the case, an official said.

The Maharashtra cyber cell has already recorded the statements of singer Badshah and the managers of actors Sanjay Dutt and Jacqueline Fernandez in the case, he said.

The Mahadev app is under the scanner of various investigation agencies over alleged illegal transactions and betting.

Bhatia is known for her films like "Baahubali" and Netflix anthology "Lust Stories 2".

Parliament security breach: Court grants Delhi Police additional time to complete probe

NEW DELHI, APR 25: A Delhi court on Thursday granted the Delhi Police additional time to complete its probe into the Parliament security breach incident.

Additional Sessions Judge Hardeep Kaur granted another month for the police to complete its investigation and file a charge sheet by May 25.

The judge passed the order on an application moved by the Delhi Police, claiming that some witnesses are yet to be examined and a few reports are awaited. It also claimed that the digital data in the case is voluminous.

The police had urged the judge to grant 45 days to complete its investigation.

In a major security breach on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament ter-



ror attack, two men -- Sagar Sharma and Manoranjan D -- jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery during Zero Hour, released

yellow gas from canisters and shouted slogans before being overpowered by the MPs.

Around the same time, two other accused -- Amol

Shinde and Neelam Azad -- sprayed coloured gas from canisters while shouting "tanashahi nahi chalegi" outside the Parliament premises.

BJP made 'zero progress' on finding political solution to Darjeeling Hills issue: Congress

NEW DELHI, APR 25: A day before polling in the Darjeeling Lok Sabha constituency, the Congress on Thursday attacked the BJP, saying despite winning the seat in the last three elections, it has made "zero progress" on finding a permanent political solution to the issue of the Darjeeling Hills.

Three Lok Sabha constituencies in the northern part of West Bengal, including the strategically important Darjeeling seat, will go to polls in the second phase of general elections on Friday.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said only the Congress has taken concrete action to address the people's concerns in Darjeeling.

"The people of beautiful



and historic Darjeeling go to polls tomorrow. This is why they cannot trust the Bharatiya Jumla Party: 2009 BJP Manifesto: 'We will sympathetically examine and appropriately consider the long pending demands of the Gorkhas, the Adivasis and other people of Darjeeling district and the Dooars region, according to Ramesh. "2019 BJP Manifesto: 'We are committed to work towards finding a permanent political solution to the issue of Darjeeling Hills, Siliguri Terai, and

In its 2014 manifesto, the

BJP said it will sympathetically examine and appropriately consider the long pending demands of the Gorkhas, the Adivasis and other people of Darjeeling district and the Dooars region, according to Ramesh.

"2019 BJP Manifesto: 'We are committed to work towards finding a permanent political solution to the issue of Darjeeling Hills, Siliguri Terai, and

Dooars region'," Ramesh said.

Despite winning the Darjeeling seat in all three elections, the BJP has made "zero progress" on finding a permanent political solution to the issue of the Darjeeling Hills, he said.

Only the Congress has taken concrete action to address the people's concerns -- establishing the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council in 1988 and setting up the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration in 2012, with even more administrative powers, Ramesh said. The Darjeeling Hills, known for its tea, has witnessed bouts of violence since the '80s over the demand for a separate state of 'Gorkhaland'. The most recent one happened in 2017 and lasted 104 days, leaving behind a trail of destruction.

Police launches 'Delta-48' unit in New Delhi to assist cops during night operations

NEW DELHI, APR 25: In a bid to keep police alert during night duty and improve coordination among officials, Delhi Police has launched a four-personnel unit called 'Delta-48'.

Delta-48 is a call sign that the officers use to communicate with each other during night operations and policing. Each police station and district in the national capital has different call signs.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Devesh Kumar Mahla launched this initiative after he was appointed as the DCP.

This unit comprises four officials -- constables and head constables -- who work in rotational shifts in the New Delhi district.



They not only keep the police personnel alert during night duty but also ensure that they are provided with tea, snacks, and fluorescent jackets to the patrolling staff from 8 pm to 6 am.

The New Delhi district houses the president, prime minister, parliament and parliamentarians and has 10 police stations. Each

police station has about 100 police staff including three police inspectors.

On April 17, around 28 bikers were nabbed with the coordinated effort of Parliament Street and Kartavya Path police station staff for allegedly driving recklessly.

Praising the effectiveness of Delta-48 initiative, DCP

Mahla told PTI, "We managed to nab all of the bikers within 30 minutes or so as our staff was on alert at various checkpoints and intersections.

All thanks to good communication and coordination by the New Delhi patrolling staff and to my two officials, who kept alerting our patrolling staff the whole night." According to DCP's directions, the Delta-48 officials must visit the patrolling staff at least twice in the night and submit a report of their visits to his office.

Senior Delhi police officers will also conduct surprise checks at the checkpoints, police stations and barricades as night Gazetted Officers in their districts.

AAP major beneficiary of proceeds of crime generated in excise scam: ED tells SC

NEW DELHI, APR 25: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is the "major beneficiary" of the proceeds of crime generated in the alleged Delhi excise policy scam and has committed the offence of money laundering through its national convener Arvind Kejriwal, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has told the Supreme Court.

The ED has claimed the investigation done so far has revealed a part of proceeds of crime -- cash totalling around Rs 45 crore -- was utilised in the AAP's 2022 Goa assembly poll campaign.

Reacting to the ED's affidavit filed in the apex court, the AAP alleged the probe agency has become "a machine for telling lies".

In a reply affidavit filed in the top court on Kejriwal's plea challenging his arrest in a money laundering case stem-

ming from the alleged excise policy scam, the ED has claimed statements of various persons engaged in the campaign related activities by AAP in Goa have revealed that cash payments were made to them for the work they did as survey workers, area managers, assembly managers etc.

"The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is the major beneficiary of the proceeds of crime generated in the Delhi liquor scam. Part of the proceeds of crime to the tune of cash of Rs 45 cr approx. has been utilised in the election campaign of AAP in Goa Assembly elections 2022," it said.

"In this manner, AAP has committed the offence of money laundering through Arvind Kejriwal and the offences thus are covered by section 70, PMLA 2002," the ED said.

Section 70 of the Prevention

of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) deals with offences by companies.

The ED said AAP is a political party comprising association of individuals registered under section 29-A of the Representation of the People Act 1951.

It said under section 29-A of the 1951 Act, only an association or body of citizens of India can make an application for registration as a political party and since AAP is an association of such individuals it got itself registered under the Act, more particularly under section 29-A.

"Since AAP is also an association of individuals, it would fall within the definition of 'company' as contemplated under section 70 of PMLA, 2002," the ED said.

It said as the national convener of AAP and member of the national executive, Kejriwal



was ultimately responsible for the funds being used in the election including their generation.

The ED claimed that Kejriwal was and is not only the brain behind the AAP but also controls its major activities. He was also involved in deciding the excise policy as is evident from the statements of the witnesses, it said.

"He is also involved in demand of kickbacks which have inter-alia generated further proceeds of crime," it said, adding that Kejriwal was in

charge of and responsible for the said "company" when the alleged offence was committed.

"Therefore, not only the AAP but Arvind Kejriwal shall be deemed to be guilty of offences punishable under section 4 of PMLA and shall be liable to be prosecuted and punished as provided under section 70 of PMLA," the ED said.

Section 4 of the PMLA deals with punishment for money laundering.

The probe agency alleged that contravention of the PMLA, particularly offences punishable under section 4 of the Act, have taken place "with his knowledge and he didn't exercise at any time diligence to prevent such contravention".

"The present offence which is punishable under section 4 of PMLA is committed amongst others by AAP which is a company as defined," it said.

The ED said the offence of money laundering took place with the "consent/ connivance and or is attributable" to Kejriwal.

"Taking advantage of the fact that he was also the CM of Delhi, he used the said post to facilitate the offence of money laundering punishable under section 4 of PMLA by the 'company' i.e. AAP and therefore, without prejudice to his role and liability for the direct commission of the said offence, he is also vicariously liable for the offence committed by the AAP, being the national convener of the said party and because of his role and active involvement in the day to day affairs and the conduct for the business of AAP," it said.

The ED has termed Kejriwal's petition challenging his arrest as "devoid of merit" and liable to be dismissed.

The ED arrested Kejriwal on March 21, hours after the Delhi High Court refused to grant him protection from coercive action by the federal anti-money laundering agency. He is currently lodged in Tihar jail under judicial custody.

On April 15, the top court sought a response from the ED by April 24 on his plea challenging his arrest in the case. The apex court is likely to take up his plea for hearing next week.

The high court had on April 9 upheld Kejriwal's arrest, saying there was no illegality about it and that the ED was left with "little option" after he skipped repeated summonses and refused to join the investigation.

The matter pertains to alleged corruption and money laundering in the formulation and execution of the Delhi government's now-scrapped excise policy for 2021-22.