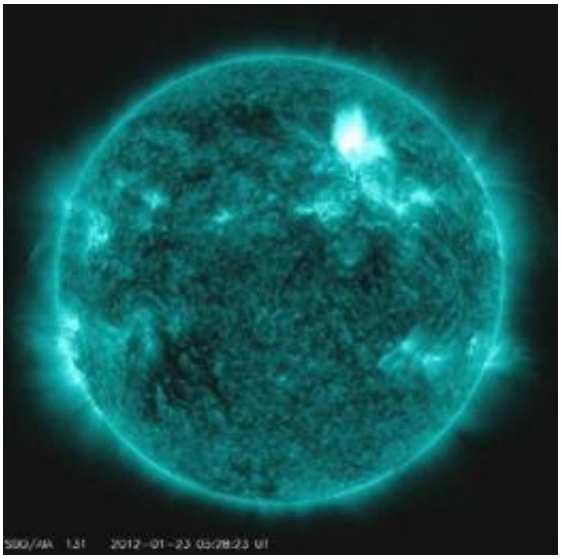
The Northern Lights dance over northern England

January 24 2012



This colorized NASA image, taken Monday, Jan. 23, 2012, from the Solar Dynamics Observatory, shows a flare shooting out of the top of the sun. It was taken in a special teal wavelength to best see the flare. Space weather officials say the strongest solar storm in more than six years is already bombarding Earth with radiation with more to come. The Space Weather Prediction Center in Colorado observed a flare Sunday night at 11 p.m. EST. Physicist Doug Biesecker said the biggest concern from the speedy eruption is the radiation, which arrived on Earth an hour later. It will likely continue through Wednesday. It's mostly an issue for astronauts' health and satellite disruptions. It can cause communication problems for airplanes that go over the poles. (AP Photo/NASA)

(AP) -- The Northern Lights have lit up the skies above Scotland,

northern England and northern parts of Ireland after the biggest solar storm in more than six years bombarded Earth with radiation.

The Canadian Space Agency posted a geomagnetic storm warning on Tuesday after residents were also treated to a spectacular show in the night sky.

Ken Kennedy, director of the Aurora section of the British Astronomical Association, said that the lights, also known as the aurora borealis, may be visible for a few more days.

The Northern Lights are sometimes seen from northern parts of Scotland but the unusual solar activity this week means the lights have also been visible from northeast England and Ireland, a rarity.

Geomagnetic storms cause awesome sights, but they can also bring trouble.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, problems can include current surges in power lines, and interference in the broadcast of radio, TV and telephone signals.

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