

Cyclone Hudhud due to slam into India's east coast

October 10 2014



An Indian fisherman's wife prepares to fix a roof damaged in cyclone Phailin at Nalianuagaon in Ganjam district of Odisha in October 15, 2013

Indian authorities were setting up relief camps and stockpiling food Friday as they braced for a "severe cyclone" due to slam into the country's east coast this weekend.

Cyclone Hudhud, building over the Bay of Bengal, was set to make landfall at Visakhapatnam on Andhra Pradesh state coast by midday

Sunday, the Indian Meteorological Department said.

"We've already set up rescue camps and arranged for food and other necessities," Parakala Prabhakar, communication advisor to the Andhra Pradesh government, told AFP by telephone from Hyderabad.

Packing winds of up to 155 kilometres per hour (96 miles), Hudhud was expected to also smash into neighbouring Orissa where Cyclone Phailin last October killed at least 18 and left a massive trail of destruction.

The navy said in a statement it has "assumed a high degree of readiness" as "the severe [cyclone](#) Hudhud is poised to strike".

Naval ships are standing by equipped with "divers, doctors, inflatable rubber boats, integral helicopters and relief material," the statement said.

Hudhud could cause widespread damage to flimsy housing and other structures and disrupt power and communications in low-lying coastal areas.

India has two categories of tropical storms based on wind speeds. Cyclones like Hudhud have [wind speeds](#) up to 167 kph.

The second, like Cyclone Phailin, has winds of up to 220 kph and is capable of causing extensive damage.

Disaster officials in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa said they were not taking any chances and were fully prepared for whatever happens.

"A special relief commissioner has already been appointed to look into prevention, rescue and rehabilitation in north coastal Andhra Pradesh," Prabhakar said.

In Orissa, where more than 8,000 people were killed in a 1999 cyclone, the state government was set to conduct a mock evacuation drill on Saturday.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has also asked federal Defence Minister Arun Jaitley for the army to be deployed in four districts likely to suffer from the storm.

Residents in Orissa's Ganjam district, which bore the brunt of the 2013 cyclone, were dreading a repeat of the devastation.

"We have made all the arrangements this time because of the scale of devastation that we saw in 2013 and 1999," Prabhat Ranjan Mahapatra, the deputy relief commissioner of Orissa, told AFP.

The weather office has urged fishermen to stay ashore until the storm is over.

India's eastern coast and neighbouring Bangladesh are routinely hit by bad storms between April and November that cause deaths and widespread damage to property.

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