

Powerful cyclone makes landfall in India

November 25 2020, by Arun Sankar



Residents walk along a deserted road as Cyclone Nivar approached the southeastern Indian coast in Puducherry on November 25, 2020

A powerful cyclonic storm hurtled into India's southern coast early Thursday, uprooting trees and packing strong winds and rains as tens of thousands of people took refuge in shelters.

The centre of Nivar made landfall at 3:05 am local time between Karaikal in Puducherry territory and Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu state with winds of up to 130 kilometres (81 miles) per hour.

Thousands of state and national emergency personnel were deployed in the southern regions of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry as authorities suspended power supply across several cities to prevent damage to the [electricity grid](#).

One woman in Tamil Nadu died after a boundary wall collapsed following heavy rains late Wednesday, local media reported.

Initially classified as a very severe cyclonic storm as it swirled in the north Indian Ocean's Bay of Bengal, Nivar weakened after landfall into a severe cyclonic storm, the India Meteorological Department said.

Wind gusts uprooted trees and toppled electricity pylons while downpours lashed parts of the region, causing flash floods, with Cuddalore district in Tamil Nadu recording nearly 244 millimetres (9.6 inches) of rain since Wednesday morning.

The Tamil Nadu government issued a severe weather warning for further thunderstorms over the coming hours.



Cyclone Nivar made landfall between Karaikal in Puducherry territory and Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu state

Tamil Nadu minister R.B. Udhayakumar said late Wednesday that around 175,000 people were moved to shelters across the state as [local authorities](#) declared a public holiday Wednesday and Thursday, shutting everything except emergency services.

Flight operations at Chennai airport were suspended until Thursday morning and metro train services halted.

In Puducherry, home to 1.6 million people, the rain-soaked streets and markets were deserted and Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi appealed to locals to stay indoors and abide by authorities' instructions.

"Move to high places wherever you have to. There are relief centres. Please move there," Bedi said in a video message on Twitter.



Large waves lash the beach as Cyclone Nivar approached Puducherry on November 25, 2020

The navy said its ships, aircraft and crew were on standby to assist with disaster relief.

But people in some pockets along the coast were reluctant to abandon their homes and fishing boats and move to government shelters.



Authorities in southeastern India evacuated several thousand people out of the path of Cyclone Nivar

In Tamil Nadu's capital Chennai, authorities said they were also closely observing the level of reservoirs and lakes to avoid a repeat of 2015 flooding which killed several hundred people.

Lake Chembarambakkam outside Chennai discharged extra water because of the heavy rains amid warnings to residents in low-lying areas.

No evacuation orders were issued in Sri Lanka but [heavy rains](#) were forecast, particularly in the north of the island nation.

Fishermen there were advised not to go out to sea.

More than 110 people died after "super cyclone" Amphan ravaged eastern India and Bangladesh in May, flattening villages, destroying farms and leaving millions without electricity.

But the death toll was far lower than the many thousands killed in previous cyclones of that size, a result of improved weather forecasting and better response plans.

© 2020 AFP

Citation: Powerful cyclone makes landfall in India (2020, November 25) retrieved 1 June 2023 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-11-powerful-cyclone-landfall-india.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.