

Names of Tropical Cyclones

1. Historical Background

The practice of naming storms (tropical cyclones) began years ago in order to help in the quick identification of storms in warning messages because names are presumed to be far easier to remember than the numbers and technical terms. Many agree that appending names to storms makes it easier for the media to report on tropical cyclones, heightens interest in warnings and increases community preparedness.

Experience shows that the use of short, distinctive names in written as well as spoken communications is quicker.

In the beginning, storms were named arbitrarily. Then the mid-1900's saw the start of the practice of using feminine names for storms. In the pursuit of a more organized and efficient naming system, meteorologists later decided to identify storms using names from a list arranged alphabetically. Thus, a storm with a name which begins with A, like Anne, would be the first storm to occur in the year. Before the end of 1900's, forecasters started using male names for those forming in the Southern Hemisphere. Since 1953, Atlantic tropical storms have been named from lists originated by the National Hurricane Center. They are now maintained and updated by an international committee of the World Meteorological Organization.

It is important to note that tropical cyclones /hurricanes are named neither after any particular person, nor with any preference in alphabetical sequence. The tropical cyclone/hurricane names selected are those that are familiar to the people in each region. Obviously, the main purpose of naming a tropical cyclone/hurricane is basically for people easily to understand and remember the tropical cyclone/hurricane in a region, thus to facilitate tropical cyclone/hurricane disaster risk awareness, preparedness, management and reduction.

2. Importance for naming tropical cyclones:

- It would help identify each individual tropical cyclone.
- It helps the public to become fully aware of its development.
- Local and international media become focused to the tropical cyclone.
- It does not confuse the public when there is more than one tropical cyclone in the same area.
- The name of the tropical cyclone is well remembered by million of people as it is unforgettable event whose name will long be remembered.
- Warnings reach a much wider audience very rapidly.

3. Procedure for Naming of Tropical Cyclone

There is a strict procedure to determine a list of tropical cyclone names in an ocean basin(s) by the Tropical Cyclone Regional Body responsible for that basin(s) at its annual/biennial meeting. There are five tropical cyclones regional

bodies, i.e. ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee, WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones, RA I Tropical Cyclone Committee, RA IV Hurricane Committee, and RA V Tropical Cyclone Committee. The areas of responsibility of different RSMCs are shown in Fig. 1. The Specialised Meteorological Centre (RSMC) – Tropical cyclones is responsible for monitoring and prediction of tropical cyclones over their respective regions. They are also responsible to name the cyclones.

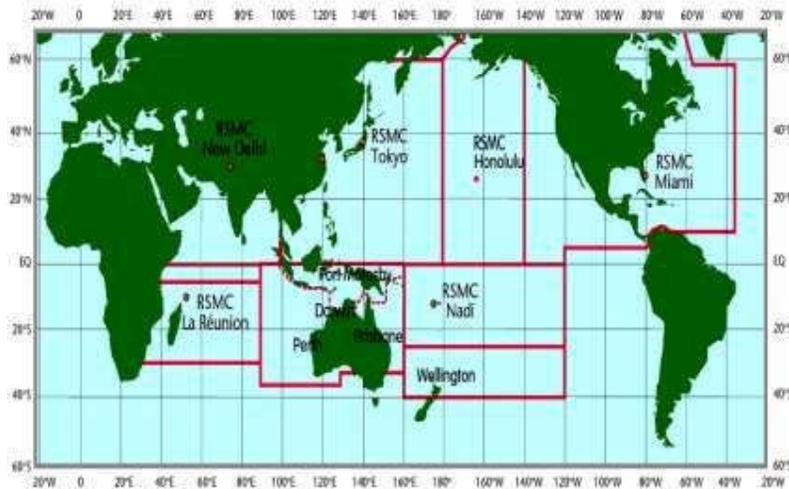


Fig.1 Areas of responsibility of different RSMCs

In general, tropical cyclones are named according to the rules at a regional level. For instance, Hurricane Committee determines a pre-designated list of Hurricane names. As an example for north Atlantic Ocean six lists are used in rotation. Thus, the 2008 list will be used again in 2014. For the eastern north Pacific Ocean the lists are also re-cycled every six years (the 2008 list will be used again in 2014). For central north Pacific Ocean the names are used one after the other. When the bottom of one list is reached, the next name is the top of the next list. For the details of the names of the tropical cyclones over different Ocean basins, kindly visit WMO website (www.wmo.int/pages/prog/www/tcp/Storm-naming.html)

4. Naming of tropical cyclones over north Indian Ocean.

The WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones at its twenty-seventh Session held in 2000 in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman agreed in principal to assign names to the tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea. After long deliberations among the member countries, the naming of the tropical cyclones over north Indian Ocean commenced from September 2004.

- The Panel member's names are listed alphabetically country wise.
- The name will be used sequentially column wise.
- The first name will start from the first row of column one and continue sequentially to the last row in column eight. Example, this will be as Onil, Hibar, Pyar, Baaz Amphan
- The names which have been already used from the list are highlighted.

Naming of Tropical Cyclones over north Indian Ocean

Panel Member	Column one		Column two		Column three		Column four	
	Names	Pron'	Names	Pron'	Names	Pron'	Names	Pron'
Bangladesh	Onil	Onil	Ogni	Og-ni	Nisha	Ni-sha	Giri	Gi-ri
India	Agni	Ag'ni	Akash	Aakaa'sh	Bijli	Bij'li	Jal	Jal
Maldives	Hibaru	--	Gonu	--	Aila	--	Keila	--
Myanmar	Pyarr	Pyarr	Yemyin	Ye-myin	Phyan	Phyan	Thane	Thane
Oman	Baaz	Ba-az	Sidr	Sidr'	Ward	War'd	Murjan	Mur'jaan
Pakistan	Fanoos	Fanoos	Nargis	Nar gis	Laila	Lai la	Nilam	Ni lam
Sri Lanka	Mala	--	Rashmi	Rash'mi	Bandu	--	Viyaru	Viyaru -
Thailand	Mukda	Muuk-dar	Khai Muk	Ki-muuk	Phet	Pet	Phailin	Pi-lin

Panel Member	Column five		Column six		Column seven		Column eight	
	Names	Pron'	Names	Pron'	Names	Pron'	Names	Pron'
Bangladesh	Helen	Helen	Chapala	Cho-po-la	Ockhi	Ok-khi	Fani	Foni
India	Lehar	Le'har	Megh	Me'gh	Sagar	Saa'gar	Vayu	Vaa'yu
Maldives	Madi	--	Roanu	--	Mekunu	--	Hikaa	--
Myanmar	Nanauk	Na-nauk	Kyant	Kyant	Daye	Da-ye	Kyarr	Kyarr
Oman	Hudhud	Hud'hud	Nada	N'nada	Luban	L'luban	Maha	M'maha
Pakistan	Nilofar	Ni lofar	Vardah	Var dah	Titli	Titli	Bulbul	Bul bul
Sri Lanka	Ashobaa	Ashobaa	Maarutha	Maarutha	Gaja	Gaja	Pawan	Pavan
Thailand	Komen	Goh-men	Mora	Moh-rar	Phethai	Pay-ti	Amphan	Um-pun

The RSMC tropical cyclones New Delhi gives a tropical cyclone an identification name from the above name list. The identification system covers both the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. These lists are used sequentially, and they are not rotated every few years as are the Atlantic and Eastern Pacific lists.

If public wants to suggest the name of a cyclone to be included in the list, the proposed name must meet some fundamental criteria. The name should be short and readily understood when broadcast. Further the names must not be culturally sensitive and not convey some unintended and potentially inflammatory meaning. A storm causes so much death and destruction that its name is considered for retirement and hence is not used repeatedly. The suggested name pertaining to India may be communicated to Director General of Meteorology, India Meteorological Department, Mausam Bhawan, Lodi Road, New Delhi-110003 for consideration.