

Notes and News

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF GEODESY AND GEOPHYSICS

The Executive Committee of the I.U.G.G. convened in Paris in April 1953 has decided to establish a I.U.G.G. Committee for the International Geophysical Year.

S. Basu, Deputy Director General of Observatories, Meteorological Office, Lodi Road, New Delhi-3, from India has been requested to serve on the Committee.

EVEREST CONQUERED

So at last Everest has been conquered! Our heartiest congratulations to Colonel Hunt and his men for the wonderful achievement. When asked in a press interview about the one single factor which contributed to the success of the present expedition, while so many previous expeditions failed, Tiger Tenzing, Indian hero of the expedition is reported to have attributed it to "Weather". This is not surprising as weather has been the biggest headache for all previous expeditions. Without belittling in the least the human effort behind the brilliant achievement of Colonel Hunt and his men, it can be said the present expedition was undoubtedly lucky in regard to weather which was most favourable at the crucial moment of the final assault. In the words of one of the members of the expedition "it was a bright and sunny day with no clouds and practically no wind"—really an ideal weather for the assault. The arrival of the monsoon over the Everest region was delayed this year and the lull that follows the dying down of the westerlies and precedes the arrival of the monsoon winds—the period eagerly looked forward to by the expeditionist for his final assault—was fairly long and characterised by almost uninterrupted fair weather.

Meteorological Office (Alipore) Calcutta, was responsible for the weather service to the

expedition. Daily weather bulletins containing forecasts valid for 24 hours from 1200 GMT were broadcast from the All India Radio stations at Delhi and Calcutta and also by the B.B.C., London for the benefit of the expedition. These bulletins indicated, whenever possible, a further outlook for two or three days and also gave information about the progress of the monsoon.

It is gratifying to note that the expedition found the forecasts useful, which in the words of Col. Hunt, "proved, in the main, to be most accurate and were listened to with keen anticipation day by day".

RADAR OBSERVATIONS OF RAIN FROM NON-FREEZING CLOUDS

In the Australian Journal of Physics, Series A, Vol. 6, March 1953, Messrs. R. S. Styles and F. W. Campbell describe five airborne radar observations of rain from non-frozen clouds in the vicinity of Sydney, Australia; lat. 35°S. The rain from some of these clouds was "very excessive", *i.e.*, of the order of 3" per hour. The radar echo reached its maximum development at or just before the time of maximum development of the cloud; the maximum precipitation rate at the ground occurred after the cloud passed its maximum development. The temperature of the cloud top at its maximum development was between +7°C and 0.5°C—The cloud depth at the time of heavy precipitation was 9250 to 9900 ft. Immediately after reaching its maximum development, the cloud either dissipated or subsided. The region of high concentration of water drops near the middle of the cloud also disappeared at the same time and was replaced by an echo nearly uniform with height.

The authors conclude that the raindrops must have grown in size in falling through the cloud by coalescence of drops.

A footnote adds the following sad statement—Mr. Styles and Mr. Campbell lost their lives in the course of further experimental work, when their aircraft crashed into the sea on the morning of Oct. 27, 1952 soon after entering a heavy cloud on which they were taking measurements. All the four members of the crew lost their lives.

PHOSPHORESCENCE

Vessel : S. S. Jalayamuna

Captain : N. P. Macfarlane

Voyage : Bombay to Calcutta

Observer : M. P. Ahuja, 2nd Officer

1. 3 February 1953, 1600 GMT. At Anchor Goa Roads Lat. $15^{\circ} 25' N$ Long. $73^{\circ} 46' E$. Blue sky, light air and rippled sea. Observed phosphorescence along the coast and extending about a mile into the sea from Aguada resembling the beam of a searchlight.

2. 4 February 1953, 1700 GMT. At Anchorage Goa Roads. Blue sky, wind 340° , Force 1-2, observed phosphorescence again about from southsoutheast to west (seaward) more distinctive than previous night. Horizon resembling the look of a town becoming brighter with the waves.

ABNORMAL REFRACTION

Vessel : S. S. Daressa

Captain : C. L. Broadhurst

Voyage : Bombay to Persian Gulf

Observers : H.W. Bolles, 2nd Officer
A. S. Wood, 3rd Officer

29 April 1953, 2115 GMT

Khorramshahr to Kuwait—Lat. $29^{\circ} 25\frac{3}{4}' N$ Long. $48^{\circ} 49\frac{1}{2}' E$. Course $198^{\circ} (T)$. Observed JAZIRAT AL KUBR light at 28 miles bearing $219^{\circ} (T)$. Maximum normal range 18.77 miles. Air Temp. $82^{\circ} F$. Barometer 1009.3 mb. Wind $4/SW$.

WEATHER, HOT WEATHER SEASON (MARCH—MAY 1953)

The chief features of weather during the period under review were—

(i) Formation and movement of a cyclonic storm in the Bay of Bengal during April, (ii) passage of a few active western disturbances, (iii) moderate heat wave over parts of northeast India during the last 10 days of May and (iv) advance of southwest monsoon in the Andaman Sea and the adjoining areas in the latter half of May and (v) rainfall generally in defect over the country.

March—Six western disturbances moved across northwest India during the month. Most of them caused local or fairly widespread showers in the western Himalayas. In the wake of the disturbance which moved from the Punjab (P) to the Punjab hills between the 26th and 27th there was a surge of northerly cold air, and both day and night temperatures fell by $15-20^{\circ} F$ over northwest India and Gujarat between the 27th and 29th. An appreciable drop in temperature also occurred over Madhya Bharat, west Madhya Pradesh, Deccan (Desh) and west Hyderabad during this period.

There were spells of good thunderstorm activity in Assam during the month, the noteworthy periods being 2nd to 4th, 8th to 10th, 13th to 14th, 19th to 22nd and 26th to 29th. Local thundershowers also occurred in north Bihar on the 14th. According to newspaper reports, the thunderstorms in Assam and Bihar on 13th and 14th were accompanied by heavy gales which took a toll of nearly 35 lives, injured about 700 people and caused considerable damage to property. Some of these storms were also accompanied by hail, and the hailstorm at Darbhanga on the 14th was reported to be the severest in the last 15 years. Weather remained mainly dry in the central parts of the country and the peninsula during the month except for local or fairly widespread thundershowers in Travancore-Cochin on a few days.

Unusually warmer days were experienced over the country outside Assam, West

Bengal and the south peninsula during most of the month. The warm spell was, however, checked towards the end of the month by the surge of cold northerly air mentioned above.

April—Two active western disturbances passed across northwest India during the month. The first moved from the Punjab (P) to the Punjab hills between the 12th and 15th. It caused fairly widespread showers in the Punjab hills throughout this period and local showers in the Kumaon hills on the 13th and 15th and in the plains of the Punjab (I) on the 14th. The western disturbance which moved across the Punjabs between the 17th and 20th caused fairly widespread or local showers in the Punjab-Kumaon hills between the 18th and 20th, in the plains of the Punjab (I) on the 19th and 20th, in the plains of west Uttar Pradesh on the 19th and in east Rajasthan on the 20th. A severe duststorm with wind speed reaching 60 mph was reported over Allahabad on the 19th afternoon. The remaining three western disturbances of the month were feeble.

Local or fairly widespread thundershowers occurred on many days during the month in Travancore-Cochin and Malabar—south Kanara and on a few days in Deccan (Desh), Hyderabad, Rayalaseema, Mysore and Tamilnad. They also occurred in Assam and Sub-Himalayan West Bengal between the 8th and 15th and 26th and 30th, in west Madhya Pradesh between the 15th and 19th and in east Madhya Pradesh between the 19th and 22nd.

A severe norwester hit Dum Dum and Barrackpore airports during the afternoon of the 27th, the wind speed at Dum Dum reaching 82 mph. According to press reports, one hangar at the Barrackpore airport collapsed and an aircraft was damaged. Weather remained dry in Gujarat and Saurashtra and Kutch throughout the month.

A depression formed in the southeast Bay of Bengal on the 29th evening centred near Lat. $12\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}\text{N}$, Long. 91°E . Moving northwards and intensifying rapidly, it became a severe cyclonic storm by the next morning

with its centre near Lat. $14\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}\text{N}$, Long. $92\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}\text{E}$. Thereafter it moved in a north-easterly direction and after weakening, passed inland across the Burma coast near Diamond Island on the morning of 1 May. Under its influence heavy rain occurred in the Bay Islands on the 30th, Table Island recording 9" of rain.

Day temperatures were generally appreciably above normal in most parts of the north India and the central parts of the country throughout the first half of the month and continued to be so in northwest India during the rest of the month.

May—Out of the eight western disturbances during the month, two disturbances were feeble, but the remaining ones caused local or fairly widespread showers in the Punjab-Kumaon hills. Fairly widespread showers also occurred in west Rajasthan on the 22nd when a western disturbance moved away northeastwards across Western Pakistan.

Spells of good thunderstorm activity prevailed in Assam between the 10th and 11th, 14th and 16th, 19th and 23rd and 28th and 31st with a few heavy to very heavy falls between the 15th and 17th. Cherrapunji recorded 24.6" of rain during the 48 hours ending at 0830 IST of the 17th. According to press reports, the Brahmaputra river and its tributaries rose in spate during this period and the communications between Dibrugarh and Gauhati were also reported to have been disrupted on account of the fierce gales. Local thundershowers continued in Assam for the rest of the month, and also occurred on many days in sub-Himalayan West Bengal. Local thundershowers were also reported from the rest of northeast India on the 7th. A thunderstorm with fierce gales of 60 mph was reported from Ranchi on the 6th afternoon on account of which a building collapsed and 14 persons were killed. Thundershowers also occurred locally in Gangetic West Bengal on the 3rd and 5th and between the 9th and 12th, in Orissa between the 1st and 4th and on 10th and 11th, in Chota Nagpur on the 9th and

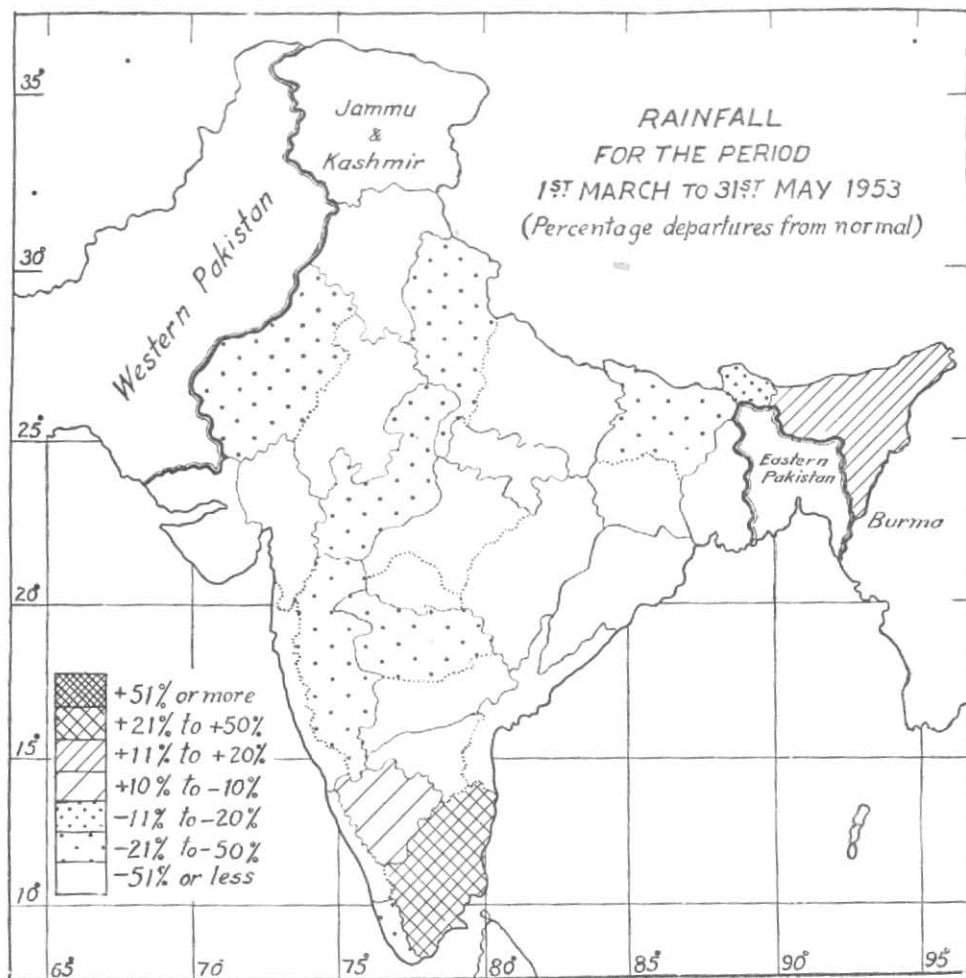


Fig. 1

10th and in Bihar on the 8th, 12th and 28th.

Local or scattered thundershowers also occurred in Madhya Bharat on the 17th, in coastal Andhradesa between the 1st and 5th and on 8th, in south Tamilnad on the 6th and 7th, in Malabar south Kanara on the 7th and in Travancore-Cochin between the 6th and 9th. Otherwise weather was mainly dry over the central parts of the country and the peninsula.

The southwest monsoon made a feeble advance into the south Andaman Sea by the

middle of May but remained restricted to Tenasserim coast, Andaman Sea and the southeast Bay of Bengal during the month.

A moderate heat wave prevailed over Chota Nagpur, Gangetic West Bengal and Bihar during the last ten days of May. Day temperatures were also markedly above normal in coastal Andhradesa between the 14th and 16th.

The distribution of rainfall over the country during the period under review is shown in Fig. 1 above.