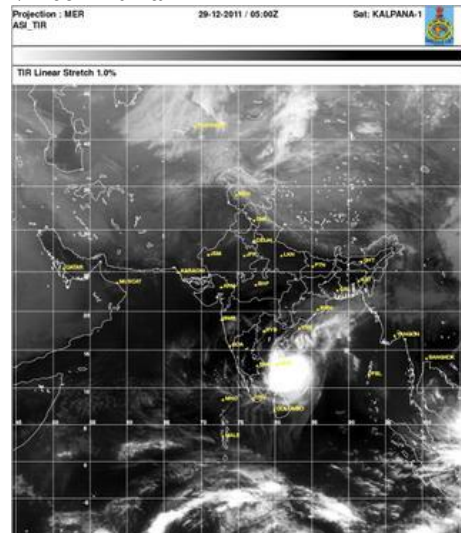


## Cyclone 'Thane' ramps up to menacing strength

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Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 29:

The severe cyclonic storm 'Thane' has intensified another round to become a very severe cyclonic storm this morning with wind speeds clocking 120 to 130 km/hr gusting to 145 km/hr.

The storm might lose some steam on the home stretch but is expected to blast its way in as a severe cyclonic storm, only a notch down from its current intensity.

The storm reset itself to a track to west-southwest overnight, in line to aim the Nagapattinam-Puducherry stretch of the Tamil Nadu coast by tomorrow morning.

India Meteorological Department (IMD) maintained an almost similar outlook in this morning's bulletin, positing the track west to cross the coast between Nagapattinam and Chennai, close to Puducherry.

Dr Jayaraman Potty, Chief Scientist, at the Bangkok-based Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System (RIMES), too, confirmed to *Business Line* that 'Thane' is in line to hit the coast south of Chennai.

The Nagapattinam belt is known to be a sitting duck for approaching storms, and could likely witness storm surges and vast inundation.

In fact, Hyderabad-based Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (Incois) has warned of high wind waves in the range of 2.5 to 11.0 metres (maximum forecasted height) until midnight of tomorrow along the Nagapattinam to Pulicat coast of Tamil Nadu.

The higher waves may occur between Nagapattinam to Pondicherry, the Incois said.

Alert for high wind waves between 2.5- 8.0 metres (maximum forecasted height) are also valid for the Andhra Pradesh coast for the same period from Ramayapatnam to Kaligapattanam.

The IMD bulletin said 'Thane' lay centred about 300 km east-southeast of Chennai and 480 km northeast of Trincomalee (Sri Lanka) this morning.

Satellite imagery showed convective (rain-bearing) clouds rising over south Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu coasts and south and central Bay of Bengal ahead of the approaching storm.

Heavy to very heavy rainfall would occur at a few places with extremely heavy falls (25 cm or more) at one or two places over north Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Rayalaseema and south coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next two days.

After crossing the Tamil Nadu coast, the remnant of 'Thane' is shown as being yanked away to north-northeast over central India and adjoining east India, bringing some rains over these regions.

This would be brought about under the influence of a western disturbance drifting into the west and northwest India.