

Arthur grows to hurricane off US coast

Strom expected to weaken quickly, but many choose to evacuate homes

By AGENCIES in Miami

Tropical Storm Arthur became the first hurricane of the 2014 Atlantic season on Thursday, after sparking evacuations, closing beaches and tourist sites and disrupting Independence Day celebrations along parts of the US East Coast.

Arthur was about 300 kilometers south-southwest of Cape Fear, North Carolina, with maximum sustained winds of 120 km per hour, the US National Hurricane Center said after upgrading the storm's status.

It was moving at 15 kph in a northerly direction toward the coast and is expected to turn toward the northeast with an increase in speed on Thursday.

Authorities began closing campgrounds, lighthouses and beaches on the Outer Banks of North Carolina on Wednesday. Several towns and villages rescheduled Independence Day festivities and fireworks plans as the storm picked up speed.

North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory declared a state of emergency on Wednesday for 25 eastern counties to help prepare for possible damage.

Local businesses were worried about losses, though computer forecast models showed the hurricane was not a threat to key oil-and-gas producing areas in the Gulf of Mexico.

One local said that he was more worried about his tomato plants than storm damage.

But McCrory warned: "Don't put your stupid hat on!" In addition to the hurricane



A Surfer enjoys the waves near the old damaged Hatteras Pier, on Wednesday in Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. By Wednesday evening, many residents were evacuating.

warning, tropical storm warnings were in effect for coastal areas in South Carolina and Virginia.

Gary Reinhardt, 63, and his wife Lori, both of Sarasota, Florida, said they planned to exit low-lying Hatteras Island on Thursday morning. So did nearly two dozen other family members from California, Nebraska and Michigan. A long line of cars, trailers and recreational vehicles already formed a steady stream of traffic before sunset Wednesday.

"I'm worried about the road. It took way too long to get here," said Gary Reinhardt, adding that the two-and-a-half-hour delay to get on the island came on Sunday, when there was no hurricane threat. Reinhardt worried their departure would take twice as long on Thursday.

Mike Rabe of Virginia Beach, Virginia, planned to

stay in his beach home the entire weekend. He and his wife, Jan, arrived on Wednesday at the house they bought two and a half years ago and set to work stowing lawn furniture and anything else that could be tossed about by hurricane winds. He said he was going to spend Thursday helping a friend and longtime resident prep his nearby water sports shop and campground for bad weather.

"I'm going to help him prepare and then I'm going to ride it out," said Rabe, 53.

Arthur could be packing Category 1 hurricane-force winds of 135 kph when the outer bands brush the Carolinas on Thursday and Friday before weakening, forecasters said.

The storm could also cause dangerous rip currents, rainfall, fierce winds and flooding along coastal areas of Southern states.



A satellite image shows Arthur moving north off the east coast of Florida on Wednesday.

Farther up the coast, the resort town of Ocean City, Maryland, said it was moving its July 4 fireworks display to Saturday because of the storm.

Boston officials also delayed a nationally televised concert by the Boston Pops

MARK WILSON / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

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Tiny scanner shows chemical makeup of everyday items

By ASSOCIATED PRESS in Tel Aviv, Israel

An Israeli inventor has created a scanner that he says could change the way we shop and take care of ourselves — by reading the chemical makeup of foods, drugs and other items we use.

The tiny gadget is still limited to a few key applications, but creator Dror Sharon envisions a machine that will compile a massive collection of data that will allow users to analyze the physical matter that exists around them.

"We wanted to find applications where people have the most visceral connection to the world," said Sharon, CEO and co-founder of Consumer Physics.

His gadget, called the SciO, is an infrared spectrometer the size of a thumb drive. It is being marketed for three applications — food, pharmaceuticals and horticulture. Simply by pointing and clicking a miniature digital wand, users can see how many calories are in a piece of cheese or determine when a tomato will reach peak ripeness.

Its name evokes the Latin verb "to know".

These features may seem more fun than life-changing at this point. But ultimately, advocates say, the SciO could have life-saving uses, such as identifying contaminated foods or determining whether a drug is counterfeit.

"Immediately, the major impact will be increasing the awareness of people to the material world around them, which is already an enormous effect," said Sanford Ruhman, a professor of chemistry and an expert on spectroscopy at

Israel's Hebrew University.

Ruhman, who is not involved with SciO, said that while the technology has been growing smaller and smaller for decades, the SciO represents a significant new step. It is believed to be the first device of its kind.

A self-described "skeptical nature", Ruhman suggested that in the future, the ability to detect chemicals could be very beneficial in fields such as health and security. "It is just the beginning of something that can become much larger," he said.

Sharon, an engineer with an MBA from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, describes the gadget as the next generation of "Googling". He finds the current process of searching for information to be cumbersome. The user must think of a concept or question, identify a relevant set of words, type them into a search engine and hope they get some useful results.

With the spectrometer, he said, you can just point the gadget at an item — without even necessarily knowing what it is. The device reads the item's molecular structure, matches the information to an ever-expanding database and then can send additional data to your smartphone.

"I think it will change the world in many ways," said Sharon. He said the device could have potential uses for monitoring car tires, fuel tanks, soil analysis and the human body.

Sharon has raised over \$2 million from more than 11,000 supporters on the fundraising website Kickstarter.

chengdureport

Chengdu propels Sichuan's foreign trade

By XU XIAO

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\$22.45
billion

import and export volume in Chengdu in the first five months of this year

Despite an overall downturn in the country's economy, Chengdu's import and export volume in the first five months of the year reached 137.03 billion yuan (\$22.45 billion), accounting for 80 percent of Sichuan province's total, according to Chengdu Customs District.

Statistics showed that Chengdu's import-export volume beat other cities in Sichuan province from January to May. The figure increased 6.3 percent year on year.

"Sichuan's foreign trade is mainly propelled by Chengdu, Deyang and Mianyang, and among these cities Chengdu keeps the leading position.

"This is a major character of Sichuan's foreign trade," said a Chengdu Customs District official.

In the first quarter, Sichuan's foreign invested enterprises had an import-export value of 62.98 billion yuan, which helped elevate the province's entire foreign trade by 3.7 percentage points.

Privately-owned enterprises generated an import-export value of 53.2 billion yuan, which elevated the province's total foreign trade volume by 7.4 percentage points.

Foreign invested enterprises saw a faster increase while privately owned enterprises were the biggest propeller in foreign trade.

The Chengdu Customs District official said this was a major character of Sichuan's foreign trade.

Steady growth

Chengdu's municipal gov-

ernment released 22 major measures to steadily boost the city's economy on June 23.

The measures echoed the central government and provincial government's call to "make steady growth a priority of economic development".

Officials said strengthening the propelling function of investment was important as well as encouraging locals to consume and spend.

The city plans to use squares and other public places to hold expositions and promotion events and hopes to develop rural tourism.

A city official said they also wanted to transform the government roles to create a fair market and provide transparent and efficient services.

The city also wants to upgrade industries, which will require the government to balance investment, consumption and exportations.

It also asks the government to balance environmental protection and economic development as long-term sustainable development is the ultimate goal, an official said.

Service center

In recent years, more and more foreigners have got to know Chengdu and more than half of the world's top 500 enterprises have established offices in the city.

Statistics showed from 2009, Chengdu was one of the top

choices for businesses from the United States looking to invest in China. To date, more than 1,400 US enterprises and projects have settled in the city including Intel, Dell and Cisco.

"China is becoming more and more charming in US people's eyes. Its culture, history and food attract many US people. Chengdu is a great choice for them to experience China," said Shi Zhengxian, deputy sales manager in charge of United Airlines' Atlantic Ocean and Pacific regions.

United Airlines started running direct flights from Chengdu to San Francisco on June 11, which shortened the journey to 14 hours.

"The evaluation took us five years and finally we chose Chengdu from several competing cities due to its broad business opportunities and rich tourism resources," Shi said. The US has also attracted more Chinese tourists from Chengdu and surrounding regions.

In 2013, more than 1.8 million Chinese travelers went to the US, an increase of 23 percent year on year, according to the US Consulate in Chengdu.

"Chengdu and San Francisco are both major cities and flight hubs in the western part of the two countries. I believe that this new flight will bring active impacts to both sides' transportation, culture and trade," Shi said.

The first flight from San Francisco to Chengdu and the return flight were fully booked and the flight line's occupation rate is the highest among United Airlines' 13 lines in the China region for June, July and August, said Walter Dias, general manager of the



ZHU XINXING / CHINA DAILY

Relying on its geographic advantages and environment, Chengdu is one of the most popular investment destinations in China.

air company's China region and South Korea.

The immediate popularity surprised both the United Airlines and Chengdu, said a director of Chengdu's logistics office.

"We have never encountered this kind of situation despite the fact we have opened many new routes with airlines before," he said. Chengdu is serviced by 73

international and regional airlines. As China's fourth largest air hub, Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport's tourist throughput capacity hit more than 33.44 million in 2013.

The new Eurasian Continental Bridge, which connects Chengdu and Europe, also boosted import-export trades and cultural exchanges.

Since it opened on April 27 2013, the Chengdu-Europe

express has carried 3,704 standard containers worth of \$156 million.

Products include IT, machinery equipment, automotive spare parts and clothing from 110 enterprises from cities including Chengdu, Chongqing, and Zhejiang, Guangdong and Fujian provinces.

"Opening the Chengdu-Europe express helped West China to embrace opportuni-

ties from Europe," said a representative at the Bureau of Commerce from Chengdu's Qingbaijiang district.

The moves echo Chengdu's goal to become the country's regional center in the service industry by 2020, according to the municipal government's press conference on May 15.

Chengdu has prepared policy supports to boost the city's service industry into the fast lane.