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Q5

## **Discuss the meaning of colour-coded weather warnings for cyclone prone areas given by India Meteorological department.**

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · GS I · 10 marks · Indian Heritage and Culture

Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

### **Core demand of the question**

- Discuss the meaning of colour-coded weather warnings for cyclone prone areas given by the India Meteorological Department
- Explain **Green**, **Yellow**, **Orange**, and **Red** and how the public should act
- Keep the explanation within a 10-mark length

### **Revision summary**

IMD cyclone colours are **Green**, **Yellow**, **Orange**, and **Red**.

**Green** means no special action; **Yellow** means watch and stay updated.

**Orange** means prepare for flood, wind, and failed services.

**Red** means take action, including evacuation of the vulnerable.

The colours sit on a timed watch-alert-warning-outlook sequence for named coasts.

### **Introduction**

The India Meteorological Department uses colour-coded warnings so coastal states can read cyclone risk at a glance. **Green**, **Yellow**, **Orange**, and **Red** are not decorations; they are graded orders to watch, prepare, or move.

### **Body**

#### **What the four colours mean**

- **Green means no cyclonic warning:** the sea and coast are in a normal watch, and no special public action is required.
- **Yellow means be updated:** a watch is on, heavy rain or wind may hurt kutcha houses and low fields, and people should follow the next bulletins.
- **Orange means be prepared:** an alert that power, roads, and communications may fail, flooding is likely, and disaster units should stand ready.
- **Red means take action:** a warning of extreme rain and wind, likely extensive damage, and the need to evacuate vulnerable people from the surge line.

#### **How IMD times the cyclone message**

- A pre-cyclone watch is typically issued about seventy-two hours ahead, then a cyclone alert, a cyclone warning, and a post-landfall outlook as the storm nears and crosses.

- Colour on the map is tied to expected wind, rain, and storm surge for named coastal districts, not to a single national mood.
- Ports, fisheries, and railways use the same ladder so boats return, trains slow, and salt workers leave exposed bunds.

### Why colour codes matter in cyclone belts

- Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Gujarat, and the island territories need a shared language that works on radio and phone when literacy and time are short.
- After the Super Cyclone of 1999, Odisha's later success in storms such as **Phailin (2013)** showed that early colour-coded warning plus evacuation saves lives even when crops and huts still fall.
- The code is a public-safety tool; it does not itself stop the cyclone.

### Flow diagram

Green no action -> Yellow be updated  
Yellow be updated -> Orange be prepared  
Orange be prepared -> Red take action  
Red take action -> Evacuate surge line  
Yellow be updated -> Follow next bulletin

### Conclusion

IMD's **Green-Yellow-Orange-Red** ladder tells cyclone coasts when to ignore, watch, prepare, or evacuate. The meaning is action, timed to the storm's approach, not a forecast of zero damage once **Red** is hoisted.

### Facts & figures

#### Green

No warning; all is well and no special public action is needed.

#### Yellow

Watch: be updated; vulnerable kutcha structures and low land may be hurt.

#### Orange

Alert: be prepared; communications, power, and flooding risk rise.

#### Red

Warning: take action; extreme weather and evacuation of exposed people.

#### Phailin, 2013

Odisha cyclone where mass evacuation after IMD warnings cut the death toll versus 1999.

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