

Fiji Islands Weather Summary

February 2006

Rainfall Outlook till May 2006

FIJI METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE

IN BRIEF

In February majority of the sites received average to below average rainfall. Most of the notable falls occurred in the beginning of the month when the South Pacific Convergence Zone (SPCZ) drifted over the group.

In the Western Division many sites generally recorded below average to average rainfall. The Central Division recorded average rainfall except for Suva receiving above average rainfall. The Northern Division recorded average rainfall except for Labasa which received well above average rainfall. Labasa Airport recorded the highest 24 hour rainfall of 194.4mm on the 4th. Heavy rain caused landslides affecting Labasa and this caused three fatalities during the first week of February. Sites in the

Eastern Division recorded below average to average rainfall.

A new high of mean monthly minimum temperature of 25.0°C was recorded at Vunisea.

Day-time air temperatures were generally average to above average at most of the recording sites.

Night-time air temperatures were mostly average to above average around the country.

Based on model predictions and current ocean and atmospheric conditions, most parts of the country can expect average to above average rainfall in the upcoming three months.

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WEATHER PATTERNS

The northern parts of Fiji received the heaviest falls, contributed by the monsoonal westerlies and the SPCZ. Landslides due to heavy rain in Vanua Levua caused three unfortunate fatalities during the first week of February.

Tropical Cyclone *Jim* drifted south into Fiji's area of responsibility on the 1st. Associated westerlies with monsoonal trough to the west brought rain over most parts of the group during the first week. The SPCZ drifted over Vanua Levu on the 4th and produced torrential rain, which resulted in flooding and landslides.

The SPCZ later moved further north of the group as westerlies weakened eventuating in southeast wind change. Stable weather conditions followed as a result for the next few days. Meanwhile, tropical depression 12F formed east of Fiji. The system intensified and was named Tropical Cyclone *Vaianu* around 11 pm on the 11th. The system drifted southwest and later turned south, passing between Fiji and Tonga. Strong southeast winds, rough seas and heavy swell affected mostly Southern Lau Group from the 13th.

the group on the 13th and produced widespread rain for the next few days. Vatukoula reported the second highest rainfall for the month receiving 24 hourly rainfall of 184.2 mm on the 14th. The trough later weakened and was displaced by a secondary ridge of high pressure extending over the group on the 18th. Another tropical depression 13F was identified to the far northwest on the 21st. The system drifted southeast, passing to the west of Fiji. However, associated convergence zone moved over the group and brought another episode of widespread rain from 22nd to 25th. Strong and gusty northwest winds from 13F also affected the country from 24-25 Feb. The convergence zone retrogressed to the west on the 26th and easterly wind flow settled over the group till the end of the month.

Rotuma experienced another wet month due to the close proximity of the SPCZ. The westerly burst on the first week of the month also brought strong and gusty winds over the islands. Highest 24 hour rainfall of 92.2 mm was recorded on the 2nd.

As TC *Vaianu* drifted further southeast, associated trough moved over northern parts of

Further Information:

The Director
Fiji Meteorological
Service
Private Mail Bag NAP
0351
Nadi Airport
Fiji

Ph: (679) 672 4888
Fax: (679) 672 0430

Email: fms@met.gov.fj
Web Site: www.met.gov.fj