

World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Web Sites
World Weather Information Service (WWIS)
Severe Weather Information Centre (SWIC)
User Guide (version 1.1 – 15 Sep 2006)

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1. Introduction

(a) WWIS: World Weather Information Service

WWIS is a comprehensive portal site providing weather observations, official weather forecasts and climate statistics for major cities around the world. With data gathered and prepared according to rigorous standardized procedures under the auspices of WMO, it contains authentic and reliable information originating from national weather services worldwide. If the city you need cannot be found in the selection list, you can also continue your search to see if it can be located through the link of the respective national weather service web site. Because of its multi-lingual approach, the same information can reach out to a wide audience of different nationalities in an increasingly globalized community. As of September 2006, the WWIS web site supports five languages: English (hosted by Hong Kong, China), Chinese (hosted by China), Arabic (hosted by Oman), Portuguese (hosted by Macao, China) and Spanish (hosted by Spain). The preferred language can be selected using the buttons displayed on the front page. Work is currently underway to add more language versions. WWIS is therefore particularly useful for travelers and tourists.

(b) SWIC: Severe Weather Information Centre

SWIC, currently available in English only, is a portal site that places special emphasis on tropical cyclone warnings and severe weather information. The first stages of development focus on global coverage of warnings for tropical cyclones and observations of intense precipitation. Information on other severe weather phenomena will be added as the web site evolves. For the sake of effective disaster preparedness and mitigation, this ensures ready access to consistent and authoritative warning messages issued by the responsible national weather services for the area under threat. The web site is therefore particularly useful for international aid and emergency relief agencies, as well as for reliable reporting purposes by the mass media.

(c) How can the web sites be accessed?

No special software and hardware is required; all that is needed is a computer or a communication device with an Internet browser and an Internet connection, preferably via a broadband link. After starting the browser, type in the following URL addresses:

(i) for WWIS <http://worldweather.wmo.int/>

(ii) for SWIC <http://severe.worldweather.wmo.int/>

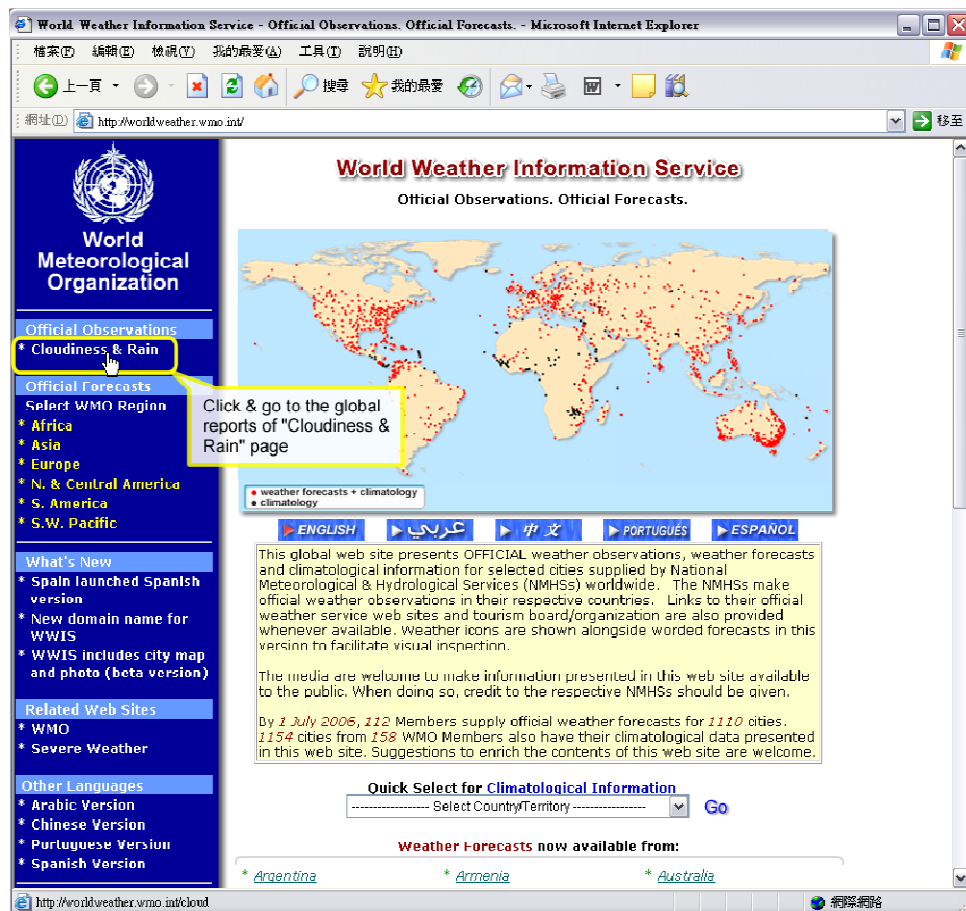
or follow the weather link from the WMO homepage <http://www.wmo.ch/indexflash.html>.

2. WWIS

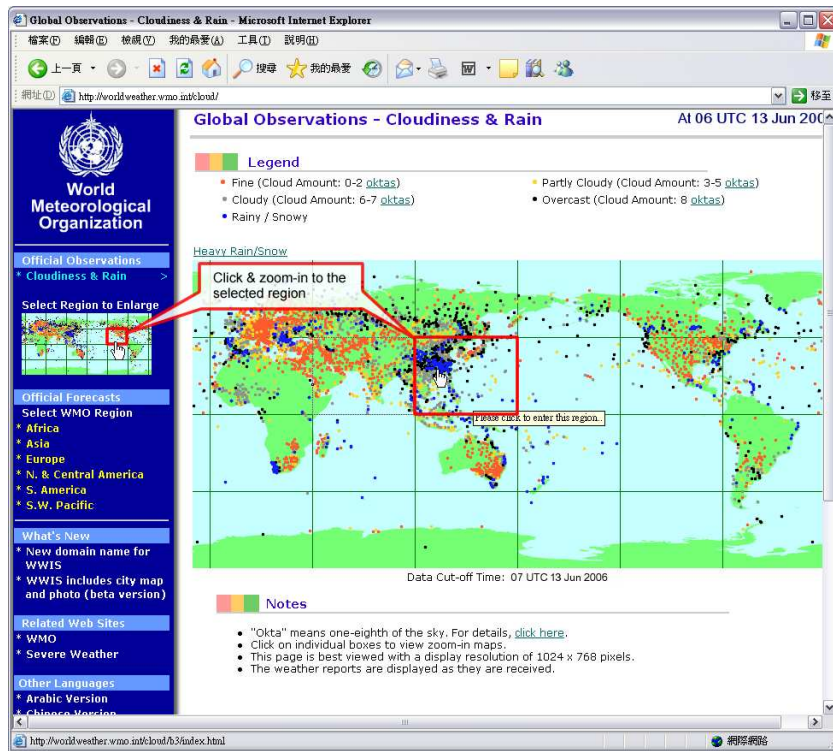
(a) Weather observations

These are the latest observational data as reported by official weather stations around the world and transmitted through WMO's dedicated network - the Global Telecommunication System. The data are decoded and displayed as received. Samples of global observations of cloudiness and rain in WWIS and heavy rain/snow in SWIC are shown in Fig. 1 and 2 respectively, with more weather elements to be added as the web site evolves. The data are updated every three or six hours depending on the reporting station, with a typical time lag of 40 to 90 minutes for decoding and database processing. Late-arriving observations will be included through hourly polling for updates.

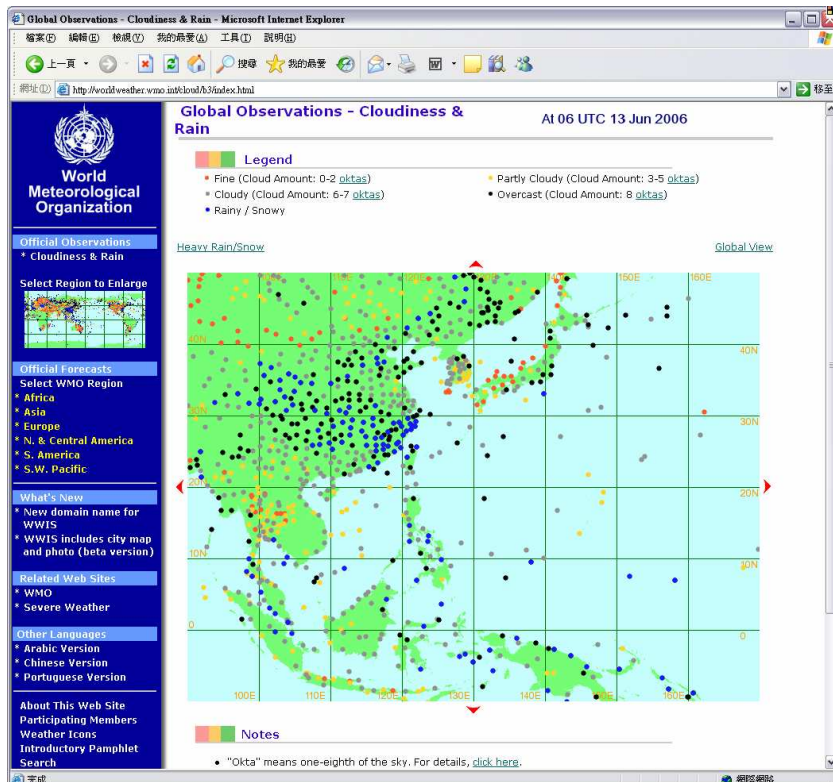
To access global reports of cloudiness and rain in WWIS, click on the menu bar on the left-hand side to select:



Click on the region to have the zoom-in options for more details:



Zoom-in view:



While observations should generally be spatially consistent for areas in close proximity to each other, allowance should also be given to regions under strong topographical influence (such as stations on different sides of a mountain range, and stations that are positioned along the coast or sheltered inland). In particular, reports for stations at high altitudes may be appreciably different from stations located near the sea level.

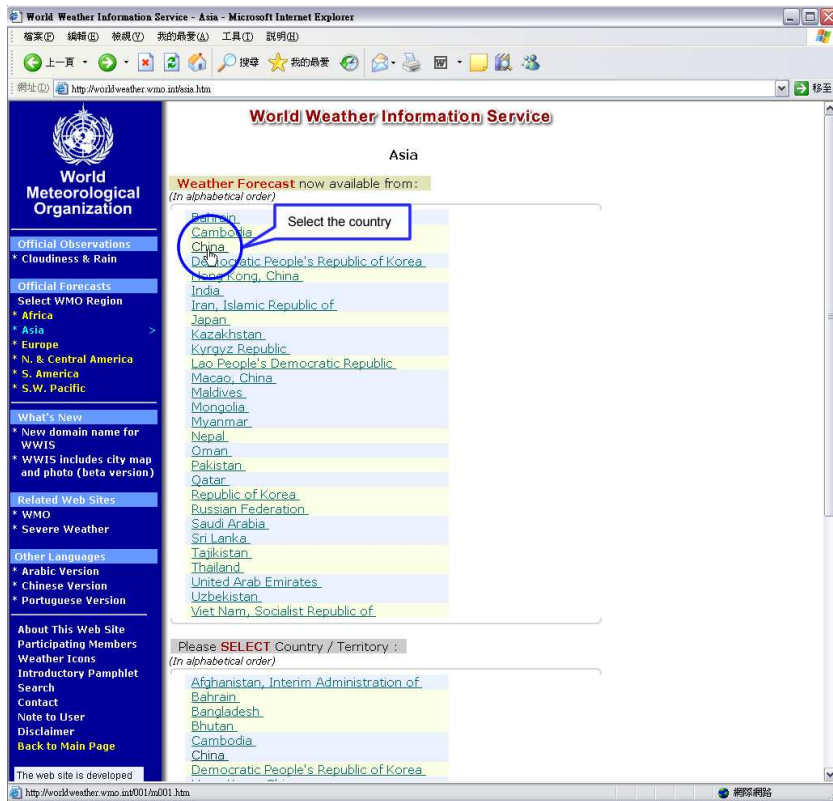
(b) Weather forecasts

These are official weather forecasts for major cities around the world as issued by the national weather services and sent to WWIS. While the forecast time horizon varies, the predicted information generally includes daily maximum and minimum temperatures (in degree C or F), brief textual description of expected weather, accompanied by suitable weather icons. For an explanation of the weather icons, please refer to http://worldweather.wmo.int/wx_icon.htm. The update frequency is usually on a daily basis, but some national weather services may choose to refresh their city forecasts every two or three days. The updating process by WWIS is carried out continuously to ensure that the latest forecasts are displayed once they are received.

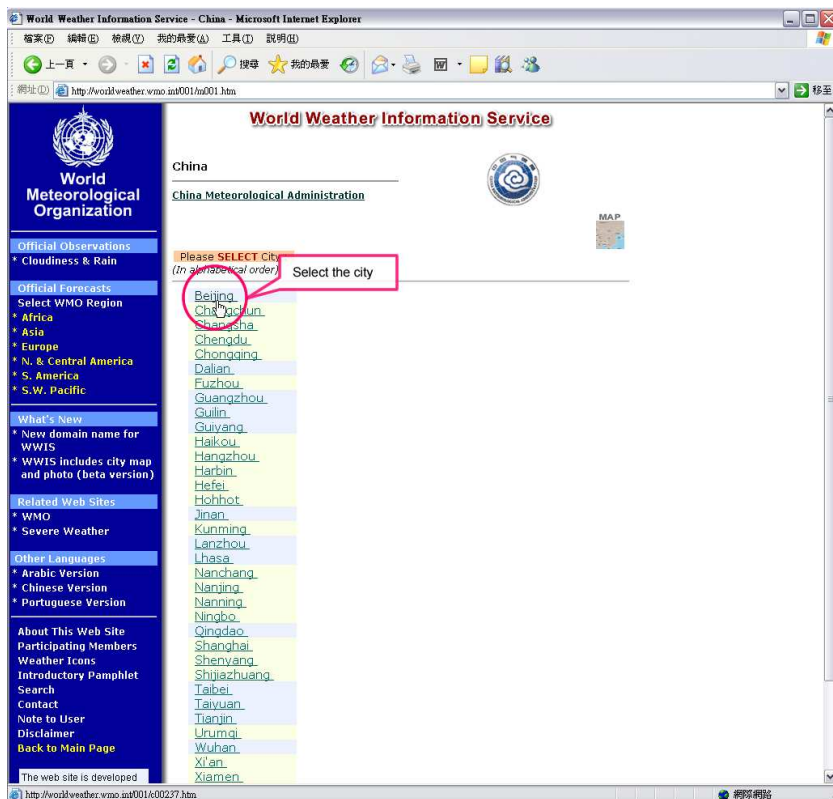
Select the forecast area using the map or the menu bar on the left-hand side:

The screenshot shows the World Weather Information Service (WWIS) website. The browser window title is "World Weather Information Service - Official Observations. Official Forecasts. - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The address bar shows "http://worldweather.wmo.int/". The page content includes the WMO logo, a navigation menu on the left, a world map with a green circle highlighting the Asia region, and a text box that says "Select the WMO Region from the left side menu or click on the map." Below the map are language selection buttons for English, Arabic, Chinese, Portuguese, and Spanish. A text block explains that the site provides official weather observations and forecasts for 1110 cities from 112 WMO members. At the bottom, there is a "Quick Select for Climatological Information" section with a dropdown menu and a "Go" button, and a list of countries where weather forecasts are available: Argentina, Armenia, and Australia.

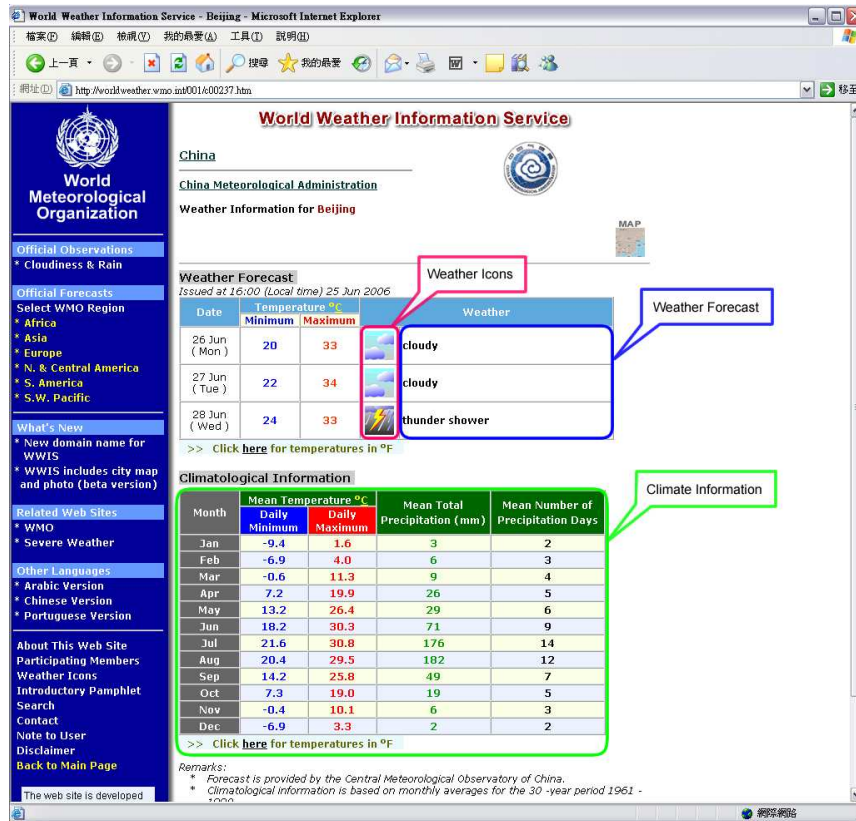
Select the country:



Select the city:



Official city forecasts with icons and climate information as displayed:



While the use of a standardized set of weather icons is meant to facilitate easy interpretation of the likely weather scenarios predicted for various cities, the subjective descriptive terms adopted by the national weather services to reflect such scenarios may differ from one country to the next. For example, 20 millimetres (mm) of rain may be described as “heavy rain” in a mid-latitude city, but the same amount of rainfall could well be just routine business for showers that occur in the course of a day in the tropics.

(c) Climate information

Follow the same steps as in 2(b), and view climate information for the city as displayed underneath the official forecasts (if available).

Climate information represents “typical” or “normal” conditions that are derived from past data averaged over a number of years. The length of data period varies for different countries and is specified in remarks against the corresponding climatological table. Information as provided by the national weather services to WWIS includes monthly mean daily maximum and minimum temperatures (in degree C or degree F), mean total precipitation (in mm), and mean number of

precipitation days. Precipitation refers to both rain and snow, but in some countries only rain is given. As climate conditions change very slowly from year to year, such information is only updated at longer intervals, typically on a decadal basis.

Climate information only represents typical conditions for the city at certain time of the year. Actual weather conditions are therefore likely to be somewhat different. For cities with observations and forecasts provided, climate information offers a useful reference framework to assess any anomalous departures from normal. For cities with no observations or forecasts provided, climate information can also serve as “first-guess” reference material for planning purposes by travellers or other special users.

(d) Other features

Links to national weather services can be found at <http://worldweather.wmo.int/members.htm>.

Tourism information for travelers is available in WWIS for national weather services that provide such links.

Follow the same steps as in 2(b), and click on the appropriate button for tourism information, city photos and location maps:

The screenshot shows the WWIS website for Hong Kong, China. The main content area includes a weather forecast table for the period from June 27 to July 3, 2006. The forecast shows temperatures ranging from 27°C to 32°C and weather conditions of 'Fine' and 'Showers'. A 'Tourism Information' link is highlighted with a red box and an arrow pointing to a secondary window showing a tourism page. A callout box says 'Click and go to the tourism information page'.

Date	Temperature °C		Weather
	Minimum	Maximum	
27 Jun (Tue)	28	32	Fine
28 Jun (Wed)	27	31	Showers
29 Jun (Thu)	27	30	Showers
30 Jun (Fri)	27	30	Showers
01 Jul (Sat)	27	31	Showers
02 Jul (Sun)	28	31	Showers
03 Jul (Mon)	28	32	Showers

Month	Mean Temperature °C		Mean Total Rainfall (mm)	Mean Number of Rain Days
	Daily Minimum	Daily Maximum		
Jan	13.6	18.6	23.4	5.6
Feb	13.9	18.6	48.0	8.9
Mar	16.5	21.3	66.9	10.1
Apr	20.2	24.9	161.5	11.1
May	23.9	28.7	316.7	14.9
Jun	25.9	30.3	376.0	19.2

World Weather Information Service - Hong Kong - Microsoft Internet Explorer

World Weather Information Service

Hong Kong, China

Hong Kong Observatory

Weather Information for Hong Kong

Tourism Information: [Hong Kong Tourism Board](#)

Weather Forecast
Issued at 12:10 (Local time) 26 Jun 2006

Date	Temperature °C		Weather
	Minimum	Maximum	
27 Jun (Tue)	28	32	Fine
28 Jun (Wed)	27	31	Showers
29 Jun (Thu)	27	30	Showers
30 Jun (Fri)	27	30	Showers
01 Jul (Sat)	27	31	Showers
02 Jul (Sun)	28	31	Showers
03 Jul (Mon)	28	32	Showers

>> [Click here for temperatures in °F](#)

Climatological Information

Month	Mean Temperature °C		Mean Total Rainfall (mm)	Mean Number of Rain Days
	Daily Minimum	Daily Maximum		
Jan	13.6	18.6	23.4	5.6
Feb	13.9	18.6	48.0	8.9
Mar	16.5	21.3	66.9	10.1
Apr	20.2	24.9	161.5	11.1
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Click to view the photos of the city

World Weather Information Service - Hong Kong - Microsoft Internet Explorer

World Weather Information Service

Hong Kong, China

Hong Kong Observatory

Weather Information for Hong Kong

Tourism Information: [Hong Kong Tourism Board](#)

Weather Forecast
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>> [Click here for temperatures in °F](#)

Climatological Information

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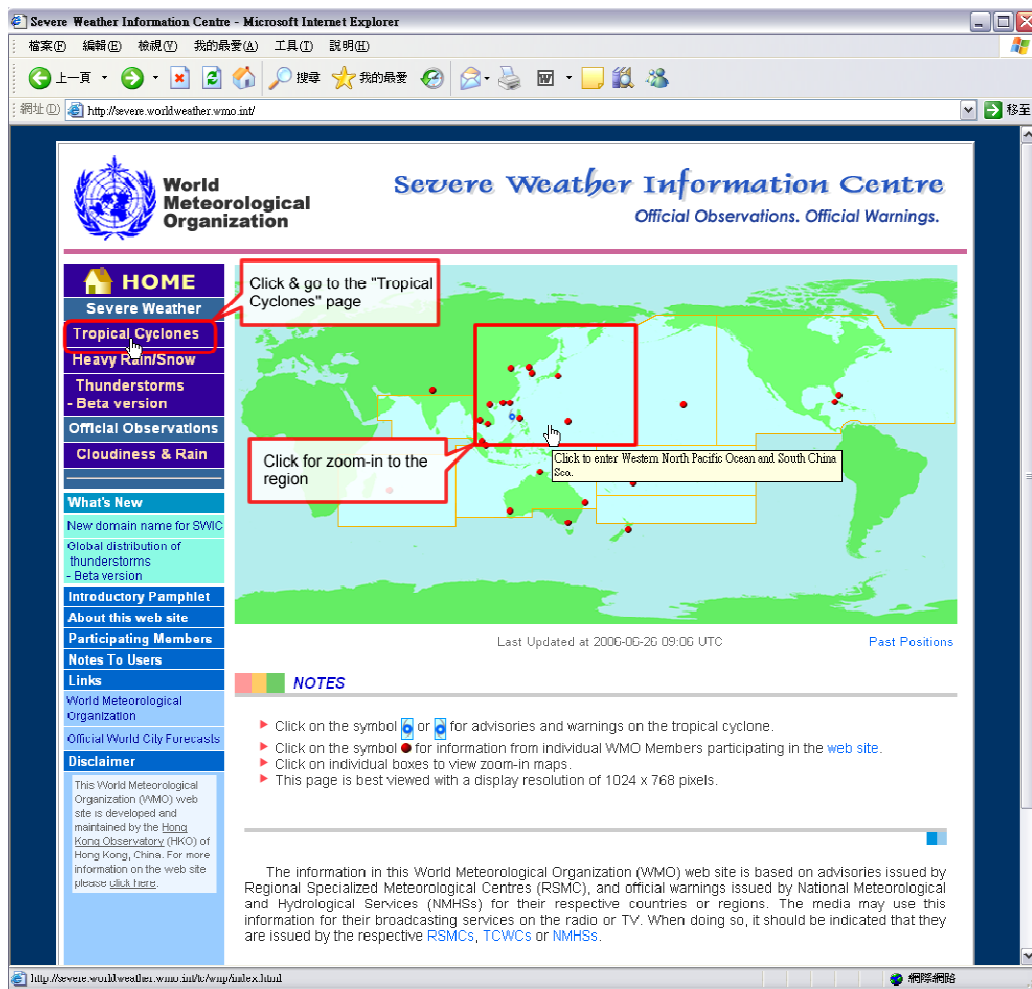
Click to view the location map of the city

3. SWIC

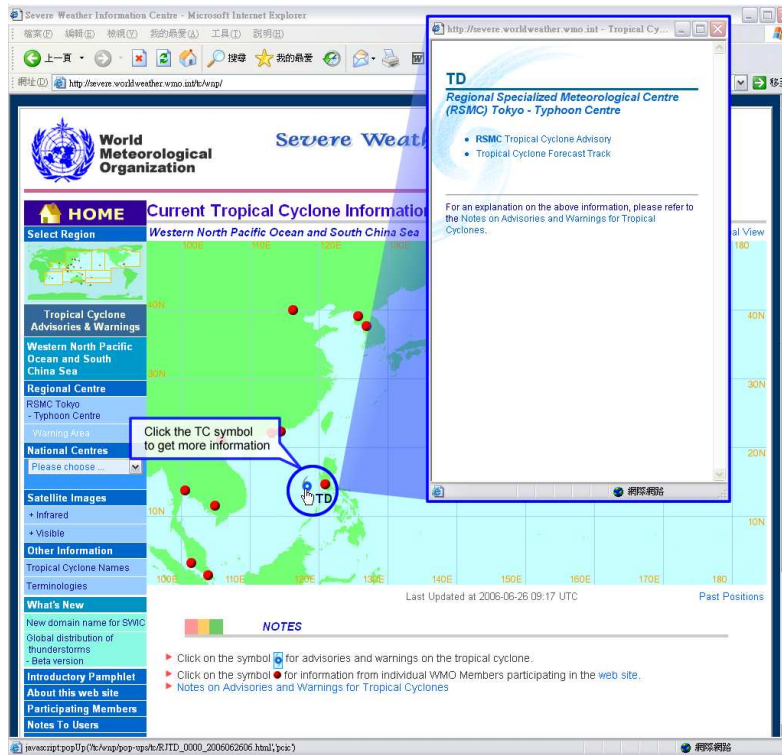
An overview of tropical cyclone warnings and observations of severe weather can be found in SWIC. In the case of tropical cyclone (TC) warnings, the latest cyclone locations plotted on a world map can be visualized at a glance, and further details can be accessed by clicking on the relevant TC symbol for built-in links to forecast tracks and currently active warnings as issued by WMO's Regional Specialized Meteorological Centres and national weather centres in the region. Update frequency differs among various warning centres, but regular polling will be carried out by SWIC to ensure that the latest warning information is made available for timely retrieval and display.

(a) Tropical cyclone warnings

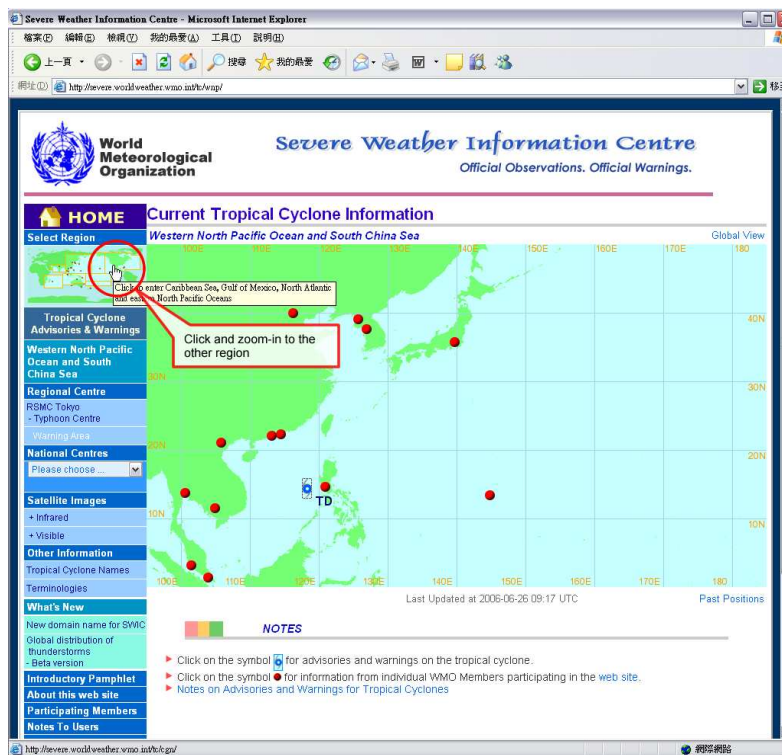
Go to the Tropical Cyclones page using the menu bar on the left-hand side menu. Click on the region to zoom-in for more details:



Click on the TC symbol to obtain more information on the TC:

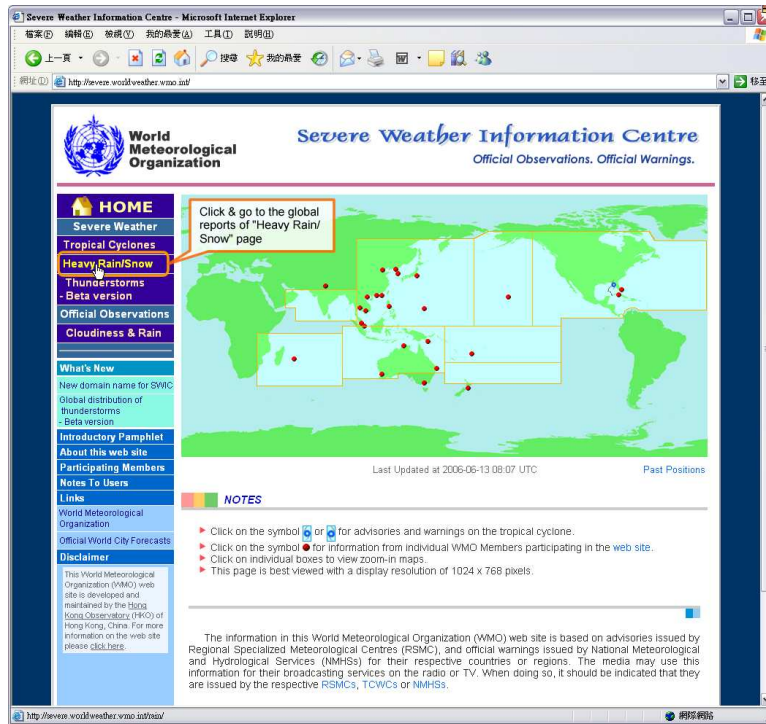


Click on the map on the menu bar on the left-hand side for zoom-in to other regions:

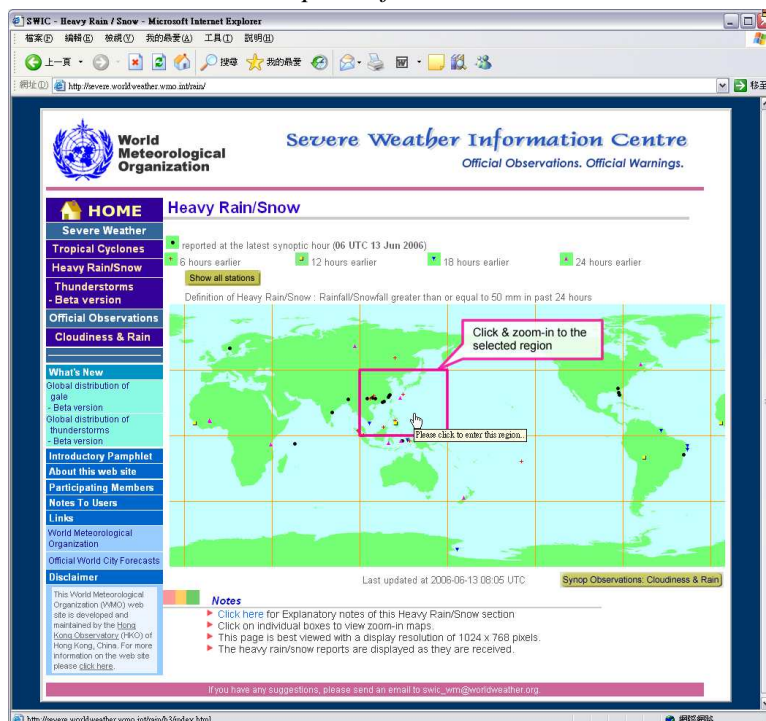


(b) Observations of significant weather

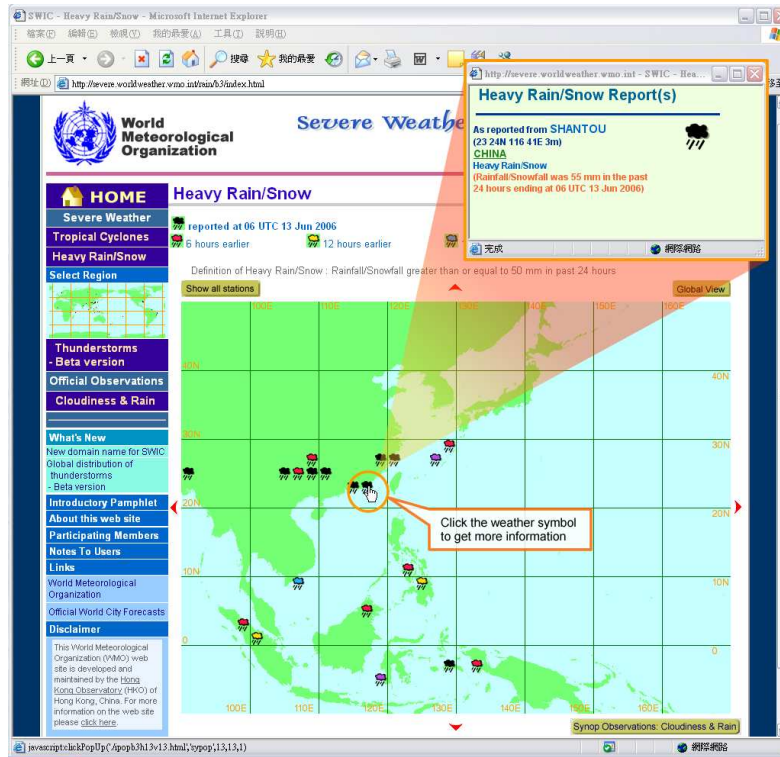
To access global reports of significant weather, e.g. heavy rain and snow, in SWIC, click on the menu bar on the left-hand side to select:



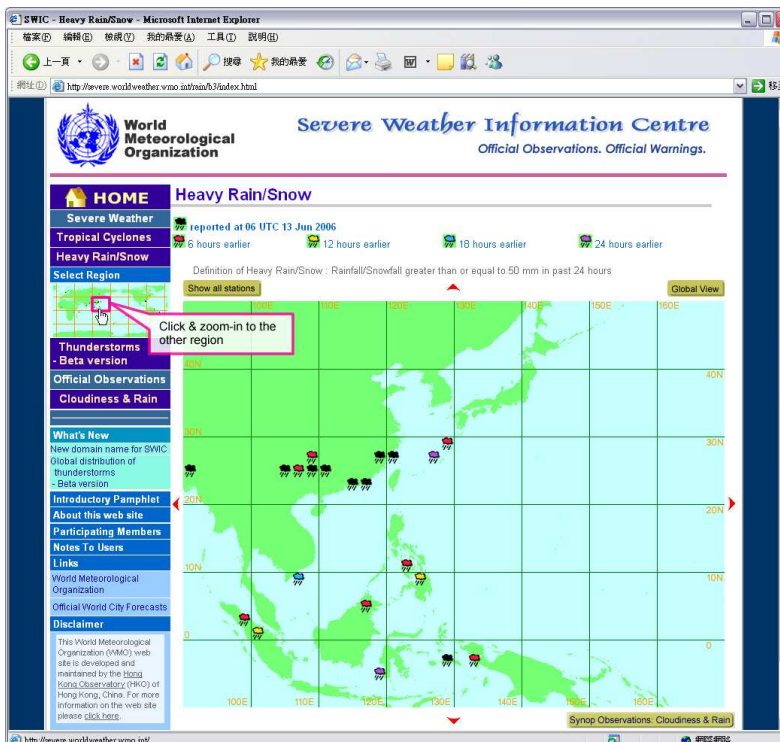
Click on the region to have the zoom-in options for more details:



Click on the weather symbol to get more information:



Click on the map on the menu bar on the left-hand side for zoom-in to other regions:



As observations and warnings of severe weather phenomena invariably involve a certain degree of analysis and forecast judgment, the information given for the same weather system by various warning centres could be different. For example, the intensity and track forecasts issued by different warning centres for the same TC are often not the same which, to a certain extent, also reflects the forecast uncertainties involved. **Therefore, it is extremely important for areas under threat to always refer to the latest warnings issued by their own national weather service to ensure that relevant preparedness measures applicable for the local communities are closely followed for optimal disaster mitigation purposes.**

(c) Other special features

Links to national weather services can be found at <http://severe.worldweather.wmo.int/nmhss.html>.

4. Future development

It is envisaged that both WWIS and SWIC will continue to expand in terms of global coverage and information content, with more observations, forecasts and warnings to be added in an incremental development process. An updated user guide incorporating the latest information on the use of the two web sites can be readily retrieved from the WMO PWS web site <http://www.wmo.int/web/aom/pwsp/index.html>, as well as from links in WWIS and SWIC.

For general comments or suggestions regarding the two web sites, please contact:

Public Weather Services Division

World Meteorological Organisation
7 bis, avenue de la Paix
Case Postale No 2300
CH-1211 Genève 2
Switzerland
Tel:(+41 22) 730 83 33
Fax: (+41 22) 730 80 21
e-mail: hkootval@wmo.int

For specific problems relating to the operation of the two web sites, you may also contact the webmasters directly following the feedback path given in SWIC and the respective language versions of WWIS.

5. “How to” index

<u>WWIS</u>	pp	<u>SWIC</u>	pp
Zoom in to a certain region for observations	4	Zoom in to a certain region for tropical cyclone warnings	10-11
Zoom in to a certain region for forecasts	5	View detailed information on specific tropical cyclone	11
View of reports of cloudiness and rain	3-4	Zoom in to a certain region for severe weather like heavy rain/snow	12-13
View world cities forecasts	5-6	View detailed information on specific weather events	13
View world cities climate	7	Link to national weather services	14
View world cities background information	8-9	Provide feedback	16
Change language	2		
Locate icon definitions	5		
Link to national weather services	8		
Provide feedback	16		