



Weird and Wonderful

PHENOMENA





An imprint of The Energy and Resources Institute

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First published in 2011 by
The Energy and Resources Institute
TERI Press
Darbari Seth Block, IHC Complex, Lodhi Road,
New Delhi 110 003, India
Tel. 2468 2100/4150 4900, Fax: 2468 2144/2468 2145
India +91 ■ Delhi (0)11
Email: teripress@teri.res.in ■ Website: <http://bookstore.teriin.org>

ISBN 978-81-7993-255-1

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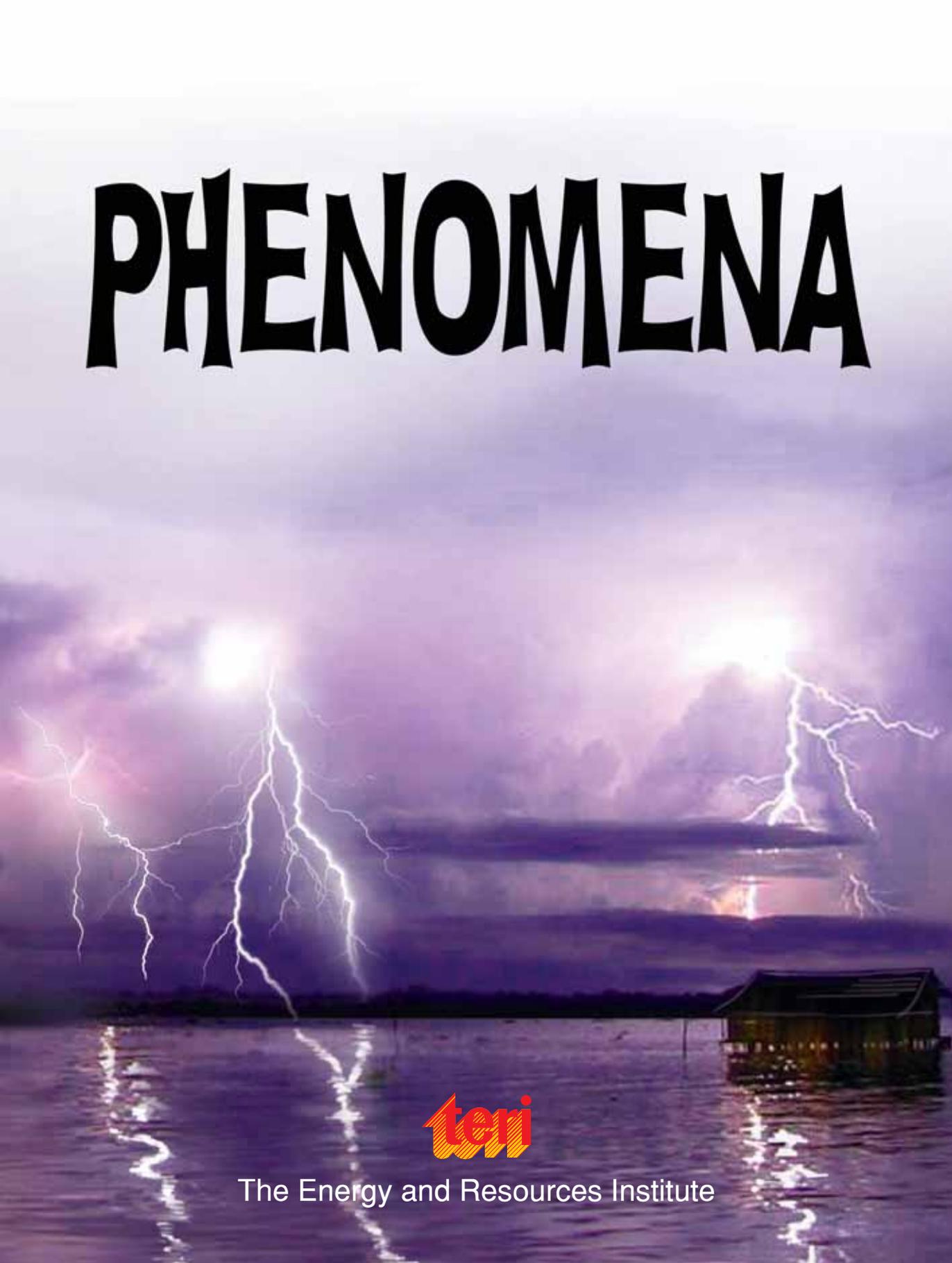
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Printed and bound in India

This book is printed on recycled paper.

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The Energy and Resources Institute

A note from Dr R K Pachauri

'Quirky' is possibly the word farthest from our minds when we think of nature. But it is a fact that underneath the beauty lies a side of nature that is completely out of the ordinary. Not many of us are aware of this facet, but once it is introduced to us, we cannot help but be amazed.

This series focuses on the most remarkable, yet little-known wonders of the natural world. From the tiniest to the world's biggest and heaviest flower; a fruit that looks like a hand; a desert full of salt; carpenter bees and tailor birds; from smoking hills to ringing rocks—these are indeed the most peculiar among animals, fruits, flowers, and natural phenomena.

By introducing children to the oddest and strangest, these books are sure to imbibe in them an inquisitiveness to learn more about nature. At a time and age when our future generations are at risk of getting more and more cut off from the world around them, this series will rekindle their interest by focusing on the unusual. I hope these pages will also instil in young minds a sense of responsibility to care for the environment that has so much surprise in store.



R K Pachauri
Director-General, TERI
Chairman, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

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What the devil!

Dust devils

These devils could well be vacuum **cleaners** or even fast-spinning tops. They move **fast and suck** up dust or anything else that **comes in their way**. Dust devils are small but fast-moving swirls of wind. These **twisted air curls** are usually formed on a dry and hot afternoon. **They start** from the **warm** ground, pick up sand and dust, and **move upwards**. These devils then turn themselves around, and as they **spin faster**, they move forward.



Most dust devils are small and weak, but some can grow as wide as ten school buses and even lift a bus with their power. If you have missed seeing them on Earth you have a good chance of spotting one on planet Mars!

Sometimes, a dust devil can be ten metres high.



Australians call dust devils 'whirly whirly', and in south-western United States, they are called 'dancing devils'.





Moody blows

Chinook winds

If people can change their minds, so can winds. There are winds that bring rain to one side of a mountain but go on to dry up the other side completely! Chinooks are wet winter winds from the Pacific Ocean.



Chinook winds can give people a thumping 'chinook headache'.

Chinook winds rise from the ocean and move towards the western coast of the United States and Canada.

They then hit the Rocky Mountains and come down as rain. This leaves them dry and warm. As they come down the other side of the mountain, which is snowy, they suck up water from trees and plants and kill them.

In less than an hour, Chinooks can melt snow completely and take people from 'brrr' to 'phew'!

Chinook is an American-Indian word for 'snow-eater'. 





Now you see it, now you don't Mirage

If you like surprises, then drive down a long road on a hot summer day. You might see a pool of water in the distance. When you drive up to it, the water will vanish. Travellers in deserts often see palm trees and patches of water. No matter how much they move towards it, they can never reach it. Such a puzzling view is called a 'mirage'.



Weird and Wonderful : Phenomena



Publisher : TERI Press

ISBN : 9788179932551

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Type the URL : <http://www.kopykitab.com/product/8476>



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