Catatumbo Lightning

Source: TOI

Catatumbo lightning is a natural phenomenon that occurs over the **Catatumbo River** in **Venezuela**, where **lightning strikes** almost continuously.

- The strikes occur for up to **160 nights in a year**, with an average of **28 lightning strikes per minute** at its peak.
- This phenomenon primarily happens at the **mouth of the Catatumbo River**, where it meets **Lake Maracaibo,** the **largest lake** in **Latin America**. It is also among the oldest water bodies on the planet.
- Warm, moist air from the **Caribbean Sea** is pushed towards the **Andes mountains**, where it collides with cooler air descending from the peaks.
- This collision creates a **perfect storm of sorts,** as the **warmer air** is forced to rise rapidly by the shape of the **local landscape.**
- It cools and condenses, forming towering **cumulonimbus clouds.** The combination of **strong winds** and **temperature differentials** generates electrical charges within these clouds.
- The cumulonimbus clouds **sometimes reach heights of more than 5 km** loaded up on static electricity. When the electrical potential within the clouds becomes too great, it **discharges in the form of lightning.**

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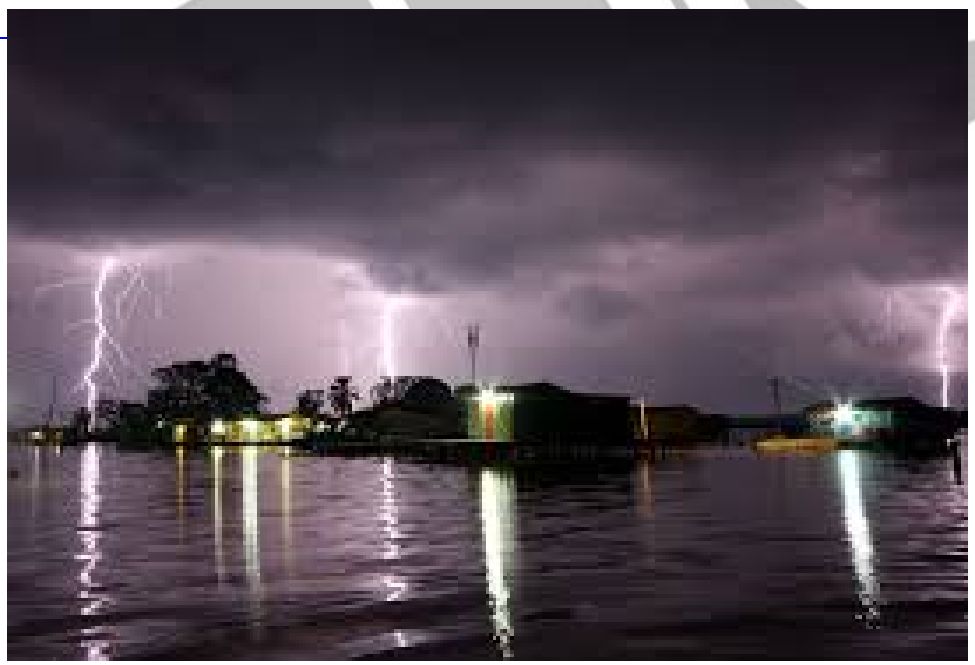

Read more: Report on Lightning Strikes