

Rain, snow, sleet, winds belt U.S.

by UPI

NEW YORK -- Precipitation-packed winter weather attacked both coasts Thursday and gusty winds in New York were blamed for the death of a construction worker. New York City officials said the worker fell 12 stories Wednesday when the scaffold platform beneath him collapsed, apparently because of high winds, The New York Times reported Thursday. City officials said another worker jumped to safety and a third fell onto a ledge and was hospitalized in serious condition. The Buffalo, N.Y., area was buffeted by 70-mph wind gusts that zapped electricity for roughly 70,000 customers, The Buffalo News reported. The winds created a tidal-wave-like conditions on Lake Erie, as huge ice chunks clogged the Niagara River and raised concerns about rivers, creeks and streams flooding later. An avalanche shut down part of Interstate 90 near Seattle, snarling traffic but not injuring anyone, CNN reported. Elsewhere, blanketing snow, thunderstorms and tornadoes were predicted to accompany a storm system moving from the southern Plains to the Midwest, AccuWeather.com reported, prompting winter storm warnings and watches along its path. In the south, rain and thunderstorms along the Gulf Coast have the potential of producing dangerous tornadoes, hail, damaging winds and blinding downpours, forecasters said. p>

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