

Title: Request to send an enquiry committee to study the damages/loss caused by the severe cyclone in the coastal areas of the Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal.

SHRI PRABHAT SAMANTRAY (KENDRAPARA): Sir, today the coastal areas of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal have experienced a severe cyclone and at the moment the velocity of the cyclone is between 220 and 240 kilometres. Before coming to the House, I checked up with the Director-General of the Meteorological Department. They have stated that as per the record of the Meteorological Department, a cyclone with such a severe velocity has never hit any part of the country. They are terming it as 'super-cyclone'. I could not have any contact with Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara and Bhadrak districts. Since eight o'clock in the morning, this area is cut off from the rest of the world. I beg to submit to this House and to the Government, through you, to send a committee of the House to have a look at the area, make an on-the-spot study and report to the House for taking remedial measures.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): Sir, at 10.30 in the morning, I heard a T.V. news on the special bulletin that is being issued, that the cyclone is likely to come at any time. Probably a cyclone with such intensity has never been experienced before in this country. Large parts of South Bengal, Orissa and, maybe, Andhra also are likely to be affected. It is apprehended that the whole town of Puri will be under the severest risk of total damage. The whole of the Sagar dweep, one of the beautiful places in our country in the Sunderbans area, will probably be wiped out. We do not know, but that is the anxiety. Therefore, I am requesting the Central Government to keep in closest touch with the State Governments in these areas so that all possible steps can be taken. This will be a human tragedy, a national tragedy and, I am sure, the Government, the House and everybody will take it up with such seriousness that not a moment may be lost in trying to find out what has happened or is going to happen because warning has been given at least till 3 o'clock in the morning.

AN HON. MEMBER: Whole night.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Till three o'clock in the morning, I was listening to the half-an-hour bulletin that was being issued. A serious apprehension is there. Therefore, I am sure, the Government will take it up as the highest priority so that no time is lost.

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU (SRIKAKULAM) Mr. Speaker, Sir, serious warning is being given by the Meteorological Department of India that it may cross the coastal areas at any time today with a velocity of 220 to 250 kilometres. So, I am requesting through you, Sir, to the Government to keep one Minister in touch with the State Governments and also to advise the Armed Forces to meet any eventuality, if it arises. That is my humble submission to the Union Government through you, Sir.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ): Sir, yesterday, while the debate was on in the House, I got a news from the Meteorological Department and also heard an announcement on Doordarshan that a severest kind of cyclone is likely to cause very devastating effect in West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. Further, the news bulletin said that the tidal line has changed its course and is now heading towards Gangasagar in South 24-Parganas district. I think the report that has come shows that it is a cyclone of the highest magnitude that has ever come before and the North 24-Parganas, South 24-Parganas, Hooghly, Howrah and the entire city of Calcutta are under its threat.

The Government of West Bengal has already alerted the Army yesterday. I think the Government of India, leaving aside all other business, should immediately, today, get in touch with all the resources at their command technical and otherwise - with the three State Governments, the Chief Ministers...

MR. SPEAKER : Including the House business also?

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSHI : Sir, immediately somebody from the Government should take care of this matter on behalf of the Cabinet without wasting a single minute of time. Sir, by the time we rise for the day, I think, the devastation will start. Therefore, this is such an important matter that the entire House should concentrate on this issue without wasting any moment.

Furthermore, I am told that after the withdrawal of the strike by the truck operators, even now some supply network on important National Highways is blocked. Some other measure in this regard is required. Otherwise, I am afraid, if something goes wrong, supplies could be affected from this evening.

Thank you.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): Mr. Speaker, Sir, senior Members of the House have expressed, naturally expressed, deep concern about these happenings and these developments. I can only assure the House that the Government shares their concern and would be in constant touch with the State Government to ensure that these calamities are faced. Whatever help and cooperation is needed would always be available.