

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 13.12.2016 of **Thiru O. Panneerselvam**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

"As you are aware on 12.12.2016, a severe cyclonic storm 'Vardah' hit the northern Districts of Tamil Nadu namely, Chennai, Thiruvallur and Kancheepuram leaving in its wake a trail of destruction and causing further damages in the Districts of Vellore, Thiruvannamalai and Dharmapuri.

Immediately on receipt of information from the Indian Meteorological Department on 10.12.2016, that a severe cyclonic storm had formed in the Bay of Bengal and was forecast to cross the north Tamil Nadu coast on 12.12.2016, the Government of Tamil Nadu swung into action to take all necessary precautionary measures. I deputed high level teams comprising Ministers and Senior I.A.S. Officers to the Districts to lead and monitor the preventive, rescue and relief operations. Teams of officials of Revenue, Police, Fire and Rescue Services, State Disaster Response Force, Public Works Department, Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation Limited (TANGEDCO), Rural Development, Municipal Administration and Water Supply and all local bodies were mobilised and deployed to take up necessary interventions. The services of the National Disaster Response Force, Army, Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard were also requisitioned and these personnel were prepositioned to undertake necessary rescue and relief work. I thank you for your prompt response and support in speedily despatching the Central Forces.

More than 15,000 persons from identified vulnerable and low lying areas were evacuated to 104 relief camps and provided with food, water, medical services and other essential services.

'Vardah', the severe cyclonic storm had a land fall near Chennai Port in the heart of the city, causing unprecedented damage to infrastructure and properties. At the time of land fall, Chennai city and the Districts of Thiruvallur and Kancheepuram witnessed very heavy rain fall and very strong winds with a velocity of 130-140 kms per hour. 16 lives have been lost due to the cyclone. The cyclone uprooted more than 12,000 trees disrupting traffic in the entire city and its suburbs. It caused extensive damage to road infrastructure including attendant road furniture. Due to the extensive damage caused to transmission lines, sub-stations, transformers and distribution lines, power supply was cut off in almost the entire city of Chennai as well as large parts of Kancheepuram and Thiruvallur Districts. More than 10,000 electric poles have been mangled and more than 800 transformers damaged. The immediate priority is restoration of electricity supply. Human resources and material have been mobilized from other parts of the State and deployed on a war footing to restore electricity supply.

Extensive damage has been caused to huts, drinking water infrastructure and sewerage facilities. A detailed exercise to assess the damages and the requirement of funds for immediate relief and restoration is being carried out. Since the damage to various infrastructure assets and properties has been extensive, the detailed assessment is expected to take 2 or 3 days. State Government will present the detailed Memorandum on the extensive damages suffered due to the cyclonic storm Vardah in the next few days.

In the meantime, in view of the urgency, I request you to kindly depute a team from the Government of India to study the extensive damages caused by the cyclonic storm. Further, as a number of relief, rehabilitation and immediate reconstruction measures have to be undertaken by the Government of Tamil Nadu along with the urban and rural local bodies in the area affected by the cyclone, which is beyond the funds available in the State Disaster Response Fund, I request you to urgently sanction the release of an "on account" payment of Rs.1000 crores from the National Disaster Response Fund to the Government of Tamil Nadu to enable immediate relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction measures to proceed expeditiously."

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