

SRI LANKA/INDIA - CYCLONE 04 B

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The Disaster

A cyclone struck (04B) the north eastern coast of Sri Lanka on Tuesday, affecting more than 50,000 families, according to meteorological department officials. The cyclone, with wind speeds of up to 150 km per hour (95 miles per hour), struck between the towns of Trincommalee and Mullaittivu, and thereafter headed towards Mannar on the west coast.

State radio said details of the people affected were sketchy, due to poor communications in some areas. The cyclone is now expected to lash the coast of India's southern Tamil Nadu state on Wednesday: 'a very severe cyclone is currently lying centred about 200 km (125 miles) east/south-east of Pamban,' a spokesman at the weather office in Madras told Reuters on Tuesday, 'It is likely to move in a west north-westerly direction and cross the coast between Nagapattinam and Tuticorin by tomorrow morning.'

The storm was expected to be accompanied by gales of between 140-160 km (88-100 miles) an hour and would generate a tidal surge of 2-3 metres above normal high tide level during the time of landfall.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Sri Lanka Red Cross is gathering more information about the impact of the cyclone. The Red Cross has been requested by the Ministry of Social Services to provide shelter for the affected population. The Sri Lanka Red Cross reports that at least two districts are flooded with up to 100,000 houses damaged. The Federation is in contact with the ICRC and will coordinate closely should the Sri Lanka Red Cross request international assistance.

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