

## Buddhadeb demands more funds for cyclone relief

West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee Saturday met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Home Minister P. Chidambaram here and requested for more funds for relief operations after Cyclone Aila devastated parts of the state last month.

'The government has assured us all help in carrying out relief operations in the state. They have already started giving us some funds and we are expecting more funds,' Bhattacharjee told reporters.

The state had sought a relief package of Rs.10 billion to carry out relief operations after the May 25 cyclone that left 138 people dead.

Bhattacharjee also submitted a note, proposing steps to prevent such disasters.

'There is a need to construct semi-permanent and permanent river embankments to prevent such problems. However, the problem is how to construct a permanent embankment which can withstand this sort of cyclone in particular,' he said.

'I have proposed the centre to involve international agencies for consultation, funding and construction of these embankments, especially in the mangrove delta of Sundarbans. With the global warming and cyclonic storms, Sundarbans is really threatened and the sea level is rising in the area,' he said.

'When a storm occurs, the river water breaks into villages compelling thousands to leave their houses. The problem needs to be tackled,' he added.

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