

MASULIPATAM CYCLONE—OCTOBER, 1949.

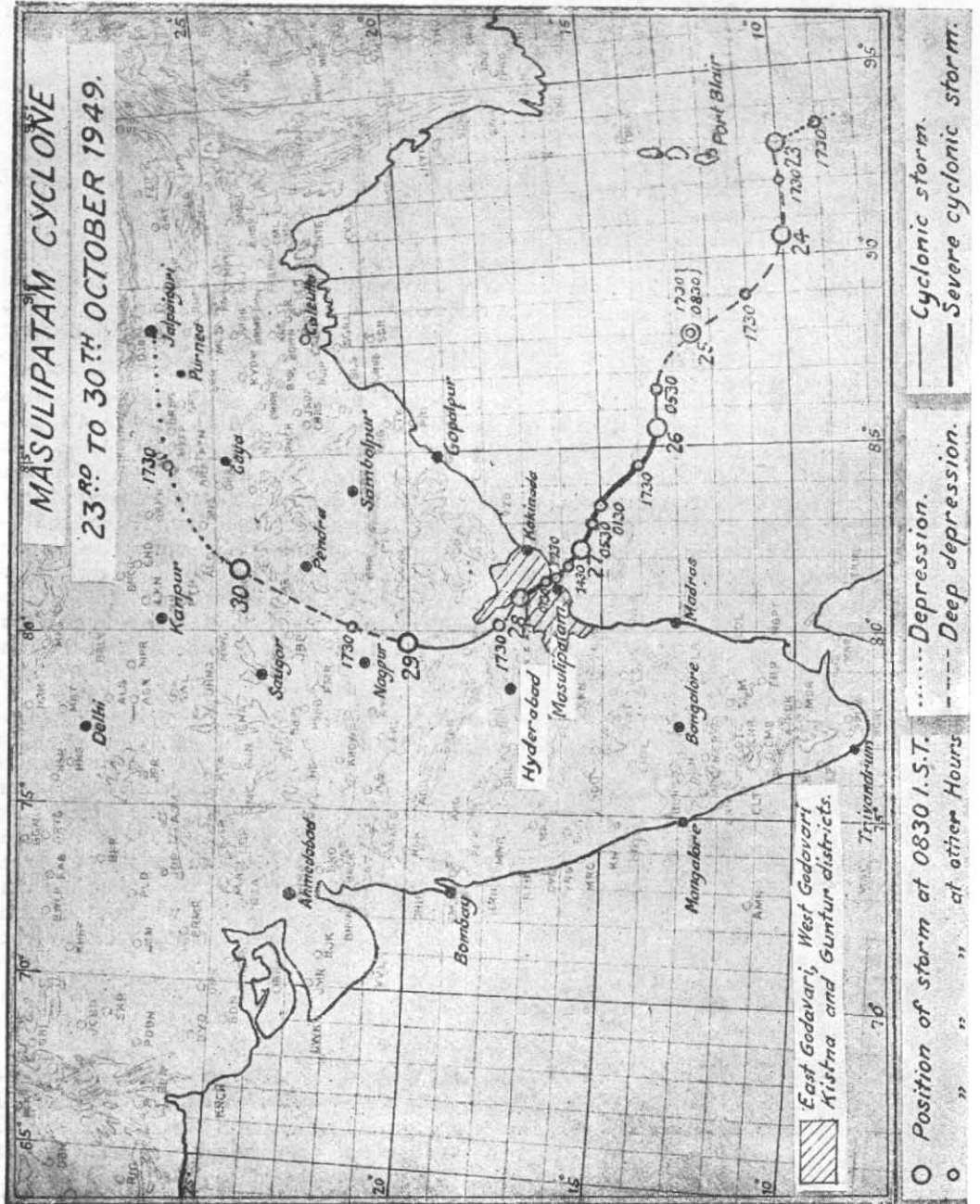
A severe cyclone from the Bay of Bengal struck the Andhra Coast near Masulipatam in the early hours of 28th October, 1949 and caused widespread havoc in the East Godavari, West Godavari, Kistna and Guntur districts. There was a complete breakdown of all communication channels in these districts on the 27th night. About 800 human lives perished and thousands were rendered homeless as a result of this severe cyclone which was accompanied with a tidal wave. Severe damage to about 3 lakhs of houses and about a million acres of crops added to the devastation caused by this cyclone.

2. The cyclone originated as a depression in the Andaman Sea which was centred about 200 miles SSE of Port Blair on the evening of 22nd October, 1949. The depression moved northwestwards and became deep within the next 24 hours. The deep depression continued to move northward and by the morning of the 26th intensified into a cyclonic storm which was centred about 350 miles southeast of Masulipatam. On receipt of observations from ships about 2 to 3 hundred miles from the cyclonic centre reporting 45-50 knots wind, heavy rain squalls and very high seas, the cyclone was declared to be severe on the same morning (26th). On the 27th morning, it was centred about 100 miles east-southeast of Masulipatam. It continued to move slowly NW and struck the Andhra Coast just north of Masulipatam at about 0130 hours I. S. T. of 28th. A map showing the track of the cyclone is printed on the next page.

3. The severity of the storm can be judged from the lowest pressure (976.3 mbs.) recorded by Masulipatam, which was about 30 mbs. below its normal value. An important feature of the cyclone was a huge storm wave caused by the high on-shore winds which swept the coastal parts of East and West Godavari districts. Masulipatam and Kakinada experienced very high winds reaching up to about 85 miles per hour. The tidal wave rose to a height of 10 to 15 feet and inundated the coastal area to a distance of 5 to 10 miles. The heavy downpour of rain caused by the severe cyclone resulted in the flooding of rivers and irrigation canals. It is noteworthy that Masulipatam Observatory recorded exceptional heavy rainfall of 20" within a period of about 12 hours ending at 8 a. m. of the 28th. Extracts from the report received from Port Officer, Kakinada is reproduced below:—

" We experienced a very high tide which rose to 10 feet. Until 0300 hours on the 28th we had continuous violent squalls and it is estimated the force reached nearly 100 mph "

4. Warnings in connection with this cyclone were issued by the Madras Meteorological Office sufficiently in advance. Great danger signals were hoisted at the ports of Masulipatam and Kakinada about 24 hours prior to the cyclone striking the coast. Warnings against heavy rain and gales in Andhradesa were issued well in time to various officials including the Collectors of each of the Districts affected. Commencing from the afternoon of the 25th, five special bulletins were issued to the All India Radio Stations at Vijayawada and Madras for broadcast. The A. I. R. Vijayawada received numerous letters of appreciation about the timeliness and usefulness of the special warnings and they made a special broadcast acknowledging the appreciation letters.



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5. A full technical study of this cyclone is being undertaken in the Meteorological Office at Madras.