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CLASS - IX

ENGLISH

MOMENTS

CHAPTER - 3

WEATHERING THE STORM IN ERSAMA

Part – 1

Prashant and the Storm's Fury

Nipa Das



Harsh Mander

(17 April 1955) is an Indian author, columnist, researcher, teacher, and social activist.

"Weathering the Storm in Ersama" recounts the inspiring true story of Prashant, a courageous teenager who rises to the challenge of surviving a devastating cyclone.

Inspiring : প্রেৰণা মূলক

Devastating cyclone : বিধস্তকাৰি ঘূৰ্ণী বতাহ

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Sour... Cyclone–1999

THE UTKAL AGE

BHUBANESWAR TUESDAY 2 NOVEMBER 1999

APOCALYPS...

1.6 crore affected, 50 lakh rendered homeless

1,500 ... pressed ... serio... arou...

By Our Correspondent

Bhubaneswar, Nov. 1: Orissa is yet to convalesce from the torrents of destruction wrought by the cyclonic storm which struck its coast on Thursday night and unleashed its fury throughout Friday. The destruction that the cyclone has left in its trail has completely paralysed normal life in a wide radius of the state — from Puri to Balasore.

The state government is yet to ascertain the magnitude of the losses including loss of human lives, cattle-heads and other livestock. Thousands are in peril and no exact number may have perished, admit top ministers and officials in the state. The entire paddy crop along the coast has been washed out.

According to state revenue minister Jagannath Patnaik, 10 districts have been severely affected and devastated. Nearly 1.6 crore people have been affected and 50 lakh people rendered homeless. Prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has already declared the catastrophe as a national calamity. The Centre has sanctioned Rs 100 crore from the National Calamity Relief Fund and another Rs 200 crore has been sanctioned as advanced plan assistance.

Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Puri, Paradip, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Rajnagar and the adjoining villages have borne the brunt of the devastation. It looks as if a medieval king has just plundered the Orissa coast. There is no news yet from Paradip where the gale wind struck at a velocity of 260 km/hr. There are some unconfirmed reports that a six metre high tidal wave surged, inundating low-lying areas adjoining the Paradip coast. The government still cannot confirm as to how far the tidal wave moved. Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur and Paradip still remain cut off from the state capital. Both Bhubaneswar and Cuttack were also struck by gale wind at a velocity of more than 100 km/hr.

According to Mr Patnaik, this is the worst-ever natural calamity in independent India. The state government on Monday pressed into service six choppers for air-dropping food packets to the marooned people. The state government has asked appropriate authorities to remove blockades and restore water and electricity supply on a priority basis. The revenue minister told *The Asian Age* that health teams "have already been moved and steps taken to provide safe drinking water to the affected people." To strengthen relief work, commissioner rank officials have been deployed in the affected districts to supervise the relief work. The revenue minister further added, "If the Centre does not help the state in a big way, the state cannot cope with the situation."

The state has requested Rs 500-crore relief as immediate assistance from the Centre.

Telecommunication links with the outside world remained completely cut off in the immediate aftermath of the cyclone. Links have, however, been partially restored between Bhubaneswar-Delhi and Bhubaneswar-Calcutta on Monday. Air service to Bhubaneswar was also restored on Monday.

Apart from the central assistance, neighbouring states are also rendering assistance to the state government. Chief minister Chandrababu Naidu has ordered a special team of Andhra Pradesh IAS officers to visit the cyclone-affected areas of Orissa. Apart from relief, Mr Naidu has also asked the Andhra Pradesh power sector officials to help Orissa in restoring supply expeditiously.

The Tamil Nadu and Bihar governments have also announced special assistance for Orissa to help the cyclone-affected people.

Epidemic threat looms large in city

By Our Correspondent

Bhubaneswar, Nov. 1: Apprehension of an epidemic outbreak in the city after the devastating cyclone ravaged the city seems to loom large. With acute shortage of drinking and potable water, many people have been found consuming water from places where the water source remains to be either contaminated or unconfirmed.

According to the city doctors, outbreak of an epidemic cannot be ruled out in such a situation as panic-stricken people usually consume water without confirming the source and boiling it. This, along with water communication at various places, especially in the slum areas of the city, is feared to spread cases of diarrhoea, gastroenteritis and cholera.

The entire city has been without water for four consecutive days following the breakdown of electric supply. People whose houses have wells and tube wells have

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Mangled remains of hoardings at Master Canteen Square in the city. A photograph by Ashok Panda

Relief convoys looted on highway

By Our Correspondent

Bhubaneswar, Nov. 1: Looting of the relief convoys has begun in the outskirts of the city from Sunday morning.

Several trucks carrying food commodities and other relief assistance from Andhra Pradesh were looted on Sunday by angry villagers between Khurda and Bhubaneswar. This had an impact on the flow of relief by road as several trucks were compelled to wait in the roadside dhabas before Khurda rather than venturing towards Bhubaneswar. Large convoys of trucks carrying goods were seen along the strife torn Khurda to Balugaon on Sunday.

In the capital city, there were several instances of irate people beating up shop-owners for keeping their shutters down. There were instances of looting of several shops in the capital. In VSS Nagar, even the mob stabbed a shop-owner for refusing to open his shop.

Officials were that if the government would not be able to provide assistance in the affected people in the next few days, rioting for food cannot be ruled out. Meanwhile, as supply lines have remained cut off, prices of essential commodities have registered

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Rumours fly thick and fast

By Our Correspondent

Bhubaneswar, Nov. 1: Following the cyclone that hit the city, the rumours that are doing the rounds:

1. DEATH TOLL CROSSES ONE LAKH: Speculation is that this cyclone has caused more than a

Capital mauled beyond recognition

Calamity of rarest severity, says Sonia

By Our Correspondent

Bhubaneswar, Nov. 1: It was the worst expression of Nature's wrath which left the city devastated, paralysed and almost dead. The cyclone which battered the Orissa Coast on Friday was an experience which many would like to forget, and a few would also remember to narrate to their grandchildren.

Despite the earlier forecasts and government warnings, none in Bhubaneswar had apprehended the full impact of the severe cyclone which hit the city on Friday morning and stayed to torment and twist the

BEFORE YOU READ?

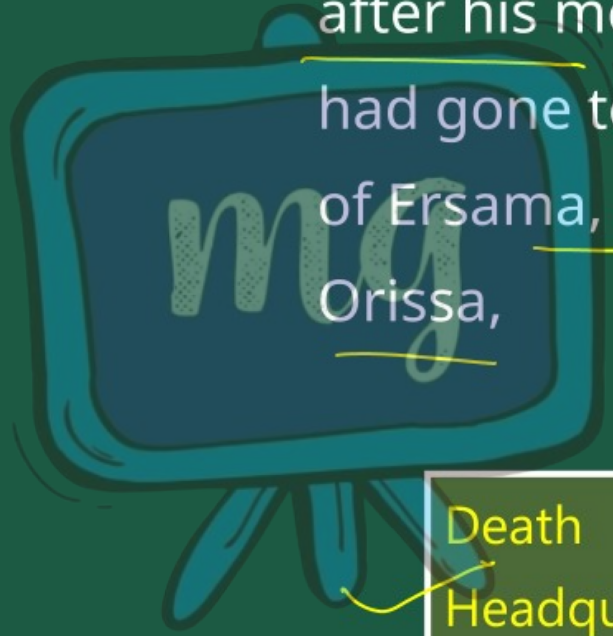
The cyclone that hit Orissa in October 1999 killed thousands of people and devastated hundreds of villages. For two dreadful nights Prashant, a young man, was marooned on the roof of a house. On the third day he decided to go to his village. Did he find his family?

dreadful : ভয়ংকৰ
marooned : আৰদ্ধ, বিছিন্ন
devastated : বিধ্বস্থ
cyclone : ঘূৰ্ণী বতাহ

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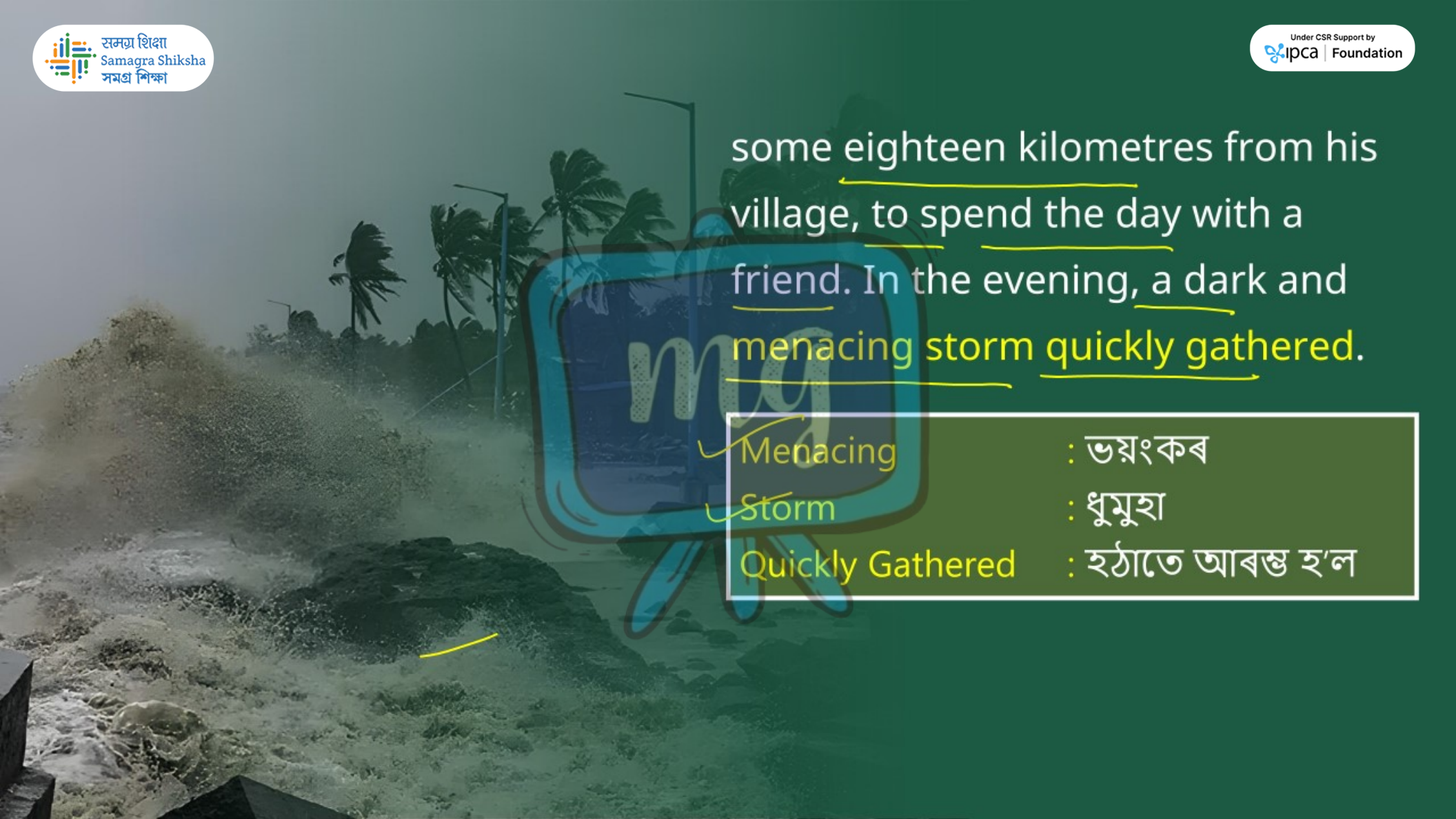
On 27 October 1999, seven years after his mother's death, Prashant had gone to the block headquarters of Ersama, a small town in coastal Orissa,



Death	:	মৃত্যু
Headquarters	:	মুখ্য কার্যালয়
Coastal	:	উপকূলীয়

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some eighteen kilometres from his village, to spend the day with a friend. In the evening, a dark and menacing storm quickly gathered.

Menacing	: ভয়ংকৰ
Storm	: ধুমুহা
Quickly Gathered	: হঠাতে আৰম্ভ হ'ল

Winds beat against the houses with a speed and fury that Prashant had never witnessed before.

Winds beat against : বতাহ আহি খুন্দিয়াব ধৰিলে

Speed : গতি

Fury : উগ্রতা, ৰুদ্র মূর্ত্তী

Witnessed : দেখিছিল

Heavy and incessant rain filled the darkness, ancient trees were uprooted and crashed to the earth.

Incessant	:	নেৰা নেপেৰা
Darkness	:	আন্ধাৰ
Ancient	:	পুৰণি
Uprooted	:	উভালি পেলোৱা
Crashed	:	চূৰ্ণ-বিচূৰ্ণ হোৱা

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Screams rent the air as people and houses were swiftly washed away. The angry waters swirled into his friend's house, neck deep.

Screams	:	চিঞৰ
Swiftly	:	খৰকৈ
waters Swirled into	:	ঘূৰণীয়াকৈ

পানী সোমাই অহা



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The building was of brick and mortar and was strong enough to survive the devastation of the wind's velocity of 350 km per hour.

Survive	:	বাচি থাকিল
Devastation	:	ধ্বংস, বিধ্বস্থ
Velocity	:	বেগ

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But the cold terror of the family grew with the crashing of trees that had got uprooted and fallen on their house, some time in the middle of the night, damaging its roof and walls.

Terror	:	সন্ত্রাস
Middle	:	মাজ
Damaging	:	ক্ষতি কৰা

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The crazed destruction wrought by the cyclone and the surge of the ocean continued for the next thirty-six hours, although wind speeds had reduced somewhat by the next morning.

Crazed Destruction	:	প্রচণ্ড ধ্বংস
Wrought	:	আনি
Cyclone	:	ঘূর্ণী বতাহ
Although	:	যদিও
Reduced	:	নিম্নগামী
Somewhat	:	কিছু পৰিমাণে

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To escape the waters rising in the house, Prashant and his friend's family had taken refuge on the roof. Prashant will never forget the shock he experienced at his first glimpse

Rising	:	বৃদ্ধি পোৱা
Refuge	:	আশ্রয়স্থল
Experienced	:	অনুভৱ কৰিছিল
Glimpse	:	আভাস

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of the devastation wrought by the super cyclone, in the grey light of the early morning. A raging, deadly, brown sheet of water covered everything as far as the eye could see; only fractured cement houses still stood in a few places.

Raging	:	প্রলয়নকাৰি
Deadly	:	প্রাণঘাতক
Covered	:	আৱৰণ
Fractured	:	ভাঙি যোৱা



Bloated animal carcasses and human corpses floated in every direction. All round even huge old trees had fallen. Two coconut trees had fallen on the roof of their house.

Bloated	:	ফুলি উঠা
Carcasses	:	শৰীৰ
Corpses	:	মৃতদেহ
Floated	:	উপঙি থকা
Direction	:	দিশ

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This was a blessing in disguise, because the tender coconuts from the trees kept the trapped family from starving in the several days that followed.

Blessing in Disguise	:	ছদ্মবেশত আশীর্বাদ
Tender	:	কোমল
Trapped	:	আৱদ্ধ হৈ
Starving	:	ভোক

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For the next two days, Prashant sat huddled with his friend's family in the open on the rooftop. They froze in the cold and incessant rain; the rain water washed away Prashant's tears. The only thought that flashed

Huddled	:	একেলগে থকা
Froze	:	শিহৰিত হোৱা

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through his mind was whether his family had survived the fury of the super cyclone. Was he to be bereaved once again?

Two days later, which seemed to Prashant like two years, the rain ceased

Fury	:	ৰুদ্রমূর্ত্তী
Bereaved	:	শোকসন্তপ্ত
Ceased	:	শেষ/বন্ধ কৰা

and the rain waters slowly began to recede. Prashant was determined to seek out his family without further delay. But the situation was still dangerous,

Recede	:পিছলৈ ঘূৰি যোৱা
Determined	:দৃঢ়
Seek out	:বিচাৰিবলৈ
Delay	:পলম কৰা
Situation	:পৰিস্থিতি
Dangerous	:বিপদজনক

and his friend's family pleaded with Prashant to stay back a little while longer. But Prashant knew he had to go.



Pleaded : অনুৰোধ কৰা, কাকুতি কৰা

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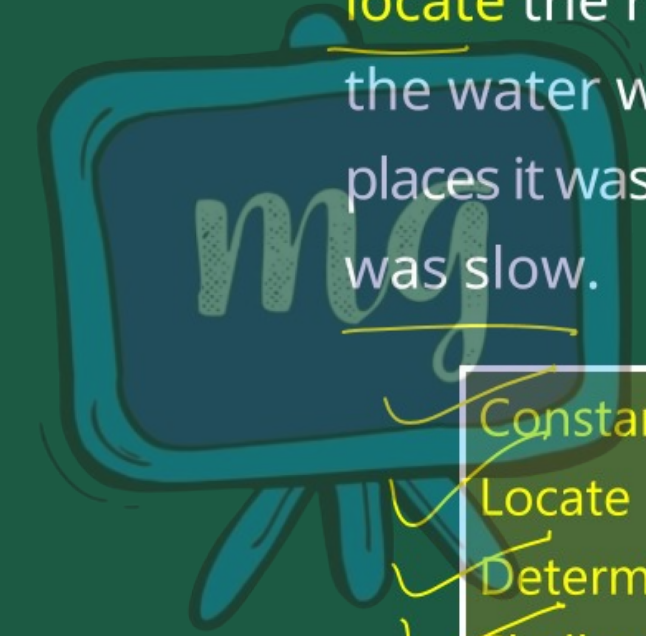
He equipped himself with a long, sturdy stick, and then started on his eighteen-kilometer expedition back to his village through the swollen flood waters. It was a journey he would never forget.

Sturdy	:	শক্তিশালী
Stick	:	লাঠি/কাঠ
Expedition	:	অভিযান
Forget	:	পাহৰা

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He constantly had to use his stick to locate the road, to determine where the water was most shallow. At places it was waist deep, and progress was slow.



Constantly	:	অবিৰত
Locate	:	বিচাৰি উলিওৱা
Determine	:	নিৰ্ণয় কৰা
Shallow	:	তৰাং, বাম
Progress	:	আগবঢ়া

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At several points, he lost the road and had to swim. After some distance, he was relieved to find two friends of his uncle who were also returning to their village. They decided to move ahead together.

Distance	:	দূৰত্ব
Relieved	:	সকাহ পোৱা

ASSESSMENT



1 What event caused the destruction in Orissa in October 1999?

- A. A severe earthquake
- B. A super cyclone
- C. A volcanic eruption
- D. A massive flood

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ASSESSMENT

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2 What kept Prashant and his friend's family from starving while stranded on the roof?

A Canned food

B Fruits from fallen trees

C Rainwater

D Tender coconuts from fallen trees

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ASSESSMENT

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3 How did Prashant navigate through the flooded area on his way to his village?

- A By boat
- B By following a guide
- C ✓ With a long, sturdy stick
- D By car