

**Regarding problems caused due to river erosion in Malda and Murshidabad districts of West Bengal**

माननीय सभापति : शून्यकाल ।

माननीय श्री ईशा खान चौधरी जी ।

**SHRI ISHA KHAN CHOUDHURY (MALDAHA DAKSHIN):** Hon. Chairperson, I am drawing the attention of the House, and of the Jal Shakti Ministry to an issue of immediate urgency and national importance. I have spoken earlier about the problem of river erosion in my Constituency of Malda Dakshin which includes Malda and Murshidabad districts.

This year my Constituency faces river erosion in all seven of my blocks. But, today, I want you to specially focus your attention on the large-scale problems of Manikchak block of Malda district. At Bhutni Island of Manikchak, which has a population of over two lakh, there has been a total collapse of the ring embankment which was constructed by late ABA Ghani Khan Choudhary, causing erosion, and, as a result, there were large-scale flood in all three Gram Panchayats of the Island. Even the sluice gates, which expel water back into the rivers, were ineffective, and the whole Island remained in a semi- submerged state for 50 days in August and September of this year. Around 80,000 families faced the brunt of this erosion caused by flooding, and approximately 15,000 houses were fully or partially damaged. The power supply remained cut off for approximately 35 days, compounding the suffering of the people. According to an estimate, the total economic loss across all the sectors is at Rs. 250 crore, with agriculture and land fisheries being the hardest hit sectors. The fear now is that the rivers that surround Bhutni, which includes Ganga and Fulahar, may merge and completely wash away the area.

Madam, Chairperson, my request to the Government is that a large-scale plan is required for Bhutni Island, and for Malda to stop erosion. I strongly demand that the Central Government, in cooperation with the Government of West Bengal, develop a large-scale vision to protect the destitute and the suffering erosion prone areas of Malda and to prevent further erosion. Thank you.