

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:88
ANSWERED ON:29.11.2005
RELIEF TO EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS
Chakraborty Shri Ajay;Mane Smt. Nivedita

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has conducted any survey/assessment in regard to the loss of life and property suffered on account of the recent earthquake in the northern part of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;
- (c) whether teams of the Union Government and the National Human Rights Commission visited the affected areas;
- (d) if so, the details of the reports submitted by them after such visits; and
- (e) the details of assistance/relief provided by the Government to the victims so far on the basis of such reports?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION No. 88 due for reply on 29.11.2005.

(a) & (b): An earthquake of an intensity of 7.4 on the Richter scale occurred on 8th October, 2005 at 0920 hrs. The epicentre of the Earthquake was in Pakistan, at Latitude 34.6 N and Longitude 73.0 E, 55 KMs, west-north west of Muzaffarabad. Tremors of the earthquake were felt in several States of Northern India which inter alia includes the States of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab and Uttaranchal. The State of Jammu & Kashmir was the worst affected.

As per the provisional information furnished by the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, 1216 persons lost their lives. In addition, 120 Defence and Central Para Military Forces personnel are also reported to have lost their lives. In terms of damage to property, about 39,182 houses are reported to have been fully damaged and about 71,078 houses partially damaged.

The State Government of Punjab has also reported the loss of two lives due to the earthquake. No report of loss of life, due to the earthquake, was received from any other State/UT in Northern India.

(c) to (e): The Inter Ministerial Central Team was deputed to Jammu & Kashmir by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India from 11-14th October 2005 to make an on the spot assessment of the situation and requirement of funds for relief operations by the State Government. Upon receipt of the report of the Central Team, the quantum of financial assistance for relief operations is considered in accordance with the laid-down procedure.

A Team of officers of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) also visited the areas affected by the earthquake in Jammu & Kashmir and took suo-moto cognizance of the calamity arising from the devastating earthquake. The NHRC has made the following recommendations:

(i) That with a view to ensure equitable distribution of relief in kind it is desirable that the State Government considers having centralized collection and distribution centers at various places in the affected areas where relief material could be received from the NGOs, Civil Society and other private agencies. The material so received could thereafter be distributed equitably to all affected families;

(ii) Keeping in view that the winter is already setting-in, the Central Government and the State Government should take steps to ensure that building material required for repairing damaged property or restoring destroyed property is available at the affected places before the access to those areas is closed due to winter. This would enable the construction/reconstruction of the property to be undertaken at the earliest.

(iii) That since the number of tents required is more than what is physically available or immediately procurable despite best efforts of the Central and State Governments, it is desirable that where tents cannot be made available, temporary shelters in those affected areas are provided to the local population so that they may have relief from rain, snow and cold weather. These temporary shelters

would be there till the buildings damaged or destroyed are restored. Essential amenities be provided in these temporary shelters for the local population;

(iv) The Central and State Government shall consider feasibility of constructing houses in the affected areas with pre-fabricated building material which obviously would expedite the job of providing permanent shelters to the earthquake victims.

(v) In all such catastrophes, it is experience of the Commission that children and women are the worst affected. It is, therefore, necessary that the State Government prepares a computerized list of children who have been rendered orphan as also widows and young girls, not only with a view to provide rehabilitation to them but also to ensure that their vulnerability is not exploited by anyone. This computerized list can also assist the Government and other agencies, who undertake the task of rehabilitation of the orphans/widows/young girls in their tasks; and,

(vi) Similarly, a computerized list of dead and missing persons be also prepared to enable their next of kin to claim proper relief.

The recommendations of the NHRC have been forwarded to the Government of Jammu & Kashmir for taking appropriate action thereon.

It is the concerned State Government, which is first responder to a disaster situation and is primarily responsible for taking necessary relief measures in the wake of natural disasters and for the distribution of relief on the ground. For this purpose a Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) has been constituted for each State with an allocated amount, based on the recommendations of the 12th Finance Commission.

The Government of India supplements the efforts of the State Governments by providing financial and logistic support, wherever necessary. If the calamity is of a severe nature, additional financial assistance is also considered from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) in accordance with the laid down procedure.

The Government of India, the Armed Forces and Central Para Military Forces promptly responded to the situation and provided all necessary logistic support to the State Administration of Jammu & Kashmir in rescue and relief operations. The Ministry of Home Affairs coordinated the logistics for the collection and dispatch of relief material to the State Government. The Central Ministries/Departments, discharging emergency support function viz. the Ministry/Department of Health and Family Welfare, Food and Public Distribution, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Drinking Water Supply, Telecommunications, Women and Child Development, Power, Civil Aviation, Railways etc. also coordinated action with their counterparts in the State and all provided all necessary support and assistance, in their respective sectors, to the State Government of Jammu & Kashmir.

In terms of financial assistance provided by the Government of India, the second instalment of Central share of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) i.e. Rs 32.42 crore for the year 2005-2006, was released in advance to the State Government alongwith an adhoc release of Rs 100 crore from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) on 10th October 2005. The Hon`ble Prime Minister during his visit to the State on 11 th October 2005 announced an additional amount of Rs. 500 crore, of which Rs. 200.28 crore has been released by the Ministry of Finance as advance from Normal Central Assistance/advance payment of State`s share of Union Taxes/duties.

In terms of relief material, the Government of India has made available to the State Government of Jammu & Kashmir. various relief items viz. tents, tarpaulin sheets, sleeping bags, mattresses, blankets, woollens, medicines, drinking water, etc.

In order to facilitate the process of providing shelters to the affected persons, prior to the onset of the winter season, in addition to providing tents, the State Government has announced an assistance of rupees 1.00 lakh to each of the affected families, whose houses were fully damaged, to enable them to reconstruct their houses on their own. The distribution of first installment of 40% of the said amount i.e. Rs.40,000/- to each such beneficiary family had started with effect from 19.10.2005. The State Government has also decided to construct 22,000 temporary shelter units for those families whose houses have been fully damaged. Some of these shelters for the hapless families are to be constructed by the State Government and Government of India`s agencies while the others are to be constructed by the affected families. To facilitate this construction, the State Government has provided Rs. 30,000/- per family and has also announced an incentive of Rs. 5,000/- to those families who are able to construct their temporary shelters before 30th November, 2005. The Government of India has procured and made available to the State

Government 8,000 MT of CGI sheets for the construction of these temporary shelter units.

The Union Ministry of Urban Development has proposed to construct 130 community halls in 130 locations (i.e. Uri-66, Tangdhar-38 and Poonch-26). The construction of these community halls have already commenced.

Various Agencies of the Government of India have adopted 22 villages for providing relief and for undertaking rehabilitation and reconstruction works which inter alia includes construction of shelters and provision of necessary amenities to the affected families to meet their short-term and long-term needs. NGOs such as the Bharatiya Jain Sangathan (BJS), Pune has donated 870 pre-fabricated structures for erection in Uri and Tangdhar while SEEDS, another NGO has offered to construct 400 houses in Poonch for the earthquake affected persons.