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12.24 hrs.

Title: Regarding continuous erosion of banks of Ganga causing threat to hundreds of villages in Bengal, called by Shri Sunil Khan.

SHRI SUNIL KHAN (DURGAPUR): Sir, I call the attention of the hon. Minister of Water Resources to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The situation arising out of continuous erosion of banks of Ganga thereby causing threat to hundreds of villages in the districts of Murshidabad, Malda and North Bengal and steps taken by the Government in regard thereto."
...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing should go on record except the Minister's statement.

(Interruptions) â€¹*

MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI): The river Ganga enters West Bengal into the Malda district from Rajmahal in Bihar and flows to Bangladesh near Jallangi Bazar in Murshidabad district, West Bengal. In between, the Farakka Barrage has been constructed dividing the total stretch of 157 kilometres of the Ganga-Padma river into two parts – (i) 55 kilometres at the upstream of the Barrage in Malda district and (ii) 102 kilometres at the downstream of the Barrage in Murshidabad district. Heavy erosion along the left bank of river Ganga in Malda district and along the right bank of Murshidabad district of West Bengal has been occurring due to the meandering nature of the river Ganga and has been active in different reaches at different periods of time depending upon the changing morphology of the river from time to time. ...(Interruptions)

कुंवर अखिलेश सिंह (महाराजगंज, उ.प्र.) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, एक मिनट लेना चाहूंगा।

* Not Recorded

MR. SPEAKER: Kunwar Akhilesh Singh, I cannot permit you to speak ten times. This is not good.

...(Interruptions)

श्री चन्द्रनाथ सिंह (मछलीशहर) : वीडियो कैसेट है।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आपकी कैसेट है, वह उन्हें भेज दो।

MR. SPEAKER: Please listen to the hon. Minister. It is a very important matter concerning lakhs of people.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): Sir, it is a matter which should be very seriously considered as to how far State matters should come here. I have been, in my humble capacity, raising this question. We in our own agony bring in State matters with which the Centre is not concerned. If there is any matter within the competence of the Central Government and the Parliament is involved, we should take a principled and sober stand on this. This cannot be just branded across the House. I am requesting all the hon. Members. Every party has its own views on this matter.

Sir, I think, you have to take that initiative in this matter so that many matters which can be avoided should not be brought here. ...(Interruptions)

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: Flood Management including river erosion being a State subject, investigation, planning and implementation of flood management schemes are within the purview of the respective State Governments. The Centre renders assistance that is technical, catalytical and promotional in nature.

The Ganga Flood Control Commission constituted by the Central Government in 1972 had prepared comprehensive plans for flood management for all the 23 river systems of Ganga basin of which West Bengal is also a part. These reports/plans have been forwarded to the State Government for implementation of the recommendations made therein.

In 1996, the Planning Commission had constituted an Expert Committee (namely Keskar Committee) which had suggested various short term as well as long term measures to be taken up by the State Government as well as Farakka Barrage Project Authority (FBPA). At the request of the Government of West Bengal, the Planning Commission had sanctioned, as a special case, additional funds of Rs. 30 crore to the State under the State Plan

funds to enable the State to take up top priority schemes during the financial year 1998-99. The Farakka Barrage Project authorities have also incurred an expenditure of Rs. 10.4 crore on anti-erosion works both in upstream and downstream of Farakka Barrage.

In connection with the erosion problem on the left bank of Ganga on the upstream of barrage near Panchanandpur, the Central Water and Power Research Station, Pune had submitted a report based on the Satellite Imageries indicating development of a new channel on the right bank downstream of Rajmahal which could develop in the coming years, thereby reducing the attack on the left bank. The above behaviour of the river is to be further studied by carrying out model studies through the CWPRS in association with the State Government.

Sir, with a view to provide financial assistance to the Ganga basin States of Uttar Pradesh (including Uttranchal), Bihar and West Bengal and Farakka Barrage Project Authority for implementing critical anti-erosion schemes, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme was approved by the Government of India in January, 2001 with a total Central share of Rs. 110 crore. The scheme is on the basis of 75:25 for Central: State share. Against the Central share of Rs. 30 crore, an amount of Rs. 17.88 crore was released to the Government of West Bengal during 9th Plan. A further amount of Rs. 4.27 crore has also been released to West Bengal in January 2003. Further release of funds will depend upon the submission of requisite progress reports/utilization certificates by the State Government.

Sir, I am glad to inform the House that the above scheme for providing Central assistance to the Ganga basin States for taking up critical anti-erosion works is also being continued during the Tenth Five-Year Plan for which an outlay of Rs. 133 crore has been kept. My Ministry has constituted an Expert Committee which includes representatives from the concerned State Governments including West Bengal to review the recommendations of the earlier Committees including that of Keskar Committee and come up with its recommendation for tackling erosion problem in the Ganga basin States. The State Governments have been asked to submit the prioritised schemes to the above Committee for inclusion in the Centrally Sponsored Scheme during the Tenth Plan.

Sir, my Ministry has also initiated steps for constitution of an Empowered Authority under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources with representatives from Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Ministry of Power, Railway Board, Inland Waterways Authority of India, Government of West Bengal and Calcutta Port Trust, to guide and oversee the operation and maintenance of the Farakka Barrage *inter alia* also to address the concerns on erosion problems upstream and downstream of the Barrage.

SUNIL KHAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated these things before the House. But the hon. Minister of Finance has already cut down the allocation to Rs. 16 crore from the previous year's Budget when he allocated hardly Rs. 20 crore. For the last 25 years the Government of West Bengal sought the Central assistance to combat the dangerous situation which cropped up due to erosion of land at the banks of Padma and Ganga rivers. Several villages have gone down into the riverbed. At certain areas the distance between Padma and Ganga rivers is less than one kilometre. The future of the Farakka Barrage has become uncertain.

The Government of West Bengal is demanding Central assistance for the last 25 years to combat the situation. The Chief Minister of West Bengal wrote a number of letters to the Union Government. An All-Party delegation met the Government at New Delhi and the present Chief Minister personally apprised the hon. Prime Minister of India about the gravity of the situation. But everything went unheard.

Hon. Member Shri H.D. Deve Gowda had personally surveyed the sites during his incumbency as Prime Minister of India and he called it as a national disaster and formed a Committee to tackle it. The Committee submitted an action plan of Rs. 900 crore. But after the exit of the Deve Gowda Government, the Central Government took no interest. It is a situation like the earthquake-hit Gujarat. It is impossible for the State Government alone to combat this disastrous situation spread over several districts.

I, therefore, demand that the disaster should be categorised and declared as a national disaster. Secondly, an interim fund of at least Rs. 200 crore should be sanctioned as Central assistance to the Government of West Bengal. Thirdly, a High-Powered Committee may be constituted, though already constituted earlier, with the representatives of both Central and State Governments to finalise the action plan. Fourthly, the Central assistance is to be given to the Government of West Bengal to tackle the national disaster. In addition to that I would highlight the erosion in Damodar river also as a result of which some parts of the districts Bankura, Burdwan, Hooghly and Howrah were already submerged. I would also request you to dredge the silt and sand at the point of Damodar river at the barrage of Durgapur. We have already witnessed an unprecedented flood situation in the years 1978 and 1995. The situation has to be tackled now. I would again urge upon the Union Government to please sanction the

money of at least Rs. 200 crore immediately.

Lastly, I submit that if we fail to do that, deadly silence will be there; every village will be lost, every dwelling will be a past and a cry of anguish will cover the sky, but no one will be there.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Moinul Hasan. May I make it clear to you, Shri Hasan that only clarificatory questions can be asked and no speech can be given. You just ask questions to the Minister.

MOINUL HASSAN (MURSHIDABAD): Yes, Sir, I will ask some questions. I request you to permit me to speak for three to four minutes.

Sir, it is such a problem which is happening in my constituency, in my district and in my State. For the last two or three decades, the erosion of the Ganga River banks is a serious problem in West Bengal. Earlier, it was in a particular area of Murshidabad, Malda and Nodia. Now, it has spread to other parts of the State, in seven or eight districts of Murshidabad at different parts of different rivers such as Hoogly, Ichhamati, Subarnarekha and Bhagirathi. In the statement, the Minister has already stated that heavy erosion has taken place and lakhs of people have been evicted from their residences and lakhs of hectares of cultivable land and orchard mangroves are engulfed by the erosion. Also, school building, hospital and administrative building are lost due to erosion. It is such a situation which is just like a national calamity.

In this regard, my first question is : What is the attitude of the Government towards declaring the situation a national problem? Secondly, erosion is threatening national highway, power sector at Bandel, railway at Samudragarh and Shakopada in Eastern Railway. My question is : Has any comprehensive interaction started or not? Then, the hon. Minister has stated in his statement that there is a high-powered committee. What are its Terms of Reference? Thirdly, A high-powered committee was established under the chairmanship of Shri Keskar at the time of former Prime Minister, Shri Deve Gowda. The Committee had submitted its Report also. My question is : Has the Government accepted the Report as it is or not, or has the Government accepted the Report partially? I am raising this question because in his reply, the hon. Minister has stated that they have set up another committee to review the recommendations of the Keskar Committee. This Keskar Committee only had given some assurances on behalf of the Planning Commission to the people of West Bengal. They had proposed two terms – long-term and short-term – for doing it. It had required Rs. 927 crore to protect erosion and to take up the anti-erosion programme. If that Report of Keskar Committee is fully accepted, what action has the Government taken according to their recommendations?

Fourthly, the Government of India was in agreement with the State Government over expenditure sharing to face the problem. The ratio was 75:25. It is already mentioned in the statement of the Minister. May I ask whether till date, the Government of India is following this agreement or not? If they are following this agreement, how much funds are provided.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Adhir Chowdhary.

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN : Sir, I am concluding.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, you conclude.

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN : To start anti-erosion programme – the Minister knows it – for preparation of a project, the State Government was compelled to pass through a cumbersome process. The Minister looked after the matter to ease the process.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Adhir Chowdhary.

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN : I come to my next question. A mass agitation of people led by the Left Front took place in West Bengal.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Adhir Chowdhary, you start speaking. I have given him a very long time.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY (BERHAMPORE, WEST BENGAL): Sir, I will also pick up the thread from where he ends.

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN : Sir, I am raising another question. Who will do the rehabilitation work of people?

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down.

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN : What is the thinking of the Government of India about the rehabilitation of the evicted people? My last question is this. The Ministry of Water Resources is in a position to ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please conclude now. Now, nothing should go on record. Shri Adhir Chowdhary.

(Interruptions) â€¹*

MR. SPEAKER: I am not taking on record anything what Shri Moinul Hassan is speaking now.

(Interruptions) â€¹*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Moinul Hassan, please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Adhir Chowdhary, you can start now. I am not allowing whatever Shri Moinul Hassan is speaking hereafter to go on record.

(Interruptions) â€¹*

* Not Recorded

ADHIR CHOWDHARY : At the outset, I must subscribe partially to the view expressed by my colleagues, who are supposed to be the praetorian guards in Parliament on behalf of the Left Front Government in West Bengal.

I must acknowledge that it is a matter of grave concern. However the entire responsibility is to be borne out by the Central Government is simply a fallacy being churned out by the State Government out to hoodwink the erosion-affected people and in order to provide a fig-leaf to conceal their dismal performance, it seems as if they shall be twiddling their thumbs while lakhs of people are rendered homeless and penniless. What I am saying is that on such a sensitive issue, we should not indulge ourselves in scoring any political brownie points.

I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister that the erosion of such magnitude is hardly to be dealt with singly by a State Government. You are well aware that in 1978, the State Government of West Bengal constituted one Committee: the Preetam Singh Committee. Again, in 1996, under the guidance of the Planning Commission and under the stewardship of Keshkar, one Committee was constituted to recommend measures against the severe erosion along the banks of the *Ganga* and the *Padma*.

Under the Radcliff dispensation, the Indian Government conferred upon East Pakistan the Hindu-dominated 'Kusthia' District in swapping for the Muslim-dominated 'Murshidabad' District with an eye on constructing the Farakka Barrage Project. The reason is to cater to the need of preservation and maintenance of Kolkata Port and increase the water supply from upland at Farakka into the *Bhagirathi* River to reduce salinity and to ensure sweet water. The third was the strategic rail and road link across the bridge of Farakka. It is the lifeline between Kolkata and North-Eastern India. The fourth is the navigational facilities on the *Bhagirathi* and the *Hooghly* rivers.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Adhir Chowdhary, will you please conclude now?

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY (BERHAMPORE, WEST BENGAL): At one point, at a village named 'Fazilpur', the distance between the *Bhagirathi* and the *Padma* rivers has been reduced to a mere 1.2 kilometres, and the eroding gap between the two rivers ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please conclude now.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY : The hon. Minister has already stated as to how much sum has been allotted to the Government, but may I ask the hon. Minister as to why the full amount has not been released so far? What was the lacuna on the part of the State Government of West Bengal? Second, I must urge upon the Central Government to explore a national plan so as to restrain the erosion.

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. Shri Lakshman Seth, you can start now.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Whatever Shri Adhir Chowdhary is saying hereafter will not be taken on record.

(Interruptions) â€¹*

* Not Reocrded

LAKSHMAN SETH (TAMLUK): The situation is very much grave. If this situation is not tackled, it may lead to national cataclysm because of erosion. Heavy siltation is taking place in the river-bed, which is eroding the depth of the shipping channel. That is why, the Kolkata Port and the Haldia Port are facing dire consequences.

Big ships are facing impediments in entering the Port. This is a very important issue. Because of erosion, the catchment capacity of the rivers is reducing. That is why the amount of water flowing from the up-end is reducing and the tidal water from the sea is entering into the estuaries as well as various river like Rupnarayan, Ajoy, etc. As a result of this, the water is becoming much more saline. The saline water is entering into the subsoil also. Because of this, people living alongside the Ganges are facing a serious problem of non-availability of water for drinking and irrigation purposes.

Mere dumping of boulders cannot protect these embankments. If Ganga and Padma meet, the whole of South Bengal would be washed out. The whole area will come under water. A national cataclysm, a national catastrophe may take place. I request the hon. Minister to engage a very high-powered consultancy firm, which should have some knowledge and expertise in this matter and which should have worldwide fame, to study this matter.

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. How can you encroach upon other's time?

SHRI LAKSHMAN SETH : Only by dumping boulders, the embankments cannot be protected. Recently the University of Hamburg in Germany has suggested usage of a certain type of geo fabric to protect these embankments well. I want to know from the Minister whether the Government is going to engage such an international consultant for undertaking the feasibility study. Otherwise, we will face a disaster. This is very much important. Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: The position about the Calling Attention Notice is clear that only those Members are allowed to speak whose names are on the list. But, since this is a very important matter, I have allowed two Members to put questions and they will only put questions. Whatever Shri Lakshman Seth says now will not go on record.

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR (BARRACKPORE): Sir, I may be allowed to speak in lieu of Shri Basu Deb Acharia.

MR. SPEAKER: In lieu of him, you will not be allowed to speak. But I will permit you to ask one question.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ): Sir, I am thankful to you for allowing this Calling Attention. I have been crying for this for the last one month.

We may recall that in the last Session of the House the hon. Minister gave the assurance that if schemes were sent to him he would look into them sincerely. On that assurance, I went back to my Constituency where not one, not two, not three, but 18 villages in Ratua Block at Mahantola, Bilaimari have been washed away in Phulwar and Ganges. I pacified the people saying that some justice will be done. I gave the Minister the schemes for Uttar Dinajpur District. Schemes of Malda are coming very shortly. I appeal to the hon. Minister that before the monsoon begins - in West Bengal it normally begins in the month of July - a team be sent to evaluate the schemes at least in Uttar Dinajpur and Malda embankments of Ganges, Mahananda, Phulwar, River Sui and Nagar. I will be grateful to the hon. Minister, if necessary steps are taken.

Sir, I need your protection. Believe me, I will tell you the truth. For the last one and a half months I could not visit those segments because there are no people there. The villages are washed away. Those people are living in hutments now. Only this Calling Attention, based on the assurance, will ensure my passage to that area. Therefore, I appeal to the hon. Minister to kindly respond to this call and send the team quickly to the embankments both in Malda and Uttar Dinajpur so that some steps can be taken before the monsoon begins.

SARDAR SIMRANJIT SINGH MANN : Sir, Shri Dasmunsi is a great leader, a national leader of great magnitude. But, whenever he rises to speak on national matters, whether it is the Railway Budget or water issues, he confines his speech only to his constituency and some other Districts of West Bengal. Will you please ask him to speak about Punjab and the rest of the country also? Thank you, Sir.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, I assure him that I will specially take care of Punjab and his constituency also.

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आपको केवल प्रश्न पूछना है। किसी को प्रश्न से बाहर नहीं जाना है।

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (HOOGLY): Sir, please allow me also to ask a question....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: केवल प्रश्न पूछिये नहीं तो मैं दूसरे सदस्यों को भी प्रश्न नहीं पूछने दूँगा। I am allowing some Members to ask questions as a special case, because the issue is very important. But Members should not take undue advantage of this goodness.

श्री धर्म राज सिंह पटेल (फूलपुर) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, हमारे फूलपुर संसदीय क्षेत्र में गंगा के कटान की वजह से दो तीन गांवों ककरा, कुटवा और लालापुर में किसानों की खेती कट रही है। वह गंगा का कटान कटते-कटते गांव के पास तक आ चुका है। मैंने एक-दो बार नियम 377 के अधीन मामला उठाया था मगर अभी तक उस पर कोई कार्रवाई सरकार द्वारा नहीं की गई। मैं सरकार से मांग करता हूँ कि उन गांवों की सुरक्षा के लिए कोई न कोई व्यवस्था सरकार करे।

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY (CALCUTTA NORTH WEST): Thank you, Sir. Though I am an MP from Calcutta, my birth place is Murshidabad. Therefore, naturally, I want to share my sentiments with the problem.

Sir, the hon. Minister has said that during the 10th Plan, Rs. 133 crore has been allotted for the whole Ganga basin area. My question is very specific. Would the hon. Minister consider setting up a master plan for protection of the erosion of the river Ganges, particularly in the zones of Murshidabad, Malda Nadia and North Bengal?

MR. SPEAKER: Now, Shri Tarit Barun Topdar...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : Please allow me also. It covers my Constituency in a big way....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR : Sir, the explanation has been given by the hon. Minister. But whether it comes under the jurisdiction of the Central Government or the State Government....(*Interruptions*)

श्री रामजीलाल सुमन (फिरोजाबाद) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, शून्यकाल में किसानों का सवाल भी बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है। हमने कार्य स्थगन प्रस्ताव दिया है। लिहाज़ आपसे प्रार्थना है कि उस पर भी गौर किया जाए। **ॐ!** (व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : जब आपका नंबर आएगा, तब बोलिये।

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : Sir, I have been witness to millions and millions of people suffering for all these years.

MR. SPEAKER: I will permit you to ask one question. Now, please allow him to raise his question.

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR : Sir, it is not clear whether it is under the jurisdiction of the Central Government or the State Government. What the hon. Minister had said is not clear. It is ambiguous. So, the Government should candidly declare as to whether they are going to implement the Keskar Committee Report or not.

RUPCHAND PAL : Sir, I am one of those who have been witness to lakhs of people losing their livelihood and losing their agricultural land. There is a railway line near Behula. I do not know what is going to happen to the national highway, to the railway lines and to the power plants in Bengal.

Sir, it is a national problem. So, we have been seeking some assurance from the Government in this regard. At least, Rs. 1,000 crore need to be just spent for this master plan over a period. The technology is available. In Bangladesh and in some other countries, this technology is being used successfully. This technology is cheaper for embankment, to stop erosion and in containment of erosion that is taking place.

The Minister of External Affairs is here.

MR. SPEAKER: Please put your question straight.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have told you that you should only ask the question. I have made it a special case.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : Sir, I am asking my question. What does the Government propose to do with regard to this serious and national problem? What is the amount going to be provided immediately so that the work can be started to save the livelihood of the people? Thank you.

डॉ. रघुवंश प्रसाद सिंह (वैशाली) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं सरकार से जानना चाहता हूँ कि बिहार में समस्तीपुर, वैशाली और बेगूसराय तीनों जिलों में गंगा का बड़ा भारी कटाव हो रहा है। उसके लिए राज्य सरकार ने क्या प्रस्ताव आपके पास भेजा, कितनी मांग की और आपने कितनी आपूर्ति की, कितना बकाया है जिससे वहां का कटाव रूक सके और लोगों को पुनर्वासित करने के लिए आपने क्या उपाय किये हैं?

MR. SPEAKER: Now, the hon. Minister.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY : Sir, I am on a point of order.

There is an error in the Statement.

MR. SPEAKER: That you should have said in your speech.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY : He has said that 'the river Ganga enters West Bengal into the Malda district from Rajmahal in Bihar and flows to Bangladesh near Jallangi bazar in Murshidabad district....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have not allowed your point of order.

(Interruptions) â€*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Adhir Chowdhary, you have to state the rule under which you are asking your point of order.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, now the Hon. Minister.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Adhir Chowdhary, please sit down.

* Not Recorded

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: Sir, with your permission, I would like to admit that the situation of bank erosion, especially in the Ganga basin States are serious; no doubt about it. For that purpose, many , Committees have been constituted; they have given their recommendations also.

As has been mentioned by the hon. Members, once Preetam Singh Committee had been constituted. Similarly, Keshkar Committee was also there. Another Committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Shri G.N.

Murthy who was the Chairman of GFCC. Similarly, in the Ministry of Water Resources, I have also directed my officers to visit the spot and find out the critical areas. Critical areas have been identified in different parts of erosion sites and remedial steps have been taken to mitigate the sufferings.

As has been mentioned by hon. Members, during 1998-99, as per the recommendations of the Keshkar Committee, the Planning Commission has sanctioned Rs.30 crore in favour of the State of West Bengal. As per the recommendations of the G.N. Murthy Committee who was the then Chairman of GFCC, the following allotment has been made; and I would like to point out here – as has been mentioned by my friends from West Bengal on critical erosion – four schemes have been taken up and the amount sanctioned was Rs.30 crore. This is from the Ministry of Water Resources. We have released till date an amount of Rs.22.15 crore. Another amount of Rs.1.3 crore will be released very soon, in the month of March itself.

But I would like to point out that some problems lie with the State Governments. Money has been sanctioned, no doubt – as I have stated here, an amount of Rs.22.15 crore, but if utilisation certificate do not come, we cannot release the rest.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : It has come right now.

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: Just now it has come. I have written letters to the hon. Minister of Water Resources, Government of West Bengal and then only it has come. Recently it has come. Accordingly, an amount of Rs.1.3 crore will just be released very soon, in this month itself. ...*(Interruptions)* Out of Rs.30 crore, we have released Rs.22.15 crore and another amount of Rs.1.32 crore will be released very soon. The moment we get the utilisation certificate from the State Governments, the rest of the amount will be released in favour of those States.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : What about the master plan? It is the national plan.

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: I am coming to that.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY : May I know whether the State Government has produced any master plan to you or to the Planning Commission?

MR. SPEAKER: There will be many more such questions. But you can reply to whatever you want.

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: Sir, secondly so far as U.P. is concerned, we have already sanctioned an amount of Rs.16.33 crore. They will get another amount of Rs.4.7 crore, the moment we get the utilisation certificate. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI RAJKUMARI RATNA SINGH (PRATAPGARH): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to what the comments he made about U.P. I do not know where he spent the money. Just now, in the *kumbh mela* month, the water has become orange and nobody was able to take bath in the entire month because of pollution. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: Sir, I seek your protection.

Money will be released from the Central Government; and it is up to the State Government to utilise it. They have to utilise the funds made available to them. They have also to submit the utilisation certificate in time. ...*(Interruptions)*

श्री श्रीप्रकाश जायसवाल (कानपुर) : मंत्री जी, मुझे माननीय अध्यक्ष ने आपसे प्रश्न पूछने की परमीशन दे दी है।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मंत्री जी, मैं बताना चाहता हूँ कि श्री श्रीप्रकाश जायसवाल जी ने मुझ से परमीशन मांगी है, लेकिन मैंने दी नहीं है।

श्री श्रीप्रकाश जायसवाल : माननीय अध्यक्ष जी, उत्तर प्रदेश के बारे में मंत्री जी चर्चा कर रहे हैं। मैं बताना चाहता हूँ कि कानपुर में पिछले 30 साल से उन्नाव की तरफ धीरे-धीरे कटाव होता चला जा रहा है। गंगा के उस कटाव में सैकड़ों गांव डूब गए हैं।

13.00 hrs.

इस तरफ से कानपुर में गंगा में नहाने वाले जो भक्त हैं, उन्हें पिछले 20 साल से गंगा स्नान करने को नहीं मिला। गवर्नमेंट ने लगभग 20 साल पहले गंगा बैराज की घोणा की थी।*(व्यवधान)*

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मैंने इन्हें बोलने की इजाजत नहीं दी, मंत्री जी आप बोलिए।

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: Sir, this matter is not under my control. It is under the Ministry of Environment and Forests...*(Interruptions)* Generally whatever projects are submitted, they are submitted by the State Governments. We certainly examine the projects submitted by the State Governments and try to provide funds for their execution. We cannot make schemes on our own.

MR. SPEAKER: There are many important questions to be taken up. I cannot allow discussion like this.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. Mr. Minister, you can conclude your reply.

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: This particular issue is related to bank erosion of Ganga river and not to any barrage or scheme or project. So, what can I do?

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Like this, your reply will remain incomplete. I want you to complete your reply. You can just go ahead.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: Sir, if time and again interruptions are there, how could I complete the reply?...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Whatever you are saying, every word will go on record and nobody else's words will go on record.

(Interruptions) *â€

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: Sir, as the situation is grave, this scheme will continue during the Tenth Five Year Plan. We have kept Rs.133 crore to solve the problem of bank erosion in the Ganga basin States. We are providing funds for this project. As regards declaring this project as a national project, there is no scope of treating or declaring this project as a national project. So far as the Master Plan is concerned, certainly many schemes have been given. We are examining them. We will take a decision in consultation with the State Governments of these basin States.

With these words, I thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The discussion on Calling Attention is over. Now, Shri Ramji Lal Suman would speak.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, he could call the hon. Members to his Chamber and discuss the matter. Sir, you can direct the Minister to do so. That would save the time of the House...(Interruptions)

SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, may I make a request? This is a serious matter. It is not a question of controversy. It should not be treated as a controversy between the Centre and the States. Everybody admits that this is a serious matter. The hon. Minister has also said this. It is also understood and accepted by everybody – the former Finance Minister is here and he would also agree – that one State Government cannot possibly tackle this serious issue which require nearly Rs.1000 crore. Therefore, the Chief Minister of West Bengal has suggested that a Task Force containing the Central Government, concerned State Governments, and some experts should be constituted to monitor daily. It would find out what is the best way of doing it as also how best we could utilise funds.

* Not Recorded

This has been the request that has been made many times by the Chief Minister and even he made this request in his last letter to the hon. Minister. Therefore, our appeal to you is that this should be treated as a national issue. Huge tracts of land are being lost and people are losing their hearths and home. They do not have any place to go. There is the question of rehabilitation of these people. Therefore, this is a real national issue. Please treat this in this manner. There may be some faults here and there. I can point out something that the Centre has done or not done. Similarly, you also can point out something that the States have done or not done. But that will not help matters. As has been mentioned by Shri Dasmunsi, you can talk to the people there and the concerned Members of Parliament could help you out in this. This is a very serious national issue.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY : Sir, my district has been the worst affected in the State of West Bengal...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I am not going to start a debate on this.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: Sir, I have stated in my statement that an Empowered Committee has been constituted with representatives from all the concerned Ministries. In keeping with the suggestion of our senior leader, Shri Somnath Chatterjee, this Committee would go into the details of each scheme, each project and seek

the opinion of all persons who are considered important and who could suggest and contribute for the implementation of the schemes and projects.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Why do you not call a meeting of the Members of Parliament whose constituency is affected badly? After that you can give the report to the concerned State Governments and then the Task Force can give their views. In that case we can do some concrete work on this...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY : Hon. Minister you are well aware that the Ganga river...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Whatever Shri Adhir Chowdhary is speaking will not go on record.

(Interruptions) *

अध्यक्ष महोदय : सुमन जी, आप बोलेंगे तो आपको इजाजत है।

SHRIMATI RAJKUMARI RATNA SINGH : Now, when you have this Committee, you can call the Members of Parliament representing the constituencies in the Ganga Basin and ask them about the problems they are facing. Mr. Minister, would you do that? ...*(Interruptions)*