

12.52 hrs.

Title: Regarding flood situation in Orissa and Kerala and other parts of the country.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (KALAHANDI): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have given notice to you regarding flood situation in Orissa. Sir, today the flood situation in Orissa is very grave and all the rivers are still rising. Sir, I thank the Prime Minister for having granted Rs. 100 crore from National Calamity Relief Fund. But that is still like a drop in the ocean, and that is not sufficient to meet the present flood situation.

Today, out of 30 districts of the State, 21 districts have been severely affected by the flood and the water is rising every day. Sir, flood related diseases have started spreading and it has led to about 57 deaths already.

12.53 hrs. (Mr. Deputy-Speaker *in the Chair*)

The health services have to be refurbished. The Central Government has to come to the aid of the State Government. It is because today the State Government is passing through a severe financial crisis. The Central Government should come forward with more funds and with more material to help the people who are affected by the flood. Sir, today the entire master plan has to be prepared for the embankments on the major rivers of the State like Mahanadi, Brahmani, etc. The Relief code of the State has clearly mentioned that flood-free zone should be created. But I am sorry to say that the previous Governments which functioned there never took an iota of interest in tackling the flood situation in the past. Therefore, there must be a futuristic plan to solve the flood situation in the State.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Hon. Members, 38 Members have given notices. If you have patience, I will try to accommodate everybody. Now, Shri Deo, please conclude.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO : Sir, four lakh people are in the marooned area and they have not eaten for the last seven days. Therefore, I request the Central Government to press more personnel from the Armed Forces into service for the aid of the flood affected victims.

The existing standing crops have been severely damaged due to water clogging. Therefore, the Central Government should come up with a package to save the agriculturists in the State. Agriculture has been very badly hit in the State and especially Kalahandi district, which is a drought-prone district, has been inundated with floods. I again request the Central Government to come to the rescue of the people there.

SHRI ANADI SAHU (BERHAMPUR, ORISSA): I associate with Shri Bikram Keshari Deo in so far as his submission regarding the flood situation in Orissa is concerned. I would like to add only one point. There are 1.3 lakh tonnes of grade 'A' rice available in FCI godowns in Orissa. May I request the hon. Minister for Food and Consumer Affairs, through you, to release that stock immediately to the flood affected areas of Orissa? ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please do not create disturbance like this.

SHRI SURESH KURUP (KOTTAYAM): As you very well know, Kerala is devastated by floods. In an unprecedented move, the Central Government has denied its grant to the State Government for the purpose of facing this flood situation. I have full sympathies with the people of Orissa as there has been a devastating flood there. While the Central Cabinet decided to give aid to Orissa, it denied any grant or aid to Kerala. This is an unprecedented decision. Therefore, I would request the Government of India to immediately release aid to Kerala. ...(*Interruptions*) The callous and negligent attitude of the Government of Kerala should not come in the way of granting aid to Kerala.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now you do not spoil your case.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : The Central Government should immediately come to the aid of the people of Kerala.

SHRI V.M. SUDHEERAN (ALLEPPEY): The situation in Kerala is alarming. The flash floods, cyclonic storm and heavy sea erosion have made the lives of the people very difficult. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: If you raise the matter like this, you will not be called. I will call you if you are patient enough.

SHRI V.M. SUDHEERAN : The entire coastal belt of Kerala is very badly affected by sea erosion. The sea shore is washed away to a large extent in many places of Kerala, including my constituency. In my constituency there are places like Arattupuzha, Thrikkunnapuzha, Purakkod, Ottamassery, Arthungal and Omanapuzha where sea shore were washed away due to sea erosion. So, the people are in great difficulties. It is high time the Central Government had rushed to the State with all sorts of assistance, including additional financial assistance as

requested by the Government of Kerala.

SHRI A.C. JOS (TRICHUR): I fully associate with the sentiments expressed by Shri Suresh Kurup and Shri Sudheeran. The Government of Kerala has submitted a memorandum to the Central Government and met the erstwhile Agriculture Minister also. But, unfortunately, that Minister got changed and a new Agriculture Minister has come. We have requested for Rs.555 crore assistance. The damage is so wide and deep that unless the Central Government comes forward to help the Kerala Government, the alarming flood situation there cannot be managed. Sea erosion is taking place in my constituency also. Sea erosion is threatening the entire coastal belt of Kerala. So, our request to the Central Government is that the Ministry of Agriculture should come forward in a big way to help the Kerala Government.

SHRI VAIKO (SIVAKASI): Only Kerala Members are being called.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Those Members who have given notices are being called.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: All these Members happen to be former Speakers of the Kerala Assembly and imagine that they are conducting themselves like this!

13.00 hrs.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): Sir, the flood situation in Kerala is unprecedented. There were landslides in the district of Idukki and more than 100 people lost their lives. Property worth crores of rupees is destroyed as a result of the landslides. No steps could be taken to prevent this disastrous consequence. Moreover, the attitude of the Central Government in this matter is not helpful.

Now, why I welcome the step taken by the Central Government towards floods in Orissa is because that is quite natural. Of course, they should take effective steps also but the movement of aid through FCI to Kerala is not good. Kerala being a Southern State, the Central authorities are not taking effective steps for rehabilitation in the State of Kerala. We also belong to this federal republic. The Prime Minister was kind enough to give a phone call to Orissa. I could understand that and it is quite good. But at least, he should have written to the State of Kerala enquiring the state of affairs there. Nothing has been done so far in that regard. This is very very alarming and highly discriminatory.

We know that there is none in the Central Government representing the State of Kerala. Our political influence is less because all Members representing Kerala are in the Opposition. But at the same time, justice should be done to Kerala. A maximum amount of Rs.500 crore is required by the State. I request the Central Government to take immediate steps and do justice to the Southern States.

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE (IDUKKI): Sir, as has been mentioned by my colleagues from Kerala here, Kerala has been ravaged by very unprecedented floods, cloudbursts and landslides. The worst hit by these has been my constituency. Almost 20,000 houses have been damaged and 35,000 people have been left homeless. The loss by way of damage of roads and bridges comes to around Rs.550 crore and the damage of cash crops and other agricultural crops is worth around Rs.150 crore. What we have got from the Centre is only a mere paltry sum of Rs.26 crore and that is the last instalment that is due to Kerala from the Central Relief Fund. We have got nothing as aid from the Centre as yet. We want a liberal dose as aid from the NCCF which the Centre normally gives to all the calamity-stricken States. Again and again, Kerala is getting a stepmotherly treatment from the Central Government.

So, I request, alongwith my colleagues here, the Central Government to release sufficient funds to tide over from this crisis.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (MAVELIKARA): Sir, I associate with the sentiments expressed by my honourable colleagues from Kerala.

The flood situation is very grave. When the former Agriculture Minister, Shri Nitish Kumar came to Kerala, we personally discussed the matter with him and the Government of Kerala had given him a memorandum also. It is very unfortunate that only Rs.26 crore were given to the State of Kerala as a balanced amount from the Natural Calamities Relief Fund. I think the situation is very grave. Even now the people are homeless and are in the camps. Even though the State Government is bankrupt and there is no money with the State Government to manage the day-to-day affairs, the Government could manage to give financial assistance to the various districts to maintain the relief camps. Roads were washed away. There were landslides. The *Malayalam Manorama* photographer, Shri Victor George was washed away. So many serious incidents had occurred in the districts of Idukki, Allapppy and Patharanthatta as well as other parts of the State. It is unfortunate to note that the Minister for Agriculture has not

even taken note of the incidents.

Of course, the situation in Orissa is also very grave. The same is the situation in Kerala also. But it is unfortunate that the Central Government has not even shown sympathy to the State of Kerala.

So, I request the hon. Minister, through you, Sir, that the Government should immediately look into the matter and give enough financial assistance for the rehabilitation of the poor people of the State and also for the repair of the roads. The Government should give adequate compensation for the people, for the farmers who were affected very badly by this unprecedented flood. Thank you.

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA (KOLAR): Sir, we have also given a notice.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You will get the chance. Your notice is not on this issue.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Vaiko to speak now.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: He is associating himself with Shri Kuppusamy on this matter.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI VAIKO : The Chair has given me the floor of the House.â€ (Interruptions)

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Sir, at least the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs should make a statement on the flood situation in Kerala.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I cannot compel him.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI VAIKO : I have given a specific notice on this issue. The Chair has given me the floor to speak on the same subject....(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Vaiko, please take your seat. The hon. Minister wants to react to it.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Radhakrishnan, the hon. Minister is reacting to it. He is responding to it.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI VAIKO (SIVAKASI): I have given a specific notice to speak on the same matter.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): Shri Vaiko, you can continue after one minute. I would respond to the Kerala issue and then you can continue with it.

Sir, I think, on behalf of the Government, I must respond to the Kerala issue because a large number of Members of Parliament from Kerala have expressed their concern about the flood situation in Kerala. Normally, the flood situation in Kerala is something strange for a person who does not understand the topography of Kerala. It will not be possible for somebody if he goes there after three or four days to find out where the water was. Just looking at the topography of the sea and the hills, it would not be possible to say. But the damage done in Kerala by the floods is much more than the damage done in the plains. You lose trees and all that in such a situation. So, to recover them, you need six to eight years. It is not a three-months' crop which you lose in Kerala. It is a crop which you lose for a decade.

The Government is also aware that the Government of Kerala has already made a representation to the Government of India. I think yesterday or day before yesterday, the Kerala Assembly passed a unanimous resolution asking the help of the Central Government. So, I assure the hon. Members that I will personally take up this issue with the hon. Agriculture Minister. We will try our level best to help the people of Kerala at this juncture.

I would like to refute that there is no discrimination done by the Government of India to any State. Whether somebody elects the NDA or not, that is a separate matter. As far as the people are concerned, the people are the people of India. So, whether they vote for "A" or "B", it hardly matters. We will put up all our efforts in dealing with this case.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Hon. Members, copies of the statement made by the Prime Minister regarding the Summit-level talks between India and Pakistan from 14th to 16th July, 2001 are available at the Publications Counter. Members may please obtain the same from the Publications Counter.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Vaiko to continue. He was on his legs.