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Title: Statement by Minister regarding relief and rehabilitation of Tsunami affected people – Laid.

12.06 hrs.

**(ii) RELIEF AND REHABILITATION OF
TSUNAMI AFFECTED PEOPLE ***

MR. SPEAKER: The second Statement is about the relief and rehabilitation of Tsunami affected people. You can lay it on the Table of the House.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL) :I beg to lay this Statement on the Table of the House.
...(Interruptions)

** As all the Hon'ble Members are aware, the Tsunami of 26th December, 2004 has caused extensive damage to life and property in the States of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Uts of Pondicherry and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The tsunami was triggered due to an earthquake of 8.6 (Mw) magnitude which occurred at 0629 IST of west coast of Sumatra Island (Indonesia) on that day. This kind of disaster has been experienced for the first time in the country. It also affected other countries in the Indian Ocean, namely, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Maldives and even the east coast of Africa.

The Tsunami affected a population of 27.92 lakh in 1089 villages in the five States and Uts. 10273 people lost their lives and 5823 people are said to be missing and feared dead. Most of the missing persons are from the Nicobar Islands. 530 children have been rendered orphaned. 35605 livestock was also lost besides damage to about 22,000 hectares of cropped area. The Tsunami disaster has badly hit the fishermen community who not only lost their near and dear ones but also lost their means of livelihood. 2.39 lakh dwelling units and over 83,000 boats were damaged. There has also been extensive damage to the infrastructure including harbours, jetties, roads, bridges, power, telecom, hospitals, schools and other social sector buildings.

s* Also placed in Library. See No. LT 1670/05

** Speech was laid on the Table.

3. The Government of India coordinated, monitored and reviewed the National efforts in providing logistics and financial support to the affected States/Uts. The Ministry of Home Affairs, being the nodal Ministry, coordinated the relief efforts. The strategy to deal with the Tsunami Disaster was divided into three phases; immediate relief and response; temporary rehabilitation and restoration of infrastructure and long term rehabilitation and reconstruction. The Cabinet Committee/Group of Ministers on Disaster Management under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister regularly reviewed the situation. The Armed Forces provided round the clock logistic support for undertaking relief, rescue and evacuation operations. The Government of India and the affected States/Uts worked together in facing the great challenge. The National response has been overwhelming. The States not affected by tsunami came forward to provide required relief at the crucial stage. It was because of this support of the people of the country that we have been able to respond to the disaster with our own resources and did not require any external assistance for relief and response. Not only this, the country also provided, to a limited extent, relief assistance to the Tsunami affected countries of Sri Lanka, Maldives and Indonesia.

4. It may be recalled that the Government had made a presentation before the All Party meeting on 9th January, 2005 on the measures taken for handling the disaster. Later on members of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs were also briefed about these measures on 24th January, 2005. The Prime Minister, the Defence Minister, the Finance Minister, the Agriculture Minister, myself and other Union Ministers visited the affected areas. The Chairperson of UPA, the Leaders of Political Parties and Members Parliament have also visited the affected areas. The feedback from these visits has been very useful in framing our policies and response for the affected people.

15. The Prime Minister announced an ex-gratia of Rs.1.00 lakh to the next of the kin of the deceased and an amount of Rs.450 crore was released as an immediate assistance from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) to the States of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. In addition, an amount of Rs.50.00 crore to Pondicherry and Rs.200.00 crore for Andamans was also earmarked.
15. The massive relief and rescue operations launched by the States and the Government of India has helped in normalizing the situation very early. About 20,900 personnel from Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and Para Military Forces were deployed. 40 Naval/Coast Guards ships, 34 aircrafts and 42 helicopters were part of the massive operations. 28,734 persons were rescued on the mainland and more than 6000 stranded people including tourists from Andaman & Nicobar Islands, were brought to the mainland. 6.36 lakh persons in all were moved to safer places and kept in 930 relief camps.
15. The Ministry of Home Affairs had designated the relief supply hubs in different parts of the country from where relief was mobilized with the help of the respective State Governments. A total of 13, 639 MT of relief material has been transported to the affected areas of which 994.67 MT is by air, 7,763.70 MT by ship and 2,761.50 MT by Rail. All the concerned Ministries/Departments of the Government of India, namely, Telecom, Health, Power, Petroleum, Civil Aviation, Defence, Drinking Water Supply, Road, Transport & Highways provided necessary emergency support in dealing with the situation. It is a matter of great relief that in spite of such a huge tragedy, no epidemic was reported from any of the affected areas. A team of 2000 doctors worked continuously to take care of the health sector.

8. The Government of India, considering the fact that most of the people affected by the Tsunami disaster belong to weaker sections of the society and the fishermen community in particular were worst hit, approved a special package of Rs.3644.05 crore named as "Rajiv Gandhi Rehabilitation Package for Tsunami affected areas" to provide assistance for immediate relief and response, revival of fishery and agriculture sectors, immediate construction of temporary (intermediate) shelters and repair/restoration of infrastructure besides special relief to orphans, unmarried girls above 18 years of age, widows and disabled. The package for Tamil Nadu is Rs.2347.19 crore, Andhra Pradesh – Rs.70.00 crore, Kerala –Rs. 249.36 crore, Pondicherry – Rs.155.62 crore, Andaman & Nicobar Islands – Rs.821.88 crore.

9. For revival of the fishery sector, the Government has decided to provide full subsidy to the fishermen who have lost their Catamaran (wooden boats). Such fishermen also have the option now to switch over to boats with motors upto unit cost of Rs.1.50 lakh. In this category the fishermen will be entitled for 50% subsidy and 50% loan. The bank loans will carry interest @ 7% and interest subsidy of 2% will be reimbursed in case of prompt repayments. The moratorium for the loan payment will be 1-1/2 years and repayment period will be 7 years after that. The affected fishermen will be entitled to get the loan even if the earlier loans are outstanding. For fishermen who have not lost their boats but these have been damaged, full subsidy up to Rs.10,000 has been approved for repair of damaged boats. This package has been announced in relaxation of the existing norms and it is the first time that assistance in a natural disaster is being provided on such a scale.

15. The Government has also considered the fact that the fishermen and others have lost their houses. For the inter-mediate period, the Government has provided funds to the States for construction of temporary (inter-mediate) shelters. These are proposed to be constructed before the onset of the coming monsoon. The Government has also decided to provide permanent housing by way of a minimum of two room dwelling unit to each of the family who had lost the house in the Tsunami disaster. These houses will be multi-hazard proof and the designs are being finalized. It is the intention of the Government. That the new settlements for permanent housing are properly planned with all the required social infrastructure and civic amenities. The Government of India will also be bearing the cost of acquisition of land for these new settlements.
15. In case of Andaman & Nicobar Islands where the agriculture sector has been extensively damaged, the Government has approved a special package for revival of agriculture sector at a cost of Rs.239.54 crore.
15. There is no doubt that revival of the livelihood of the affected people will take some time. Generally the sustenance allowance for the interim period has been allowed in the past for about 30 days. However for the Tsunami affected people, the Government of India is bearing the cost of sustenance for a period of 90 days and, if necessary, it will be extended further. The Government wants to assure the people affected by the unprecedented disaster that not only the Governments but the Nation stand behind them and no effort will be spared to ensure that they resume their normal life and a better life at the earliest. It is a matter of great satisfaction that the community and the State Governments are taking due care of the orphaned children.
15. A Core Group under the Planning Commission has also been constituted to plan and make provisions for long term rehabilitation, reconstruction and providing multi hazard proof permanent houses. Whereas no external assistance was sought for immediate relief and response, the Government is considering such assistance from multi-lateral agencies like World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Union and the UN agencies for long term reconstruction purposes. Once the Core Group finalises its plan of action, the package for long term reconstruction will be announced .
15. The Government has decided to set up Tsunami Early Warning System in the Indian Ocean. The Department of Ocean Development has already initiated work in this regard.
15. A Bill will also be introduced in the current Session of the Parliament for enacting a legislation on disaster management. A National Disaster Management Authority is separately being notified with the Prime Minister as its Chairman. Building up the capacity both at the National and State levels, setting up the National Disaster Response Force and measures for mitigation are the areas of immediate attention of the Government.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): I want to seek a clarification. ...(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: It is exactly on the point which is raised by the hon. Members. I am informing this House as to the steps which have been taken to respond to the calamities. If this is brought to the notice of the hon. Members, then we can discuss it at any time the Members want to discuss this, in any form that you may allow.

MR. SPEAKER: We shall find time to discuss it.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : I want to seek a clarification. I have given notice also. Kerala is one of the States which is affected by Tsunami. The most important question is about the rehabilitation. That is not taking place. The people who are uprooted and whose families have been lost, they are on the streets....(Interruptions) I request the Central Government to take immediate steps for rehabilitation of people who are thrown out of their homes. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: We shall have a discussion on this.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : That should be taken into consideration. It is a humanitarian issue and nothing has been done. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister wants to respond to this.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: What has been done in Kerala is mentioned in the Statement. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: It is mentioned in the Statement. You read it and we shall allow a discussion.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: If any more information is required, we will give it to the hon. Member. We have provided the relief and rescue facilities. We are taking steps to provide temporary shelter. And things are being done for permanent shelter also. This information is available in the Statement. If any more information is required, I will furnish that.

MR. SPEAKER: We shall discuss it.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : It is a question of human feelings. The poor people are not going to schools. Nothing has been done to rehabilitate them. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You have very justifiably raised a very great human issue. He has made a statement. If anything has to be discussed, we shall do that. I have already agreed to have a discussion on this.

Now we take up Item Number 7. Shri Jaipal Reddy may lay the statement on the Table of the House.
