

Title: Regarding loss of life and property due to heavy rains and landslides in Kerala.

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE (IDUKKI): Like it was mentioned in the morning, various parts of the country have been affected by heavy rains and consequent floods and landslides, causing large-scale loss of life and property, especially in Maharashtra and Kerala States.

In Maharashtra, nearly 1,000 people have died and in Kerala, the death toll has crossed 100. The damages and loss to houses and property, agricultural crops and other long-term losses are yet to be fully estimated by the States.

In Kerala State, more than 100 people have died and more than 12,000 houses have been destroyed. Seventy-two relief camps have been opened in which more than 13,000 people have been accommodated. The preliminary estimate of loss due to destruction of houses, standing crops, agricultural fields, roads, bridges, public buildings and other assets amounts to more than Rs. 50 crore. The Government of India should take the initiative to make a special study of disaster prone areas.

In the case of Mumbai, the financial capital of our country, for the last two weeks, life has been completely paralysed and there has been no activity at all. In Kerala also, in the hilly district of Idukki, there have been heavy landslides and several areas have been cut off. The small town of Munnar, a tourist centre which is known as Southern Kashmir, has been affected mostly by landslides. The Government of India should take an initiative to make a special study of these kinds of disasters and disaster prone areas and to come out with measures to check this in future.

In a calamity of this nature, the most affected is the agricultural sector. So, I would request the Government of India to enlarge the scope of the national agricultural insurance scheme. It should include all the cash crops and spices because in a State like Kerala, agriculture crops are the most affected, in a natural calamity like this. In this hour of extreme crisis, I would appeal to the Government to rush Central teams to all the affected States and areas. The Central Government should not wait for representations from the States because we need an on the spot assessment immediately and assistance, financial and otherwise, from the Central Government to help the States in order to tide over this crisis.