

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Wednesday, July 21, 2004/Asadha 30, 1926 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

(MR. SPEAKER in the Chair)

12.00 hrs.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

Drought Situation In Maharashtra

Title: Regarding drought situation in Maharashtra.

THE PRIME MINISTER (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH): Mr. Speaker Sir, in response to the issue raised by the hon. Members on the drought situation in Maharashtra, I had given an assurance that I would make a statement after studying the issue.

As far as Maharashtra is concerned, in 2003-04, the Government of Maharashtra had declared 71 talukas in 11 districts covering 28 per cent of the State, as drought affected. In accordance with established practice, assistance was considered and the State was found eligible for Rs.119.92 crore subject to adjustment of balances in the Calamity Relief Fund of the State. After such adjustment, made by the nodal Home Ministry, Rs.77.46 crore was released from the National Calamity Contingency Fund and four lakh tonnes of foodgrains valued at Rs.400 crore were also allocated to Maharashtra.

A Central team visited Maharashtra during 2nd to 5th April 2004 to assess further assistance required by the State Government. Based on its report, the State Government was found eligible for Rs.201.16 crore subject to adjustment of balances in the Calamity Relief fund. After adjustment to the Calamity Relief Fund, Rs.165.33 crore from the National Calamity Contingency Fund was released to the State on 3rd June 2004. Further, three lakh tonnes of foodgrains amounting to around Rs.300 crore were also released to the State on 2nd June 2004. The decision to sanction this amount was taken during the meeting of a Ministerial delegation from Maharashtra led by the Chief Minister, with me, on 28th May 2004. The total assistance given to the State for the drought of 2003-04 is Rs.208.14 crore towards Central share of Calamity Relief fund, Rs.242.79 crore from the National Calamity Contingency Fund and seven lakh tonnes of foodgrains amounting to Rs.700 crore.

Subsequently, the State Government submitted yet another memorandum seeking additional assistance of Rs.914.97 crore based on relaxation of norms. This memorandum was considered by the High Level Committee on 14th July 2004 for sanction from the National Calamity Contingency Fund. It has been decided that the issue of revising norms of assistance in the event of particularly prolonged calamities deserves to be considered for general application. A Committee consisting of representatives of Ministries concerned and Relief Commissioners of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa has been constituted for the purpose, with Agriculture Secretary as its Chairperson. The

Committee shall submit its recommendations to the High Level Committee shortly. If the Committee recommends high allocations, this would be considered positively.

As far as the status of monsoon in the current year is concerned, the cumulative rainfall during June 1 – July 14 2004, has been 264 mm. Compared to the normal of 291.8 mm. This means a deviation of ten per cent below normal. Out of the 36 meteorological subdivisions, 20 have received normal/excess rainfall, whereas in 16 subdivisions, the cumulative rainfall has been deficient/scanty.

Telengana and Rayalaseema regions of Andhra Pradesh, Vidharbha and Marathwada region in Maharashtra, Western Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Southern Punjab, Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand had so far rain deficiency ranging from 25 per cent to 51 per cent against the normal rain.

Ministry of Agriculture is keeping a close watch on the situation. Area Officers of the Ministry of Agriculture in charge of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab were instructed to visit these States and to assess the ground level situation and discuss with State Governments concerned on the preparation of contingency crop plan and its logistical details. The officers have also reviewed drought relief preparedness planning in these States.

Sir, the crop sowing season in all these States extends up to the end of July with delayed rainfall. The precise extent of unsown area can only be assessed after the end of July. Therefore, assessment for employment generation under the drought relief measures will be considered after the end of July. All State Governments have drawn up their plans to ensure drinking water supply in the areas affected by deficient or scanty rain in the eventuality of shortage of water.

I have also personally reviewed the situation with the Ministers and Secretaries concerned on 9th July, 2004 after which I asked the Cabinet Secretary to review the situation on a weekly basis. The first monitoring meeting was taken by the Cabinet Secretary on the 13th July and it was decided to increase stocks of foodgrains in areas deficient in rainfall. I would like to assure the Members that the Government shall spare no efforts in providing all possible assistance to people in the eventuality of a drought.

श्री अनंत गंगाराम गीते (रत्नागिरि) : अध्यक्ष जी, लगातार सूखे के कारण **â€** (व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: He has given an exhaustive statement.

श्री अनंत गंगाराम गीते : सर, हम प्रधान मंत्री जी को धन्यवाद दे रहे हैं। मैं सिर्फ एक मिनट बोलना चाहता हूँ। जो बयान प्रधान मंत्री जी ने सदन में दिया है, हम उसके लिए प्रधान मंत्री जी को धन्यवाद देना चाहते हैं। लेकिन लगातार सूखे के कारण पिछले वा महाराष्ट्र में जिन 235 किसानों द्वारा आत्महत्या की गई है, उसके बारे में एक भी सैन्टेंस प्रधान मंत्री जी के पूरे बयान में नहीं आया है। हम मांग करते हैं कि आंध्र प्रदेश में किसानों द्वारा आत्महत्या करने पर, जैसे प्रधान मंत्री जी आंध्र प्रदेश गये थे, वैसे ही प्रधान मंत्री जी महाराष्ट्र के किसानों द्वारा आत्महत्या करने के मामले में महाराष्ट्र का दौरा करें।**â€**

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. I would not allow anybody else.