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Title: Need to undertake immediate necessary measures to provide relief to the drought affected Palakkad district in Kerala.

SHRI P.K. BIJU (ALATHUR): Palakkad district in Kerala is facing one of the worst droughts in its history. Many parts of the district, particularly areas in Chittur taluk, are facing severe drinking water shortage. With dams and water bodies, including rivers such as the Bharathapuzha and Bhavani drying up, people are facing severe shortage of drinking water. The average temperature has crossed 40 degrees Celsius. There has been no rain in the district in the last four months has compounded the problem. Water level has gone down in the Malampuzha, Walayar, Chulliyar, Meenkara, and Pothundy reservoirs. Crops in 859 hectares were destroyed and another 4,822 hectares are facing drought-like situation. Paddy cultivation in the areas serviced by the Malampuzha and Pothundy irrigation projects had been affected badly. Till now loss to agriculture amounting to Rs. 68.23 crores has been estimated and the loss of paddy itself amounts to Rs. 31.42 crores. The State was to get 7.25 tmc ft water from the Parambikulam Aliyar Project (PAP]. But Tamil Nadu has released only 4.91 tmc feet water till February 28, 2013. Because of the non-availability of PAP share of water; the farmers are not able to begin farming activities for the second crop of paddy. Many parts of the district, particularly areas in Chittur taluk, are facing severe drinking water shortage.

I urge the Government to provide free seeds and fertiliser and other related facilities to the farmers for their next cropping. Free ration should be delivered immediately to the drought hit farmers. The crops of the farmers should be insured at the earliest. Also, steps should be taken for expeditious completion of drinking water and irrigation projects in the district.