

[English]

BILLS, AS PASSED BY RAJYA SABHA

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I lay on the Table the following two Bills, as passed by Rajya Sabha:-

- (1) The Indian Ports (Amendment) Bill, 1991
- (2) The Delhi High Court (Amendment) Bill, 1991.

13.06 hrs

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Situation Arising out of Earthquake in Hills of Western Uttar Pradesh

[English]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): Sir, I seek leave of the House to make a statement on the situation arising out of the recent earthquake in hills of Western Uttar Pradesh and the steps taken by the Government for rendering relief to the affected population.

An earthquake occurred in the very early hours of October 20, 1991 in the hills of Western Uttar Pradesh with epicentre of 30.75° North and 78.86° East having a magnitude of 6.6 on the Richter Scale. India Meteorological Department's seismological observatory at Delhi has recorded 58 after shocks till 28th November, 1991. It is quite likely that some more after shocks may still be recorded till the aftershock activity decays. However, there is already a perceptible decline in the number and magnitude of the after shocks.

Earthquake related damage depends on many factors and the magnitude of the

earthquake is only one of these factors. For example, the Indo-Burma Border earthquake of August 6, 1988 was of higher magnitude (7.2) as compared to the magnitude (6.5) of the Indo-Nepal Border earthquake of August 21, 1988. But the former caused no damage whereas the latter resulted in serious devastation. The resultant damage depends on the local depth, nature of soil, type of buildings and structures, population density and time of occurrence (night or day)

The impact of earthquake of 20th October, 1991 was felt more severely in Garhwal Region of Uttar Pradesh. Its impact, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Delhi. It caused extensive damage in the Districts of Uttarkashi, Tehri and Chamoli. It also caused some minor damage in the District of Nainital, Pauri Garhwal and Dehradun. Himachal Pradesh Government reported death of one person, injury to six persons, and some damage to three houses. The State Governments of Punjab, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Delhi did not report any damage.

The exact details of the damage especially to the property are still being assessed by the State Government of Uttar Pradesh. According to the latest information furnished by the State Government, 1819 villages were affected by this earthquake comprising population of 4.22 lakhs. About 90,000 houses have been damaged of which about 20,000 fully and 70,000 partially. 768 persons are reported to have lost their lives and 5,000 persons sustained about injuries in addition to loss of 3000 cattle heads.

Immediately on occurrence of the earthquake, the State Government officers were contacted to ascertain the position and also immediate central assistance required. A Central Reconnaissance Team also visited the affected areas on the 21st October, 1991 to have a first hand information about the impact, of the earthquake relief measures being undertaken by the State Government of Uttar Pradesh and immediate assistance required by them from the centre to meet the situation.

Keeping in view the extensive damage caused by the earthquake in Garhwal Region of Uttar Pradesh, the Prime Minister visited the affected areas on the 23rd October, 1991. I, myself along with senior officers of my Ministry also visited the affected areas on the 3rd November, 1991. Before that my colleague Shri Salman Khursheed, Union Deputy Minister of Commerce had also visited the affected areas.

Immediately on occurrence of the earthquake, the Committee of Secretaries reviewed the position on the 21st October, 1991 regarding relief measures and directions were given to all the concerned Ministries/Departments to provide the required assistance to the State Government concerning their sectors. The situation was regularly reviewed by the Cabinet Secretariat and the Prime Minister's Office. The Crisis Management Group functioning in the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation under the Chairmanship of Central Relief Commissioner continually reviewed the position regarding the action being taken by various Central Government Departments in rendering assistance to the Government of Uttar Pradesh. The State Government of Uttar Pradesh was kept informed of the decisions taken in the meetings so that necessary proposals and clarifications required from the State Government of Uttar Pradesh could be expedited.

The Hon'ble Members would appreciate that all concerned Central Government Ministries and Departments took this as a challenge and provided necessary assistance of war footing. Air Force made available 6 Chetak and 2 MIT helicopters for relief and rescue operations. Border Road Organisation repaired the damaged roads under their charge and made them motorable on priority basis. Ministry of Communications provided STD facilities to the affected areas in Uttar Pradesh on emergency basis. The also repaired all the nine damaged telephone exchanges and made them operational by 2nd November, 1991. Ministry of Food allocated additional quantities of

wheat and rice for distribution among the affected people. This allocation was over and above the allocation being made to the State Government under the public distribution system. The Ministry of Energy under took repairs of damaged transmission lines and made them functional on priority basis. Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas ensured adequate supply of petroleum products to the affected areas.

As the Hon. Members are aware, under the existing scheme of financing the relief expenditure which came into force with effect from the 1st April, 1990, a Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) has been constituted for each State which an allocated amount, of which 75% is contributed by the Central Government as a non-plan grant in four quarterly instalments and the balance 25% is contributed by the State Governments from their own resources. There is an annual allocation of Rs. 804 crores in the CRF consisting of Rs. 603 crores as central contribution and Rs. 201 crores States' contribution. There is an annual allocation of Rs. 90,00 crores to Uttar Pradesh under the CRF of which Rs. 67.50 crores is contributed by the Central Government. The Central Government had released first three instalments of the central share of the CRF to the State Government by September, 1991. The fourth instalment of Rs. 16.87 crores which was due to be released to the State Government in January, 1992 was released in advance on 24th October, 1991 to enable the State Government to undertake relief measures. In addition to Rs. 90.00 crore available under the CRF in 1991-92, the State Government was also left with unspent balance of Rs. 42.71 crores from the CRF of 1990-91. Thus, an amount of Rs. 133 crore was available to the State Government for meeting the expenditure on natural calamities during 1991-92.

In addition to the amount available under the CRF, the Union Government released Rs. 25.00 crores as Ways & Means advance, Rs. 6.51 crores under the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana for three severely affected districts of Uttarkashi, Tehri Garhwal and Chamoli, Rs. 5.80 crore have been released

as additional assistance under Indira Awas Yojana for construction and repair of houses in the earthquake affected areas. Rs.80.00 lakh have been sanctioned from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund and Rs. 8.00 lakh from the Indian People's Natural Calamities Trust (IPNCT).

The Prime Minister had announced assistance of Rs. 30 crore for reconstruction of houses in the affected areas through National Housing Bank. Out of this, Rs.10 crores have already been released to Uttar Pradesh State Agricultural and Rural Development Bank and Rs. 10.00 crore to HUDCO for construction of houses in the affected areas. The balance amount of Rs. 10.00 crore would be released by the National Housing Bank to the agency to be designated by the State Government.

The Uttar Pradesh Government is still working out sector-wise details of damage that took place. They estimated a damage of about Rs. 300 crore and wrote to Government of India on 1st November, 1991 for World Bank assistance. Secretary, agriculture, had already held preliminary discussions with World Bank officials and the request of the Uttar Pradesh Government has been lodged with the World Bank authorities. The Investigation Team of the World Bank is now visiting the affected areas to have first hand assessment of the ground situation. The Uttar Pradesh Government has been requested to expedite the project proposal so that matters regarding assistance from the World Bank could be expedited.

The magnitude of the problem is such that efforts being made by both Central and the State Governments can only partly mitigate the hardships the affected people are suffering. Assistance from various voluntary organisations has also been sought. A number of voluntary organisations are assisting in relief operations through Indian Red Cross Society, State Government of Uttar Pradesh and through their own channels. Relief articles comprising blankets, woollen garments, milk powder, high protein biscuits,

polythene sheets etc. valued of Rs. 73 lakhs was despatched through the Indian Red Cross Society.

Since this area is earthquake prone, adequate attention is being paid to the construction of houses which would withstand earthquakes in future. For this purpose, technical expertise from the Earthquake Engineering Department of Roorkee University and HUDCO have been pooled. HUDCO has also prepared an architectural design for the earthquake resistant houses to be built in that area. HUDCO is providing necessary assistance to the State Government for building of three centres at Uttarkashi, Tehri Garhwal and Chamoli and six sub-centres for proper technology transfer and assistance where building material would be fabricated which would quicken the pace of construction.

I would like to assure the House that Government of India would extend all possible assistance to Government of Uttar Pradesh to enable them to undertake rehabilitation measures in the affected areas. A Central Reconnaissance Team has visited Uttarkashi yesterday to take stock of the relief operations (*Interruptions*)

AN HON. MEMBER: How about the party team?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: I had sent a team from my Ministry with Mr. J.C. Pant as the Chairman and there are members from the State functionaries also in that team. They have taken decisions regarding the extent of debris and all that. They have come back now and they will be submitting their report to me.....(*Interruptions*)..... They have talked about all things. We will discuss about them.

MR. SEPUTY SPEAKER: Now the House will take up the next item. Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey.