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Title: Demand to provide adequate funding for renovation and restoration of Ashrukhola-Jora wetland in Odisha.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Sir, I would draw the attention of the Government to a very big stretch of wetland in my district and also in my adjoining district, Kendrapara. It relates to Ashrukhola-Jora, an ancient wetland. This natural wetland was the lifeline of the people living on both sides of these wetland, and was instrumental in providing livelihood to about more than a lakh of people through fisheries and agriculture, besides meeting all the domestic requirements of water. This wetland was famous as it was one of the longest fresh water wetlands in the State. Due to various factors of environmental degradation like siltation, complete stoppage of inflow of flood water due to closure of inlets, highly eutrophic conditions, weed infestation, and illegal conversion of land into agriculture fields, this wetland has since been degraded gradually in size, threatening the entire ecosystem. As a result, the utility potential of the wetland has been adversely affected and disappeared now. As a single flow water body, this wetland is now on the verge of extinction. Therefore, I would urge this Government to provide adequate funding for renovation and restoration of this memorable wetland called Ashrukhola.

I have also written to the hon. Minister concerned but I would draw the attention of the House towards this issue. As there is a programme of Wetland Development Authority which comes under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, I would urge upon this Government to take necessary steps. The Odisha Government

has already sent the proposal to the Union Government, and I would urge the Government to take the decisions expeditiously.