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Title: Regarding varikapudisala Lift Irrigation Project in Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI LAVU SRI KRISHNA DEVARAYALU (NARASARAOPET):

The country gradually acknowledges the acute water crisis affecting our major cities and towns in recent weeks. But today I will highlight a historically prevalent and perennial drought that has plagued the plateaus of Palnadu in Andhra Pradesh.

It was in 1952 that this region, eternally challenged by hilly terrain and high temperatures, was declared drought prone. The same year, the Varikapudisala Lift Irrigation Scheme was deemed most essential to resolve the shortage of drinking and irrigation water in Guntur district, particularly in the mandals of Karampudi, Durgi, Veldurthi, Bollapally and Pullelacheruvu.

I regret to inform you that 67 years later, the scheme is yet to see the light of the day. In 2008, the then Chief Minister of United Andhra Pradesh had made herculean efforts for the scheme, beginning at Gangalakunta. However, successive State Governments had pulled the plug on the visionary idea. As a result, more than 4,50,000 people have been reeling under distress without drinking water. Hence, 1,20,000 acres of land remain uncultivated.

This summer, almost 30 lakes and other water streams dried up. The Water level in the Nagarjuna Sagar Project has seriously depleted. Borewells were dug to a depth of 1200 feet to but to no avail.

The people of Palnadu Region need full support of the Central Government to help lift Krishna River water to a mammoth height of 80 to 100 feet and impound it into the Vajralapadu lake. I request the Ministry of Jal Shakti to help harness this water resource by way of Jal Shakti Abhiyans with much needed Central funding.

The lake water is to be supplied to over 90 villages by a main pipeline of 7.5km running through 10 acres of forest land, but the acquisition of forest land has been a bone of contention in the region. I request the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to coordinate with the State Forest Department for clearance and certification to realize the Varikapudisala Lift Irrigation Project.