

measures to control the recurrence of floods I would like to suggest to the Central Government to take up the matter with the Governments of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh to construct a dam on the Gahaggra river. Firstly, it will be helpful to check floods and secondly, the stored water will be used for irrigation.

**(vi) Need to check deforestation in Sunderbans area of West Bengal**

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL (Joynagar) Sir, Sunderbans area in West Bengal, bordering the Bay of Bengal, was once renowned for its Tiger Project and unique flora and fauna. But unfortunately, it has now fallen on bad days resulting from its deforestation. The bane of the whole problem is that the traders in timber with some local people who are poverty-ridden and ignorant of the resultant damage being caused to their forest wealth as a result of this deforestation are clandestinely getting the trees uprooted and carting them for being sold at a very high price.

It is high time that the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests responsible for the maintenance of the Tiger Project in Sunderbans and its guardian for ecological protection moves in the matter and puts an end to these nefarious trade practices and save the scenic forests from degradation.

Further, Sir, nature is also taking its own toll inasmuch as during the tide, the sand brought by it accumulates and spreads and ultimately uproots the trees. Since the Ministry is also responsible for the preservation of bio-sphere ecology in this region it is high time that it consults some experts and devises some effective measures to check that the sand does not uproot the trees but is utilised more gainfully and purposefully.

**(vii) Need to lay railway line between Chatra and Gaya, Bihar**

[Translation]

SHRI DHIRENDRA AGARWAL (Chatra) Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Chatra is a very backward district of Bihar which is about 80 km away from Gaya. In the absence of rail route, the people of this district feel difficulty to visit Gaya. Local people have been demanding construction of a rail line from Gaya to Chatra since long. A survey was conducted in this regard earlier but the construction work has not started yet. I am the people's representative of this district. The people of Chatra have urged me to ensure that Chatra is connected by a rail line at the earliest. This is an urgent matter of public interest. It will pave the way for development of this area.

I, therefore, urge upon the Central Government that District Headquarter Chatra should be connected by a rail line on the priority basis so that the development of the area can start.

14.23 hrs.

**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER**

**(i) Situation arising due to Kala-Azar in Bihar**

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : Mr Deputy-Speaker, Sir, Kala-azar is a major public health problem in the States of Bihar and West Bengal. It is spread by the sand fly vector which is predominantly seen in the Gangetic belt, especially to the north of Ganges.

During the current year upto the month of May 196 deaths are reported to have occurred due to Kala-azar in the State of Bihar as against 259 deaths reported in 1995 and 379 deaths reported in 1994. It may be mentioned that both in number of cases and in deaths Kala-azar has shown a declining trend since 1993 upto close of 1995 in the State of Bihar. There has however, been an increase in both cases and deaths over the period January to May, 1996 as compared to the same period last year.

Out of the 196 deaths due to Kala-azar, reported between January and May 1996, the worst affected districts have been Vaishali, Muzaffarpur, Samastipur, Madhubani, Sitamarhi and Darbhanga.

The increase in the number of the cases in Kala-azar during the first half of 1996 can be attributed to non-spraying of DDT according to the prescribed schedule and the fact that active house-to-house detection and treatment of cases was not carried out adequately.

Health is a State subject and the responsibility of preventing and controlling a disease rests essentially with the State Government. However, the Government of India in the form of a Central Sponsored Scheme provides insecticides and anti-Kala-azar drugs required for the control of this disease to the Government of Bihar. The Central Government further provides technical assistance to the State health authorities in the form of evaluation reports, training and offers guidance on strategies relevant to the situation. The implementation of the Kala-azar control programme nevertheless remains the responsibility of the State Government. This includes meeting the operational costs of insecticidal sprays, prompt detection and treatment of cases as well as meeting the expenditure on the staff component etc.

My Ministry has supplied 99,200 vials of Sodium Stibogluconate (SSG) and 10,000 vials of Pentamidine to the Government of Bihar during 1995-96 which constitute essential drugs for treatment of Kala-azar. Supply of another 50,000 vials of SSG and 10,000 vials of Pentamidine for the current year is in the pipeline. The State Government in their telephonic and written communications have not expressed any shortage of drugs. In addition, DDT has been supplied to the State for spraying operations. Our information is that 1,000 MT are available with the State for undertaking spraying operations. Further supplies will be made as per demand of the State Government whose confirmation is awaited.

The need for undertaking spray as per schedule, as well as house-to-house search and providing early treatment has been impressed on the Bihar Government repeatedly over 1994, 1995 and 1996. This has been further supported through meetings with the State officials both at Patna and at Delhi on different occasions including this year. An expert team was constituted on 28th May, 1996 for assessing the implementation of the Kala-azar control activities in Bihar and West Bengal. Although, the State Governments were asked to participate, Bihar State has asked for a postponement till August, 1996.

Sir, on the 9th of July, 1996, the Honourable Member from Bihar Shri Md. Ali Ashraf Fatmi met me in my office and requested me to see that an expert team visits the affected districts immediately to offer on-the-spot advice on the situation. Seeing the Member's concern and the problem that Bihar is facing, I immediately ordered a team of technical experts from the Directorate of National Malaria Eradication Programme, National Institute of Communicable Diseases and Indian Council of Medical Research to visit the affected districts of Bihar and offer such assistance as called for. These teams were despatched on 11th onwards and are working closely with the State Government but they will need a little time to give a complete report. We are in touch with them on a daily basis and they have been asked to render the maximum assistance to the State Wealth authorities.

The need of the hour is that the Government of Bihar undertake the spray operations and organise house-to-house search for detection of cases and arrange for their treatment. Our technical staff as well as the Expert Committee are at the disposal of the Bihar Government to support their efforts.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI (Darbhanga) : Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir just now the Hon'ble Minister has told that I had met him. Sir, DDT has not been sprayed out, it was not done to the required extent in the last year or this year.

Another thing, I would like to say is that he has mentioned that this medicine Pentamidine is available here but at the local level there is shortage of this medicine and the Doctors are using Pegijon. A vial is being sold in the black market at the rate of Rs. two hundred and fifty or Rs. three hundred, whereas its cost should be Rs. 10 only. I have come to know that this drug should not be utilized because this is a life saving drug. I would like to know from the Minister that if that medicine is usable then the Government should provide it and if that medicine is not to be used, then why it is being used there? If that is a life saving drug, then it should be used for other purpose only. Therefore, I would like to know from the Minister that if that medicine is required for the control of the disease Kala-azar, then it should be provided there and if it is not required, then necessary steps should be taken to check it.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR (Barh) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the answer given by the Minister just now seems to be beyond truth. Besides, the districts of North Bihar and Central Bihar are also affected by Kala-azar. In my constituency, there is a village Badpur under district Patna, where I myself have met the families of the people who have died due to Kala-azar. We have seen that eight-ten people have died of Kala-azar and several people are still afflicted with this ailment. Medicines are not available there, spraying of D.D.T. is also not being carried out. Now you have said that the D.D.T. is available in adequate quality. Nothing to worry about. The truth has been revealed by Fatmi Jee. If medicine is available, and spraying of DDT is also being carried out, then why the disease is not being controlled. You have said in your reply that the intensity of the disease is declining. But why the disease is not coming under control? The official data collected from lower level have nothing to do with reality. The reality is not the same as projected by data. The situation is very horrible. People in large number are suffering from Kala-azar. Everybody knows what is the situation in his constituency irrespective of whether the Minister is present here or not. All know that there is a dearth of funds at state level, there is no dearth of staff. Staff do not have any work and they cannot do even the available work. We are not going to have excuse of having shortage of staff or technical expertise. But it is a reality that there is a shortage of funds, DDT and medicine. Why do not you arrange it? I agree that it is a state subject but all people are citizens of India. If you have DDT then you arrange it and send it. If we indulge in talking about the duty of State Government and that of Union Government, then the humanity afflicted with it will not get a relief. We will urge upon you that you should personally visit the area and take stock of the situation. If it is published in newspaper that Mr. Minister is coming to meet the Kala-azar afflicted people and you are not scared of meeting such people, then such people will come to meet you.

KUMARI MAMTA BANERJEE (Calcutta-South):  
Go for the surprise visit.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : You must intimate before going there. This is a state matter, how could I say that you go on surprise visit. Go and have on the spot study. If despite this, it appears to you that everything is okay, then only God can save us. So far as I know the situation is not good and it is not under control. I pray to you that whatever help is possible from here should be made available to the people so that their treatment could become possible and the Kala-azar could be controlled. We should go for advance spraying of DDT in the Kala-azar affected areas. Otherwise after it has broken out DDT is not effective. Therefore, we should go for its sprinkling in advance. Thus its arrangement should be made on both the fronts. As far as it appears to me, the Central Government should extend its assistance exclusively for this. The Government should launch a Kala-azar eradication programme along the pattern of Malaria eradication programme and this should be hundred percent centrally sponsored programme. If this happens, only then this problem can be solved.

PROF RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer): Mr. Speaker, Sir, in what connection you had given directive to the Government that it should deliver a statement in regard to the Kala-azar disease. This disease is spreading out in epidemic form. Every year thousands of people fell prey to it. And every year we are given the same statement that the medicines from the Central Government have not reached and this disease is still spreading like a monster. Five to seven years have elapsed ever since I have become member of Parliament and every year hon. Minister's Statement is delivered here or a special statement comes later on but it makes no difference to the situation. Why not appropriate measures are taken in order to check its recurrence in the state like Bihar where thousands die of Kala-azar. If various other programmes for the eradication of different diseases can be launched by the Government in order to check those diseases, then why a special programme cannot be launched for checking the dreaded disease like Kala-azar.

The Government of Bihar should be given special assistance so that the disease could be eradicated like Malaria and the people of Bihar could be saved from untimely falling prey to this disease. The Government of Bihar has written to you. A team of experts has gone there. Who have said that the Government should send those medicines as a mark of precaution and it should be ensured that these medicines are being properly utilized and delivered at the appropriate place. Whether the doctors, employees of Primary health centre or sub-health clinic are making available these medicines to the

village people should also be ensured. This is my request to you.

SHRI SATYAPAL JAIN (Chandigarh) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the statement given by hon'ble Minister just now in the House, comparative figures have been given in regard to the last 2-3 years as to how many people have died, whether this number is more or less. I want to bring to your notice only a small matter. This disease normally attacks in this region only. Sometimes less area is affected by this disease and some other time more area are affected. After the break out of the disease it is said that the medicines have been sent and so many people have died and this much number of people have survived. This thing comes up. I want to ask one thing specifically as to what preventive steps have been taken by the Government in order to check its spreadout and whether the committee constituted for the purpose has submitted its report. If this does not happen, then to say that so many people died or survived is not going to serve the purpose. If your say that 295 people died last year and 195 died this year and so, there is improvement in the situation. But, even if one person dies, then action should be taken. You said that the Government of Bihar has been asked to take some steps. My request in this connection is that the concerned Minister should personally talk to the Government of Bihar. There is no question of success or failure of the central Government or state Government. The question is how to save human life, the Government should take steps on war footing so that people's lives could be saved.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY (Chapra) : We have got informations through newspapers and the proceedings of this House that 70-75 people have died in the Vaishali district. Such an information is also being received from my Parliamentary constituency, Chapra.

Sir, we are noticing over the last few years that when epidemic of Kala-azar breaks out only then the House initiates discussion over it. Often it is said that the medicines are being sent and spraying of DDT is being made. I would like to ask from the hon. Minister as the epidemic of Kala-azar is continuously increasing whether Research institute or National institute of immunology is investigating it particularly whether any success has been achieved in regard to this disease? Whether any research has been carried out by your department or by the National Institute of Immunology for the development of vaccine, so that we could assume that the local medicines or imported drug will be available within 1-2 years. Whether the Government is taking action in this regard?

KUMARI MAMTA BANERJEE : Mr. Deputy Speaker, sir, the disease of Kala-azar is spreading

in Bihar over the last 3-4 years. We raise this issue every year. Even the World Health Organization has admitted that the disease like Kala-azar, Thalesemia and malignent Malaria often occur in the eastern region and in the border areas of Bihar and West Bengal. It is said in the House that medicines are being sent. This should be a continuous process and precautionary measures should also be taken. I want to bring one more thing to the notice of hon. Minister. The medicines that you send.

[English]

The State Government are using the medicines after the expiry date. It is very bad. In my State last year, three children died because the medicine used in the vaccination was after the expiry date. May I request the hon. Minister to get in touch with the World Health Organisation to see that the needful is done in the matter because they are helping many developing countries in the eradication of this disease?

[Translation]

The cost of injection for Thalesemia, Kala-Azar and Malignent, malaria is more than Rs 400/-. This Pentamedine injection is given to children once a month but its price has gone up by Rs 900/-. It has become very difficult now.

[English]

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura) : It costs rupees one hundred. I am telling about the malignant malaria. (Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMTA BANERJEE : It is not that. Now I am telling you about *thalasemia*. Malignant malaria is different. I have already told about malignant malaria. Now I am telling about *thalasemia*. The point is the one *desferial* injection cost Rs 450/-. Two such injections are needed in a month. If an employee earns Rs 1000/- a month, for getting two injection for his child, he has to spend Rs 900/-. The question is, How will he spend Rs 900/- for the injections to administered to his child? Kala-azar, malignant malaria and *thalasemia* are serious diseases. I request the hon. Minister to look into the matter, review it and reduce the prices of the medicines so that the poor people can get the medicines. He can even arrange to supply preventive medicines for this particular disease so that poor people will not suffer.

[Translation]

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER : This statement was under rule 372 in which permission is not granted for putting question but as this is a very serious matter therefore as a special case, I have allowed five hon'ble members. If the Minister wants to say anything then he may say.

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR SINGH (Aurangabad) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, This is a serious matter. This disease is caused among the poor people because they sleep on the ground. This injection of Pentamedine is very costly and is not available, so the arrangement for this should be made. The third thing is that the spraying of DDT has become ineffective. The Mosquitoes got killed in the initial spraying but later sprayings did not have any effect. I therefore urge that, either a research should be conducted on this or some other solution should be found out.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Whether the Hon'ble Minister would like to say anything?

SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I very well, understand the anxiety and problem of the hon'ble members because the reality is that here people are dying of kala-azar and we should adopt measures to check it. As I have told earlier some members have not understood my statement properly and I would like to inform Mr. Nitish Kumar, through you, that I have not said that it is confined to this region. I had told that these are the worst affected areas and the names of these 4-5 areas have been mentioned. I had also not told that the number of persons dying due to these diseases is decreasing. This number had gone down for two years but this year it is increasing. Therefore, we are adopting some measures regarding this. I am trying to send an expert committee from here so that this problem could be controlled at the earliest. I would also like to say that some measures are taken by the Centre and some, the State Government has to take. This disease has two aspects. The preventive one can be tackled by spraying DDT and after that S S G and thereafter it can be treated by Pentamedine. The Hon'ble Member Shri Fatmiji has brought this matter to the notice of the Government. I have sent a team there in this regard and after we receive its report, I assure the House that we will take action on war footing. It shall be our endeavour to prevent it fully so that it may not spread further.

SHRI KRISHNA LAL SHARMA (Outer Delhi) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to mention about two tragic incidents. The one is that in Maha Kaleshwar temple of Ujjain.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER : This has already been mentioned in the morning.

SHRI KRISHNA LAL SHARMA : If this has been mentioned it is fine. Whether the Government has given any statement over it?

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER : No statement has come.

SHRI KRISHNA LAL SHARMA : I think it is good if any statement comes from the Government. The

reason for it was that at both these places i.e. in Ujjain and Haridwar adequate arrangements were not made. So, the Government should give a statement that on such occasion when large number of people have gathered, why proper arrangements are not made? If it has any information regarding Ujjain, then Government should come out with a statement 13 person have died in Haridwar Today was the day of taking holybath on the occasion of Somvati Amavasya. 13 persons were drowned due to stampede in the crowd The arrangement that was made was not proper. The bamboos which were erected at Mahabaleswar were so weak that people succumbed to their injuries, caused by these I want that the Government should inquire into this matter so that on such religious occasions when people visit these place in large number and die, occurrence of such accidents should be stopped and the Government should give a detailed statement on this

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER The Government should make a statemnt tomorrow on both these incidents.

DR MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI (Allahabad) Mr Deputy Speaker sir, Uttar Pradesh is at present under President's rule Therefore it is the overall responsibility of the Central Government that the arrangements made at these places should be thoroughly inquired into and full information regarding the cause of the accident and the details of the action taken against the officers found guilty of mismanagement should be given to the House

DEFENCE MINISTER (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV) Sir, the incidents at Haridwar and Ujjain have been very tragic In this regard, the questions asked by hon'ble Mr Joshi and the other members, will be referred to the Governor of Uttar Pradesh and will be requested to make available information regarding cause of accident and negligence on the part of officers Whatever help is required will be provided The same process will be followed in case of Ujjain

14.46 hrs.

#### DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

##### Steep Pre-budget hike in the administered prices of Petrol, LPG, Diesel and other petroleum products—contd.

[English]

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER The House shall now resume Discussion under Rule 193 Shri E. Ahmed to continue his speech

SHRI E. AHAMED (Manjari) Mr Deputy-Speaker, Sir, as I said other day, the decision of the

Government to hike the price of petroleum products has put the people into great hardship and difficulty And I express here the sense of resentment on behalf of the people who are to suffer due to this unprecedented hike in the prices of petroleum products

I am sorry to say that the popular Government under the leadership of Shri H.D. Deve Gowda has been forced to take an unpopular decision so soon which, I should say, should have been avoided. The Government may have to go around justifying that 25 to 30 per cent hike in prices was inevitable and it would also mop up for the Government additional resources to the tune of Rs. 8,000 crore during the remaining nine months of the current financial year. The additional resources mobilisation in the full year will be more than Rs 18,000 crores taking into account the Excise Duty, Sales Tax etc

I am very much concerned because this hike would definitely result in raising the prices of essential commodities. We had that experience The last price hike of LPG was effected in January 1994 and for other petroleum products like petrol and diesel the price hike was effected in February 1994. So on a perusal of the consumer price index then prevailing in the country before and after the price hike of the petroleum products last time, you would know that there was a steep rise in the prices of essential commodities.

For expamle, Sir, prior to the hike in 1993, from July to December, the pre-hike period being increased in consumer products based on the consumer price index was 11 points But after the price hike of the petroleum products in 1994 January for LPG and February for petrol, the increase during February and July 1994 was 16 points So, this is what is going to happen in this, as a result of the present hike in Price of petroleum commodities also. So, this increase in the essential commodities which we are going to face within a few months in future will definitely put an additional burden on the common man.

It is on this basis, sir, that I would request the Government to reconsider their decision of hiking the prices too steep from 25 per cent to 30 per cent in the petroleum pducts

Sir, there are certain things I would like to observe which have resulted by this hike in the price of petroleum products. We are to take some steps to control the consumption of the oil But unfortunately, our consumption is growing and growing every year And, it is also seen that during 1994-95 the consumption of petroleum products was 65.5 million tonnes showing a growth rate of 7.7 per cent over the previous year In 1991-92, the growth rate in consumptions of petroleum products was 3.5 per cent, in 1992-93 it was 2.4 per cent and in 1995-