

Title: Regarding damages caused by devastating floods in several parts of the country and particularly in West Bengal.

12.08 hrs.

RE: FLOODS IN SEVERAL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): Mr. Speaker Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the hon. Members of this august House to a serious situation that has arisen in West Bengal after the devastating floods that we had in September this year. I am sure, the House will not treat it as a party matter because it concerns over two crores of people who have been very seriously affected by these floods.

The hon. Minister for Agriculture had taken the trouble - we are grateful to him - to have gone there during the floods, seen for himself and openly stated that the situation was extremely grave and required help from every quarter. He of course also assured help from the Central Government.

Nine out of seventeen districts of the State have been affected. The people who have been affected are over 2.18 crores; the standing crops damaged are over 19.20 lakh hectares; lives lost are 1320; houses damaged in the rural areas are about two lakhs costing about Rs.438 crore. The Central Teams had also gone there. The total damage that has been assessed by the State Government is over Rs.5660 crore. The State Government, it is known, has spent about Rs.590 crore out of its own resources already.

You are aware that the Eleventh Finance Commission has said that a new Fund called the Natural Calamity Contingency Fund has to be created. Under the previous Fund, Rs.110 crore was receivable by us and that has been received. Shri Patil has recently been there. But, that has been totally inadequate.

I cannot blame the Minister of Agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture can only disburse the amount after he gets them. But they have said that they have no money and there is no budgetary provision. They have written a letter saying that the State Government should spend out of its own funds. I can understand the agony of Shri Nitish Kumar also.

What is to be done? On our claiming of about Rs.1580 crore, we have been given credit for whatever has been received. The former Chief Minister of West Bengal had made a personal request to the Prime Minister for even passing an ordinance for the purpose of constituting this Contingency Fund in terms of the recommendation of the Eleventh Finance Commission. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I have not called you. I have recognised only Shri Somnath Chatterjee.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Now the plea is, without that Fund nothing can be done.

Special assistance has been provided. We are happy that, when other States faced such a calamity, we discharged our duty in this House in supporting the demands of different States. Andhra Pradesh had to face a critical situation. The people of Arunachal Pradesh also faced a similar situation. Of course, in the case of Orissa, the entire country rose to support it. Therefore, it is not a party matter. We have done our humble bit whenever different parts of the country faced such a situation. But, unfortunately, only in the case of West Bengal, it is not done. Bihar is also facing a similar problem. Such a calamity can happen anywhere at any moment. If Government of India says that it is the obligation of only the State Government to meet the expenses out of its own funds, then it is denial of minimum rights of the citizens of this country to be protected or to be given relief and restoration work to be done for the people affected by flood or other natural calamities. Therefore, not a single paisa of extra assistance has been given.

I am demanding that the Government should immediately release funds for which repeated reminders and requests have been made. Today, not only Members of Parliament of West Bengal from the Left Front had staged a demonstration but I am happy to say that many leaders of other parties also attended and extended their support to it. I am thankful to the Congress Party, Shri Sharad Pawar, Shri Chandra Shekhar and the Samajwadi Party - almost all of them - who had supported us and it was our unanimous demand. I am going to meet the hon. Prime Minister in this regard. As I said in the beginning, I am appealing to you not to treat it as a party matter. It is a human matter; it is a human suffering and human misery. It just cannot be discriminated against. We have not protested against release of funds for the farmers in Punjab or Haryana. We had said that if assistance is needed, it should be given. But that does not mean that different treatments should be given to different States on the basis of considerations other than merit. Therefore, through you, I call upon the Government to immediately send assistance for the purpose of meeting the expenses of relief, reconstruction and restoration work which are vitally needed in West Bengal. This is my demand. We are going to meet the hon. Prime Minister. Sir, I hope that he will also respond favourably. But it is the duty of the Government also and I appeal to all sections of the House to stand by the unfortunate people of West Bengal.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Sudip Bandyopadhyay and Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi may associate themselves with what Shri Somnath Chatterjee has said just now.

...(Interruptions)

डा. रघुवंश प्रसाद सिंह (वैशाली) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, बिहार को एक पैसा भी सहायता के तौर पर नहीं दिया गया। (व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय: रघुवंश बाबू, आप बैठिए।

वे (व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: This will not go on record.

(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Sudip Bandyopadhyay and Shri Dasmunsi can also associate themselves with what Shri Somnath Chatterjee has said on this subject.

...(Interruptions)

* Not Recorded

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY (CALCUTTA NORTH WEST): Sir, there was a devastating flood in West Bengal causing damage of lives and property of millions of people.

We still believe that the Eastern Region, and in particular Bengal, is the worst sufferer of regional imbalance since Independence. Each one of us is well aware of it. What happened this time? The flood caused damages, as mentioned by Shri Somnath Chatterjee. I do not want to go into the details of figures but there is no doubt that the hon. Minister for Agriculture flew to Calcutta and met the Chief Minister at his residence.

He discussed in detail with the officers. Naturally, the expectations went up to a certain extent that the Central assistance should go to that State now. We, on behalf of our party, certainly make a demand for more assistance....(Interruptions) I have something to mention. I will take two or three more minutes....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have got forty notices with me. Please understand it.

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY : Sir, my notice is also there. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please see the anxiety of the other hon. Members also.

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY : Let me finish my version. We certainly make a demand for more assistance.

I want to make a last point. The flood caused this time was a man-made flood....(Interruptions) I want to say that this was a man-made flood. I want to mention about the release of flood water. The release of flood water went up to 2,23,000 cusecs in one day. This is the failure of the Government....(Interruptions) This was a man-made flood. I want to give a report of the Central Water Commission.

So, I demand that the causes of floods have to be investigated. It is not a casual matter. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is a serious issue. Please understand it.

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY : As I said earlier, the cause of the flood has to be investigated. The flood was a man-made one. It is the fault of the Government because they released the water without any intimation. ...(Interruptions) Sir, I have not finished my speech yet.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ): Sir, it is not a casual issue....(Interruptions)

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY: I will finish it in a minute. The State Government is to be condemned. It is because of the fault of the State Government that millions of acres of land, property worth crores of rupees have been lost and several lives have also been lost.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, through you, I want to convey to the House one thing. I request the House not to take the incident of the recent flood in West Bengal casually. This is an unprecedented one. Human lives,

property, road and infrastructure - all these were destroyed. One of the major districts where things have been reduced to ashes is Murshidabad whose Member of Parliament Shri Adhir Chowdhary, is present here.

I would like to convey to the House that the damage caused due to this flood has not been addressed properly. The Government of India has not even responded to this issue even meagrely. I must say without scoring any political point that had there been enough outstanding planning and vision to protect the catchment areas, had there been any vision about the Master Plan long back, the West Bengal Government could have prevented this disaster substantially and objectively....*(Interruptions)* The Government did not give enough funds. It lacked certain things. Even the party people also told me about this. In Birbhum, Murshidabad and Nadia, the river bed was so high. In respect of the barrages of Mayurakshi, Tilpara and Kansawathy, they did not even give the signal that water is flowing above the danger level. This brought the human tragedy. We did cooperate with every one. I would have been grateful if the hon. Prime Minister had gone to West Bengal to see the plight for himself. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition had gone there. So, I sincerely demand, without bringing party politics into the picture, that the Government of India must ensure a substantial package immediately for West Bengal and thereafter to our people....*(Interruptions)* Shri Adhir Chowdhary is the main victim of the entire flood.

MR. SPEAKER: He can also associate with the other hon. Members. Now, the hon. Minister to reply.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: This is not a debate. This is the 'Zero Hour'. I cannot accommodate all the Members during the 'Zero Hour'. Please understand it. Now, the hon. Minister to reply.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Are you not interested in his reply?

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY (BERHAMPORE, WEST BENGAL): Sir, let me have the opportunity to speak.

MR. SPEAKER: No. This is not a debate. Please understand it.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You have not given any notice. Please understand it.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY : I have already given a notice to speak about the real plight of the people. My point is that both the Central and the State Governments are responsible for this flood.*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Adhir Chowdhary, you have not given any notice.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I have the list of the Members. Should I call them or not?

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing should go on record except the reply of the Minister.

*(Interruptions)**

*** Not Recorded**

अध्यक्ष महोदय : यह अच्छा नहीं है। आप क्या कर रहे हैं?

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Shri Adhir Chowdhary is from that area. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing should go on record except the reply of the Minister.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please take your seats. It is unfortunate that you are politicising the issue.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I am also requesting the leaders of the parties to control their respective members. Everything is being politicised. Even the issue of national calamity is being politicised.

Now, the Minister.

...(Interruptions)

कृषि मंत्री (श्री नीतीश कुमार) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, पश्चिम बंगाल में बाढ़ से हुई क्षति और उसके बाद की स्थिति की चर्चा अभी सदन में कतिपय माननीय सदस्यों ने की है। माननीय सदस्यों ने स्वयं इस बात का उल्लेख किया है कि जब वहां बाढ़ से भीषण तबाही हुई तो यहां से स्थिति का जायजा लेने के लिए केन्द्रीय टीम भेजी गई और उसके बाद प्रधान मंत्री जी के निर्देशानुसार मैं स्वयं वहां गया था। वहां की स्थिति का आकलन मैंने स्वयं भी किया और जो कुछ भी वहां की स्थिति मैंने देखी, उसके बारे में वहां भी मैंने सार्वजनिक रूप से कहा था और आकर माननीय प्रधान मंत्री जी को भी हमने पूरी स्थिति से अवगत कराया। पश्चिम बंगाल में बाढ़ की स्थिति से भारी क्षति हुई है और इस बात से इंकार नहीं किया जा सकता है कि राज्य सरकार के साथ भी बैठकर चर्चा हुई थी। अन्य राजनीतिक दलों के प्रतिनिधियों ने भी अपनी बात कही थी और उन्होंने लिख कर भी कुछ दिया था और मौखिक तौर पर भी बात कही थी। सभी बातों का उल्लेख करते हुए जो कुछ नुकसान हुआ है, फसल का नुकसान, इनफ्रास्ट्रक्चर का नुकसान, सड़कों का नुकसान, लोगों के मकानों का नुकसान बड़े पैमाने पर हुआ था। इसी स्थिति को देखते हुए तत्काल जो कुछ भी उपलब्ध था कैलेमिटी रिलीफ फंड का वह पूरा का पूरा पैसा रिलीज किया गया। **â€¦ (व्यवधान)** पूरी बात सुन लीजिए। अभी बिहार की बात नहीं कर रहा हूं, पश्चिम बंगाल की बात कर रहा हूं।

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Only the Minister's reply would go on record.

(Interruptions)*

श्री नीतीश कुमार : भाण तो हम सभी देते हैं। यह लोक सभा भाण देने की ही जगह है, किसी दूसरे काम की जगह नहीं है। यहां भाण ही दिया जाता है और कुछ नहीं किया जाता है। अगर आपकी लोक सभा के बारे में कोई और राय है कि यहां भाण के अलावा कोई और काम होता है तो बात दूसरी है।

डॉ. रघुवंश प्रसाद सिंह (वैशाली) : भाण तो हम लोग देंगे, आप लोग पैसा देंगे।

श्री नीतीश कुमार : पैसा भी देंगे। ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, are you not interested in listening to the reply of the Minister?

...(Interruptions)

श्री नीतीश कुमार : रघुवंश जी चाहेंगे तो उनका बात का भी हम जवाब देंगे लेकिन पूरी बात सुन तो लीजिए। पश्चिम बंगाल के बारे में मैं बता रहा हूं। **â€¦ (व्यवधान)**

डॉ. रघुवंश प्रसाद सिंह (वैशाली) : पहले कहा था कि इसके लिए एक ऐक्ट बनेगा और पैसा मिलेगा। वह ऐक्ट नहीं बना और कोई पैसा नहीं मिला। **â€¦ (व्यवधान)**

श्री नीतीश कुमार : अध्यक्ष महोदय, पश्चिम बंगाल में 2000-2001 का कैलेमिटी रिलीफ फंड में सेंटर शेयर रु.75.83 करोड़ पूरा रिलीज किया गया है।

An amount of Rs.422.43 crore has been released as revenue deficit grant. Upto 20 per cent of the Fund released under Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) can be spent on Sub-Mission projects/schemes. 50 drilling rigs are available in the State for Rural Water Supply Programme. During current year, against the allocation of Rs. 78.95 crore under Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme, first instalment of Rs.38.90 crore has been released. Further under ongoing Sub-Mission Projects, a sum of Rs.20 crore has been released.

Then, damaged Railway lines have already been restored for passenger as well as freight trains. An additional allocation of 87,080 tonnes of rice at BPL

* Not Recorded

rates have been made for distribution to flood affected families at the rate of 20 kg. per family.

The National Highways No.31, 34 and 35 have been restored to the traffic with effect from 06.10.2000. An amount of Rs.7 crore has been released to take up emergent repair of flood damages.

Then, 10,000 kilo litres of kerosene oil have been dispatched to the State Government. Disinfectants and other medicines have been supplied by the Department of Health including 1,000 tonnes of bleaching powder.

...(Interruptions)

सेंट्रल टीम गठित की गई है। उसकी रिपोर्ट आने के बाद जो कुछ भी केन्द्र सरकार समझेगी वह कार्रवाई करेगी।

अध्यक्ष महोदय, माननीय सदस्यों ने जो कुछ प्रश्न अभी तक उठाए, उनका उत्तर देने का मैंने प्रयास किया है। ..व्यवधान.

1228 hour

(At this stage, Shri Ajoy Chakraborty and some other hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.)

...(Interruptions)

1229 hours

(At this stage, Shri Adhir Chowdhary and some other hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.)

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please go to your seats. I am appealing to you.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please go to your seats first.

...(Interruptions)

श्री रघुनाथ झा (गोपालगंज) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, बी.सी.सी.एल. के अध्यक्ष व प्रबंध निदेशक बालसामी ऐकला तथा संस्थान के चार वरिष्ठ पदाधिकारियों के घर सी.बी.आई. ने छापे मारे। **व्यवधान**

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing should go on record, except Shri Raghunath Jha's submission.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER: What is your *modus-operandi*? I do not understand this. When the hon. Minister was replying you were not yielding and you were making noise. What is this?

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please go to your seats first. You cannot raise matters like this standing in the Well of the House.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I am appealing to you. Please go to your seats.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: We cannot conduct the House like this.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing should go on record.

*(Interruptions) **

1232 hours

(At this stage, Shri Paban Singh Ghatowar and some other hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.)

MR. SPEAKER: Your leader has raised the matter. I have asked the hon. Minister to give a reply. He has replied too and now you are stalling the proceedings of the House.

...(Interruptions)

* Not Recorded

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Rupchand Pal, please ask your Members to resume their seats. This is not the proper way to raise matters in the House.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please hear me first. If you are not satisfied with the reply, you can seek clarifications from the hon. Minister, but not like this.

...(Interruptions)

1233 hours

(At this stage, Shri Ajoy Chakraborty, Shri Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Shri Paban Singh Ghatowar and some other hon. Members

went back to their seats.)

MR. SPEAKER: Please understand, there are a number of issues to be raised in the House.

श्री मदन लाल खुराना (दिल्ली सदर) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, हम चाहेंगे कि शहरी विकास मंत्री जी दिल्ली के बारे में एक स्टेटमेंट दें। (व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat, I have called Shri Raghunath Jha.
