

1602 hours

**Title:** Regarding situation caused by severe earthquake in Gujarat, on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2001.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, we shall take up item no. 6 – Statement by the hon. Minister.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): Sir, I seek the leave of the House to make a statement on the situation caused by the severe earthquake on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2001 which severely affected many parts of Gujarat.

A severe earthquake of the magnitude of 6.9 on the Richter scale occurred at 0846 hours on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2001 with epicentre at 20 Kms. North-East of Bhuj. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has sought the leave of the House to make a statement. The leave of the House has to be granted and then he has to make the statement. Sir, he is saying: "I seek the leave of the House" ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: It has already been circulated. It is already there in the List of Business.

...(*Interruptions*)

श्री नीतीश कुमार : परमीशन है तभी बोल रहा हूँ।

कुंवर अखिलेश सिंह (महाराजगंज, उ.प्र.) : हिन्दी प्रदेश के होते हुए आप अंग्रेजी में बोल रहे हैं।

वेद ( ब्यवधान)

श्री नीतीश कुमार : जब आप यहां बैठते थे तो क्या दूसरा काम करते थे।

डॉ. रघुवंश प्रसाद सिंह (वैशाली) : जैसा आप कर रहे हैं, वैसा हमने कभी नहीं किया। वेद ( ब्यवधान)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please do not interrupt directly.

**SHRI NITISH KUMAR:** Sir, the impact of earthquake had been felt in various parts of the country. Gujarat has been affected very severely, causing colossal loss of human lives and property. The after-shocks are still continuing. The Government of Gujarat and the Central Government have responded immediately to this unprecedented disaster and, with the help of Armed and Para-Military Forces and other concerned Departments and Authorities, States, NGOs, Voluntary Organisations, have launched massive emergency operations for rescue and relief. Over 23,500 Army troops and 3,000 Para-Military Force personnel were deployed with the medical and engineering teams and equipment. The Air Force deployed 48 aircraft including helicopters and carried over 950 sorties for evacuating injured people and for carrying relief, teams, equipment and material. Navy also made available three ships, and two ships were converted into hospitals.

An *ad hoc* assistance of Rs. 500 crore, as announced by the Prime Minister has been released to the Government of Gujarat on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2001.

The Central Government also provided financial concessions and relaxation for relief. RBI relaxed over draft norms, advised banks for conversion and rescheduling of loan and to provide additional need based crop loans, working capital and consumption loan. All relief material was exempted from customs/excise duty and 100 per cent income tax exemption on donations to charitable institutions and PM/CM Relief Fund was announced. Inland Air travel tax was exempted and the relief material was transported free of cost by the Air Force, the Indian Airlines and the Air India. The world community have offered their assistance as solidarity for the people affected by the earthquake and the same has been appreciated by the Government of India and accepted gratefully as per the policy. This assistance has been in cash, relief material, medicine, medical teams and search and rescue teams. The response of the people of the country, the State Governments and the Indians abroad has been overwhelming. The National

Crisis Management Committee under the chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary has been supervising and co-ordinating the relief activities with the Department of Agriculture and Co-operation as the nodal Department for the follow-up.

The Prime Minister, keeping in view the magnitude and impact of the calamity, and to further provide ministerial support and direction to the efforts at official level, has set up an Empowered Group of Ministers comprising of the Home Minister, the Railway Minister, the Defence Minister, the Agriculture Minister, the Communication Minister, the Power Minister, the Textiles Minister, the Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Minister, the Finance Minister, the Health and Family Welfare Minister, the Rural Development Minister, the Information and Broadcasting

Minister and the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (MIRYALGUDA): Shri Nitish Kumar, nobody is left out. Therefore, there is no co-ordination.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): At least, is it better than GoM?

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: This is Empowered GoM.

The Empowered Group of Ministers has held a number of meetings to review the situation.

The Prime Minister held a meeting with the leaders of the Parties and Groups on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2001. In the aforesaid meeting a presentation was made on the intensity and impact of the earthquake, damages caused to life and property and the emergency relief and rescue operations launched by the Central Government in association with the State Government. As a follow-up of the meeting held on 3.2.2001, an all-party National Committee on Disaster Management under the Chairmanship of the hon. Prime Minister has been set up with a view to suggest short-term, medium-term and long-term steps for relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in the earthquake affected areas of Gujarat, deliberate on the necessary institutional and legislative measures needed for an effective and long-term strategy to deal with natural calamities and to look into the parameters for defining a "National Calamity".

The Prime Minister, the Home Minister, the Defence Minister, the Health Minister, the I&B Minister, the Minister for Law and Shipping, the Urban Development Minister, the Power Minister, the Youth Affairs and Sports Minister, as also other Ministers, and myself have visited the earthquake affected areas. This has helped in energizing and activating the official machinery not only to function at its optimum level but also to maintain it. The Government of Gujarat has also divided the earthquake-affected areas into different zones and these are being supervised by senior officers.

As per reports received from the State Government, more than 19,000 people have been declared dead and about 1.67 lakh have been injured. About 1.59 crore population in 7904 villages in 182 Talukas spread over 21 districts have been affected by the earthquake. 1.65 lakh Pucca houses, 1.63 lakh Kuchcha houses and about 16,000 huts have been fully destroyed and 4.60 lakh Pucca houses and 3.15 lakh Kuchcha houses and about 32,000 huts have been damaged. The survey of the damage is going on. The Government of Gujarat has reported that the damage to property and infrastructure is likely to be of the order of Rs.21,262 crore. Power, telecommunication, road and railway infrastructure facilities have been restored. Water supply in the affected towns/villages has also been restored.

The Department of Agriculture and Co-operation is issuing regular bulletins high-lighting the efforts being made to provide succour to the affected people in Gujarat. This status report has also been put on the website of the Department viz. [www.ndmindia.nic.in](http://www.ndmindia.nic.in). The Krishi Control Room is functioning round the clock and coordinating as a nerve centre of all Central Government efforts and in close coordination with the Government of Gujarat. The senior officers of the Department of Agriculture and Co-operation as also of other Central Government Departments have visited the earthquake-affected areas of Gujarat.

Most States are assisting the Government of Gujarat both in cash and kind. A number of States have arranged relief supplies in the form of food, medicines, water, blankets, etc. Teams of doctors from various States have been deployed in various affected areas for providing medical assistance. In addition, the State Governments are also assisting Gujarat in the relief operations.

The World Bank has announced assistance of US \$300 million and the Asian development Bank has announced an assistance of US \$350 million, for the reconstruction activities.

The State Government have taken up relief work on a war-footing. Senior officers of the State Government have been deployed in the severely affected Kachchh district to oversee the relief operations. Large numbers of cranes/JCBs, bulldozers/excavators, loaders/dumpers/trucks, jeeps/ambulances, gas cutters/DG sets/sub-pumps and other equipment have been deployed for rescue operations and for the removal of the debris in Kutch and other districts. *(Interruptions)*

श्री शंकर सिंह वाघेला (कपड़वंज) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, जो मंत्री जी पढ़ रहे हैं वह सत्य नहीं है। \*

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: It is expunged.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: This is a very serious matter. The hon. Minister is making a statement. When you get a chance, you can rebut it. I will not allow you. Shri Shankersinh Vaghela, I have already expunged the words. Please do not repeat it. I have already expunged it. This is such a serious matter.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: Essential commodities are being supplied free of cost in the affected areas. All 45 sub-stations have been energised and all 255 damaged feeders have been restored. Thirty-four hospitals and 31 primary health centres in Kutch district and 361 hospitals and 949 primary health centres in other districts are functioning. In addition, nine mobile hospital ambulances each in Anjar and

\* Expunged as ordered by the Chair

Bhachau, 25 in Bhuj, three in Gandhidham and four in Rapar are providing medical services. Eight hundred and seventy-two medical officers/specialists in Kutch district and 1947 in other districts are serving. More than 18,000 patients have been admitted and 1.67 lakh injured cases have been treated. Satellite phones, hotlines, HAM Radios and mobile telephones have been pressed into service to ensure proper communication. Shelter material of about 3.89 lakh blankets/sheets, 64,000 tents, 5,000 tonnes GI sheets and 1.05 lakh plastic sheets have been received by the State Government. The State Government still requires more tents and blankets.

Relief operations in the wake of the Gujarat earthquake have been undertaken on a national scale. Steps have already been initiated for taking rehabilitation and reconstruction measures in the affected areas and these will be undertaken on a large scale. The Government of India is in constant touch with the State Government and it shall be our endeavour to extend all possible assistance and take necessary steps to assist the State Government to tackle the situation effectively and provide succour to the grief stricken families.