

Fourteenth Lok Sabha

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Date : 23-08-2006

Participants : Banerjee Kumari Mamata, Dasmunsi Shri Priya Ranjan

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Title : Regarding development of North Bengal.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, I am sorry that within this month, I have got only one chance to speak during 'Zero Hour'. It is very unfortunate... (*Interruptions*) बोलने का मौका देते ही नहीं हैं। ... (*व्यवधान*) That is the problem. We cannot represent the House. It is most unfortunate.

Sir, I thank you very much; at least, you have given me an opportunity today to speak during 'Zero Hour'.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I am listening to you.

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Hon. Members, have silence, please.

कुमारी ममता बैनर्जी : अगर एक महीने के सेशन में एक भी मौका ज़ीरो आवर में नहीं मिलेगा तो कैसे काम होगा?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Madam, you should continue now.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, I want to draw the attention of the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs to a very important issue from the economic and geographical points of view.

Both North Bengal and the North-Eastern Region are the border districts of our country. North Bengal is the gateway of North-Eastern Region; and the North-Eastern Region is the gateway of China and Myanmar. North Bengal is also the gateway of Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan... (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Nobody should disturb her, please.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : *Bhai*, North-Eastern Region and North Bengal are the border areas. Bangladesh is the border of Pakistan; you know better than me... (*Interruptions*)

Sir, I am raising the development issues ... (*Interruptions*) Do you want to differ here also?... (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Madam, you please address the Chair and not to any individual.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, Bangladesh is also the border of Pakistan. India also has a border with Pakistan.

North Bengal is a very neglected area; and the North-Eastern Region is very far away from the country though they are very much in the mainstream of the country. Therefore, I would request

the Government to give some special package to North Bengal because its areas are so underdeveloped and neglected. You would appreciate that in Aliporeduar, more than 180 people have died because of malaria. There are no doctors, no medicines.

Sir, the main earning of the people of North Bengal is mostly based on the jute industry and tea gardens.

In the tea garden area, more than 1000 people died because of hunger. It is unfortunate that North Bengal is far from us. So many children are being sold out because they do not get food. They do not have good health condition so that they can revamp themselves.

I know that our Minister, Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi, belongs to North Bengal. I would request the Government to immediately send a team to survey the malaria-affected areas, give medicines, equipment and arrange other infrastructure so that people could get them.

My second point is regarding Ganga erosion.

Regarding foreign currency, the hon. Finance Minister is here. I am repeating this question. Once the Reserve Bank of India investigated the matter. Foreign currency is used there. Sir, North Bengal is very much in India. North-Eastern region is very much in India. But we are busy with other matters that we do not take care of these people, as a result of which, being a border area, smuggling is increasing. People, who are indulging in terrorist activities, are increasing. They are coming and helping. We want that Government should give special attention, special protection and a special package to North Bengal and to the North-Eastern region. Thank you.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): Sir, I have the privilege to represent that region. In response to your request, I would respond to the House that during the tenure of the NDA Government, I tried to draw the attention to these matters. I got not even a lip service from the previous Government. Soon our Government was installed, I took up the issue of erosion. For the first time, the Government of India, with the concurrence of the State Government, extended the erosion management task from the Farakka barrage both in Murshidabad and Malda. We have solved one-fourth of the problem. We have solved one of the major problems in Panchanandpur.

In regard to other economic support, I have presented a memorandum two months back and the Prime Minister is actively examining it. I can assure that justice to North Bengal's economic package, involving both the State Government and the Central Government, would be ensured by this Government at the earliest.

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