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Title : Situation on the Indo-Bangladesh Border.

**\*SHRI PRASANTA KUMAR MAJUMDAR (BALURGHAT)** : Hon. Chairman Sir, through you I would like to draw the attention of the Government of India to a very serious problem pertaining to my state West Bengal. You must be aware that out of the 18 districts of Bengal, eight are situated in the border of Bangladesh. Therefore keeping the security aspect and international norms in mind the Central Government has put up barbed wire fencing from the zero point at a distance of 150 yards. But the problem is, due to this fencing much of the agricultural land of the poor Indian farmers have fallen on the other side of it. The government have also constructed gates every one, two or three kilometres away to facilitate agriculture. The security arrangements are monitored by the BSF personnels. The rule is that the gates would be opened at 6'O clock in the morning. But in practice, this is not done. Now we are having the monsoon season when most of the agricultural activities are undertaken in West Bengal. If the gates are actually opened at 8 A.M. then it becomes very difficult for the cultivators to reap their harvest. Paddy, wheat and jute cultivation suffer immensely as a result of this. The poor marginalised farmers who depend entirely on their land face extreme difficulties. The situation is very grim. You will find in the newspapers that the villagers have regular clashes with the BSF jawans. Even exchange of fires took place often, in turn killing the innocent helpless people. They are even put behind bars. Thus my humble request to the Government of India is that it should acquire the land lying between the zero point and fencing. It should

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\* English translation of the Speech originally delivered in Bengali.

hand over the money to the cultivators so that they are able to purchase land this side and earn their livelihood by growing crops. This is my proposal which I am putting forth before this August House.

I would also like to mention here that the people of the bordering areas are a distressed lot. The region is backward, under developed. Basic minimum facilities are missing. There is no electricity, no water, nothing. The government runs the Border Area Development Schemes but the money is not properly utilised to develop the basic infrastructure of the area. Therefore I propose that Hon. Members of Parliament should be made to represent in the committees which look after this aspect. If that is done then the funds can be effectively used to expedite various schemes which are pending thus ensuring holistic development and growth of the region. The poor people will also be able to live peacefully and have two square meals a day. I request the central government to take note of this.

With these words, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak and conclude.