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Title: Issue regarding outbreak of Avian Influenza Virus (bird flu) at Kuttanad area in Alappuzha district, Kerala.

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (MAVELIKKARA): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to invite the attention of this august House and Government to the outbreak of Avian Influenza Virus (bird flu) at Kuttanad area in Alappuzha district, Kerala. Duck farming is one of the major occupations of the farmers of Kuttanad, especially in off season. Due to the outbreak of Avian influenza Virus, more than 50,000 ducks died in a week.

Thalavady village, Kainakari village of Kuttanad Taluk and Purakkad village of Ambalappuzha Taluk are the worst hit due to the virus. Even though the death of ducks are reported early, now only the reason has been identified. The disease was confirmed after the test in HSAD Lab, Bhopal. The situation is alarming. If it is not contained on a war footing manner, millions of ducks being reared in Kuttanad will be affected, which will amount to the loss of crores of rupees to the farmers.

It is first time that Avian Influenza Virus is detected in Kerala. The disease is due to the virus belonging to H5 category. If it is not prevented, the illness may spread to human beings also.

The Government of Kerala has decided and started burning all the ducks in and around five kilometres of the identified area to prevent spread of the virus. The sale of duck meat and egg is banned in Kuttanad area. The virus has now been reported from Purakkad, Vattakkayal, Thalavady, Kainakari panchayats of Alappuzha district and Ayimanam in Kottaayam district.

Though the State Government is taking measures to contain the spread of the disease, we request the early intervention of the Government of India to contain the spread of the virus.

Now the bird flu has spread to other categories like poultry also. The Government of Kerala is taking all out efforts to contain the epidemic. It is spreading like wild fire and the situation is alarming. There is fear among the public that the virus may affect the human beings also. Red alert has been issued.

Awareness generation programmes among farmers, supply of medicines and relief to the farmers affected etc. may be arranged immediately.

The Government of India may send a team of experts to study the severity of the problem and provide all necessary support to the Government of Kerala to address the issue effectively.

Financial assistance may be provided to the State Government urgently to compensate the loss of farmers.

Sir, this is a very serious situation. I hope the Government of India will intervene immediately.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri P. Karunakaran is allowed to associate with the issue raised by Shri Kodikunnil Suresh.

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL (ALAPPUZHA): Sir, kindly allow me to raise a matter. I had given notice and the Speaker had allowed it.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is it on the same subject?

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL : Sir, it is regarding my constituency....(*Interruptions*)

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member, your name is already there. Do not force me like that. Balloted names are there. I have to give priority to them. I will call you afterwards. Now, Dr. Kirit Solanki.

...(*Interruptions*)