

Sixteenth Loksabha

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Title: Outbreak of vector-borne disease in Kerala.

DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards the public health disaster in my home state of Kerala, where the outbreak of vector borne diseases is severely crippling everyday life, including in my constituency of Thiruvananthapuram, which is among the worst affected.

Over 2 lakh cases of viral fever alone have been reported in the state as of June this year which has resulted in the death of over 120 individuals in the first 6 months of 2017— the highest in the history of Kerala. 23 have died of dengue and the number of reported cases of dengue is also at its highest, at 11581 by July, as against a total of 7439 in 2016. Hospitals are putting up houseful signs like cinemas.

Given that this figure only represents reported cases, it is very likely that it does not fully reflect the actual magnitude of the crisis, particularly in rural areas where cases are frequently under-reported. As the monsoon strengthens as is usual, the situation is only expected to worsen.

The state's public health infrastructure is stretched to its limits, and one is left with the heartbreaking sight of children, the elderly, and the weak lining up outside medical facilities, unable to avail treatment as hospitals are inundated with patients. This is not a crisis the state can handle on its own.

I urge the Minister of Health to depute a high—level crisis response team to take stock of the crisis, increase the quantum of funds allocated to the state for tackling vector borne diseases, and ensure that these funds are released on a priority basis.