

but so far the Government has not come forward. I am afraid whether it has come to the notice of the Prime Minister or not. Yesterday I heard on radio that our Prime Minister has shown lot of sympathy to other neighbouring States where devastation has taken place...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI RAM PRASAD SINGH (B'kāmgañj): We are not being given any chance to speak, so I walk out of the House.

12.41 hrs.

[English]

*At this stage, Shri Ram Prasad Singh left the House*

MR. SPEAKER: You have to be very brief. There are others also who have to speak.

SHRI S. MALLIKARJUNAIAH: But unfortunately, Karnataka is still unattended to. Therefore, I wish to bring it to the notice of the Government that they shall have to send a team of experts to assess the damages caused in Karnataka.

SHRI H. D. DEVEGOWDA (Hassan): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I support the views expressed by my friend Shri Mallikarjunaiah. It has mostly affected by constituency. I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that Karnataka has been neglected on all fronts, including the flood control. Nearly five persons have been washed away during the recent floods and eight persons have died in Coorg, Shimoga and Hassan districts. Several houses have collapsed and the property and standing crops worth several crores have been washed away due to heavy floods in Hassan, Mandia, Coorg and Chikmagalur districts. This is the plight of the farmers and the people who are

residing on both sides of the river. So, I urge upon the Government to at least release Rs. two crores to provide relief to the flood victims.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI (Gandhi Nagar): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to raise an issue which was earlier mentioned by my colleague but which I think needs to be taken far more seriously by the Government than it is being taken. A very serious crisis threatens the newspaper industry and if the proposed hike of newsprint is effected by the STC, it would cripple the whole industry. It would mean that except for a few affluent houses which run newspapers, all the others would be closed down. It is a kind of a death warrant for all those small newspapers and journals, not only small but even medium sized, which cannot bear this particular hike. After all, there is a Newsprint Price Fixation Committee which meets every three months. When in the month of June they met, the price of imported standard newsprint was Rs. 13,000 per tonne. They agreed at that time to enhance it by Rs. 1,200 and the price became Rs. 14,200 per tonne. This was on June 21 and this was fixed for the quarter July-September. Then once again there was devaluation and on July 3, the Committee was asked to meet again and a further hike was introduced and the price was raised to Rs. 16,000 per tonne from Rs. 13,000 to Rs. 16,000! And when once again on the 30th of July, that is, day before yesterday, the meeting of the Price Fixation Committee was convened, they were shocked and flabbergasted to hear the STC's recommendation that it should now be increased to Rs. 20,670 per tonne. So, in the last one month, it is sought to be increased from Rs. 13,000 per tonne to Rs. 20,670 per tonne. It is something which is unheard of. It was, therefore, that the newspaper industry protested in that meeting and the meeting had to be put off to the 8th of August. I understand that today the Secretary, Information and Broadcasting is to meet the Finance

Secretary in this regard and a decision is to be taken. I wish that the matter were taken up more seriously and not merely at the Secretaries' level. Political intervention is sought for and I appeal to the Government to intervene immediately and to come to a decision.

Here is a Government which, if it takes the step, it will not be viewed only in monetary terms. It will be viewed as an assault on the media, an assault on democracy and an assault on information.

I, therefore, rise to protest against this particular hike and to request the Government to see that this proposed hike is withdrawn. After all this hike is also being introduced because of the failure of the State Bank of India to fulfil its commitment to foreign newsprint dealers and because of the State Bank of India's failure, which means the Government of India's failure, the newspapers should not be penalised. The media should not be penalised. This is my humble request.

[Translation]

SHRI SURYA NARAYAN YADAV (Saharasa): Mr. Speaker, Sir, today I am pained to say that whatever we speak in the House is not broadcast by A.I.R. or telecast by Doordarshan. If some how it is included in the Parliament News bulletin it is broadcast in Hindi bulletin alone and not in the Parliament News bulletin in English. I have been a member of Bihar Legislative Assembly for the last ten years and I was elected to Parliament last time also from Bihar. But since then I have been watching that whatever we say is not telecast, broadcast or published at all. I am much pained by all this. Speeches of important leaders and the honourable Members occupying the front seats are published as well as broadcast and telecast. This makes us feel as if we have been elected to this House by animals and not by human beings. After a lot of efforts we get a chance to speak, but we are pained when we find that whatever

we speak here is not given publicity. I request you to issue a direction to the media in this regard.

[English]

SHRI MURLI DEORA (Bombay South): I am trying to add one line to what Shri Advaniji has just said in the House. The problem which has just come for raising the rate of newsprint is because of the canalisation of newsprint through STC. The real solution to this problem will be to decanalise the import of newsprint through STC or anybody else. Because most of the time the L.Cs. are not opened in time, the commitments are made and the newsprint does not reach in time. I hope the Government will decanalise so that this problem does not come up. I only hope that all the liberal measures will be supported by Shri L. K. Advani (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA (Madhubani): Sir, before speaking on the subject of my notice, I would like to comment on the matter raised by my hon. colleague Shri Surya Narayan Yadav... (*Interruptions*)...

MR. SPEAKER: Please confine yourself to the subject of your notice.

SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA: I am speaking on the subject of my notice only. I urge our media persons to take note of these things. Actually people ask me the reasons behind the statements and speeches made here not reaching them. Now I come to the subject of my notice. Last week the erosion caused by Kosi river caused the river's embankments to collapse. This prompted the Minister of Water Resources of Bihar to submit his resignation. Fortunately the Chief Minister did not accept his resignation as he is an able Minister. Kosi, Kamala and Bagmati are three rivers which carry silt as they flow down from the northern Himalayas beyond Kathmandu. Had I not seen