

[Sh. Mohan Lal Jhikram]

crops were destroyed least year for want of rain. Consequently, thousands of people left their villages and migrated to other districts to earn their livelihood. Starvation death is many districts and two deaths have also been reported from the district of Mandla. No relief measures were taken in the first and the second phase and only some measures were taken in the last phase. Supply of ration though PDS was bad from the very beginning. It is very difficult for the people to get their ration. Even this year, the whole region is hit by drought in absence of rain. The paddy crop sown by the farmers in the first rain weathered after sprouting. Farmers are in acute crisis of seeds. The problem of drinking water has become all the more acute. Wells and hand-pumps have been dried up in different places. The water level has gone down.

It is therefore requested to the Central Government that it should provide adequate amount to the Government of Madhya Pradesh so that relief measures can be taken on large scales. At the same time, immediate arrangements should be made to make drinking water available and special attention should be given to facilitate water and fodder for the cattle.

(iv) Need to Control the prices of essential medicines.

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA (South Delhi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, presently there is acute shortage of medicines in the country and the prices are every high. Medicines for tuberculosis, cancer, heart disease, epilepsy diseases of children and for many other similar diseases are not available in the market and are out of stock in hospitals on the other hand, the medicines that are easily available in chemist shops are being sold at exorbitant prices and cost of these medicines have been increased from 70 to 150%

and in certain cases the increase in price is even more. Some companies have changed the names of medicines with the changes of their prices. There are also the cases in which prices has been increased and the quantity of medicines has been reduced. For example the syrup of a particular medicine which was initially available in 100 m.l. packing has now been reduced to 75 m.l. packing.

There are many reasons for shortage and this arbitrary increase in the prices of medicines. The Problem has gradually come up in the last one year. The Government has not taken any appropriate step in this regard. The long awaited Drug policy has not been announced as yet. I would therefore request the Central Government to elaborate their policy in this regard and take proper steps to check the rising prices of medicines immediately.

(v) Need to ensure that vijayanagar Steel Plant at Hospet In Karnataka was not closed.

[English]

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI (Bellary) : People of Karnataka are very much agitated over the closure of Vijaya Nagar Steel Plant at Hospet.

The statement by Essars Gujarat Group that they are not interested in starting the plant due to non-feasibility of the project is not correct according to the consultants, that is Mecons who have prepared the feasibility report.

Hence I request the Government of India and Karnataka State Government to come together immediately and try to set right the whole issue before people start agitation.