

old rates. But regarding the twenty lakh tonnes of fertilisers with the whole sale traders, Government have issued telex orders to sell them at the new rates and I have proof in this regard. This matter needs to be clarified. The hon. Minister is not present here, but the leader of the House is present. The people of the country should not be misled on this issue. The farmers would have a burden of Rs. 200 crores on them. The farmers are already suffering because of drought and if they get this much fertilizer, it will be sufficient to meet their eighty per cent requirement. I would like the Government to make a statement on it clarifying its attitude towards farmers.

SHRI RAM PRASAD SINGH (Bikramganj): Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards my constituency, Bikramganj. Sir, my constituency is mainly an agricultural area which is irrigated through the Sone Canal system. But today the entire area is affected by drought. Eighty per cent of the labourers have no work. People say that they have not seen such a severe drought in their life time. Not only my constituency, but adjacent districts like Bhojpur and Aurangabad are also affected by the drought. I urge the Government to formulate some scheme to provide relief to the drought affected people and if Government fails to do so, the labourers will die of starvation, corruption will increase and the law and order situation will deteriorate. Sir, as such I urge that the relief work should be started on a war footing to save the people from starvation.

12.17 hrs.

RE: HOSTAGE CRISIS IN ASSAM AND JAMMU AND KASHMIR.

[English]

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat): I rise to draw the attention of the hon. Home Minister to the hostage crisis in Assam and Jammu and Kashmir which appears to have taken a very serious and dangerous turn recently.

In so far as Assam is concerned it is reported that the State Government of Assam has clarified its position that the Government have not granted general amnesty to

the activists of ULFA, whereas the ULFA activists claim that the Government made that kind of an announcement on the 8th July. The ULFA demanded the release of its members, supporters and sympathisers by the 26th July in exchange of ONGC officers and other officers kept as hostages.

The State Government in a statement made only yesterday in the Legislative Assembly of Assam has stated that they have already released 432 ULFA activists detained under the TADA and only 290 detainees are there in different jails.

Two important issues arise here. The first is whether the general amnesty was at all declared as announced by the State Government of Assam. If so, why? This might have been announced after consultations with the Government of India because it relates to the fundamentalist activities, terrorist activities and secessionist activities and the State Government cannot take that kind of a decision of their own, unless they have got some kind of consent or some kind of green signal from the Government of India.

Secondly, another question that arises is, whether the Assam Government has sought for a dialogue with the ULFA. I want to know from the hon. Minister the basis of having a dialogue with ULFA. Have they indicated any basis?

These are two very important issues. Everybody is passing their days in great anxiety and anguish for the release of these ONGC officers and other officers. I want that the Minister should make a statement here and now.

I would only mention a word about Jammu and Kashmir. Today's *Indian Express* carries a news that a fresh threat to kill Mr. Doraiswamy has been issued and Mr. Doraiswamy would be killed if Mr. Shalla and others are not released by 3 p.m. today (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can speak only on one subject and not all subjects. Shri Asokaraj.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD (Salem-pur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, two officials of