

agencies of our country. External agencies are trying to wipe off our own agencies. How far it is proper? In no way it is in the interest of the security and sovereignty of our country. I want a detailed statement from the Government on this issue and condemn the entry of foreign companies in the form of news agencies into our country. I urge the Government to put a check on it.

SHRIGEORGE FERNANDES (Muzaffarpur): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to speak on this issue, but I would support this issue also. However, I want to speak on a separate issue.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You are on the same point, I suppose. If you are on a different point, I will allow you later on.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI AJIT PANJA): Sir, I can react to the statements of both of Shrimati Malini Bhattacharaya and of the honourable Member. So far as Shrimati Malini Bhattacharaya is concerned, we also noticed in the newspapers that some of our newspapers, that is newspapers published - ownership and publication - within India, are approaching foreign television companies for the purpose of having some agreement. We have started making inquiries.

So far as the foreign agencies are concerned, it was discussed at the high level. Now PTI and UNI are functioning and functioning to our satisfaction and to the satisfaction of the people in general. What was asked for by Finance Department is certain economic information which they thought very much necessary. That is why whether any foreign agencies could be asked to give some economic data, not for public use but for their own consumption. At present, Government has decided not to take help of any

foreign agency whatsoever. Without full discussion of matters in the Indian News Agencies, Newspapers Industry. We will rely on our own indigenous agencies, that is, PTI and UNI, and also sit with them to discuss if they are having any difficulty in giving us the economic information which is very much necessary, inputs which are very much necessary, in view of Government's new economic policy. (*Interruptions*)

So far as cross-media restriction is concerned, this was taken into consideration by the various committees. The whole idea of the Government is to break the monopoly. Therefore, cross-media restriction is existing in all the developed and developing countries.

Vardhan Committee has recommended that while granting to any private producer right in Doordrshan, cross-media restriction should be kept in view. Therefore, Government is quite aware of and alert to it.

12.02 hrs.

RE: DRAUGHT CONDITIONS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF MAHARASHTRA

[English]

SHRI MUKUL BALKRISHNA WASNIK (Buldana): Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the Government towards the severe drought conditions in different parts of Maharashtra. According to the present assessment, 29,157 villages out of 47,000 villages in Maharashtra have been declared as scarcity-hit villages. This is the rarest of the rare situation. Under such a situation, it is desired that the Union Government should provide additional funds to the Government of Maharashtra to tackle this severe situation.

As per the estimates prepared by the Government of Maharashtra, it has been projected that almost Rs. 834 crore would be

required to tackle the situation. Out of Rs. 834 crore, Rs. 500 crore have already been spent by 31st March and the Union Government has only contributed Rs. 33 crore in this regard. The Government of Maharashtra has submitted several representations to the Agriculture Ministry. Representations have already been submitted to the Prime Minister also. But on previous occasion, the Government has announced that no additional funds would be provided.

As the hon. Agriculture Minister is present in the House, I would like to request him: number one, as the teams have already visited Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh to assess the drought condition there, a team should also visit Maharashtra immediately; and number two, additional funds should be provided to Maharashtra because 20 per cent of the planned funds have already been diverted to meet the situation and this will affect the planned development of the State.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN (Rosera): I had been to Maharashtra on 24th – 25th. There is severe drought in Nagpur, Wardha and Pulgaon. Although human being manage to get water somehow or the other, but the condition of animals is pitiable. I had to witness a very sad state of affairs. Thousands of people were demanding that water should be provided to them. They were also saying that in the absence of water they will die. It is not very hot at present as. It is just the month of April but May and June are yet to come. Therefore, I would urge the hon. Minister to consider this problem very seriously.

The Government is fully aware of the situation in Marathwada area. The Government of India should not leave all this to the State Government. Government of India should be prepared to combat this situation

on war footing and arrangements should be made for all the possible help.

SHRI RAM NAIK (Bombay North): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the famine in Maharashtra is the worst of its kind after independence. Famine of such a worst nature was faced in 1972. During that famine, the Central Government had provided assistance of nearly Rs.600 crore to Maharashtra. But now no immediate assistance is being given to them. It is said that a new policy has been framed for it. But the Finance Commission has said that a Delegation will be sent there only when the situation turns serious. It is a very serious situation. Keeping in view the serious situation there, a delegation ought to have been sent there.

According to the Maharashtra Government two crore animals are not getting either fodder or drinking water.

[English]

Out of a population of 4 crores of cattle.

[Translation]

If they don't get grass, the situation will turn more serious. Because of this, all the people of Maharashtra are feeling agitated. You might be knowing that the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly were disrupted because of this and the whole of Maharashtra is going to observe a bandh on the 8th of May. I want the Government to give a statement on this situation.

A central team should visit the place at once to assess the situation there, and at least Rs. 500 crore should be given to Maharashtra Government as the first instalment of assistance. Rs. 800 crore have been spent so far. The Government should act immediately and make a statement in the House. We wish that our Agriculture Minister should consider it. It is a very serious prob-

lem. The people of Maharashtra are time and again pressing for sending a team there, but no notice is being taken.

SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR (Chimur): Many hon. Members have mentioned the serious famine condition prevailing in Maharashtra. I would make a submission to you that food may, of course, have to be arranged during famine, but today we have to think as how to make arrangement of drinking water for human beings and animals. Nobody bothers about the irrigation schemes of the area. A central team with full details about the famine should be sent there. The Members have already demanded that such a situation should not arise there in future. Hon. Minister is fully aware of this fact. Perhaps he is expecting a representation from the Maharashtra Government and another representation form all of us, then alone he will take some initiative. Therefore, we would urge the Hon. Minister that the Government should extend some help to Maharashtra in this hour of crisis. (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, would you like to respond?

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (Uluberia): Sir, before the Minister replies, I would like to say that over 80 districts all over the country including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, UP, Tripura, Kerala and West Bengal have no sign of rain and there is delay in monsoon also. There is not drinking water and the poor people including the agricultural workers are not getting jobs also. They are starving which is a serious situation. The Demands for Grants for the Ministry of Agriculture have already been discussed and so, the time has already passed that the Government should take note of it

and a new scheme should be evolved to face the serious drought situation all over the country. Sir, the hon. Minister is here and I hope he will give us an assurance that he will send teams to various parts of the country, including West Bengal, and devise special schemes to take care of the situation in the country.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha): Sir, regarding the need for a new scheme, I would like to mention that Kerala is also very much affected by this drought. This year, there is an unprecedented drought in Kerala. While replying, the hon. Minister may please keep the State of Kerala also in view..... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Thomas, we have already discussed the Demands for the Ministry of Agriculture for a pretty long time and this point has already been made. Please sit down.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Sir, the temperature in Kerala has gone upto 40°C.....

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Don't you want response from the Minister?

(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I totally agree with the views expressed by the hon. Member. I am aware of the difficulties faced by the people but there are some problems to be looked into. You know it very well that we actively took part in the discussion held in the House last time on drought condition and are prepared to participate even now. As I have stated earlier that a team was sent and a team to Maharashtra will also be dispatched. The report of

the team after on the spot survey will be laid before the Cabinet.

12.18 hrs.

The issue is what are the funds available with us and what we can disburse? Three-four years ago grants used to be released by the Centre on receipt of report of the team sent to the affected areas and subsequently new works also used to be started. But with the recommendations of the Ninth Finance Commission regarding the distribution of the entire 'Calamities Relief Fund' among the States the Centre has already made the allocations for 10 years on average basis. According to the recommendations the Centre should not keep anything with it. Thus the entire 'Calamities Relief Fund' for 10 years on average basis is allocated among all the States every year in four quarterly instalments. After every three month, the instalment, in which the Centre contributes Rs. 603 crore and States Rs. 201 crore, are released by the Central Government. First instalment has already been released and if the need be, on demand of the States the second instalment can also be released. If the problem persists then recommendation for the release of the third instalment can also be made. Apart from this, if the situation is more grave and the Central Government declares it as national calamity then more assistance can be given. The Centre can give more assistance only after the stock of the situation is taken on receipt of reports of the various teams which I promise to lay before the cabinet. That is all (*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI BHAVNA CHIKHLIA (Jugarpur): Gujarat is in the grip of drought for three years but nothing has been said about it. (*Interruptions*)

RE: STOCK EXCHANGES

[*Translation*]

SHRIGEORGE FERNANDES (Muzaffarpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, on 31st of the last month this august House passed the legislation regarding the Securities and Exchange Board of India. The law was to come into force immediately. The Chairman of SEBI, Shri G.V. Ramkrishnan issued an order to all the Stock Exchanges through out the country to get the brokers registered with the SEBI which are registered with the Stock Exchanges.

I was under the impression that the hon. Minister of Finance will definitely make a statement on the three week long strike, by the stock brokers in all the Stock Exchanges in the country in contravention to the legislation passed in the Parliament to get themselves registered or he will try to resolve the issue outside the House. The matter is very serious because nearly Rs. 302 lakh crore are invested in the Stock Exchanges in India. At present Rs. 302 lakh crore is the total.

12.19 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

registered capital invested in the Stock Exchanges in the country. One thing is clearly evident that the Stock Brokers are not prepared to come under any type of Government control. One of the reasons for it became evident last week in the country when the State Bank of India alone found difficulty in reconciling accounts to the tune of Rs. 1000 crore given as an advance to a leading stock broker registered with a Stock